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PERFORMING FORCES

SATB Chorus
Soprano Solo (movement 5 only)
Flute
B♭ Clarinet
Violin
Violoncello
Percussion (Marimba, Vibraphone, Claves, Drum Set*)
Keyboard (Piano and Celesta)

* Only a Drum Set is required for performance of Jazzonia.

AVAILABLE EDITIONS

Piano/Vocal Score 8828
Full Score 8828A
Instrumental Parts 8828B
Jazzonia (No. 3) 8829
Full Score 8829A
Instrumental Parts 8829B

The other six movements may be performed separately by license from the publisher.

Duration: 32:30

Drum Set Notation

Kick Drum
Tom-tom (floor tom)
Snare Drum
Cross Stick (Latin rimshot)
Cowbell
Hi-Hat (half-open)
Triangle
1. A Black Pierrot

I am a black Pierrot:
She did not love me,
So I crept away into the night
And the night was black, too.

I am a black Pierrot:
She did not love me,
So I wept until the dawn
Dripped blood over the eastern hills
And my heart was bleeding, too.

I am a black Pierrot:
She did not love me,
So with my once gay-colored soul
Shrunken like a balloon without air,
I went forth in the morning
To seek a new brown love.

2. Breath of a Rose

Love is like dew
On lilacs at dawn:
Comes the swift sun
And the dew is gone.

Love is like star-light
In the sky at morn:
Star-light that dies
When day is born.

Love is like perfume
In the heart of a rose:
The flower withers
The perfume goes—

Love is no more
Than the breath of a rose,
No more
Than the breath of a rose.

3. Jazzonia

Oh, silver tree!
Oh, shining rivers of the soul!

In a Harlem cabaret
Six long-headed jazzers play.
A dancing girl whose eyes are bold
Lifts high a dress of silken gold.

Oh, silver tree!
Oh, shining rivers of the soul!

Were Eve's eyes
In the first garden
Just a bit too bold?
Was Cleopatra gorgeous
In a gown of gold?

Oh, silver tree!
Oh, shining rivers of the soul!

In a whirling cabaret
Six long-headed jazzers play.

4. Justice

That Justice is a blind goddess
Is a thing to which we black are wise.
Her bandage hides two festering sores
That once perhaps were eyes.
5. Song for a Dark Girl
Way Down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
They hung my black young lover
To a cross roads tree.

Way Down South in Dixie
(Bruised body high in air)
I asked the white Lord Jesus
What was the use of prayer.

Way Down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
Love is a naked shadow
On a gnarled and naked tree.

6. Silhouette
Southern gentle lady,
Do not swoon.
They’ve just hung a black man
In the dark of the moon.

They’ve hung a black man
To a roadside tree
In the dark of the moon
For the world to see
How Dixie protects
Its white womanhood.

Southern gentle lady,
Be good!
Be good!

7. To a Dead Friend
The moon still sends its mellow light
Through the purple blackness of the night;
The morning star is palely bright
Before the dawn.

The sun still shines just as before;
The rose still grows beside my door,
But you have gone.

The sky is blue and the robin sings;
The butterflies dance on rainbow wings
Though I am sad.

In all the earth no joy can be;
Happiness comes no more to me,
For you are dead.

Motherless Child
(Traditional African American Spiritual)

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
A mighty long way from home,
Yes,
A long, long way from home.
True believer,
A mighty long way from home,
Yes,
A long, long way from home.
**PROGRAM NOTES**

*Black Pierrot* was commissioned by conductor Paul Crabb for the University of Missouri University Singers and the Mizzou New Music Ensemble (Stefan Freund, director) with funding from the Sinquefield Charitable Foundation through the Mizzou New Music Initiative. Based on seven poems by Langston Hughes, it is scored for SATB Chorus (*divisi*) and Chamber Ensemble (Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Violoncello, Percussion, and Piano).

The instrumental scoring used here is one that has become quite common in recent chamber music and is sometimes called a "Pierrot plus percussion" ensemble. "Pierrot" refers to the 1912 masterpiece by Arnold Schönberg titled *Pierrot Lunaire*, which is scored for a single vocalist accompanied by a quintet of the aforementioned two woodwind and string instruments and piano (without percussion).

The first movement of *Black Pierrot* sets Hughes’ 1923 poem of the same name. Much of its music is dominated by a constantly recurring seven-note figure heard in opening in the right hand of the piano, itself a parody of the figure heard in the opening of Schönberg’s great score. Hughes’ *Pierrot* is, like the classic commedia dell’arte character, a sad figure lamenting the loss of his love. Just as the poem is in three verses, the music divides clearly into a tripartite structure, each opening with the line, "I am a black Pierrot."

*Breath of a Rose* (1944) concerns the fragility of love and how easily it can evaporate, like the dew on a flower at dawn. Musically, it is set as a slow and sensuous dance over a gently undulating bass pattern, with the instruments gently interweaving the choral parts.

*Jazzonia* (1923) describes the scene in a Harlem café of the 1920s in which “six long-headed jazzers play,” and beautiful girls dance. After a short introductory section, the music moves into a lively ragtime—complete with drum set—that forms the background for the remainder of the piece. Altogether, it is something of a poetic and musical glance at the era of the Harlem Renaissance in which so much African-American music, art, and poetry emerged as vital forces in the arts.

The first three Hughes poems presented in this cycle celebrate life, the bitter-sweetness of love, sadness when it is lost, and the simple human delights to be enjoyed in dancing and flirting. The mood changes abruptly and profoundly with the fourth movement, Hughes’ brief 1923 poem, ironically titled *Justice*. The poem’s four bitter lines are delivered quietly and simply, somewhat dispassionately, held in; they are accompanied by quiet, sustained music in five of the instruments, while the piano aggressively pursues its own ironic, violent course.

*Song for a Dark Girl* (1927) is Hughes’ emotionally wrenching and deeply personal response to the evil of lynching, the murder of black men by white mobs. Each of the poem’s three verses begins by quoting the phrase, “Way Down South in Dixie,” from the song *Dixie*; the chorus sings these words over and over, though never to the familiar tune. The remainder of the poem is delivered as a first-person lament by the soprano soloist, largely in duet with the violoncello, perhaps suggestive of her now-dead lover, “hung... to a cross roads tree.”

*Song for a Dark Girl* unfolds with deep sadness in response to the lynching of her lover. In contrast, *Silhouette* (1944) presents an entirely different response. Its words describe a “Southern gentle lady” who is, apparently, entirely indifferent to the fate of the murdered black man and accepting of “How Dixie protects Its white womanhood.” Perhaps unexpectedly, the music is a sometimes casual-sounding waltz, but one with constant, dark undertones.

*To a Dead Friend* (1922) opens with the suggestion of a moonlit scene, tinged by the sadness of a friend now departed; it continues with reflections on beautiful things that no longer can be enjoyed in the same way. Musically, this final movement is dominated by the familiar, reflective spiritual, *Motherless Child*, from the instrumental introduction to its choral conclusion. Some instrumental elements from earlier movements reappear in this movement. For example, the seven-note figure of the first movement returns to underpin this poem’s second verse, while the angry instrumental music from the fourth movement serves as a transition from the end of Hughes’ poem to the concluding, simple, unaccompanied choral presentation of *Motherless Child*.

—William Averitt

William Averitt (b. 1948)
For biographical information visit: www.williamaveritt.com
Black Pierrot

for SATB Chorus (divisi) and Chamber Ensemble

1. A Black Pierrot

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1. A Black Pierrot

Pi - er - rot: ____________________________

I am a black Pi - er - rot: ____________________________

Pi - er - rot: ____________________________

Pi - er - rot: ____________________________

Pi - er - rot: ____________________________

Pi - er - rot: ____________________________

Pi - er - rot: ____________________________

Pi - er - rot: ____________________________

Pi - er - rot: ____________________________

Pi - er - rot: ____________________________
She did not love me.

She did not love me.

She did not love me.

She did not love me.
So I crept away into the

And the

night

And the

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And the

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So I crept away into the

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So I crept away into the

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And the

night
2. Breath of a Rose

Langston Hughes (ASCAP)


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Love is like dew
On lilacs at dawn:

Comes the swift sun
And the dew is

Come the swift sun
And the dew is

Love is like dew
On lilacs at dawn:
is like star---
In the sky---
at

is like star---
In the sky---
at

is like star---
In the sky---
at

is like star---
In the sky---
at

\[34\]

\[38\]

morn:
Star---
that dies
When---
day is
born.

3. Jazzonia

Langston Hughes (ASCAP)  William Averitt (ASCAP)

Dreamily  \( \frac{\dot{\downarrow}}{4} = 52 \)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano (for rehearsal only)

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oh, silver tree!

Oh,

(3 + 2)

shining rivers of the soul!

Ragtime $q = 78$

A

soul!

soul!

A Ragtime $q = 78$

WW. & Str.

K.D. & S.D.

(Perc. in background)
In a Harlem

cabaret

Six long-headed jazzers play.

E

Pno.

Cl.

Fl.
4. Justice

Langston Hughes (ASCAP)  
William Averitt (ASCAP)

Deliberately  \( \frac{}{\text{\( J = 60 \)}} \)

That justice is a

That justice is a

That justice is a

That justice is a

* During these bracketed passages, consonants ending words should be placed in rests.

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blind god - dess Is a thing to which we black are wise.
5. Song for a Dark Girl

Langston Hughes (ASCAP)  William Averitt (ASCAP)

Slowly, wearily \( \dot{=} 52 \)

Piano
(for rehearsal only)

Vib.
Vn.
Vib.
Pno.
Fl.
espr.
Vib.
Vn.
Vib.
Fl.
Cl.
Vn.
Pno.
Vc.
pizz.

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5. Song for a Dark Girl
5. Song for a Dark Girl

Sop. Solo

(Break the heart of me)

They

S

A

T

B

Vc. Solo

with intensity

hung my black young lover To a cross roads
Way Down South in Dixie,
6. Silhouette

Langston Hughes (ASCAP)  
William Averitt (ASCAP)

Tempo di valse  \( \dot{=} 52 \) (\( \dot{=} 156 \))

Piano (for rehearsal only)

Cl. & Vc.

* Please note the clef which persists throughout this movement.

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6. Silhouette


Southern----gentle----

Southern----gentle----

Southern----gentle----

Southern----gentle----
6. Silhouette

40

\( \text{la - dy.} \quad \text{Do not} \quad \text{la - dy.} \quad \text{Do not} \quad \text{la - dy.} \quad \text{Do not} \quad \text{la - dy.} \quad \text{Do not} \)

45

\( \text{swoon.} \quad \text{They’ve just} \quad \text{swoon.} \quad \text{They’ve just} \quad \text{swoon.} \quad \text{They’ve just} \quad \text{swoon.} \quad \text{They’ve just} \quad \text{swoon.} \quad \text{They’ve just} \quad \text{swoon.} \quad \text{They’ve just} \quad \text{swoon.} \quad \text{They’ve just} \quad \text{swoon.} \quad \text{They’ve just} \)
hung a black man
In the
dark of the moon.
7. To a Dead Friend

Langston Hughes (ASCAP)  William Averitt (ASCAP)

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The moon still sends
7. To a Dead Friend

\[ (3 + 2) \]

its mellow light Through the purple
its mellow light; Through the purple
its mellow light Through the purple
_{

blackness of the night;_
blackness of the night;_
blackness of the night;_
blackness of the night;__

73
* If the two lower bass notes are not possible, then all basses should sing the optional upper note.