

Poetry for a Midsummer's Night

two poems by Marvin Bell,
for tenor, double bass and piano

David Gompper

The first version of Poetry for A Midsummer's Night, consisting of two poems by Marvin Bell, were written for a recital featuring Katherine Eberle, Diana Gannett, and the composer at the piano that took place during the Double Bass Convention (5th Einco) in Goiania, Brazil on August 24, 2000. This version was revised for Gregory Wiest and represents a substantial rethinking of the tenor line.

While the first poem is reflective and quiet, set as a duet between singer and double bass, the second poem is lively and rhythmic. The latter is what I imagined Brazilian music to be, with seventh-chord arpeggios in the double bass and those quick dance rhythms found in the piano.

How the Lovers Found True Love After All

They say the woods are full of mystery,
 who venture in and do not reappear
 until such time as they achieve a mastery
 of signs employed by sprites, who feel no fear.

Not so, the lovers, who, not knowing better,
 scatter their emotions like plucked daisies
 across the forest floor, some sweet, some bitter:
 spasmodic measures of how much love is crazy.

The trick's to have the one you love in view
 when he or she can see no one but you.
 It helps, to get the other in the mood,
 to call them out at night to walk the wood.

People will tell you the forest has its way
 with those who walk it all-worked-up.
 Desperate, lonely, lovesick every day,
 they sniff the devil's paintbrush, the buttercup.

Who can predict when Cupid's state is bliss,
 and Eros can spare an amorous advance?
 Our lovers, heretofore astray, amiss,
 found true love's path by the seat of their pants.

Like Words, Like Music

Some have heard the music in the trees
that has no words, but words they have
more than music, and so they sing.

Others have heard the words of love
that make no sound, but sounds they have
more than silence, and so they speak.

For them, there's crackling music in a fire,
a round in the rapids, shimmery chords
midair, and a drumming in the earth.

What's worth more than our poverty
that needs such speech and song as poets
and lovers are helpless not to utter?

Lovers have a music in their heads,
the words by heart, and could not love long
were they less heartfelt, less headstrong.

Midsummer's a confluence of time
and passion, when those halfway to matrimony
labor to compose their love symphony.

Shakespeare knew his meters and strewed them
along the garden path and in the wood
that those who needed most to hear them could.

Lovers, though you be neither courtly nor English,
yet you have other traits worth a show,
so sing and play together, for you never know.

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I. How the Lovers Found True Love After All

Marvin Bell

David Gompper
2000

$\text{♩} = 72$

Tenor

Double bass

arco pizz. arco pizz. arco

f *p* *f* *mp* *mf* *p*

5

T. Db.

3 pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco

p *p*

They say the

10

T. Db.

woods are full of mys - ter - y, who ven - ture in

mp *p*

14

T. Db.

and do not re - ap - pear un - til such time as

mp *mf* *p*

19

T. Db.

they a - chieve a mas - tery of signs em - ployed by sprites, who feel no fear.

24

T. Db.

Not so, the lo - vers, who not know - ing bet - ter, scat - ter their e - mo - tions like

29 79

T. 

Db. 

34

T. 

Db. 

Più mosso ♩=88

37 *f*

T. 

Db. 

41

T. 

Db. 

poco rall.

Meno mosso ♩=69
p

46

T. 

Db. 

50

T. 

Db. 

80 T. *8* Des-perate, lone-ly, love-sick ev-ery day, they sniff they sniff the de-vil's

Db.

58 T. *8* paint-brush, the but-ter-cup.

Db.

poco accel. *A tempo*

rubato *arco*

f

61 T. *8* Who can pre-dict when Cu-pid's

Db.

pizz. *arco* *pizz.* *arco*

p cresc poco a poco

poco rit. *Meno mosso* ♩ = 60

65 T. *8* state is bliss, and E-ros can spare an a - mor-ous ad-vance? Our lo-vers, here-to-fore a -

Db.

f

69 T. *8* stray, a - miss, found true love's path by the

Db.

rit. *A tempo* *p*

p

72 T. *8* seat of their pants (hmm)

Db.

II. Like Words, Like Music

♩=60

Tenor

Double bass

Piano

fp

mf

p

79

T.

Db.

Pno

p

83

T.

Db.

Pno

p

Some have heard the mu-sic_ in the trees pizz. that has no words but words they have more than

86

T. *mu - sic and so they sing.*

Db. *arco*

Pno *pp*

89

T. *o - thers have*

Db. *dry*

Pno

92

T. *heard the words of love_ that make no sound but sounds they have_ more than si - lence and so they*

Db. *p*

Pno

84

95 ♩=72

T. *speak*

Db.

Pno *pp* *p secco*

98

T.

Db. *sim.*

Pno

100

T. *for them*

Db.

Pno

104

T. *8* there's crack ling mu-sic in a fire a-round in the ra - pids

Db.

Pno

108

T. *8* shim-mer-ing chords mid - air and a

Db.

Pno

ord.

pp

112

T. *8* drum-ming in - the earth

Db.

Pno

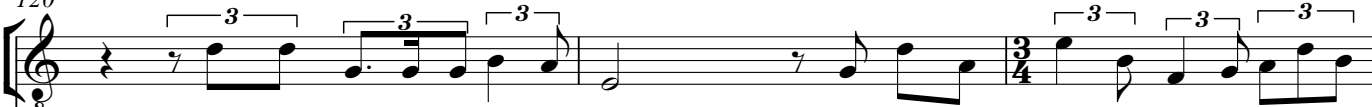
T. 

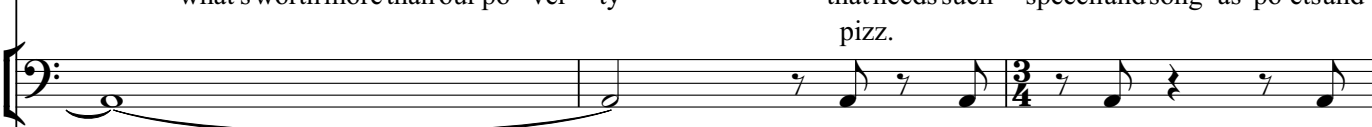
Db. 


Pno 

mp

120

T. 
 what's worth more than our po - ver - ty that needs such speech and song as po-ets and
 pizz.

Db. 

Pno 

p

R.H.

123

T. 
 lov-ers are help-less not to ut - ter

Db. 

Pno 

sim.

p

mf

126 87

T. *mf*

Lo - vers

Db.

Pno *mf* *f* *p*

129

T. have a mu - sic in their heads

Db.

Pno

133

T. the words by heart and could not

Db.

Pno

137

T. *8* love long were they less heart - felt less
(sul G) (sul D)

Db.

Pno

141

T. *8* head-strong Mid - sum-mer's a con - flu-ence of time and pas - sion

Db. ord. pizz.
mf

Pno

146 *cresc.*

T. *8* when those half-way to ma - tri-mo - ny la - bor to com-pose their

Db. *f* *arco* *mf*

Pno

149 *f*

T. *love sym - pho - ny.*

Db.

Pno *f*

152 *mp*

T. *Shakes-peare knew his*

Db. *pizz. p sim.*

Pno

157

T. *me - ters and strewed them a - long the gar - den path*

Db.

Pno

162

T. *8*

in the wood that those who need-ed most to hear them could_____

Db.

Pno

secco

p

167

T. *8*

arco

Db.

p

Pno

171

T. *8*

Lo-vers though you be nei-ther court-ly nor Eng-lish

Db.

Pno

175

T. yet you have o-ther traits with a show so

Db. (sul D) (sul A) D G 3 1 3

Pno rall. . . . A tempo I

8

4/4 6/16 4/4 6/16

♭ 2. 2. 2.

181

T. sing and play to - geth - er for you ne - ver

Db.

Pno

8

2/8 6/16 4/4 4/4

185

T. know.

Db.

Pno

8

4/4 4/4 4/4

