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### JULIANA HALL

## **PROPRIETY**

5 Songs for Soprano and Piano

on Poems by Marianne Moore

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Cover design by David Sims.



#### **MERCIFULLY**

I am hard to disgust, but a pretentious poet can do it; a person without a tap root; and impercipience can do it; did it.

But why talk about it offset by Musica Antiqua's "Legendary Performance" of impassioned exactitude.

An elate tongue is music. . . . . the plain truth—complex truth—in which unnatural emphases, "passi - on" and "divis - i-on," sound natural. Play it all; do; except in uproars of conversation.

Celestial refrain. . . . . My mind hears it again. Without music life is flat—bare existence. Dirgelike David and Absalom. That. Let it be that.

#### **CARNEGIE HALL: RESCUED**

"It spreads," the campaign—carried on by long-distance telephone, with "Saint Diogenes supreme commander." At the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour, a rescuer

makes room for Mr. Carnegie's
music hall, which by degrees
became (becomes)
our music stronghold
(accented on the "né," as
perhaps you don't have to be told).

Paderewski's "palladian majesty" made it a fane; Tschaikovsky, of course, on the opening night, 1891; and Gilels, a master, playing

With Andrew C. and Mr. R.,
"our spearhead, Mr. Star"—
in music, Stern—
has grown forensic,
and by civic piety
has saved our city panic;

rescuer of a music hall
menaced by the "cannibal
of real estate"—bulldozing potentate,
land-grabber, the human crab
left cowering like a neonate.

As Venice "in defense of children"
has forbidden for the citizen,
by "a tradition of
noble behavior,
dress too strangely shaped or scant,"
posterity may impute error

to our demolishers of glory. Jean Cocteau's "Preface
to the Past" contains the phrase

"When very young my dream
was of pure glory."

Must he say "was" of his "light
dream," which confirms our glittering story?

They need their old brown home. Cellist, violinist, pianist—
used to unmusical
impenetralia's
massive masonry—have found
reasons to return. Fantasias

of praise and rushings to the front
dog the performer. We hunt
you down, Saint Diogenes—
are thanking you for glittering,
for rushing to the rescue
as if you'd heard yourself performing.

After coming on Jerome S. Shipman's comment concerning academic appointments for artists.

**DREAM** 

The committee—now a permanent body—
formed to do but one thing,
discover positions for artists, was worried, then happy;
rejoiced to have magnetized Bach and his family
"to Northwestern," besides five harpsichords
without which he would not leave home.
For his methodic unmetronomic melodic diversity
contrapuntally appointedly persistently
irresistibly Fate-like Bach—find me words.

Expected to create for university
occasions, inventions with wing,
was no trouble after master-classes (stiffer in Germany),
each week a cantata; chorales, fugues, concerti!
Here, students craved a teacher and each student worked.
Jubilation! Re-rejoicings! Felicity!
Repeated fugue-like, all of it, to infinity.
(Note too that over-worked Bach was not irked.)

Haydn, when he had heard of Bach's billowing sail, begged Prince Esterházy to lend him to Yale. Master-mode expert fugue-al forms since, prevail.

Dazzling nonsense . . . I imagine it? Ah! nach enough. J. Sebastian—born at Eisenach: its coat-of-arms in my dream: BACH PLAYS BACH!

#### **MELCHIOR VULPIUS**

c. 1560-1615.

a contrapuntalist—

composer of chorales and wedding-hymns to Latin words but best of all an anthem: "God be praised for conquering faith which feareth neither pain nor death."

We have to trust this art—

this mastery which none can understand. Yet someone has acquired it and is able to direct it. Mouse-skin-bellows'-breath expanding into rapture saith

"Hallelujah." Almost

utmost absolutist and fugue-ist, Amen; slowly building from miniature thunder, crescendos antidoting death—love's signature cementing faith.

#### **PROPRIETY**

is some such word
as the chord
Brahms had heard
from a bird,
sung down near the root of the throat;
it's the little downy woodpecker
spiraling a tree—
up up up like mercury;

a not long
sparrow-song
of hayseed
magnitude—
a tuned reticence with rigor
from strength at the source. Propriety is
Bach's Solfegietto—
harmonica and basso.

The fish-spine
on firs, on
somber trees
by the sea's
walls of wave-worn rock—have it; and
a moonbow and Bach's cheerful firmness
in a minor key.
It's an owl-and-a-pussy-

both-content
agreement.
Come, come. It's
mixed with wits;
it's not a graceful sadness. It's
resistance with bent head, like foxtail
millet's. Brahms and Bach,
no; Bach and Brahms. To thank Bach

for his song
first, is wrong.
Pardon me;
both are the
unintentional pansy-face
uncursed by self-inspection; blackened
because born that way.

— Marianne Moore

Catalog No. 8586 For my mother, Carolyn Jane Hall

## **Propriety**

# for Soprano and Piano Mercifully



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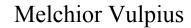
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