

Songs with Words

for Mezzo-Soprano and Baritone Voices and Piano

Tunes from the music of

Don Freund

turned into song by the lyrics of

Steve Pollett

Sunbreeze Song

My Mistakes

What Were You Thinking

Muse

Hawthorn Scented Air

Songs with Words

*Lyrics by Steve Pollitt
to music by Don Freund*

Program notes from the composer

I have always been more than a little jealous of the great American songwriters like Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Bert Bacharach, not only for their brilliant genius in coming up with fascinating and memorable tunes, but also their associations with lyricists who found just the right turn of phrase to capture the magical syntax of their music. Not knowing what to do with the melodies I have come up with over the years, I've been slipping them into string quartets and concertos, and even tried collecting three of them in a little set called *Songs without Words* for viola and piano. So I was thrilled when Steve Pollitt asked if I'd like him to write lyrics for some of these "great American songbook" wannabe's, and I continue to be amazed at how beautifully Steve's words and ideas add a fresh dimension to these "*Songs with Words.*"

We are greatly indebted to mezzo-soprano **Amanda Russo** and baritone **Reuben Walker** not only for their compelling and stylistically spot-on performances in the concert premiere and the definitive recording session, but also for putting their tremendous vocal resources and imaginative artistry at our disposal during the creative process, working behind the scenes with me and Steve to find just the right touches in the music and lyrics to fashion what we believe is a new and persuasive approach to the marriage of words and music.

Notes on the lyrics from the lyricist, Steve Pollitt:

The five songs describe three different male/female relationships. The first, *Sunbreeze Song, the Beach at Hua-Hin*, is my fantasy on Sandra and Don's vacation to Thailand. The couple here is mature, married and quite comfortable with one another. Second is a pair of songs, *My Mistakes* and *What Were You Thinking?* which tell of the first meeting between a teenage girl and her father some months after his break up with her mother. This couple is neither mature nor comfortable, quite the contrary. The final pair in this song cycle, *Muse* and *Hawthorne Scented Air*, concern a muse and her man who, through no fault of their own, are losing contact with one another after a long and loving partnership.

Songs With Words
Sunbreeze Song, the Beach at Hua-Hin

He: Do you taste the lime, is it in the sunshine?
Can you feel the breath of the ocean
Threading through the bougainvillea blossom?
You and I have gone on a few excursions.
None like this one.

Darling, the two of us,
Ever the two of us.

She: In the evening maybe we'll go out dancing,
Sip of wine, a walk in the moonlight,
Holding hands as if we're eager children,
Arm in arm along the crowded beaches,
Breezy sunshine.

Heaven, this holiday,
How could we be dismayed,
Here in this paradise?

He: When we went to town in the early morning,
In the market we could hear
A young guitarist playing to the crowd around him.
Written into the people's faces
Was the pain of Myanmar just over the hills.

Later, I'll write for them,
Music, that speaks for them.

She: Hardly the place or the time now,
Here with
You in
Breezy summer sunshine.

Later.

Songs With Words

My Mistakes and What were You Thinking?

My Mistakes

True, I've made my mistakes,
But I've paid for them a dozen times or more.
You're my own precious child,
I can't ever forget that I,
I've been such a damn fool.

All the little games we played together,
All those cute little games.
And your dear little smile,
And the ways life can turn out so wrong.

Now, again, could you let me be your father?
Maybe we take a trip somewhere this summer?

Better I hope for the best, and keep my dream alive.
Than to always regret losing you
In the dust I left behind.

What Were You Thinking?

We were so father and daughter,
All that time that you were my father.
What were you thinking of when you left me
And my mother alone?

What were you thinking?
Must have been nothing.
Not about mother,
Not about me, your darling only child.

Your only child.
I can hear it now.
Every time I think about it
I just want to scream to the sky!

I wonder what you are saying?
So you want to get back together?
I am just not really ready
To put up with any lame excuses.

Still my heart's saying,
if I'm to have my own father,
It will have to be you.

I was your daughter,
Always your daughter.

Don't be too sure of yourself.
Where were you off to
all of those lonely weeks?
I was aching for you,
Now I'm angry with you.
Did you really think I'd just be content
sitting around waiting for you?
Like in the days when we were happy,
About the days when we were happy,
Maybe the two of you were struggling.

Remembering the way things were
I probably missed a lot
Of the tension and heartache
for mother and you.

So let's start building a future.
I'm OK with building a future,
But I hope we pledge
And work together
Not to ever
Again
Hurt those we love.

Muse and Hawthorn Scented Air

Muse

The Muse:

My dearest friend, am I near you now?
Too long it's been since I sang this close beside you.
Do you remember?
I can't remember.
I want you so but now its hard to find you.
My dearest friend, can you hear me now?

The Man:

Do I hear you now? I never know.

The Muse:

I have a song I would sing for you,
Of all the love and the music made together.
Our time together.

The Man:

Our time together? Could this be new
or something I remember?
My dearest friend are you near me now?
Did I get it right? I never know.

The Muse:

My dearest friend, are you listening?
About the music and love we've made together,
Our time is ending, the season changing,
I fear it leaves me
All alone and fading

The Man:

I hear you now, but so far away,
Oh, I wish
You never had to go.

Hawthorn Scented Air

The Man:

Evening hawthorn, twilight scented,
Weary day consents to flee.
Worn by heartache, discontented.
How I wish that you
Were here with me.

I can dream I hear you still
but then awake, The hawthorn scented air
once would call you back into my world
Now if I hear your voice its from my memory
Only in my memory,
The things you used to say,
the songs you liked to sing
then whisper in my ear.

Hawthorn petals white and drifting,

with the scent of woman's love.

Might the air of death be lifting?
Carrying me on,

I can still go on
but so alone.

Hapless as a stranded bridegroom,
hanging on to twigs
Of hawthorn bloom.

The Muse (distant):

Dearest friend, my lost companion,
Still my heart can hear your call
In the air once bright with sunshine
Suddenly no light, no light at all.

Dearest friend how I remember
Drifting through darkening hawthorn
Blossoms rich with our scent
Sound or scent or sight.
Now might the evening
Of our love's death be lifting?

No, the cold is come,
Seasons change and ours is gone

Gloom and wind have torn
My hawthorn flower away.

Sunbreeze Song

(the beach at Hua-Hin)

Don Freund
"Sunbreeze Song"
from *Sunscapes*
Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra
(2006 - trans. 2015)

Steve Pollitt
(2015)

♩ = 88

He: *f*

Do you taste the lime, is it in the sun-shine? Can you feel the breath of the o-cean

f

8ba _ _ _ ,

Detailed description: This system contains the first four measures of the piece. It features a vocal line in bass clef with lyrics, a piano accompaniment in bass clef, and a bass line in bass clef. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 88. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature starts with 3/8 and changes to 4/4. Dynamics include *f* and *8ba*.

5

thread-ing through the bou-gain-vil-lea blos-som? You and I have gone on a few ex - cur - sions.

mf

Detailed description: This system contains measures 5 through 8. The vocal line continues with lyrics. The piano accompaniment and bass line continue. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 5/4 and back to 4/4. Dynamics include *mf*.

8

None like this one. Dar - ling the two of us, Ev - er

mf *mp* *f*

p *mf*

♩ = 112

Detailed description: This system contains measures 9 through 12. The tempo increases to quarter note = 112. The vocal line continues with lyrics. The piano accompaniment and bass line continue. Dynamics include *mf*, *mp*, *f*, and *p*.

13 $\text{♩} = 88$ She: *f*

the two of us. In the eve - ning may - be we'll go out dan - cing

f *f*

8ba -----

17

Sip of wine a walk in the moon-light hold - ing hands as if we're ea - ger chil - dren

19 *mf* *mp*

Arm in arm a long the crowd ed beach - es, bree - zy sun - shine.

f *mf* *p*

8vb -----

23 $\text{♩} = 112$ *f*

Heav - en, this ho - li - day How could we be dis - mayed

mf

27 *mf* *f* *mf* *sensuous* $\text{♩} = 88$

here in this par - a - dise

30 He: *f*

When we went to town in the ear-ly mor-ning in the mar-ket we could hear a young gui-tar -

33 *f*

- ist play - ing to the crowd a - round him writ-ten in - to the peo - ple's fa-ces

35 *ff* *f* *mp* *same tempo* ($\text{♩} = 88$)

was the pain of My-an-mar just o-ver the hills La - ter

ff *f* *p* *same tempo* ($\text{♩} = 88$)

38 She:

I'll write for them. Mu - sic that speaks for them Hard-ly the place or the

p

3

43 *p, cool*

time now here with you in bree - zy sum - mer sun - shine

p

49 *pp*

La - ter

pp *ppp*

8ba

Steve Pollitt
(2015)

My Mistakes

Don Freund
"Music for No Apparent Reason"
for unaccompanied melody instrument
(1985 - trans. 2015)

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 56$

True, I've made my mis - takes, — but I've
paid for them a do - zen times — or more. — You're my
own pre-cious child, I can't e - ver for-get, that I, I've — been such a damn fool. —
All the lit-tle games we played to-geth-er, All — those cute lit-tle games. And your
dear lit-tle smile. And the ways — life can turn out so — wrong. —
Now, — a - gain, could you let me be — your fa - ther? —
May - be we take a trip some-where this sum-mer? —
Bet-ter I hope — for the best and keep my dream a-live. than to al - ways re-gret —
los - ing you in the dust I left be - hind.

What Were You Thinking?

♩ = 120

Mezzo

8 *mf*

We were so fa - ther and daugh-ter All that time that you

14

were my fa-ther What were you think-ing of when you left me

20

and my mo - ther a - lone? What were you think-ing?

56

Ev-ery time I think a-bout it I just want to scream! _____ to the

gtr

61

sky! I won-der what you _____ are say-ing?

66

So you want to get back _____ to - ge-ther?_ I _____ am just

mp

71

not real - ly rea - dy _____ to put up with a - ny lame-

75

mp ex - cus - es still my heart's say - ing if I'm to

p

5

79

have my own fa - ther, it will have to be you

mp

86

i was your daugh - ter

7

92

al - ways your daugh - ter Don't be too sure

f = 132

6

mf

98

of your - self. _____ Where were you off to all of those lone - ly weeks?

104

$\text{♩} = 138$

I was ach-ing for you, _____ now I'm an-gry with you. _____ Did you real-ly think I'd

110

just be con - tent sit - ting a - round wait - ing for you? _____

mp *mf*

115

like in the days— when we were hap - py A - bout the days— when we were

118

hap - py may - be the two _____ of you were struggling

121

Re-mem-ber - ing the way things were I pro - ba - bly missed a lot of the

125

ten - sion and heart - ache for mo - ther and you

131 $\text{♩} = 138$ $\text{♩} = 132$ $\text{♩} = 120$
mf
 so let's start build - ing a fu-ture...
mp *p* *pp* *p*

138
 I'm O K with build - ing a fu-ture, but I hope we pledge and work to - ge-ther
 5
 8vb-----

145
 not to e-ver a-gain hurt those we love.
 8vb-----

Muse

Steve Pollitt
2015

Arioso for Mezzo-Soprano, Baritone and Piano
for Bethany

Don Freund
Muse
Arioso for Viola and Piano
2010 - trans. 2015

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 80, \text{ freely expressive}$

mf singing, searching

The Muse (Mezzo)

The Artist (Baritone)

Piano

with dabs of Pedal

5

The Muse (Mezzo)

The Artist (Baritone)

Piano

8

The Muse (Mezzo)

The Artist (Baritone)

Piano

11

The Muse (Mezzo)

The Artist (Baritone)

Piano

15 "a tempo" *hold back*

I have a song I would sing for you, of all the love and the mu-sic made to-ge-ther

19 "a tempo" *hold back* *slower*

Our time to-ge-ther Our time to-ge-ther? Could this be new or some-thing I re-mem-ber

p *mp*

23 *a little slower than* "a tempo" *poco rit.*

My dear-est friend are you near me now? Did I get it right? I ne-ver know

p

27 "a tempo" *mp*

My dear-est friend are you list-en-ing? A-bout the mu-sic and

P

30

mf *p subito*

love we've made to - ge - ther Our time is end - ing the sea - son chang - ing

mf *p subito*

p *p*

33

pp *almost stopping* *mp*

I fear it leaves me all a - lone and fa - ding

I hear you now but so

pp *mp* *ten. (colla voce)*

36

hold back

far a-way, oh I wish you ne-ver had to go.

(E) *pp*

Hawthorn Scented Air

Steve Pollitt
2015

Don Freund
"Morning Sunsong"
from *Sunscapes*
Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra
(2006 - trans. 2015)

♩ = ca. 72

The Muse
(Mezzo)

mf

The Artist
(Baritone)

Eve-ning haw-thorn, twi-light scent₃ - ed. Wear-y day con-

4

sents to flee. Worn by heart-ache, dis - con - tent - ed, how I wish that you

7

Dear - est friend, my
were near to me.

11

lost com-pan-ion, still my heart can hear your call,
mf I can dream I hear you still, but then a-wake. The haw-thorn scent-ed

14

in the air once bright with sun-shine sud-den-ly no light, no light at
f air, once, would call you back in-to my world. Now if I hear your voice its from my

17

*slower, parlando**yield...*

all.
mf mem-o-ry, on-ly in my memor-y the things you used to say the songs you liked to sing then whis-per in my

♩ = 72 (resurgence of previous tempo)

19

p, distant

Dear - est friend how I re - mem - ber drift -
p ear. *f* Haw - thorn pe - tals, white and drift - ing,

mp, singing

21

- ing through dark - en - ing haw - thorn blos - soms so rich with our scent.
 with their scent of wo - man's

23

Sound or scent or sight. Now might the eve - ning of our love's death be lift - ing?
 love. Might the air of death be lift - ing?

mp *f* *mf*

26

p *pp* *p*

No, the cold is come, *mf* sea-sons change and ours is gone.

f Car-ry-ing me on, I can still go on but so a-

30

p

Gloom and winds have

ff, rich lone. Hap-less as a strand-ed bride-groom,

f

$\text{♩} = 60$

33

mf *disappearing* *pp*

torn my haw - thorn flow-er a - way

f hang-ing on to twigs of haw - thorn bloom. (m)

mp *f* *f* *f*

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 72$