

Drew Sperry

Two Songs Ablaze

for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

- Full Score -

Perusal Score

Two Songs Ablaze
for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

Drew Sperry

Texts by Claude McKay and Jessie Redmon Fauset

Written for the talents of Isabelle Calkins

Movements

- | | |
|---------------------|----|
| 1. The Night Fire | 1 |
| 2. If This is Peace | 11 |

Vocal Range: C#4 - Bb5

Duration ca 8 minutes

Texts

1. The Night Fire

“The Night Fire” (1922) by Claude McKay

No engines shrieking rescue storm the night,
And hose and hydrant cannot here avail;
The flames laugh high and fling their challenging light,
And clouds turn gray and black from silver-pale.
The fire leaps out and licks the ancient walls,
And the big building bends and twists and groans.
A bar drops from its place; a rafter falls
Burning the flowers. The wind in frenzy moans.
The dwellers cry their sorrow to the crowd,
The flames beyond themselves rise higher, higher,
To lose their glory in the frowning cloud,
Yielding at length the last reluctant breath.
And where life lay asleep broods darkly death.

2. If This is Peace

“Dead Fires” (1922) by Jessie Redmon Fauset

If this is peace, this dead and leaden thing,
Then better far the hateful fret, the sting.
Better the wound forever seeking balm
Than this gray calm!

Is this pain’s surcease? Better far the ache,
The long-drawn dreary day, the night’s white wake,
Better the choking sigh, the sobbing breath
Than passion’s death!

Perusal Score

Two Songs Ablaze

for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

Claude McKay

Drew Sperry

1. The Night Fire

With fierce intensity ♩. = 96

Voice

Piano

ff *3* *p* *sffz p sub.* *sffz p sub.* *loco*

5 *mp* *f* *p* *sffz p sub.*

10 *f* *sffz p sub.*

en - gines shriek-ing res - cue storm the night,

13 *(f)* *biting*

And hose and hy - drant — And hose and hy - - drant can - not

sfz p sub. *sfz p sub.* *sfz*

16 *mp*

can - not can - - not here — a -

sfz *mp*

21 *mp*

- vail; — The flames laugh

ff *p* *mf* *p* *f* *p*

26 *f* *mf*

high and fling their chal - leng - ing light The flames laugh high

f *p* *f* *p sub.*

28 *ff* (*ff*)

and fling their The flames laugh high and fling their chal - leng -

f *ff*

32 *senza dim.*

-ing light,

sfz

37

Musical score for measures 37-41. The score is written for piano and features a variety of time signatures: 6/8, 5/8, 6/8, 3/4, and 6/8. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *sfz* (sforzando) and *loco* (loco). The melody in the right hand includes an *8va* (octave up) marking. The music is characterized by complex rhythms and a dramatic, intense feel.

42

Musical score for measures 42-47. The score continues with time signatures of 6/8, 7/8, 6/8, 3/4, and 5/4. The piano part features a *p* (piano) dynamic marking. The melody in the right hand is more melodic and includes a *p* marking. The music is characterized by complex rhythms and a dramatic, intense feel.

Slower but with motion ♩ = 96

48

Musical score for measures 48-53. The score is written for piano and features a variety of time signatures: 5/4, 3/4, 5/4, 3/4, 3/4, and 4/4. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *mp* (mezzo-piano), *f* (forte), and *p* (piano). The melody in the right hand includes a *f* marking. The music is characterized by complex rhythms and a dramatic, intense feel.

And clouds turn gray and black from sil - ver - - pale.

54

(p) *mf* *f* *rit.*
mp

The fire leaps out and licks the an - cient walls

mf *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

59

a tempo
mp 3 *gliss.* *p* *molto rit.*
mf *p*

And the big build - ing bends and twists and

a tempo *molto rit.*

64

Tempo I (♩ = 96) *ff*

groans - - - - - (s)

Tempo I (♩ = 96)

pp *ff* *p sub.* *f*

68 *f*

A bar drops from its place; and twists And

p *f* *p sub.* *sfz* *p sub.* *sfz* *p sub.*

72 *ff* *frantically*

groans Burn - ing the flow'rs,

sfz *p sub.* *mf* *p* *f*

75 *resolutely* *mf* *ff*

Burn - ing the flow'rs, Burn - ing the flow'rs!

p *ff*

79

Musical score for measures 79-83. The vocal line is mostly rests. The piano accompaniment features complex chords and textures. Dynamics include *p*, *sffz*, and *sffz p sub.*.

84

Musical score for measures 84-88. The vocal line includes the lyrics "The wind in fren - zy moans". The piano accompaniment continues with complex textures. Dynamics include *f* and *p*.

89

Musical score for measures 89-93. The vocal line includes the lyrics "The watch - ers___ gaze held won - der - ing by the". The piano accompaniment features complex textures and a triplet in measure 92. Dynamics include *f* and *p sub.*.

93 *mf*

fire The

96 *f* *p* *f sub.* *p* *f* *mf* *ff*

dwellers cry their sorrow to the crowd

98 *f*

The flames beyond them

6

f *p*

The musical score is for a piece titled "The Night Fire". It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 93-95) features a vocal line with the lyrics "fire" and "The" and a piano accompaniment with dynamics *f*, *p*, *f sub.*, and *p*. The second system (measures 96-97) has the lyrics "dwellers cry their sorrow to the crowd" and includes dynamics *f*, *mf*, *ff*, *sfz*, and *p sub.*. The third system (measures 98-100) contains the lyrics "The flames beyond them" and features dynamics *f* and *p*. The piano accompaniment in the third system includes a sixteenth-note figure labeled "6". The score is marked with a large "Perusal Score" watermark.

101

- selves rise high - er,

ff *p sub.* *mf* *p*

104

high - er, high - er

f *mp* *ff* *p*

107

ff

109 *Slowly, pensively* ♩ = 69*plaintive*
mp

To lose their

Slowly, pensively ♩ = 69

fff *mp* *f* *p*

Red.

117 *f* *mf* *p sub.* *ord., subdued* *mf*

glo - ry in the frown - ing cloud Yield - ing at length the

Red.

122 *p* *mostly without vib.* *mf* *p*

last re - luc - tant breath And where life lay as - leep broods

127

(p) *ppp*

dark - ly death.

pp

Jessie Redmon Fauset

2. If This is Peace

Solemnly, unhurried ♩ = 60

Voice

Piano

Solemnly, unhurried ♩ = 60

p *mf* *p* *mf*

14

mf *p* *f* *mp* 3

bet - ter far the hate - ful fret, the sting. Bet - ter the

mf p f mp 3

19

f *mp* *p* *mf*

wound for - ev - er seek - ing balm Than this gray calm! Than this gray

f mp p mf

24

calm

pp *p* *f* *p*

pp p f p

30

p *mf* *p sub.*

Is _____ this_pain's sur - cease? Bet - ter far the ache The

8ba

35

long - drawn drear - y day the night's white wake _____

(8) loco

mf

39

p *f* *mp*

Bet - ter the chok - ing sigh the

p *mf* *p* *mf*

43 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *f* *ff*

sob - bing breath the sob - bing breath!

47 *rit.* *a tempo* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Than pas - sion's death Than pas - sion's death Than

53 *p* *mp*

pas - sion's death If this is peace...

senza espressione *p*

Red. *(loco)*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 43-46) features a vocal line with lyrics 'sob - bing breath the sob - bing breath!' and a piano accompaniment. The tempo changes from 'poco rit.' to 'a tempo'. Dynamics range from *f* to *ff*. The second system (measures 47-52) continues the vocal line with lyrics 'Than pas - sion's death Than pas - sion's death Than' and piano accompaniment. The tempo changes from 'rit.' to 'a tempo'. Dynamics range from *p* to *mf*. The third system (measures 53-56) features a vocal line with lyrics 'pas - sion's death If this is peace...' and piano accompaniment. The tempo is 'a tempo'. Dynamics range from *p* to *mp*. The piano part includes a section marked 'senza espressione' and a 'Red.' (ritardando) section leading to '(loco)'.

57

p *mf*

If this is

f *p sub.* *mf*

60

pp senza vib.

peace...

p *mf sub.* *p* *f sub.* *pp*

with great emptiness

Ped.