A MONTH HAS PASSED (aría for Soprano)

from

THE GOLDEN GATE

opera in two acts

music by CONRAD CUMMINGS

libretto from the novel-in-verse by VIKRAM SETH adapted by the composer



Composer's Note

Vikram Seth's best-selling novel-in-verse about love and loss in San Francisco in the 1980's, "The Golden Gate," touches on all the nostalgia I feel for my home town and reminds me acutely of the adventures of my younger life. Boys with girls, boys with boys, it's all there, along with the exhilaration and the heartbreak. Seth's verse makes these experiences sing; I've tried to capture in music their unique mixture of pathos and humor.

Feel Free to Contact Me

Singers and pianists should feel free to contact me at conrad@conradcummings.com with any questions, reactions, or thoughts. I am always open to suggestions about customizing the vocal line to best suit your voice.

Synopsis

Five twenty-somethings experience love, life, and loss in the magical and innocent San Francisco of the early 1980's. JOHN BROWN (baritone), handsome and successful, will discover too late the price of his emotional detachment. He meets LIZ DORATI (soprano) through a personals ad placed by his former college girlfriend JANET HAYAKAWA (mezzo), a sculptor and punk rock drummer. Meanwhile, John's best friend from college PHILIP WEISS (bass), reeling from a divorce which has left him the single parent of six-year-old PAUL WEISS (spoken role), begins a passionate relationship with ED DORATI (tenor), Liz's younger brother. Couples come apart; new couples form, families are created, friendships are severed. A tragic death leads John, always the outsider, to the promise of a deeper connection and a warmer life.

Where the Aria Comes in the Opera

John and Liz's relationship has fallen apart and Liz has impulsively married Phil. Deeply hurt, John reconnects romantically with Jan. Though neither will put into words what they're feeling, it seems the two may finally be settling into the relationship they always should have had. Then Jan is tragically killed in a car crash. The loss shatters John and deeply affects all four friends. A month later, Liz reflects on their loss. (The Silver River is the Japanese term for the Milky Way.)

LIZ:

A month has passed. The moon is rising.

A balmy night in late July
Rests on the city, exorcising
The summer fog. Around the sky
The great imputed constellations,
Differently seen by different nations,
And that great current over all
That Janet's grandmother would call
The Silver River, faintly glowing,
Counter the city's glittering grid.
The Transamerica Pyramid
Spears up in light. A breeze is flowing
(Quiet as love that's left unsaid)
Through the straight streets. And Jan is dead.

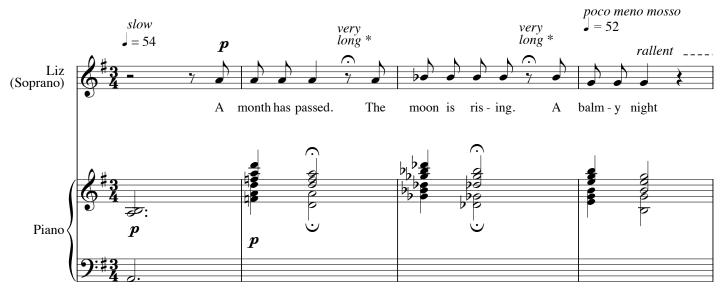
[—] from Vikram Seth's novel-in-verse "The Golden Gate," Chapter 13, Verse 1

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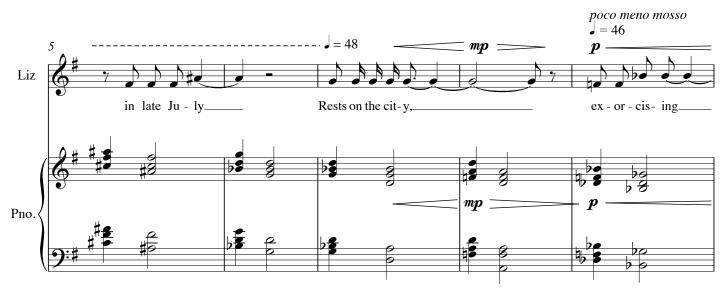
version 6/28/15

music by CONRAD CUMMINGS

Lyrics from the novel-in-verse by VIKRAM SETH adapted by the composer



(* these two fermatas can each be held for three or three-and-a-half beats in tempo)



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