# THEY PARK THE CAR BY THE MARINA (aría for Tenor)

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

Tension between John and Liz has been growing. John is horrified to learn of Phil and Ed's relationship, though it's recently ended in a violent fight. Liz and Phil drive together to the Marina. The fog clears, revealing the Golden Gate Bridge. All five characters see if from their different emotional perspectives. But this quintet finale to the first act began life as a standalone aria for Ed. Here it is, given back to him.

### ED:

They park the car by the Marina.
The surface of the cobalt bay
Is flecked with white. The moister, keener
October air has rinsed away
The whispering mists with crisp intensity
And over the opaque immensity
A deliquescent wash of blue
Reveals the bridge, long lost to view
In summer's quilt of fog: the towers,
High-built, red-gold, with their long span
—The most majestic spun by man—
Whose threads of steel through mists and showers,
Wind, spray, and the momentous roar
Of ocean storms, link shore to shore.

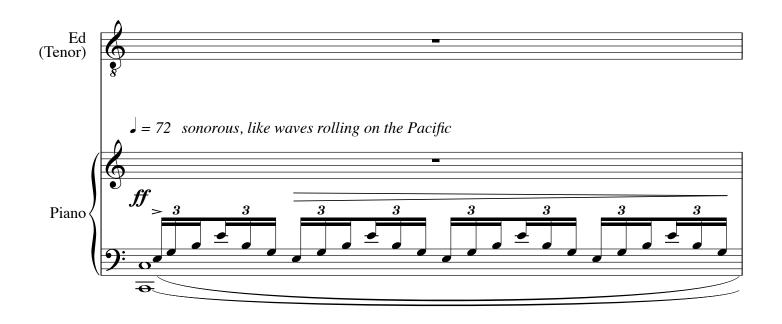
<sup>—</sup> from Vikram Seth's novel-in-verse "The Golden Gate," Chapter 9, Verse 28

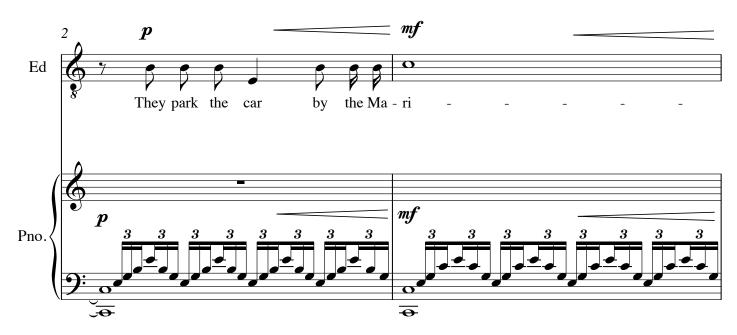
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version 6/28/15

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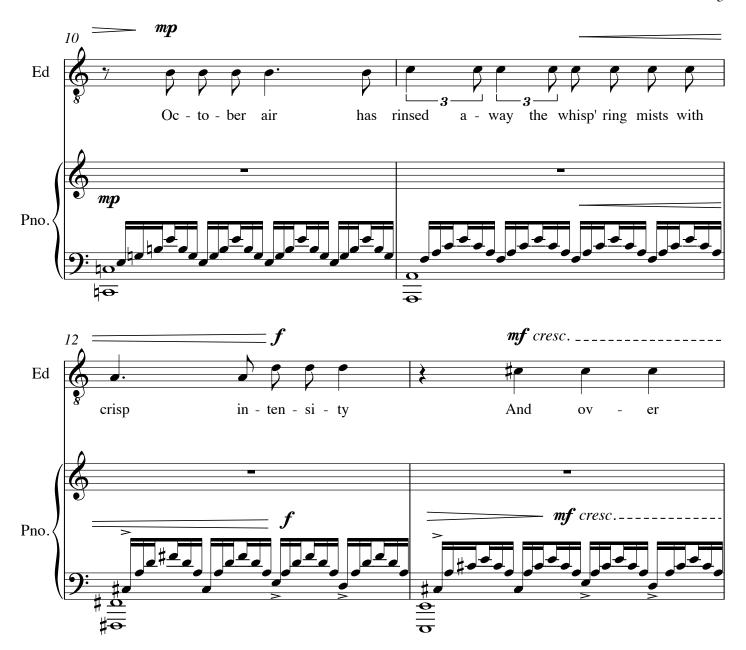
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music © Conrad Cummings, lyrics © Vikram Seth





(I fully realize that rules of English diction require this "the" to be pronounced "thee." But the progression of vowels through the phrase is so much more beautiful if it's pronounced "tha." Please consider it.)

