

Shenandoah

for SATB choir

arr. Omar Thomas

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PROGRAM NOTES

"Shenandoah" is one of the most well-known and beloved Americana folk songs. Originally a river song detailing the lives and journeys of fur traders canoeing down the Missouri River, the symbolism of this culturally-significant melody has been expanded to include its geographic namesake – an area of the eastern United States that encompasses West Virginia and a good portion of the western part of Virginia – and various parks, rivers, counties, and academic institutions found within.

Admittedly, while creating the wind ensemble version of this arrangement, I was thinking to myself how powerful it would be for this to exist as a choral arrangement as well. I'm embarrassed by how long it has taken for me to create this choral version; however, I'm proud to have finally created it, as choir feels like the perfect medium for these textures and harmonies.

This arrangement recalls the beauty of Shenandoah Valley, not bathed in golden sunlight, but blanketed by low-hanging clouds and experiencing intermittent periods of heavy rainfall (simulated by body percussion effects performed by the members of the ensemble). There are a few musical moments where the sun attempts to pierce through the clouds, but ultimately the rains win out. This arrangement of "Shenandoah" is at times mysterious, somewhat ominous, constantly introspective, and deeply soulful.

RAIN

This arrangement twice calls for simulated rain to be produced by the performers. This should be achieved in the following ways:

- Some performers should snap their fingers. It's important for the performers to know that no one person is solely responsible to create the effect of heavy rain and so their snapping should be moderate in frequency, to prevent discomfort for their hands.
- Some performers should press together the index and middle finger of their dominant hand and use those fingers to tap the palm of their other hand with moderate frequency.
- A few performers should rub one sheet of paper against another in a circular motion, taking care to avoid sounds of the paper crinkling.

As the rain is to pick up in intensity and at one point taper off, it is up to the discretion of the conductor and the ensembles to decide who and how many people at a time perform what task to create the sonic texture.

Shenandoah

Arr. Omar Thomas

Andantino, Molto Legato Throughout ♩ = 42

Soprano

Alto *p*
Oh, She - nan - do'h (oo) oh,

Tenor *p*
Oh, She - nan - do'h oh,

Bass *mp*
She - nan - do'h (oo) oh,

6

S Oh, _____

A She - nan - do'h ah, Oh, _____

T She - nan - do'h ah, Oh, _____

B She - nan - do'h ah, _____

10

S

A

T

B

She-nan - do'h I long to see you A -

She-nan - do'h see you, see you a -

She-nan - do'h see you, A -

She-nan - do'h see you, A -

mp *p*

mp *p*

mp *p*

mp *p*

15

S

A

T

B

way, a way, you rol - ling ri - ver, _____

way, a - way, you rol - ling ri - ver (oo) _____

way a - way you roll - ling ri - ver (oo) _____

way, a - way you rol - ling She-nan - do'h (oo) _____

mf *p*

mf *p*

mf *p*

mf *p*

19

S oh, She-nan - do'h, I long to hear you,

A She-nan - do'h, I long to hear you,

T She-nan - do'h, I long to hear She-nan-do'h, I

B She-nan - do'h, I long to hear you,

mp *p*

23

S a way, we're bound a -

A way, a way we're bound a -

T long to hear you, way, a way, bound a -

B way, a way, bound a -

a tempo

4
27

poco rit. -----

mf *a2* *p* rit. -----

S way, way we're bou-nd a - way, cross the wide Mis-sou

A way cross the wide Mis-sou

T way wide Mis - sour'

B way wide Mis - sour'

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31

a tempo

S ri. (oo) Oh, She-nan-do -

A ri. (oo) She-nan-do -

T She-nan - d'oh (oo) (1. Oh.) She-nan-do -

B She-nan - do'h (oo) She-nan-do -

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35

S

A

T

B

ah, oh

She - nan - do -

ah, She - nan - d'oh,

ah, (1. oh,) She - nan - do -

ah, She - nan - do -

fp

fp

fp

fp

38

S

A

T

B

mp

cross the wide Mis - sou -

pp

S *ah.*

A *pp* *ri.* *A - way* *p* *you,*

T *pp* *ah.* *A - way* *p* *you,*

B *pp* *ah.* *Ri -*

OPTIONAL

*Some sopranos and altos (enough to be heard), loudly and dramatically whisper the following phrases at random and in any order. Overlap and create a texture. Accentuate "s" sounds:

- Far away, you rolling river... - Cross the wide Missouri...
- I long to hear you... - Seven years since last I've seen you...
- Away, we're bound away - Just to be near you...

45

S *pp* *Oo,*

A *pp* *mp* *you* *rol* *- ling* *ri - ver.*

T *pp* *mp* *pp* *p* *you* *rol* *- ling* *ri - ver.* *Oh,* *Oh,*

B *ver.* *Oh,*

Score for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts, measures 49-55. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

Measures 49-55:

- Soprano (S):** *mp* (measures 49-50), *pp* (measures 51-55). Lyrics: oo, - - -
- Alto (A):** *mp* (measures 49-50), *pp* (measures 51-55). Lyrics: oo, - - -
- Tenor (T):** *mf* (measures 49-50), *p* (measures 51-52), *p* (measures 53-54), *mf* (measure 55). Lyrics: She-nan - do'h. Shenan do'h. Oh, Oh, She-nan - do - ah. She - nan -
- Bass (B):** *mf* (measures 49-50), *p* (measures 51-52), *p* (measures 53-54), *mf* (measure 55). Lyrics: Shen' She - - - oh, She -

Score for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts, measures 54-56. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

Measures 54-56:

- Soprano (S):** *mp* (measure 54), *pp* (measures 55-56), *mf* (measure 57), *p* (measures 58-59). Lyrics: oo, - - -
- Alto (A):** *mp* (measures 54-55), *pp* (measures 56-57), *mf* (measures 58-59), *p* (measures 60-61). Lyrics: oo, - - -
- Tenor (T):** *mf* (measures 54-55), *p* (measures 56-57), *mf* (measures 58-59), *p* (measures 60-61). Lyrics: doah. Oh, She-nan - do'h. Oh, She-nan - do'h. Oh,
- Bass (B):** *mf* (measures 54-55), *p* (measures 56-57), *mf* (measures 58-59), *p* (measures 60-61). Lyrics: nan - do - ah. nan Oh, She - nan - d'oh.

8
59

mf *p* *mf* *p*

mf *p* *mf* *p*

p *mf* *p*

mp *mf* *mf* *p*

Oh, She - nan - do - ah. Oh, She - nan do - ah. Oh, She -

Oh, She - nan - do - ah. Oh,

do - - - - - ah.

*whispers stop.
All sing:

[illegible]

ff

S years _____ since last I've

ff

A years _____ since last I've

ff

T years _____ since last I've

ff

B years _____ 'tis se - ven years since last I've

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a tempo

fff *p* rit.

73

S seen you. _____

fff *p*

A seen you, se - ven years since last I've seen you.

fff *p*

T seen you. _____

fff *p*

B seen you. _____

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10

G.P.

Andantino $\text{♩} = 42$

76

p

S 'Tis se - ven years since last I've

A Se - ven years since last I've

T se - ven years since last I've

B se - ven years since last I've

80

82 Move! $\text{♩} = 100$

mf

S seen you, A way, we're

A seen you, A - wa - ay, a - wa - ay we're

T seen you,

B seen you, (seen you) _____

rit. ----- $\text{♩} = 42$

84

S *sfz* *p*
bound a - way (oo) a - way wide Mis - sou -

A *sfz* *p*
bound a - way (oo) a - cross the wide Mis - sou -

T *p*
a - way, wide Mis - sour',

B *p*
a - way, wide Mis - sour',

89

S *mf*
ri. Ah.

A
ri. (oo) The wide Mis - sou -

T
Shen - nan - d'oh (oo) wide Mis - sour',

B
Shen - nan - d'oh (oo) wide Mis - sour',

94

S

A

T

B

ri. _____

Shen-nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____ the _____ wide Mis-sour',

'Cross the wide Mis-sou -

'Cross the wide Mis-sour',

Shen-nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____ the _____ wide Mis-sour',

Shen-nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____ the _____ wide Mis-sour',

*rain slowly begins again

98

S

A

T

B

ri. _____

Shen-nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____ the _____ wide Mis-sour',

'Cross the wide Mis-sou -

'Cross the wide Mis-sour',

Shen-nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____ the _____ wide Mis-sour',

Shen-nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____ the _____ wide Mis-sour',

Solo (Treb.)

Solo (Treb.)

102 *rain is full and constant. Continue to the end.

S
ri. _____ 'Cross the

A
Shen - nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____ the _____

T
Shen - nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____ the _____

B
Shen - nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____ the _____

Solo (Treb.)
mf (can be a little loose/free)
'Cross _____ the

105

S
wide Mis - sou - ri. _____

A
wide Mis - sour', Shen-nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____

T
wide Mis - sour', Shen-nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____

B
wide Mis - sour', Shen - nan - d'oh _____ (oo), _____

Solo (Treb.)
wide, _____ the wide, the wide Mis-sou - ri. _____

S 'Cross the wide Mis - sou -

A the wide Mis - sour',

T the wide Mis - sour',

B the wide Mis - sour',

SOLO (Sop): (can be a little loose/free)

Solo (Treb.) 'Cross, cross the wide Mis - sou -

S ri.

A Shen - nan - d'oh (oo), the

T Shen - nan - d'oh (oo), the

B Shen - nan - d'oh (oo), the

Solo (Treb.) ri.

Solo T. 'Cross the

molto rit.

114 a tempo
ppp

15

113

S

A

T

B

Solo (Treb.)

Solo T.

pp

ppp

pp

ppp

pp

ppp

wide Mis - sou

wide Mis - sou

wide Mis - sou

wide Mis - sou

ri.

ri.

ri.

ri.

Oo,

Oo,

Oo,

Oo,

She - nan - d'oh,

Oh I

wide Mis - sou - ri.

(different soloist) Oh She - nan -

*distant - ideally antiphonal (above and/or behind the audience) or off-stage:

117

S

A

T

B

Solo (Treb.)

Solo T.

long to long see

d'oh, I long to see

continue rain
for at least 8
seconds, then
taper to nothing.

120

S

A

T

B

Solo (Treb.)

Solo T.

you...

you...

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