



Strange is the Night

SATB choir unaccompanied

Sample (Not for performance)

Music by
Nicholas Ryan Kelly

Cassilda's Song (text source for Strange is the Night)

by Robert W. Chambers

Along the shore the cloud waves break,
The twin suns sink behind the lake,
The shadows lengthen
In Carcosa.

Strange is the night where black stars rise,
And strange moons circle through the skies
But stranger still is
Lost Carcosa.

Songs that the Hyades shall sing,
Where flap the tatters of the King,
Must die unheard in
Dim Carcosa.

Song of my soul, my voice is dead;
Die thou, unsung, as tears unshed
Shall dry and die in
Lost Carcosa.

From *The King in Yellow* (1895)

This text comes from a play that doesn't exist: a book-within-a-book alluded *The King in Yellow*, a collection of horror tales by Robert W. Chambers (1865-1933). The words to "Cassilda's Song" are deliberately cryptic: Chambers wrote them to provide a small glimpse into the world of this fictional play, which drives his characters to psychosis when they read the whole thing. (Don't worry, though: it's only Act 2 of the play that provokes this reaction, but "Cassilda's Song" is from Act 1!)

Since the meaning of this text is deliberately vague (and/or nonexistent), it serves here as a vehicle for musical exploration. Chambers never needed to flesh out the location of Carcosa, the identity of Cassilda, or any of the other fantastical entities alluded to in this poem--but this music explores what they could be like.

Strange is the Night

words:
Robert W. Chambers

music:
Nicholas Ryan Kelly

Darkly majestic ♩ = 72

SOPRANO
p Mm, *mp* oh, *p* A - long the shore the cloud - waves

ALTO
p Mm, *mp* oh, *p* A - long the shore the cloud - waves

TENOR
pp Mm, *mp* *p* A - long the shore the cloud - waves

BASS
pp Mm, *mp* *p* Oh, the cloud - waves

Piano Reduction
p *mp* *p*

8 *mf* *p* **A**

break. The twin suns sink be-hind the lake. The shad-ows leng - then in Car-

break. The twin suns sink be-hind the lake. The shad-ows leng - then in Car-

break. The twin suns sink be-hind the lake. The shad-ows leng - then in Car-

break. The twin - suns sink be-hind the lake, the lake. Shad - ows leng - then in Car-

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B

14 *p* *mf* *mp* *p*

- co - sa. Oh, oh, oh, Strange is the night where

p *mf* *mp* *p*

- co - sa. Oh, oh, oh, Strange is the night where

p *mf* *p*

- co - sa. Oh, Strange is the night where

p *mf* *p*

- co - sa. Oh,

p *mf* *mp* *p*

Sampled for performance

22 *mf* *p*

black stars rise, and strange moons cir - cle through the skies,

mf *p*

black stars rise, and strange moons cir - cle through the skies,

mf *p*

black stars rise, and strange moons cir - cle through the skies,

p *mf*

where black stars rise, and strange moons cir - cle through the skies,

mf

Strange is the Night

5

poco rit.

Faster $\text{♩} = 88$

pp sub.

28

but stranger still is lost Car - co - sa. Oh, Songs

but stranger still is lost Car - co... Songs

but stranger still is lost Car - co - sa. Oh, Songs

stran - ger still is lost Car - co - sa. Oh, Songs

p *f* *pp sub.*

32

that the Hy - a - des shall sing, where flap the tat - ters of the

that the Hy - a - des shall sing, where flap the tat - ters of the

that the Hy - a - des shall sing, where flap the tat - ters of the

shall sing, where flap the tat - ters of the

p *pp* *p*

37 *f*

king must die un - heard, must die un - heard, must

f

king must die un - heard, must die un - heard, must

f

king, of the king must die un - heard, must die un - heard, must

f

king, the king must die un - heard must die un - heard,

43 *rit.* *p* **E** Tempo I

(stagger breathe) die un - heard in dim Car - co - sa. Song of my soul, my

(stagger breathe) *ff* *p*

die un - heard in dim Car - co - sa. Song of my soul, my

(stagger breathe) *ff* *p*

die un - heard in dim Car - co - sa. Song of my soul, my

(stagger breathe) *ff* *p*

must die un - heard in dim Car - co - sa. Song of my soul, my

50 *pp* *mp* *p* **F** Pochiss. piu Mosso

voice is dead. Die thou un - sung as tears un - shed shall dry and die, shall

voice is dead. Die thou un - sung as tears un - shed shall dry and die, shall

voice is dead. Die thou un - sung as tears un - shed shall dry and die, shall

voice is dead. Die thou un - sung as tears un - shed, un - shed shall dry and die,

pp *mp* *p* *mp*

58 *f* *rit.* *p*

dry and die, shall dry and die in lost Car - co - sa, oh,

dry and die, shall dry and die in lost Car - co - sa,

dry and die, shall dry and die in lost Car - co - sa, oh,

shall dry and die, shall dry and die in lost Car - co - sa, oh,

f *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

63

Freely *pp* (stagger breathe) *mf* Tempo I *pp sub.* rit.....

in lost Car - co - - sa. Strange is the night, oh

pp *mf* *pp sub.*

oh, in lost Car - co - - sa. Strange is the night, oh

pp *mf* *pp*

oh, in lost... strange is the night, oh

pp *mf* *pp* div. (if you have the lower note, sing it!)

oh, strange is the night, oh

pp *mf* *pp sub.*

The musical score is for a choral piece titled "Strange is the Night". It is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and Piano. The score begins at measure 63. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a variety of dynamics, including *pp* (pianissimo), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *pp sub.* (pianissimo subito). There are also performance instructions such as "Freely", "(stagger breathe)", "Tempo I", and "rit.". The lyrics are: "in lost Car - co - - sa. Strange is the night, oh". The score includes a large diagonal watermark that reads "Sample (Not for performance)".

About the Composer

Nicholas Ryan Kelly is a composer inspired by speculative fiction, science, and nature. Commended by the *Vancouver Sun* for his "sophisticated work of such immediate, glittery appeal" and called "a rising star in the constellation of Canadian composers" by *Oregon Arts Watch*, he has written for many of Canada's top choirs. Nick is the recipient of commissioning grants from the Canada Council and SOCAN, as well as over a dozen awards from choirs and wind bands throughout North America. His choral music is published by Pavane, Alliance, and Cypress, and distributed by Musicspoke.

Find out more and say "hello" at www.nicholasryankelly.com.