
ROBERT G.
PATTERSON

American Pierrot
A Langston Hughes Songbook

for baritone voice and piano
(2012)

ROBERT G. PATTERSON

American Pierrot **A Langston Hughes Songbook**

for baritone voice and piano

duration ca. 25 minutes

Great River Music
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American Pierrot

A Langston Hughes Songbook

for baritone voice and piano

Text
LANGSTON HUGHES

Music
R. G. PATTERSON (2012)

I. Pierrot's Passion

When Sue Wears Red

Declamatory but entirely rhythmic (♩=80) *f* *passionate*

Voice

Piano

When Su - san-na Jones — wears red —

4

Her face is like an an - cient — ca - me - o —

8

Turned brown by the a - ges. —

11

Come with a blast of trum - pets

ff dry (trumpets)

f

14

Je - sus!

mf

18

When Su - san - na Jones wears red

f marc. *fz*

Leo. *

21

A queen from some time-dead E - gyp - - -

(r.h.) *fz* *fz* *fz*

Leo. *

24

- - tian night Walks— once a - gain.

mf *f* *fz* *fz* *mp* *f*

* Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo.

27

Blow trum - pets,— Je - sus!

fz *ff dry* *f*

* v

31

— And the beau - - - ty—

mf *ff* *fz* *fz*

* Leo. * Leo.

34

of Su-san-na Jones in red Burns in— my heart

mf *ff* *fz* *fz*

* Leo. * Leo. * Leo.

38 *fz*

a love - fire — sharp —

fz *mf*

fz *fz* *fz* *fz* *3*

ff

like pain.

pp *accelerando* - e - - -

p *with breathless passion*

Sweet sil - - - - ver trum-pets, — Je - - -

cresc. - - - - *poco* - - - - *a* - - - - *poco* - - -

45

sus!

ff marc.

Leo. *

Midnight Dancer

Rolling and passionate ($\phi=108$)

Rolling and passionate (♩=108)

Voice

Wine—

Piano

f 5

mf walking bass

5

maid - - - en Of the jazz - tuned night,

10

swing 8ths

f 5

15

Lips Sweet as

20

pur - ple dew,

25

30

Breasts Like the pil - lows of all sweet

35

dreams,

40

Who crushed—

mf

ff

quasi cadenza

ff

fz

Leg.

mf

ff

fz

Leg. sempre

(continue holding pedal)

46

The grapes of joy

(quasi echo)

mf *ff*

Red. sempre

52

mf (a tempo)

And dripped their juice On you?

fz *pp (but full of energy)* *p*

8va *8vb*

58

mf *f*

8vb

63

ffz *p* *pp* *p* *ff*

Red. ** Red.* ** Red.* ***

pp calm, but filled with wonder

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13

Taste it

16

once And the spell of its en - chant - - - ment

19

Will ne - ver let you be.

22

25

28 *pp*

Love _____ Is a

* Leo.

31

bright _____ star _____ Glow - - -

* Leo.

34 *pp*

ing in far South - - - ern skies. _____

fz

* Leo.

37

* Leo.

40

Look too hard And its

* Ped. * Ped.

43

burn - - - ing flame

Will al - ways hurt your

46

* Leo.

eyes.

49 * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *p*

Love

52

Is a high moun - - - tain

8va

* Ped.

* Ped.

* Ped.

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Lady's Boogie

Boogie-Woogie (♩=100)

Voice

Piano

f

See that la - dy Dressed so

f

fz

8vb

3

fine?

She ain't got boo - gie - woo - gie On her

f

fz

5

mind—

But if she was to lis - ten—

fz

fz

f

fz

8

I bet she'd hear, _____ Way up in the tre - ble _____

f *fz*

11

— The tin - gle _____ of a tear _____

p *pp* *mf*

stage whisper

— Be - Bach!

Bach Two-Part Invention 8 in F Major

p *mf*

19

19 *pp*

If you had known— what I know—

pp

* *Red.*

Red. sempre

23 *pp sempre*

You would know why.

pp sempre

* *Red.*

* *Red.*

attacca:

Go Slow

Impatiently fast (♩=160)

6 *f* *fz*

Go slow,—— they say—— While the bite Of the

ff *mf* *fz* *mf*

* *Red.*

13 *f* *fz*
 dog is fast. — Go slow, —
ff fz mf

19 *fz fz*
 — I hear — While they tell me You can't eat here! You can't
fz fz
 Ped. *

24 *fz f*
 live here! You can't work here! — Don't Dem - on - strate!
fz fz mf

31 *fz*
 — Wait! — While they lock the gate.
f mf

38 *f fz ff*
 Am I sup - posed to be God, —
f fz ff
 Ped.

44

Or an an - gel with wings— And a ha - lo on my head

fz *ff* *fz* *ff*

* *Leo.* * *Leo.*

49

While job - - - less— I starve to

ff *ffz* *ffz* *ffz* *ffz*

* *Leo.* *

54

dead? Am I sup-posed to

fz *mf* *ff*

Leo.

60

for-give And meek-ly live— Go-ing slow, slow,—

ff *fz* *ff* *fz* *fz*

* *Leo.* * *Leo.* * *Leo.*

67 *fz* *f* *f*

slow, _____ Slow, _____ slow, _____

mf *ff*

*

74 *f* *mf* *mf*

slow, _____ Slow, _____ slow, _____

mf *f* *mf* *f*

81 *mf* *mf*

Slow, _____ Slow, _____ Slow? _____

f *mp* *f* *mp*

88 (gesture impatiently)

???? _____ ??? _____

f *mp* *f* *mp*

95

?? _____ ? _____

f *mp* *mf* *pp* *ff*

Visitors to the Black Belt

Biting and discontented (♩=100)

mf

You can talk a - bout A - cross the rail - road tracks—

fz *p*

4

To me— it's here— On this side— of the tracks.

fz *mp* *mf*

8

You can talk a-bout Up— in Har-lem— To me it's

f *mp*

12

here— In Har - lem. You can say— Jazz—

fz *p* *fz*

17

on the South Side— To me— it's hell— On the

pp sub.

fz *p* *pfz*

21

South Side: Kitch-en - ettes— With no heat And gar - bage

p *pp* *fz* *pp* *fz*

26

In the halls.

mf *mf* *fz* *p*

30

Who're you, out - sid - er?

p *mf* *fz* *p*

35

Ask me — who — am — I.

pp *pp*

Dream Boogie: Variation

Dramatic and expectant (♩=66)

f Tin - kling tre - ble,—

f *8va*—

f *8va*—

ff

3

Roll - ing bass, High noon teeth In a mid - night— face,—

(bell peals)

f marc.

fz

5

f *8va*—

f marc.

7

Great long fin - gers— On great big hands, Scream - ing pe - dals— Where his

(*8va*)—

(continue bell peals at constant dynamic)

ff *fz* *f* *ffz*

Red. *

10

twelve shoe lands, Looks

ff R.H. *f* *8va* *3* *3*

*Reo. **

12

like his eyes Are teas-ing pain, A few min-utes late

ff *ff* *mf*

*Reo. ** *Reo. ** *Reo. ** *Reo. **

15

For the Free - dom Train.

fp

5 *6* *7*

17

accelerando e cresc. *(♩=108)*

Silhouette

With the ponderous gait of an 8-foot pendulum (♩=♩=40)

pp *sempre* *aspirated* *falsetto* (*asp.*)

South-ern gen-tle la - dy, Do not

pp *sempre*

And. sempre *

5 swoon. They've just hung a black man

And. sempre

9 In the dark of the moon.

* (*dry*) *And. sempre*

13

p ord.

They've hung a black man To a road - side

* Red. sempre

16

mf

tree In the dark

8va

* Red.

18

of the moon

8va

p

* Red. sempre

20

*pp asp.**ord.*

For the world to see How Dix - ie

pp

* Red. sempre

24

— pro-tects Its white wo-man-hood.

8va

27

pp *sempre*
aspirated

South-ern gen-tle la-dy,

ff
sub.

clear sound enough so that the singer's entrance is not covered

* *Led. sempre*

31

ord.

Be good! Be good!

p

ppp

8vb

III. Pierrot's Heart

Heart

Biting and ironic (♩=88)

Voice

Pi-er-rot Took his heart—— And hung it

Piano

mf *f* *fz fz* *p* *f* *mocking*

5 *mf* On a way-side wall.

11 *mf* *f* He said, “Look, Pas - sers-by, Here is—

18 *mp* *fz fz* — my heart!” But no one was cur-i-ous.

25 *pp*

No one cared at all

31 *mf*

That there hung Pier - rot's heart On the

36 *p*

pub - lic wall. So

42 *f*

Pi - er-rot Took his heart And hid it

47 *mf* *p*

Far a - - - way. Now peo-ple won - der

55

poco *mf* *p*

Where his heart is To - - - day.

61

f *ff* *ffz*

Soledad

A Cuban Portrait

Extremely slow; bereft (♩=48)
(2+2+2+3)

p

The sha - - - dows Of

pp dirgelike

4

too ma - ny — nights of love Have fal - len be -

(E not accented) *fz* *p*

7

neath your eyes. Your eyes, — So full — of pain — and pas -

pp *f marc.*

10

- - - sion, So full of lies.

mf *p* *pp* *ff*

13

So full — of pain — and pas - sion, So-le-dad, —

ffz *fz* *ffz* *f*

16

So deep - - - ly scarred, So

p *pp* *mp* *p*

20

still with si - lent cries. —

pp *dying away* *ppp* *n*

Life Is Fine

Brooding and unsettled (♩.=72)

p despondent

I went down to—the ri-ver,———

p hints of a Chopin Nocturne

9 I set down on—the bank.——— I tried to think but

15 could-n't,——— So I jumped in and sank.——— I

more assertive *mf*

20 came up once and hol-lered! I——— came up twice and cried!——— If that

mf marc.

fp

f

25 *mp* poco accel. *f* Suddenly faster (♩=104) *p* carefree

wa-ter hadn-'ta-been so cold I might-'ve sunk and died. But it was

31 rit. (♩=♩.)

Cold in that wa-ter! It was cold!

36 Faster than tempo I; more insistent (♩.=88) *f*

I took the e-le-va-tor Six-teen floors a-bove the ground. I

43 *mf*

thought a-bout my ba-by And thought I would jump down. I

48

stood there and I hol-lered! I stood there and I cried!—

82 *poco f*
 see me cry— I'll be dogged, sweet ba - by,
fz *p*

88 *più f* *ff*
 sweet ba - by, I'll be dogged, sweet ba - by,
fz *mp* *fz* *pp*

94 *fff* *poco*
 If you gon-na see me die. Life is fine! Fine as wine!
ffz *ff* *(sost. ped.)*

100 *ff*
 Life is fine!
4 *4* *4* *5*

105 *Suddenly faster (♩=104)* *molto rit.*
p *ffz*

