MY STATE WITH KINGS

FOR UNACCOMPANIED MEZZO-SOPRANO

by

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

*My State With Kings* is a polyphonic composition for solo mezzo-soprano in one movement. The composition is approximately 6.5 minutes long and the text comes from William Shakespeare’s Sonnet No. 29.

Pitch material through the first two-thirds of the pieces is determined by a series of improvisatory designs. After the volta, the harmonic material is comprised of pitches belonging to the C# mixolydian scale.

The contour of the composition, as well as the rhythmic structures, adhere to the formal and thematic structures of the sonnet. The sonnet has a rhyme scheme of couplets: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. The melodic contour is informed by the sonnet’s rhyme scheme and formal design.

The registral timbres of the vocalist are extensively explored throughout the composition. The dynamics and articulations follow my own interpretation of the emotional content of the sonnet.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PROGRAM NOTES

*My State With Kings* asks of the performer a degree of theatricality. Stage direction is not given and the performer is free to interpret the musical material, as well as the lyrical content in order to develop their own character. Physical movement is encouraged. The initial tempo marking is a suggestion and remains flexible for the piece’s duration.
when, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes, 

all alone beweep my outcast state, 

and trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries, And look upon myself 

and curse my fate, wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
like him, like him with friends possessed,

Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,

Wailing

With what I most enjoy contented least;

Falsely hopeful, still tenuous and uncertain

Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee and then my state (like to the lark at break of day

a tempo

Arising from sul-len earth) sings hymns at heav-en's gate;

For thy sweet love re-mem-bered such weath brings

that then I scorn to change my state with kings