

The Mona Lisa

Text: Leanne Veitch
Music: Michael Winikoff

For SATTBB choir and Soprano solo

She is there
in smoky hues of black, tan and green
with some white between the edges of the frame
and the listing catch-plate, bearing her name

Visitors. Admirers.

they look:
*oh yes....mmm...beautiful...exquisite...
a fine piece of artwork
he really knew what he was doing.
I must buy a print at once -
where's the souvenir shop?*

they don't see:
her hidden heart
a wooden plank that's all -
not even canvas.
Rotting all the while.

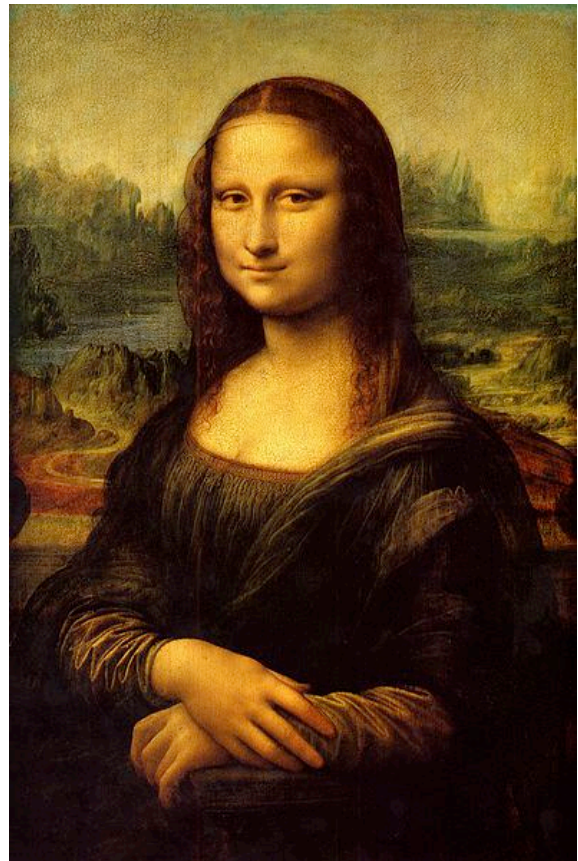
While the visitors smoked
and the lightbulbs flashed
and the babies screamed
and threw rattles on the carpeted floors

before they slung her in a perspex cage
and hung a crimson barrier on golden stands
and glued the 'No Smoking' signs to the walls
in four major languages.

And esperanto.

Such a small smile:
her eyes, so far away.

The background
semi-formed in the acid colours of a dream
fading into a memory of long dead fingers
twisting the bristles of a brush
and catching a smile then bones,
now dust.



Program Notes

Leanne wrote: “*I keep coming back to this poem. The Mona Lisa has always fascinated me, and there is something incredibly sad about the picture for me. I also find her bone structure interesting, and in this work focused on the fact that not only is the famous smile that was painted now long gone, so too are the fingers that painted her.*”

In setting Leanne’s poem I have tried to create a dream-like texture (“acid colours of a dream” and “smoky hues of black, tan and green”). In places the texture vanishes to capture the solitude and loneliness (“such a small smile, so far away”). The section about the visitors (smoking, with flashing lightbulbs, and screaming babies) is set (somewhat ironically) in a happy relaxed style, but, significantly, without any passion or real emotion: it is simply a somewhat pretty tune. The piece ends with a sad fade on the final word: “dust”, emphasised with a sibilant “s”.

In composing this piece I’ve tried to write simply, and to make the piece more readily performable than some of my other works. Although the choir does divide into multiple parts, the piece is almost entirely in 3/4, is rhythmically simple, and does not use any sharps or flats.

Performance Notes

The vowel sounds of “She”, “Is” and “In” should be identical.

Crescendos and Diminuendos above the Soprano part apply to all parts, and those above the (first) Tenor part apply to all of the men.

The first tenors have a few glissandos (e.g. in bars 2 and 4). Please be careful to only sing glissandos where they are explicitly marked. For example, there should *not* be a glissando in bar 6.

A (preferably female) single voice should read the text in bar 22. This should be timed so that it ends around the beginning of bar 27, and certainly before the soprano entry on “they don’t”. While the text is being spoken the choir should sing very quietly, to enable the speaker to be heard. It is a good idea to select a speaker who is able to project (perhaps an actor or lecturer?).

The crescendo in bar 27 is only for the Altos — other parts should change their dynamics from *ppp* to *f* (sopranos) or *mf* (men) suddenly.

The altos have the tune in bars 40-49, and should be allowed to come through. The soprano part in bars 46-50 should be gentle, and should not overpower the alto part.

In bars 61-64 brackets in the lyrics indicate consonants that should not be sung. For example, in bar 61 the second tenors sing “smo-kee” without ever pronouncing the “ng”.

The soloist (soprano or alto) should be sourced from the choir, and should have a light clear sound rather than a full operatic tone.

In the final two bars, the women and first tenors should sustain an “s” sound, starting almost inaudibly, then rising in volume (in bar 101), and then (in bar 102) fading away to nothing. To dust.

The Mona Lisa

Leanne Daharja Veitch

Duration: approx. 5:00

Michael Winikoff

October-December 2009

Andante ♩ = 60

Soprano: - - - - -

Alto: *ppp* *mp*
in smo-ky hues of black tan and green

Tenor 1: *pp* *gliss.*
She is there is there She is there is there She is there is there

Tenor 2: *pp*
She is there she

Bass 1: *pp*
She is

Bass 2: *pp*
She

7

S: In smo-ky hues of black tan and green with some white be-tween the ed-ges of the frame

A: in smo-ky hues of black tan and green in smo-ky hues of black tan and green with some white be-tween the

T1: *gliss.*
She is there is there She is there is there She is there is

T2: *gliss.*
She is there she

B1: *gliss.*
She is

B2: *gliss.*
She

12

S: and the li-sting catch-plate bea-ring her name they

A: with some white be-tween the and the li-sting catch-plate bea-ring her name they

T1: *gliss.* *mp*
there She is there is there vi-si-tors ad-mi-rers

T2: *gliss.* *mp*
She is there she vi-si-tors ad-mi-rers

B1: *gliss.* *mp*
She is vi-si-tors ad-mi-rers

B2: *gliss.* *mp*
She is there vi-si-tors ad-mi-rers

18

S
look they look they look they look they

A
look they look they look they look they

Tenor
vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers

Bass
vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers

Spoken (single female voice): oh yes ... mmm ... beautiful ... exquisite ... a fine piece of artwork / he really knew what he was doing. I must buy a print at once - / where's the souvenir shop?

22

S
look they look they look they look they look they look they don't

A
look they look they look they look they look they look they

T
vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers

B
vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers

ppp *f (sudden)*

28

S
see her hid - den heart they don't see her hid - den heart they don't see

A
look they look they look, they don't see her hid - den heart they don't see

T
vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers, they don't see her hid - den heart

B
vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers vi - si - tors ad - mi - rers, they don't see her hid - den heart

mf (sudden) *f*

33

S
they don't see her hid - den heart a wood - en plank that's all not e - ven can - vas not e - ven can - vas

A
they don't see her hid - den heart a wood - en plank that's all not e - ven can - vas not e - ven can - vas

T
they don't see her hid - den heart a wood - en plank that's all not e - ven can - vas not e - ven can - vas

B
they don't see her hid - den heart a wood - en plank that's all not e - ven can - vas not e - ven can - vas

mf (sudden) *f*

37 (same tempo, don't slow down)

S

A

T

T2

Bass 1

Bass 2

mp

p

mp

mp

mf

while the vi - si-tors smoked and the

Ah

Ah

rot-ting all the while

rot-ting all the while

rot-ting all the while

42

S

A

T

T2

B1

B2

light - bulbs flashed and the ba - bies screamed and threw rat-tles, threw rat-tles on the car-pe-ted floor, Ah

Ah

rot-ting all the while

rot-ting all the while

46 (first sopranos only)

S

A

T

T2

B1

B2

mp

Ah

Ah

rot-ting all the while

rot-ting all the while

rot-ting all the while

rot-ting rot-ting

rot-ting

She

She

51

S

A

T

T2

B1

B2

pp *p*

slung her in a

p *gliss.*

is there is there be - fore they slung her in a per - spex cage slung her in a

p

is there she slung her in slung her in

p

She is slung her in slung her in

p

She slung her in slung her in

56

S

A

T

T2

B1

B2

Tutti p

hung a crim - son bar - ri - er on gol - den stands

per - spex cage and hung a crim - son bar - ri - er bar - ri - er on gol - den stands

per - spex cage slung her in a per - spex cage and hung a bar - ri - er on gol - den stands and

slung her in

slung her in

slung her in

61

S

A

T

T2

B1

B2

pp

glued the no i(n)

smo-ki(ng) four

si(gn) ma - jor Mm

to the wa(II) lan - gua - ges and Es - pe - ran - to Es - pe -

67 *Slower (e.g. $\text{♩} = 53$)*
Solo, freely *p* *A tempo*

Solo
Such a small smile her eyes, so far a - way ————— the —
(firsts only) *pp*

S
the —

A

T

T2

B1
ran - to

B2

73

Soprano 1
back - ground se - mi - formed in the a - cid co - lours of a dream the a - cid co - lours of a drea(m)

Soprano 2
pp

Alto 1
pp

Alto 2
pp

Tenor

Bass
mf
fa - ding

78

Soprano
mm

Alto

T

B
espressivo
fa - ding fa - ding in - to a me - mo - ry of long dead fin - gers twi - sting the

83

S
A
T

Bass 1

Bass 2

pp (echo)

p

bri-stles of a brush the bri-stles of a brush and cat - ching a smile cat - ching a smile

bri-stles of a brush the bri-stles of a brush and cat - ching a smile cat - ching a smile

cat - ching a smile cat - ching a smile

cat - ching a smile cat - ching a smile

90

Solo

mp

such a small smile: her eyes, so far a - way

S
A

Tenor 1

Tenor 2

B1

B2

cat - ching a smile cat - ching a smile bones bones

cat - ching a smile cat - ching a smile then bones bones

cat - ching a smile cat - ching a smile then bones bones

cat - ching a smile cat - ching a smile bones bones

96

S
A

T1

T2

B1

B2

now now now now

now now dust dust

(pp)

ppp

sss sss sss