

# **Prologue: Two Households**

for male chorus and piano

text by William Shakespeare

music by Jeffrey Ryan

Perusal Copy

## Programme note:

**Prologue: Two Households** is a setting of the opening sonnet from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, and was commissioned by Michael Borowitz, artistic director of Cleveland Concert Opera, to open CCO's production of Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, in collaboration with the Singers' Club of Cleveland.

In the classic story, the two feuding families cannot see eye-to-eye though their views are not entirely dissimilar. This setting musically reflects this opposition on many levels: the pervasive use of the interval of a second (almost a unison, but not quite); the use of two contrasting primary tempi; the division of the full choir into two smaller choirs; the use of canonic and echo effects, where the parts follow each other but rarely come together; and through music of two dramatically opposing characters, one angry and defiant, the other gentle and introspective.

Two households, both alike in dignity,  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,  
From ancient grudge, break to new mutiny,  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.  
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;  
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows  
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.  
The fearful passage of their death-marked love,  
And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,  
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;

The which if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

**Prologue: Two Households** received its world première performance with Michael Borowitz and the Singers' Club of Cleveland (Thomas Shellhammer, artistic director), as part of Cleveland Concert Opera's production of Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, May 22, 1998, at Waetjen Auditorium, Cleveland, Ohio.

## Performance notes:

Total performance time ca. 8'20"

The full choir (labelled "tutti" in the score) is divided into a smaller "chamber choir" and a "large choir." For optimal effect, it is suggested that the chamber choir be situated in the centre of the choir, such as:

	(chamber choir)	
Bass	Bass/Baritone	Baritone
Tenor 2	T 2/T1	Tenor 1

If used as a prelude for Bellini's opera, **Prologue: Two Households** may segue directly into the opera overture without interruption.

text by William Shakespeare

to Cleveland Concert Opera

music by Jeffrey Ryan

# Prologue: Two Households

1  $\bullet = 84$  *Emphatically* **TUTTI** *ff*

T1  
Two house - holds,

T2  
Two house - holds,

Bar  
Two house - holds,

B  
Two house - holds,

*ff* *loco* *let ring*

5 *ff* (choir tacet)

6

7 *(8va)* *loco*

8 *loco*

8<sup>va</sup> - - - - -

8<sup>vb</sup> - - - - -

10 *ff*

T1 Two house - holds, both a - like

T2 Two house - holds, both a -

Bar Two house - holds, both a -

B Two house - holds, both a -

*ff*

14 *div. unis.*

T1 in dig - ni - ty,

T2 like in dig - ni - ty,

Bar like in dig - ni - ty,

B in dig - ni - ty,

*ff*

8vb - 1

17 *(choir tacet)*

19 *stringendo*

21 *♩ = 60 sub.*

— (hold pedal to m. 32)

24 **CHAMBER CHOIR** *p ethereal*

T1 Ve — ro —

T2 In fai(r)\*

Bar In fair — Ve —

B In — na,

*let ring*

\* Remain open on vowel — do not close to the “r”

28 *ppp* *p* *ff*

T1 our scene,

T2 where we lay

Bar where we

B where ou(r)\*

*let ring* *p* *ff*

\* Remain open on vowel – do not close to the “r”

32 **TUTTI** *f*

T1 From an - cient grudge,

T2 From an - cient grudge,

Bar From an - cient grudge,

B From an - cient grudge,

*f*

8<sup>vb</sup> (no pedal)

35

*ff* *f*

T1 break to new

T2 break to new

Bar break to new

B break to new

(8vb)

38

*ff* *f*

T1 mu-ti-ny, Where

T2 mu-ti-ny, Where

Bar mu-ti-ny, Where

B mu-ti-ny, Where

(8vb)

41

*ff* *f* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

T1  
civ-il blood makes civ-il hands

T2  
civ-il blood makes civ-il hands

Bar  
civ-il blood makes civ-il hands

B  
civ-il blood makes civ-il hands

*loco*

44

*sfp* *f* *mf* *f* *f* *f*

T1  
un clean.

T2  
un - clean.

Bar  
un - clean.

B  
un - clean.



47 *fff*

T1

T2

Bar

B

50 *rit.* -----

T1/2

Bar/B

♩ = 60 Gently

53

CHAMBER CHOIR

*pp* (hum)

T1/2

Bar/B

*pp* (hum)

mm

LARGE CHOIR

*pp* (hum)

T1/2

Bar/B

mm From forth the fat - al

*pp* (hum)

mm From forth the fat - al

*pp* \*\* gl.

*f* poss. let fade

\* play all chromatic pitches in this range with flat of hand

\*\* inside piano, on strings with back of fingernails; let ring (starting and ending pitches are approximate)

→ (hold pedal to m. 63)

57

*mf* > *pp*

*mf* > *pp*

T1/2

Bar/B

From (m)\*

*mf* > *pp*

*pp* From forth the fat-al loins

gl.

forth

*mf* > *pp*

*pp* From forth the

T1/2

Bar/B

loins

of these two

foes

loins

of these two

foes

*gl.*

\* close to "m"

61

*mf*

star

*mf* *mf*

of

fat-al loins A pair of star star

A pair of star

*mf* *mf*

star

*mf* *molto espr.*

loco

65

crossed

lov - ers

crossed

lov - ers

crossed

lov - ers

crossed

lov - ers

crossed

lov - ers

8va

rit. poco a poco to -----  $\bullet = 42$  Mysteriously

69

*pp* *pp* *ppp* (breathy) *pppp* (pitched whisper)

T1/2

Bar/B

take their life;-(f)

*pp* *pp* *ppp* (breathy) *pppp* (pitched whisper)

T1/2

Bar/B

take their life;-(f)

*pp* *pp* *ppp* (breathy) *pppp* (pitched whisper)

take their life;-(f)

*pppp* let fade

\* forearm cluster at bottom end of keyboard; right forearm on black keys, left on white. Quasi-tamtam effect.

74 (choir tacet)

*pp* < *f* > *p* *pp* < *f* > *p* *pp* < *f* > *p* *mf* *p*

*espr.*

78

*pp* < *f* > *p* *mf* *p* *pp* < *f* > *p* *mf* *p*

81

*mf* *p* *mf* > *p* *mf* > *p*

*pp* < *f* > *p* *pp* < *f* > *p* *pp* < *f* > *p*

84

**TUTTI**

*mf* very legato

T1  
8 Whose mis - ad - ven - tured pit -

T2  
8 Whose mis - ad - ven - tured pit - e - ous

Bar  
*mf* very legato Whose mis - ad - ven - tured pit - e - ous

B  
*mf* very legato Whose mis - ad - ven - tured

*legato, misterioso*  
*mf*

(hold pedal to m. 95)

87

T1  
8 e - ous o - ver - throws

T2  
8 o - ver - throws

Bar  
8 o - ver - throws

B  
8 pit - e - ous o - ver - throws

*sim.*

90

T1  
Doth with their death bur - y their par - ents'

T2  
Doth with their death bur - y

Bar  
Doth with their death bur - y

B  
Doth with their death bur - y their

93

T1  
strife.

T2  
— their par - ents' strife.

Bar  
— their par - ents' strife.

B  
par - ents' strife.

→ (hold pedal to m. 100)

97  $\text{♩} = 84$

(choir tacet)

100

*ff*

*stringendo* ----- *rit.*

$\text{♩} = 120$  sub. Deliberate, relentless

**CHAMBER CHOIR**

103 *f unis.*

*f unis.*

The fear -

The fear -

**LARGE CHOIR**

*p* ----- *f* ----- *p*

The fear - ful The

*p* ----- *f* ----- *p*

The fear - ful The

*f*

106

T1/2  
8  
ful

Bar/B  
ful

T1/2  
8  
f  
p  
fear - ful  
The fear - ful

Bar/B  
f  
p  
fear - ful  
The fear - ful

109

T1/2  
8  
pass  
age

Bar/B  
pass  
age

T1/2  
8  
ff  
p  
pass - age  
The fear - ful

Bar/B  
ff  
p  
pass - age  
The fear - ful



112

T1/2

of their

Bar/B

of their

*p*

T1/2

fear - ful pass - age of their

*p*

Bar/B

fear - ful pass - age of their

115

T1/2

death - marked

Bar/B

death - marked

*f* *ff* *p* *ff*

T1/2

death - marked death - marked

*f* *ff* *p* *ff*

Bar/B

death - marked death - marked

119

T1/2 *ff*  
love,

Bar/B *ff*  
love,

T1/2 *p* death - marked *ff* love,  
*gl.*

Bar/B *p* death - marked *ff* love,

122

T1/2 *ff sempre* And the con - tin - u - ance

Bar/B *ff sempre* And the con - tin - u - ance

T1/2 *mf* And the con - tin - u - ance *ff*

Bar/B *mf* And the con - tin - u - ance *ff*

124

T1/2 *And* the con - tin - u - ance  
 Bar/B *And* the con - tin - u - ance  
 T1/2 *mf* *ff*  
*And* the con - tin - u - ance  
 Bar/B *mf* *ff*  
*And* the con - tin - u - ance

126

T1/2 *And* the con - tin - u - ance of their  
 Bar/B *And* the con - tin - u - ance of their  
 T1/2 *mf* *ff* *mf*  
*And* the con - tin - u - ance of their  
 Bar/B *mf* *ff* *mf*  
*And* the con - tin - u - ance of their

129

T1/2 *ff* *fff* *mf* *ff*  
 par - ents' their par -  
 Bar/B *ff* *fff* *ff* *mf* *ff*  
 par - ents' (their) their par -  
 T1/2 *ff* *fff* *mf* *ff*  
 par - ents' their par -  
 Bar/B *ff* *fff* *ff* *mf* *ff*  
 par - ents' (their) their par -

132

T1/2 *fff* *mf* *ff*  
 ents' their par - ents' -  
 Bar/B *fff* *mf* *ff*  
 ents' (their) their par - ents' -  
 T1/2 *fff* *mf* *ff*  
 ents' their par - ents' -  
 Bar/B *fff* *mf* *ff*  
 ents' (their) their par - ents' -

135

*fff*

T1/2

rage,

Bar/B

(B) (Bar) *fff*

rage,

*fff*

$\text{♩} = 84$  **TUTTI** *f*

Which, but their chil - dren's end,

Which, but their chil - dren's end,

*fff* *f*

138

*p unis.*

T1/2

naught could re - move,

Is now the two hours' —

Bar/B

*p unis.*

naught could re - move,

Is now the two hours' —

*fff* *f* *f poss.*

8vb

142 *f sub. < ff*

T1/2

traf - fic of our stage;

Bar/B

traf - fic of our stage;

*ff*

*ff explosive*

loco

(8<sup>vb</sup>)

146

(hold pedal to m. 150)

148

*fff*

rit. -----

150 *♩ = 60 ethereal, non-vib. (somewhat breathy) pp*

T1/2

ethereal, non-vib. (somewhat breathy) *pp* The which if you with pa - tient ears. *gl.*

Bar/B

The which if you with pa - tient ears

*f poss.*

(hold pedal to m. 166)

155

T1/2

Bar/B

at - tend, What here shall

at - tend, (What) What here (shall) shall

160

T1/2

Bar/B

miss, our toil shall strive

miss, (our) our toil shall strive

165

T1/2

Bar/B

to mend.

to mend.

*p*