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Glen Shannon, Editor

Kearney Smith, arranger
Four Airs
from
“The Beggar’s Opera”
for SATB Recorders

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Four Airs from “The Beggar’s Opera”

Arranged By Kearney Smith

PREFACE

The present set of four of my favorite airs, of the over fifty that appear in the opera, were chosen because they have interesting bass lines which lie neatly in the range of the F bass. I have transcribed and in some cases transposed these airs and added inner voices while remaining faithful to the spirit of the original and not overwhelming its melody.

—Kearney Smith

Performed in England in 1728, The Beggar’s Opera was a satiric play spoofing class inequities in contemporary English society. Borne out of indignation among the English authors and actors who saw themselves being replaced by foreigners, the play took aim at the passionate interest of the upper classes in Italian opera — while simultaneously lampooning notable politicians and famous criminals.

The poet and playwright John Gay (1685–1732) assured the play’s success by selecting popular tunes of the day to be sung with his lyrics. Because Johann Christoph Pepusch (1667–1752) composed an overture for the play, it is speculated but not certain that he also composed bass lines for the airs.

Kearney Smith is a native of North Carolina, served four years in the US Marines, earned a Masters Degree from UNC-Chapel Hill and a Ph.D. from University of Georgia. After retirement in 1997 from teaching at several small colleges, he organized the Green Mountain Recorder Consort. He stays busy playing in the ensemble and arranging music for it.

—Glen Shannon



Performance notes: The text of Gay’s lyrics may suggest appropriate tempos although “Cease your funning” should probably be played faster than it would be sung. That air lends itself to a rapid jig performance. “Le printemps” is a melody for Polly’s more heart-felt expression of love and should not be rushed. In the B section of this air, a good effect can be gained by having the soprano player linger slightly on the descending eighth-note runs.

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AIRS FROM "THE BEGGAR'S OPERA"
Le printemps rappelle aux armes

Johann Christoph Pepusch? (1667–1752)
Kearney Smith, arr. (2003)

Musical score for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) voices, measures 1-7. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 8/8. The Soprano part begins with a treble clef and a sharp sign. The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts begin with a sharp sign. The music consists of a series of notes and rests across the four staves.

Musical score for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) voices, measures 8-14. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 8/8. The Soprano part begins with a treble clef and a sharp sign. The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts begin with a sharp sign. The music consists of a series of notes and rests across the four staves. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 14.

Musical score for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) voices, measures 15-21. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 8/8. The Soprano part begins with a treble clef and a sharp sign. The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts begin with a sharp sign. The music consists of a series of notes and rests across the four staves. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 21.

AIRS FROM "THE BEGGAR'S OPERA"

Cease your funning

Johann Christoph Pepusch? (1667–1752)

Kearney Smith, arr. (2003)

8

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

This system contains the first four measures of the piece. It features four vocal staves: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The music is in G major and 6/8 time. The Soprano part begins with a melodic line of eighth and quarter notes. The Alto and Tenor parts provide harmonic support with similar rhythmic patterns. The Bass part has a more sparse accompaniment with dotted half notes.

5

This system contains measures 5 through 8. The vocal parts continue their melodic and harmonic lines. The Soprano part has a notable melodic flourish in measure 8. The Alto and Tenor parts maintain their rhythmic accompaniment. The Bass part continues with its dotted half note accompaniment.

9

This system contains the final four measures of the piece, from measure 9 to 12. The vocal parts conclude their respective lines. The Soprano part ends with a final melodic phrase. The Alto and Tenor parts provide a final harmonic support. The Bass part concludes with a final dotted half note.

AIRS FROM "THE BEGGAR'S OPERA"

Fill ev'ry glass

Johann Christoph Pepusch? (1667–1752)

Kearney Smith, arr. (2003)

First system of the musical score, measures 1-8. It features four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The music is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The Soprano part begins with a melodic line, while the other parts provide harmonic support.

Second system of the musical score, measures 9-16. The vocal parts continue their respective lines. The Alto part has a more active melodic role in this section. The instrumental accompaniment remains consistent.

Third system of the musical score, measures 17-24. This system concludes the piece. The vocal parts end with sustained notes, and the instrumental accompaniment provides a final harmonic resolution.

AIRS FROM "THE BEGGAR'S OPERA"
What shall I do to shew how much I love her?

Johann Christoph Pepusch? (1667-1752)
Kearney Smith, arr. (2003)

Musical score for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts, measures 1-8. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The Soprano part features a trill (tr) in measure 8. The Alto part has a sharp sign (#) in measure 4. The Tenor and Bass parts provide harmonic support with various note values and rests.

Musical score for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts, measures 9-16. The score continues in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The Soprano part features a trill (tr) in measure 16. The Alto part has a sharp sign (#) in measure 10. The Tenor and Bass parts continue with their respective parts.

Musical score for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts, measures 17-24. The score continues in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The Soprano part features a trill (tr) in measure 24. The Alto part has a sharp sign (#) in measure 18. The Tenor and Bass parts continue with their respective parts.