Safe in Shade

Four Women’s Voices
Soprano 1
Soprano 2
Mezzo-soprano 1
Mezzo-soprano 2

and Harp

by

Bruce P. Mahin
Program Listing

Text by Robert Penn Warren (used by permission)

Program Notes

Safe in Shade explores the variable nature of time passing but leaves as many questions as it provides answers to this conundrum. The first section describes a single moment in time when a boy sits “safe and secure” in the shadow of the cedar tree in the company of an elder. The second major section of Safe in Shade shifts into a timeless vortex of unknown, but significant, events in the life of the narrator who reflects on "That paradox the world exemplifies". Time reels forward to the present where, in stanza eight, the narrator takes fleeting time as his subject and he looks to the future. The final section asks simply "Where is my cedar tree? Where is the Truth-oh, unambiguous-Thereof?" (BPM)

Biography

Bruce P. Mahin is a Professor of Music, and Director of the Radford University Center for Music Technology. Mahin received the 2007 Radford University Distinguished Creative Scholar Award. He is a former president of the Southeastern Composers League, a former co-chair of Society of Composers Region 3, a former research fellow at the University of Glasgow (Scotland) and three-time fellow at Le Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, the recipient of awards from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, Meet the Composer, Annapolis Fine Arts Foundation, Res Musica, Southeastern Composers League and others. His works are available on compact disc through Capstone Recordings (CPS-8747, CPS-8624 and CPS-8611) and published in score by Pioneer Percussion, Ltd. and in the Society of Composers Journal of Musical Scores. He received the B.Mus from West Virginia University, M.Mus from Northwestern University and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University.

Contact Information

Bruce Mahin
307 Sixth Street
Radford, VA  24141
540-831-6174
bmahin@radford.edu
Safe in Shade text by Robert Penn Warren (text used by permission)

Eyes not bleared but blue,
Of the old man, horizonward gazed --
As on horizons and years, long lost, but now
Projected from storage in that capacious skull.

He sat in his big chair, propped
Against reddish tatter of
Bole-bark of the great cedar. I,
The boy who on the ground sat, waited.

I waited for him to speak.
I waited for him to come back to me
From the distances he traveled in.
I waited for him to speak. I saw
The cob pipe in the liver-spotted hand
Now propped on a knee, on the washed blue-jeans.
Smoke, frail, slow, blue--as blue
As the jeans but not the eyes--
Rose to thread the cedar dark.

Around us in our shade and hush
Roared summer's fecundity
And the sun struck down,
In blare and dazzle, on the myth of the world, but we
Safe in the bourne of distance and shade,
Sat so silent that, from woods coming down
To the whitewashed fence but yards behind me,
I heard the secret murmur and hum
That in earth, on leaf, in air, seethed. Heard

One jay, outraged, scream.
The old blue eyes, they fixed on me.
I waited for him to speak. He spoke.
Into the world hurled,
In later times and other places,
I lived but as man must
In all the garbled world's compulsions,
By fate perforce performed
Acts evil or good, or even
Both in the same gesture, in
That paradox the world exemplifies.

And Time, like wind-tattered smoke,
Blew by for one who, like all men, had flung,
In Joy and man's maniacal
Rage, his blood
And the blind, egotistical, self-defining
Sperm into
That all-devouring, funnel-shaped, mad and high-spiraling,
Dark suction that
We have, as the Future, named.

Where is my cedar tree?
Where is the Truth--oh, unambiguous—
Thereof?

Safe in Shade

Sopr. 1

- wait 5

I saw the cob pipe in the liver-spotted hand

Sopr. 2

I - I - I - I - I - I - I saw the liver-spotted hand 3

Mezzo 1

I I I I I wait ed

Mezzo 2

wait ed for him to speak.

Harp

Now propped on a knee

Sopr. 1

Now propped on a knee

Sopr. 2

Jeans.

Mezzo 1

Now propped on a knee on the washed blue jeans.

Mezzo 2

Now propped on a knee on the washed blue jeans.

Harp

Now propped on a knee on the washed blue
Safe in Shade

Moderato (\( \frac{q}{c} = 96 \))

Sopr. 1
Sopr. 2
Mezzo 1
Mezzo 2
Harp

As the jeans
As the jeans
As the jeans
As the jeans

As the jeans

Blue jeans

Slow, as the jeans

Blue jeans

Jean's

Smoke, as the jeans

Jean's

Us shade hush summer's fecund di-

Round

Sum

In and

Sum

Our Roared summer's

Roared summer's

Safe in Shade
Safe in Shade

Sopr. 1

from woods coming down
To the washed fence

Sopr. 2

from woods coming down
To the washed fence

Mezzo 1

from woods coming down
To the white-washed fence

Mezzo 2

from woods coming down
To the white-washed fence

Harp

p
Safe in Shade

but yards behind me.

That in earth, in air.

I heard the secret murmur and hum.

scream. The old blue eyes, they fixed on me.

seethed. Heard out-raged, they fixed on me.

seethed. Heard one jay, they fixed on me.

for

G - Gb
He spoke. In to the world hurled. 1 lived

He spoke. In later times and other pla-

Safe in Shade

but as man must

By fate per-force per-

By fate
Acts evil or good, even Both in the same gesture, That paradox the world exemplifies.

And time, like wind-tattered smoke, Blew by for one who, like all men, had flung, In Joy and man's maniacal Rage, his

Safe in Shade
Safe in Shade

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

That all de-

blood

And the blind, egotistical, self-defining Sperm into funnel

mad

We have, as the future, na-

Dark suction that We have, as the future, na-

shaped, that We have, as the future, na-

and spiral ing, that We have, as the future, na-

Safe in Shade
Safe in Shade

Sopr.  1
Where is the Truth - oh, un-amb-i-guous - - - There of?

Sopr.  2
Where is the Truth - oh, un-amb-i-guous - - - There of?

Mezzo  1
Where is the Truth - oh, un-amb-i-guous - - - There of?

Mezzo  2
Where is the Truth - oh, un-amb-i-guous - - - There of?

Harp
Where is the Truth - oh, un-amb-i-guous - - - There of?