

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

Safe in Shade (2005)

Bruce P Mahin (1957)

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.

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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?

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Words by Robert Penn Warren

Safe in Shade

f Bruce Mahin

Soprano

Soprano 2

Mezzo-soprano 1

Mezzo-soprano 2

Harp

f Eyes Eyes Eyes
Eyes Eyes Eyes

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

— not bleared but blue, the old ma(n), a - (n) ho-ri-zon-ward gazed As on —
— not bleared but blue, Of ho-ri-zon-ward gazed As on As
not bleared but blue, Of ho-ri-zon-ward gazed

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12

Sopr. 1
ho - ri - zons and years, ³ long lost, lo(st)⁵ (st) but now Pro - jec - ted from sto - rage in

Sopr. 2
on ho - ri - zons and years, long lost, but from ³

Mezzo 1
ho - ri - zons and years, long lost, but now from sto - rage in

Mezzo 2

Harp

20

Sopr. 1
that ca - pa - cious skull ³ He sat in his big chair, propped propped A - gainst

Sopr. 2
that skull. chair, propped A - gainst

Mezzo 1
that ca - pa - cious skull. sat in his big chair, A - - - -

Mezzo 2
that skull. He sat in his big chair, propped gainst

Harp

Safe in Shade

27

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

red - dish tat - ter of

red - dish tat - ter of the great ce - - - dar.

red - dish tat - ter Bole - bark I, the boy who on the

red - tat - ter Bole - - - - of the great ce - - - - dar.

33

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

I sat, I wai - ted

wai - ted

ground

I

I

Safe in Shade

37

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

to — wai —
speak. — ted —
him I —
for I — for —

41

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

to — come back to me from the dis-tan - - - ces he tra - veled — in. I - - -
come back to me
him me dis-tan-ces — he tra - veled — in. I -
him me

Safe in Shade

50

Sopr. 1
wait - ed I - saw - The cob pipe in the li - ver - spot - ted hand

Sopr. 2
I - - - - I - I - - - - saw - the li - ver - spot - ted hand

Mezzo 1
I - - - - - wait - ed hand

Mezzo 2
wait - ed for him to speak. hand Now

Harp

56

Sopr. 1
Now propped on a knee

Sopr. 2
jeans. on the washed blue jeans.

Mezzo 1
Now propped on a knee on the washed blue jeans. on the washed blue jeans.

Mezzo 2
propped on a knee on the washed blue jeans.

Harp

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Moderato (♩ = c. 96)

61

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

slow, As the jeans A -

blue - - - As the jeans

frail, blue As the jeans but not the eyes

61 jeans Smoke, as the jeans

pp

68

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

us shade hush sum - - - mer's fe - - cun - - - di -

round sum

in and sum - - - mer's

our Roared sum - - - mer's

68

p

5 5 5 5 5 5

Safe in Shade

74

Sopr. 1
- - ty, the sun struck down, In blaze

Sopr. 2
mer's down,

Mezzo 1
the sun In blaze

Mezzo 2
sun blaze

Harp

5 5 5 5 5 5

79

Sopr. 1
daz - - - zle, of world, Safe

Sopr. 2
on Safe

Mezzo 1
the the we Safe

Mezzo 2
and myth but we Safe

Harp

Safe in Shade

83

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

in of dis - - - tance and shade, Sat so si - lent that,

tance and shade, Sat so si - lent that,

the bourne dis - tance and shade, Sat so si - lent that,

bourne of dis - tance and shade, Sat so si - lent that,

pp

pp

pp

pp

fff

91

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

from woods com - ing down To the wash - ed fence

from woods com - ing down the wash - ed fence

from woods com - ing down To the white - wash - ed fence

from woods com - ing down To the white - wash - ed fence

p

Safe in Shade

94

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

but yards be-hind me, That in earth, —
me, hum — on — leaf, — in air, —
I heard the se - cret mur-mur and hum —

101

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

seethed. Heard out - raged, — The old blue eyes, — they fixed on me. wai - - -
seethed. Heard I —
seethed. Heard one jay, — The old blue eyes, — they fixed on me. I — for

Safe in Shade

111

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

to He spoke. In - 5 - - to the world hurled, I liv 5 - ed

spea. spoke.

him to speak. He spoke. In la-ter times and oth-er pla -

D - Db

Gb - G

118

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

but as man must

In all the gar - bled world's com - pul - sions,

ces, By fate per-force per -

By fate

G - Gb

Gb - G

10

Db - D

Safe in Shade

124

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

or e - - - ven Both in the same ges - ture,

formed Acts e - vil or good, or e - ven Both in the same ges - ture, That par-a-dox the world ex - em - pli - fies.

131

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

And Blew who, and man-i - a - cal Rage,

And time, like wind-tat-tered smoke, Blew by for one who, like all men, had flung, In Joy and man's man-i - a - cal Rage, his

wind - smoke, all flung, i - a - cal Rage,

Rage,

Safe in Shade

137

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

blood

And the blind, e - go - tis - - - ti - cal, self - de - fin - - - ing Sperm in - to fun - nel -

mad

141

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

your - ing, _____ that We have, as the fu - ture, na -

Dark suc - tion _____ that We have, as the fu - ture, na -

- - - shaped, _____ that We have, as the fu - ture, na

and high - spi - ral - ing, _____ that We have, as the fu - ture, na

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157

Sopr. 1

Sopr. 2

Mezzo 1

Mezzo 2

Harp

Where is the Truth - oh, un - am - big - u - ous - - - - There - of? -

p

p

p

p

f *p* *pp*