

Mironczarnia

(SATB version)

edited on 2013-10-18

(English pronunciation: *Meeroncharnya*)

Introduction

“Mironczarnia” is a poem written by a Polish poet Miron Białoszewski, who was a rather untypical writer. I admire his poetry because a large part of his work contains very distinctive sounds and meanings. He creates a lot of wordplay and neologisms that in my opinion just sound great. I also appreciate the specific and abstract style of his poems. “Mironczarnia” is a good example of his poetry (also one of his most known poems). It’s somewhat abstract with a lot of neologisms, describing the author’s struggle when trying to write a poem.

Białoszewski’s works are very hard to translate. Recently I found a translation of this one, prepared by Ewa Gladka, so more or less you can see what kind of poetry it is:

Mironment

*human Miron torments himself torments
once again he’s from him words unabl
uncertain whattodoo
du*

Since none of the translations can bring the sounds of the original poem, I decided to prepare phonetic versions in many languages to make it easy to sing for everyone, so that it always sounds like the original poem - regardless of the native language of the performers. My true dream is to hear this piece being performed all over the world with the sounds of the original words.

Basic information

The piece should be performed very actively with a great vigilance. There’s no possibility to take a breath after every bar, because the piece won’t sound as tight as it should. The rhythm should be very even, like in a machine, so that it could create the right tension. I combined the text with music by slicing and repeating the words of the poem - the constant repetition should add a little ‘torment’ feeling to the piece.

This piece is based on a slight changes of the chords and the melody creates itself (usually where the pitch has changed). According to the theory that E minor is a difficult key to sing in (in terms of intonation) you can lower the key to Eb minor.

The whole piece shouldn’t be sung with the “opera” manner (at least not as much as in the typical classical music).

The first rehearsal

I suggest to start the first rehearsal without giving out the scores. Just repeat the main pattern with the whole choir, starting with smaller part of the pattern:

repeat a few times: *meh meh meh meh*

repeat a few times: *meh meh meh meh meh meh*

repeat a few times: *meh meh meh meh meh meh meh men chey*

After giving the scores, I suggest to read the translation of the poem - just to show what the original words are about. Then read the phonetic version for a few times, to make the choir familiar with all these sounds.

I also suggest to let the singers mark all the bars where the time signature changes. It should significantly speed up the process of reading and learning the piece.

Important places

- bar 12: Sopranos' tune should be performed very smoothly
- bar 15: Tenors can take the C pitch from the Sopranos in bar 12
- bar 16: Sopranos should be divided into two equal groups (S1 and S2)
Furthermore S1 divide here into B and C notes
- bar 22: Respect the rest and the accent (the same thing repeats a few times in the piece)
- bar 26: The "st" has to be performed at one time by the whole choir
- bar 33-36: Bass' part may cause problems here, so it's important to practice these bars very carefully
- bar 49-52: Tenors don't have to start exactly from the E note, but necessarily nearby this pitch (I recommend practicing some glissandos from E to B)
- bar 52: Tenors have to sing this place for a few times to memorize the rhythm precisely
- bar 53: Stay on the chord for a while here, then gliss it (Sopranos and Tenors up, Altos and Basses down), then come back to the initial chord (D A B F# B)
- bar 54-70: Tenors shouldn't sing loudly here but very sharply (almost like throat singing)
You can skip the lower Soprano solo if Tenors are singing loudly
- bar 62: Keep the same tempo but with a lot quieter dynamics
- bar 70: Stay on the chord for a while and then make a fast glissando downwards
- bar 74-88: The Tenor's solo part should be performed very brightly, lightly and selectively without any "opera" manner
- bar 76-88: Only for saving some space, the solo part is written in the same stave as the tutti part - both of the voices should perform their parts the same way as before
- bar 84: The Sopranos' "yang" (which is whispered) should be exaggerated (just to be audible) by saying something between "yang" and "shang"
- it will create the appropriate acoustic effect
- bar 93 and 95: Take care of the rhythm, to hear the sounds very punctually
- bar 99: A slight *ritenuto* in the last two measures of this bar could sound good
- bar 100: The Alto should whisper *Byauoshevski* 'a tempo'
Also the Soprano should sing *Meeron* exactly in the tempo of the piece
- even if you decided to perform the *ritenuto* in the previous bar
The exhalation should be quite long (you can try breathing out through almost closed mouth) - the whole choir have to take a deep and silent breath at the beginning of the bar 100 to have a lot of air for the effective breathing out at the end of the piece

If you are performing this piece in a place with a long reverb (like church etc.), try to make a little rest before the bar 100, just to make *Meeron* audible. This last pitch is like a resolution to the whole piece and without the rest it can disappear in the reverb of the penultimate bar. In concert halls with a nice, short reverb there's no need to add that rest.

I've seen that choirs sometimes add a subtle "choreography" to the ending 'exhale' moment. Sometimes it causes a "mess" and makes the audience a little confused in the time where the atmosphere of breathing out should resonate. I suggest to be careful with it, but the idea of the movement can be also attractive, if it is gentle and thought through.

Thank you for reading this text but please remember that these are just and only my opinions on some of the places in "Meeroncharyna". I hope you find them useful and combine them with your thoughts and ideas to create a great performance.

Thank you for performing my piece
Jakub Neske