JAMES SELLARS

Miscellaneous Songs

I've Decided

for Voice, String Quartet, and Keyboard

HOG RIVER MUSIC
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Program Notes

The ten *Miscellaneous Songs* are for unspecified voice (optionally amplified), keyboard (preferably electronic) and string quartet. They are decidedly postmodern in style, tending to deal with the present in terms of the past and the past in terms of the present. The musical idiom ranges from a crunchy chromaticism to a lilting diatonic sweetness. Despite a degree of unity in this stylistic disunity, the songs do not constitute a cycle or even a set: one to all ten may be sung in any order as the singer(s) choose.

The texts to the *Miscellaneous Songs* deal with various contemporary ideas, from our increasingly administrated robotic lives in *Function* and the constant interruptions brought on by technology in *Discontinuous,* to a pleasant dream of escape in *Dolce Far Niente.*

Sound in My Head and *I've Decided* are, in their self-absorption, songs to oneself. *Is This a Love Song,* if not exactly self-absorption, is a self-dialog, less about the impossibility of love than about the impossibility of yet another love song. *To Write a Song* carries our millennial skepticism a step further and questions the writing of any song — except, of course, one on the subject of writing a song. *I've Never Talked to a Tree* is a doubly-coded song, sincere and satirical at the same time.

I Have Nothing to Say, a modular song, is based on John Cage's famous statement, permuted into a poem by the Scottish poet Edwin Morgan. *JNNY* is a setting of a pop tune and lyric by composer Todd Merrell (with a word and note changed here and there).

Performance Notes

- Voice part may be amplified
- Keyboard part may be performed on an acoustic piano, electric piano, or synthesizer. The various synthesizer patches are described below.
- Patches (and patch changes) are indicated in the Keyboard part by a number in a box **1**
  Is This a Love Song uses only one patch:

  1: Synth chiff ensemble/pan flute

- A reference cassette (or DAT) of synthesizer sounds (as part of a sequencer "performance") is available from the publisher. This recording may be used by the singer in preparing for performance.
- Parts are available from the publisher:

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I've Decided

for John McDonough

Music and text
James Sellars

Nonchalant (♩=ca.96)

Voice

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

pizz. *arco* *pizz.* *arco*

Nonchalant (♩=ca.96)

Keyboard

1

I've de-cid-ed to take a trip by my-self— And not to think a-bout the des-ti - na-tion When I'm ar -

7

pizz. *arco*

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mf

riv - ing or leav - ing Since no one asked the ques - tion I've de - cid - ed to go a - lone on the train

13

cresc. *mf*

Go where it's go - ing with - out know - ing and not ask an - y ques - tions To see if I

mp *mf*

pizz. *arco*

18

ar - rive at an - y de - cis - ions oth - er than that I've de - cid - ed to wait a long time by my -

p *pp*

p *pp*

p *pp* *pizz.* *mf*

p *pp* *mf*

23

mp *p* *mf*

self And when you think it's o - ver I'll stay a lit - tle long - er un -

mf

mf

arco

26

til the long time by my - self has made me most - ly de - ter - mined Then I might know—

30

mp

p

p

p

p

— what's al - read - y been de - cid - ed by the oth - ers and why no - bod - y told me when the train is turn - ing

33

p

with - out know - ing it might be pos - si - ble to de - cide

pp p

pp p

sul tasto p ord.

37

p

when to look right when to go left or go right A - bout mov - ing o - ver dis - plac - ing

sul tasto p ord. mf

sul tasto p ord. mf

sul tasto p pizz. mf

pizz. mf

41

mf

mp

re - vers - ing

Turn - ing a - round and go -

46

ing out by my - self

With - out know - ing or e - ver say - ing that de - cis - ions are for -

50

got - ten are made with - out know - ing that a res - o - lu - tion with - out know - ing or de - cid - ing

arco

53

f

that my de - ter - mi - na - tion is what's chang - ing the dir - ec - tion

pizz. *arco*

pp *molto* *f* *sfz*

p *arco* *f* *sfz*

57

p sempre

I've de - cid-ed And I'm wil-ling to go on with-out know-ing And I'm wait-ing

sul tasto senza vib. *p*

ord.

p

sul tasto senza vib. *p*

ord.

p

sul tasto senza vib. *p*

ord.

mp

p

63

and in-sist-ing I've de - cid-ed that I'm go-ing a-long with-out know-ing

dim. sempre

espr. *mf* *mp*

dim. sempre

mp

dim. sempre

p

pizz. *pp*

69