

JS 013

4 minutes, 10 seconds

The House of the Rising Sun

for TTBB and Piano

Folksong, arranged by

Joshua Shank

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

Note from the arranger

The first time I heard of a gay bar in New Orleans called the UpStairs Lounge was June 12, 2016, the day after a man committed a horrific mass shooting at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida which killed 49 people and wounded 53 others. The macabre reason the UpStairs Lounge had been mentioned in the same article was that the fire there in 1973—an arson attack which killed 32 patrons—had been the largest mass murder of LGBTQs in the United States up until that point. In other words, the memory of the folks killed in 1973—largely forgotten outside of New Orleans—had been dredged up simply because more people had just been killed in a single event 43 years later almost to the day.

When I did some research into what had happened at the UpStairs Lounge I found a heartbreaking story, and June 24, 2018 will mark the 45th anniversary of this horrible tragedy. In wanting to write something to memorialize the victims, I decided to recast the folksong, “The House of the Rising Sun.” It seemed like the perfect fit; the modern incarnation of the song takes place explicitly in New Orleans, and the House itself has always been portrayed in the lyrics of the various versions as a place where people shunned by society for some reason or another gather to be together.

In my version, the House of the Rising Sun is a simulacrum for the UpStairs Lounge on the night of the arson attack, and the song features specific allusions to the events of that night as well as the fact that, near the corner of the building in the French Quarter where the tragedy occurred, there is a memorial plaque embedded in the sidewalk. Their memory lingers on...

Lyrics

By the arranger, based on the folksong

There was a house in New Orleans
They called the Rising Sun.
It's been the ruin of many a boy
And me, I could have been one.

My sweetheart he was a barber,
And my search it seemed was done.
But he was gone forever that night
When he left for the Rising Sun.

There was a house in New Orleans
They burned it to the ground.
They razed and ruined the Sun that night
Just to bring that family down.

The preacher in the window,
A charred embrace in the hall,
A father, a son, a brother.
They set fire to them all.

There was a house in New Orleans
They called the Rising Sun.
When I think on that night, silhouettes in the fire's light,
I wonder, “What could I have done?”

There was a house in New Orleans
Full of rakes, and lovers, and friends.
Their memory lingers on to this very day.
The rising never ends.

B&F Music

Joshua Shank

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Joshua Shank

for Dr. Gerald Gurss and the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus
in commemoration of their first season together

The House of the Rising Sun

In memory of the 32 men killed in the Upstairs Lounge on June 24, 1973

for TTBB Chorus and Piano

Lyrics by
Joshua Shank
(based on a folksong)

Folksong,
arranged by
Joshua Shank

Quietly (♩ = 60)

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T *p* There

B *p* There

Piano *p*

And. *And. simile throughout*

5

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Joshua Shank

was a house in New Or - leans They called the Ris - ing Sun. It's

was a house in New Or - leans They called the Ris - ing Sun. It's

The House of the Rising Sun

9
been the ru-in of ma-ny a boy. And me, I could have been one. My
been the ru-in of ma-ny a boy. And me, I could have been one. My

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13
sweet-heart he was a bar - ber, And my search it seemed was
sweet-heart he was a bar - ber, And my search it seemed was

mp bring right hand out a bit

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16
done. But he was gone for - e - ver that night, When he
done. But he was gone for - e - ver that night, When he

The House of the Rising Sun

19 *mf* 21

left for the Ris - sing Sun. There was a house in

left for the Ris - sing Sun. There was a house in

22

New Or - leans. They burned it to the ground. They

New Or - leans. They burned it to the ground. They

25

razed and ru - ined the Sun that night, Just to bring that fam - 'ly

razed and ru - ined the Sun that night, Just to bring that fam - 'ly

The House of the Rising Sun

29

28

down. A preach-er in the win-dow. A

down. A preach-er in the win-dow. A

31

charred em-brace in the hall. A fath-er, a son, a

charred em-brace in the hall. A fath-er, a son, a

34

bro-ther. They set fi-re to them all. There

bro-ther. They set fi-re to them all. There

The House of the Rising Sun

37

a tempo

T1 was a house in New Or - leans They called the Ris - ing

T2 was a house in New Or - leans They called the Ris - ing

B1 was a house in New Or - leans They called the Ris - ing

B2 was a house in New Or - leans They called the Ris - ing

f a tempo

40

Sun. When I think on that night, sil-hou-ettes in the fi-re's light. I

Sun. When I think on that night, sil-hou-ettes in the fi-re's light. I

Sun. When I think on that night, sil-hou-ettes in the fi-re's light. I

Sun. When I think on that night, sil-hou-ettes in the fi-re's light. I

The House of the Rising Sun

45 A little slower than the beginning

43

musical score for measures 43-48. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "won - der, 'What could I _____ have _____ done?'". The tempo marking is *molto rit.*. The piano part includes dynamic markings *ff* and *p*, and a *molto rit.* instruction. A watermark "B&F Music Joshua Shank" is visible across the score.

47

49

musical score for measures 47-52. It features four vocal staves (Tenor, Bass, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "There was a house in New Or - leans, Full of". The tempo marking is *p*. The piano part includes a triplet of eighth notes. A watermark "B&F Music Joshua Shank" is visible across the score.

The House of the Rising Sun

51

rakes, and lo-vers, and friends. Their mem-'ry ling-ers on to this ve-ry day. The

rakes, and lo-vers, and friends. Their mem-'ry ling-ers on to this ve-ry day. The

poco rit.

poco rit.

poco rit.

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55

Slowing

ris - ing ne - ver ends.

ris - ing ne - ver ends.

no vib.

p

molto rit.

no vib.

p

molto rit.

p

molto rit.

pp

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

Austin, June 2018

“This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...”