

PAUL JOHN RUDOI

ORANGES

PJR - 055

SSA OR TBarB CHOIR, SOLO, AND PIANO



Oranges

SSA or TBarB Choir, Solo, and Piano

DARLING, I BESEECH YOU TO GIVE ME YOUR HAND.
OR IF NOT YOUR HAND THEN YOUR PINKIE,
DELICATE LITTLE HOOK THAT SHALL REEL ME IN.

– GARY SOTO, “SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER’S DAY?”

Text

“Oranges” by Gary Soto

The first time I walked
With a girl, I was twelve,
Cold, and weighted down
With two oranges in my jacket.
December. Frost cracking
Beneath my steps, my breath
Before me, then gone.
As I walked toward
Her house, the one whose
Porchlight burned yellow
Night and day, in any weather.
A dog barked at me, until
She came out pulling
At her gloves, face bright
With rouge. I smiled,
Touched her shoulder, and led
Her down the street, across
A used car lot and a line
Of newly planted trees,

Until we were breathing
Before a drugstore. We
Entered, the tiny bell
Bringing a saleslady
Down a narrow aisle of goods.
I turned to the candies
Tiered like bleachers,
And asked what she wanted—
Light in her eyes, a smile
Starting at the corners
Of her mouth. I fingered
A nickel in my pocket,
And when she lifted a chocolate
That cost a dime,
I didn't say anything.
I took the nickel from
My pocket, then an orange,
And set them quietly on
The counter. When I looked up,

The lady's eyes met mine,
And held them, knowing
Very well what it was all
About.

Outside
A few cars hissing past,
Fog hanging like old
Coats between the trees.
I took my girl's hand
In mine for two blocks,
Then released it to let
Her unwrap the chocolate.
I peeled my orange
That was so bright against
The gray of December
That, from a distance,
Someone might have thought
I was making a fire in my hands.

Performance Notes

- At its heart, this is theatrical. Memorization is recommended to make the most impact with the audience.
- Spoken rhythms are approximate. The most important thing is to practice until it sounds naturally spoken while being together as an ensemble or section.
- Think of the emotional arc of the piece through the lens of the different parties:
 - The choir mostly speaks, but when caught up in the emotion of the moment, they sing.
 - The narrator *only* speaks, but when caught up in the emotion of the moment, they act without speaking.
- The choir should face straight out to the audience to reinforce that they are representations of the narrator's (aka soloist's) experience. That said, the emotion they show doesn't have to be exact with the soloist.
- The soloist should be someone from the choir who can act well, bringing out the emotion of the moment even if they aren't speaking. Suggestions include looking up and out as if remembering, looking at audience members as they remember, etc.

Poet



Gary Soto, poet and essayist, is the author of dozens of books, including *The Elements of San Joaquin*, *Junior College*, *What Poets Are Like*, *A Summer Life*, *Living Up the Street*, and *New and Selected Poems*, a finalist for the National Book Award. His poem “Oranges” is the most anthologized poem in contemporary literature. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation. In 1995, he was NBC's “Person of the Week.” The Gary Soto Museum is located in Fresno City College, where in 1972 he began to write poetry. After a romantic rejection in his sophomore year, he turned to Shakespeare to repair his heart. Years later and fully recovered, he lives with his wife, Carolyn, in Berkeley, California.

Oranges

For 3-part equal-voice choir (either SSA or TBarB), solo, and piano

Text by
GARY SOTO (b. 1952)

Music by
PAUL JOHN RUDOI (b. 1985)

Speechlike (♩ = 160)
mf

Solo

The first time I walked With a girl, I was twelve,

Choir

Piano

semi-dry, with pent-up energy
mf
Ped. half, ad lib

Tutti

Cold, and weight-ed down With two or-ang-es in my jack-et. De -

Pno.

Tutti

cem-ber. Frost crack-ing Be-neath my steps, my breath Be-fore me, then gone.

Pno.

10

Pno.

14

Tutti

As I walked toward Her house, the one whose Porch - light burned

Pno.

sempre f

mp

17

Tutti

yel - low Night and day, in an - y weath - er.

Pno.

f

20

Tutti

A dog barked at me, un - til She came out pull - ing At her

Pno.

p

Ped. sim.

23

Tutti

gloves, face bright With rouge.

Pno. *ff*

26

Slowly, reminiscing (♩ ≈ 100)*a tempo*

Solo

Unless indicated in the score, the soloist does not sing or speak when the choir sings. Instead, the soloist should take on the emotion of the story and the moment, gazing out or at the audience as if remembering something very special.

H

I smiled, Touched her shoul - der,

M

I smiled, Touched her shoul - der,

L

I smiled, Touched her shoul - der,

Pno. *mp* *p* *a tempo* *p*

♩ ≈ 100

Ped. half, ad lib

31

Tutti

and led Her down the street, a - cross A used car lot and a line Of

Pno. *mf*

* if performing with tenors and basses, sing down the octave from written clef.

34

Solo
new - ly plant-ed trees, Un - til we were breath-ing Be-fore a drug-store. We

Choir
new - ly plant-ed trees,

Pno.



37 *Slightly slower* (♩ ≈ 138)

Solo
En - tered, the ti - ny bell

H
En - tered, the ti - ny bell

L
En - tered, the ti - ny bell

Pno.

Slightly slower (♩ ≈ 138)

mf

Ped. full

39

Solo

Bring-ing a sales - la - dy Down a nar - row aisle of goods. I turned to the

H

Bring-ing a sales - la - dy Down a nar - row aisle of goods. I turned to the

L

Bring-ing a sales - la - dy Down a nar - row aisle of goods. I turned

Pno.

gentle

mp

42

Solo

can - dies Tiered like bleach - ers, And asked what she want-ed—

H

can - dies Tiered like bleach - ers, And asked what she want-ed—

L

can - dies Tiered like bleach - ers, And asked what she want-ed—

Pno.

rit.

45 ≈ 100 *mf*

H Light in her eyes, a smile

M *mf* Light in her eyes, a smile

L *mf* Light in her eyes, a smile

Pno. ≈ 100



49 *rit.* ≈ 138 *p*

H Start - ing at the cor - ners Of her mouth.

M *p* Start - ing at the cor - ners Of her mouth.

L *p* Start - ing at the cor - ners Of her mouth.

Pno. *mp* ≈ 138

52

mp

Solo
I fin-gered A nick-el in my pock-et, And when she lift-ed a choc-'late That cost a

mp

Choir
I fin-gered A nick-el in my pock-et, And when she lift-ed a choc-'late That cost a

Pno.



55

Solo
dime, I did - n't say an - y - thing. I took the

H
dime, I took the

M
dime,

L
dime,

Pno.

Ped. half, ad lib

Solo
nick-el from My pock - et, then an or - ange, an or - ange, And set them

H
nick-el from My pock - et, then an or - ange, an or - ange,

M
I took the nick-el from My pock - et, then an or - ange,

L
I took the nick-el from My pock - et, then an or - ange,

Pno.



Solo
qui-et - ly on The count-er. ≈ 100 The la-dy's *mf*

H
When I looked up, *p*

M
When I looked up, *p*

L
When I looked up, *p*

Pno.

Ped. full

Solo
eyes met mine,
know-ing Ve-ry well what it was all A-

H
And held the m...*

M
And held the m...*

L
And held the m...*

Pno.

mp

molto rit.

Solo
bout.

Choir

Pno.

mp *p*

mp

Tutti

Out - side A few cars hiss - ing past,

Pno.

mp

* gradually close to m

10
75

Oranges

Tutti

Fog hang - ing like old

Pno.

mf *mf*

sempre mp

78

Tutti

Coats be-tween the trees.

Pno.

mp

81

Solo

for two blocks, Then re

H

p *mf* *p*

I took my girl's hand In mi - n(e)* Then re

M

p *mf* *p*

I took my girl's hand In mi - n(e)* Then re

L

p *mf* *p*

I took my girl's hand In mi - n(e)* Then re

Pno.

* close to n

85

Tutti

leased it to let Her un-wrap the choc-'late.

Pno.

88

rit. poco a poco

Pno.

91

Pno.

94

≈ 100

mp

Solo

I peeled my or-ange That was so

p

H

p

M

p

L

≈ 100

Pno.

Solo

bright a-against The gray of De - cem - ber That, from some dis - tance,

H

oh... oo...

M

oh... oo...

L

oh... oo...

Pno.



100

mp

Solo

Some - one might have thought I was mak - ing a fire in my hands.

H

M

L

Pno.

103 *Flowing, expressive to the end*

mp

H
M
L

a fire in my
a fire in my
a fire in my

Flowing, expressive to the end

Pno.

107

f

p

H
M
L

hands, a fire...
hands, a fire...
hands, a fire...

Pno.

pp *slowing*

113

rit.

Pno.

PAUL JOHN RUDOI

SELECTED WORKS

- OUR TRANSCENDENTAL PASSION** (PJR Music) **SATB, soli, and chamber ens.**
Passion-styled work around the Transcendentalist movement Length: 60'
- Gamaya** (Graphite Music Publishing) **SATB choir or equal voices and drum**
Concert round in ancient Sanskrit Length: 3'
- Thrice Is Sweet Music Sweet** (PJR Music) **SATB, a cappella**
Traditional part-song about friendship Length: 4'
- SERMON ON THE MOUNT** (PJR Music) **SATBarB soli, choir, cello, and narrator**
Concert-length sacred music drama Length: 80'
- The Wind's True Song** (PJR Music) **SATB choir and piano**
Advanced work about the immigrant experience Length: 8'
- Yonder Come Day** (ECS Publishing) **SATB, TTBB, or SSAA choir and tambourine**
Narrative spiritual arrangement Length: 3.5'
- Miniyama Nayo** (Walton Publishing) **SATB choir, a cappella**
Nonsense work Length: 4'
- SONG OF SKY AND SEA:** **SATB or TTBB divisi, a cappella**
A Song of Realization (PJR Music) Length: 20'
Narrative spiritual cycle with four excerptible movements
- If I Were a Dog** (Graphite Music Publishing) **SAB, SSA, or TBarB and piano**
Work about pets and unconditional love Length: 3.5'
- RITE OF PASSAGE** (PJR Music) **SATB and violin**
Narrative advent cycle on the fear and hope of birth Length: 20'
- Hope and Quietly Wait** (Morningstar) **SATB and piano or strings & harp**
Sacred work about acceptance of loss through dementia Length: 5'



Paul John Rudoi is an award-winning composer, conductor, vocalist, and entrepreneur.

Deemed “indisputably unique, confident, and innovative” by the American Prize, Paul John Rudoi’s compositions are commissioned and sought after by ensembles worldwide including the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Orphei Dränger, Cantus, and Spokane Kantorei.

As a professional tenor vocalist, Paul has performed and recorded a wide range of music in professional ensembles nationwide including Seraphic Fire, The Santa Fe Desert Chorale, True Concord, the Oregon Bach Festival, and Cantus.

Paul served as the Artistic Director of the St. John’s Boys’ Choir during their 40th Anniversary season. He directs the Meetinghouse Chorale at Meetinghouse Church in Edina, MN.

Paul is also a fierce advocate for new music trends, resources, and issues. He is the co-founder of "Consortio," an online platform designed to help composers, conductors, and ensembles

explore and facilitate consortium-based commissioning, ideally making commissioning music more readily accessible for all. Visit consortio.io for more information.

Paul holds degrees from the Hartt School and the University of Oregon, and his teachers have included Dr. Sharon Paul, Robert Kyr, Dr. Craig Phillips, Libby Larsen, and Dr. Edward Bolkovac.

For more information or to purchase scores, please visit www.pauljohnrudoi.com.