Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart

for baritone and piano

Mark Gotham
2013

Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart

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Text (from the 'Song of Solomon' 8:6–7):

Set me as a seal upon thy heart,
Set me as a seal upon thine arm.

For love is strong as death.
Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can the floods drown it.

Set me as a seal upon thy heart,
Set me as a seal upon thine arm.

A note on the piece:

The 'Set me as a seal upon thy heart' text paints a vivid portrait of immutable consistency. I have taken up that theme in this setting, symbolically using a single pitch as a centre to which the music continually returns. In the outer sections, this pitch stands as a consistent line around which symmetrically balanced melodies and chords weave.

A central section accelerates through a cascade of 'many waters' depicted by descending scalic patterns. The scales pull down, but the pitch collections give the impression of rising. This creates a more oblique kind of symmetry that reaches its culmination at the words 'drown it.'

I wrote this piece to sing at my brother's wedding. The setting is dedicated with love to Matthew and Victoria.

Mark Gotham

To Matthew and Victoria, 1.6.13

Set me as a Seal

for baritone and piano

Words from the
Song of Solomon 8:6-7

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Set me___ as___ a seal up-on_____ thine

heart.

Set me___ as___ a seal up-on___

thine arm

L'istesso tempo, ma maestoso, e poco rubato

For love_____ is strong_____ as_____ death, love_____

L'istesso tempo, ma maestoso, e poco rubato

f colla voce

_____ is strong_____ as death,

mp

ff

p (enter imperceptibly)

Meno mosso, ♩ = 90

Meno mosso, ♩ = 90

p semplice, light pedalling throughout

Ped.

p semplice

Ma-ny wa-ters can-not quench love

Ma-ny wa-ters can-not quench love

Ma-ny wa-ters can-not

(phrasing sim.)

poco a poco cresc.

quench love

Ma - ny wa - ters can-not quench___ love

p — *mp* (*p*)

nei - ther can

nei - ther can the___

f *p* *sub.*

cresc. molto

♩ = **60**

ff

floods___ drown it.

♩ = **60**

poco rit.

ff

p

pp

58 **Tempo primo**

Tempo primo

p

Set me___ as___ a

p

64

seal up - on_____ thine heart.

mp

Ped.

rit. - - - - - - - - - -

69

Set me___ as___ a seal up - on_____ thine

rit. - - - - - - - - - -

74 **A tempo**

arm.

A tempo

p

pp