

Tres canciones de los elementos

Words and Music by Victor C. Johnson (b. 1978)

Texts and Translations

I. Escuchar al viento

/ɛs-ku-tʃar al βjen-to/
Escuchar al viento
Listen to the wind

/so-plan-do por la no-tʃɛ
Soplando por la noche,
Blowing through the night

/rɛs-pi-rar la pas pa-ra to-ðos/
Respirar la paz para todos.
Breathing the peace for all

II. La lluvia está cayendo

/la ju-βja ɛs-ta ka-jɛn-do/
La lluvia está cayendo,
The rain is falling

/so-bre la tʃɛ-ra ka-jɛn-do/
Sobre la tierra cayendo.
Over the earth falling

III. !Fuego;

/fwe-ɣo/
!Fuego;
fire

/βɛ-a ɛl rɛs-plan-dor ro-ho/
Vea el resplandor rojo.
See the glow red

/βɛ-a la ja-ma na-ran-ha/
!Vea la llama naranja;
see the flame orange

I. Escuchar al viento

Escuchar al viento
Soplando por la noche,
Respirar la paz para todos

Listen to the Wind

Listen to the Wind
Blowing through the night
Breathing peace for all.

II. La lluvia está cayendo

La lluvia está cayendo,
Sobre la tierra cayendo.

The rain is falling

The rain is falling,
Is falling on the earth.

III. ¡Fuego!

¡Fuego!
Vea el resplandor rojo.
¡Vea la llama naranja!

Fuego!

Fire
See the red glow,
See the orange flame.¹

Recordings

Albright College Concert Choir, 2012:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQS1bG3ytJ8>.

This is the SAB version, so not quite the same as what you are performing, but a lovely, sensitive performance.

Fort Wayne Children's Choir, 2010:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6L4ocqhyuwc>

This is the arrangement that you are singing.

Junior Gondwana Choir, Sydney, 2013: <https://youtu.be/lakdoR3qOzw>

Program Notes

The ancient Greeks believed that the world as we know it could be broken down into five elements – earth, air, fire, water and aether. Victor C. Johnson's *Tres canciones de los elementos* explores three of these elements – wind, water and fire. Johnson deft text settings reflect each element, from the flowing, breezy lines of the piano in *Escuchar al viento*, to the quote of the children's song *It's Raining, It's Pouring* in *La lluvia*, to the fierce intensity of *¡Fuego!*

Analysis

I. Respirar al viento

Key: G Major

Meter: $\frac{3}{4}$

Texture: Homophonic

Structure: AB

¹ Translations by Elizabeth Pauly

SECTION	MEASURE	EVENT AND SCORING
Intro	1-4	Arpeggiated MM7 chords, alternating from I to IV
A	5-12	Two four measure antecedent/consequent phrases SAB harmony, melody in soprano; piano accompaniment is based on introductory pattern
B	13-20	13-20 – harmonies shift to Bb Major (major of parallel minor) two four-measure antecedent/consequent phrases SAB harmony, melody in soprano;
Coda	20-26	Coda – harmonies shift by half steps in Mm7th chords from A to Ab, resolving back to G MM7; call and response between S/A and B.

II. La Lluvia

Key: E Major

Meter: 4/4

Texture: Homophonic

Structure: AB

SECTION	MEASURE	EVENT AND SCORING
Intro	1-2	Piano only; harmonic pattern of alternating E M and D M block chords established; “It’s raining, it’s pouring, the old man is snoring” is quoted in melody of piano;
A	3-8	Two identical three-measure phrases (aa); S/A in harmony, sopranos sing melody – baritones sing countermelody using a fragment of “It’s raining, it’s pouring”; piano accompaniment uses musical materials of the intro
B	9-16	Two nearly identical three measure phrases (bb’); SAB harmony, melody in Sopranos; the differences in these phrases is in the third measure of each phrase, accompaniment only.

III. Fuego

Key: F minor is implied

Meter: Mixed

Texture: Homophonic with some call-and-response

Structure: ABA’ (ternary)

SECTION	MEASURE	EVENT AND SCORING
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Intro	1-4	Piano only – accompaniment pattern is established – alternating meters from 6/8 to 2/4
A	5-12	Mixed meters, accompanied based on materials in introduction; Ms. 5-10 sopranos call and A/B responds in two part harmony; Ms. 11-12 – meter shifts to $\frac{3}{4}$, SAB three part harmony
B	13-19	Meter: 2/2; SAB three-part harmony; final cadence on C Major (V chord) – this is the one real tonal moment prior to the final cadence
A'	20-30	One measure interlude; return of A section 21-26 like Ms. 5-10; Ms. 27-30 coda, final cadence on F minor.