

Dame la mano – P1788

Dame La Mano is the poet's invitation for her audience to become one with her in her world of poetry. The rhythm of the poetry is dance-like. It creates an image first of participating in movement together in various forms (dancing, swaying, singing) as a prelude to loving and becoming one. Perhaps it is an analogy for us to involve ourselves in the lives of others so that love for them may follow. The last stanza contains two names: Rosa and Esperanza. Rosa, representing the frail, must forget herself and embrace Hope.

Performance notes:

Dame La Mano should be performed with rhythmic simplicity, but with an undercurrent of dance-like motion. More rhythmic energy is required at bar 21, where the text speaks of dancing in step together. Bar 29 returns to simplicity like at the beginning of the piece, with a return to the energetic dance-like section once again. The last verse, simple like the first verse, ends by repeating the phrase 'y nada más'. Music should drift away in the last bar to the end, like a blade of grass gently blowing in the wind.

Dame la mano (Give Me Your Hand)

Gabriela Mistral 1889 –1957

translated by Claudio G. Rey

Give me your hand and we will dance;
give me your hand and you will love me.
We will be like a single flower,
A flower and nothing more.

We will sing the same verse,
You will dance the same step
We will undulate like an ear of wheat,
Like an ear of wheat, and nothing more.

You are called Rosa and I am called Esperanza;
But you will forget your name,
'Cause we will be a dance,
On the hill and nothing more.

Promesa a las estrellas – P1789

The stars are personified as an observer of everything on Earth and the speaker as one who wants them to always see her as good and pure. The poet of this children's poem asks trusting questions, seeking affirmation about morality and purity of something greater which they know is there but cannot fully comprehend. It is possible that the stars represent God or angels in Mistral's poem, and the questions asked are universal to humanity.

Performance Notes:

The first two bars of piano music transport our mind's eye from the Earth to the heavens. The instrumental performance throughout should have a delicate quality, like a dancer on a tightrope. Verse one and two have a simple, childlike quality. Bars 53-70 have an 'expansive' feeling, like staring in wonder at the star-filled heavens at night. Bar 72-73 are played freely, with the steady tempo returning in bar 74 to the end. Note that after the fermata at bar 101 beat 1, starting on bar 101 beat 4 there is no ritardando to the end, but a consistent, firm tempo.

Promesa a las estrellas (Promise to the Stars)

Gabriela Mistral 1889 –1957

translated by Claudio G. Rey

Little eyes of the stars
Open in dark velvet:
From on high
Do you see me pure?

Little eyes of the stars
Fixed on the serene sky
Say: from above,
Do you see me good?

Little eyes of the stars
With restless eyelashes
Why are you blue, red
And violet?

Little eyes of the stars
Fixed on one and then the other, I swear
That you will always look at me,
And always see purity.

La huella P1790

The fugitive man's existence on earth is marked by his footprint (la huella). Verónica symbolizes the Earth itself, and it is silent witness to the footprints of our transient lives. The earth bears the weight of our journeys and our struggles - each person makes an impact upon it. It is a reminder that every life matters and is remembered.

Performance notes:

This piece begins with quiet, pensive restlessness (note the 'rubato' tempo marking). Vocals should be *pianissimo* in this opening section. At bar 9, the faster tempo gives the feeling of a fugitive on the run. The slower instrumental section at bar 43 is meant to be a cause for reflection upon the many who find themselves as fugitives and to remember their plight. Bar 51 once again takes up the pace of the fugitive, sung with confidence to the end that 'Verónica' (the earth) is an active witness to the footprint they leave.

La huella (The Footprint)

Gabriela Mistral 1889 –1957

translated by Claudio G. Rey

From the Fugitive Man
I have only the footprint
The weight of his body
The wind that carries him.
Neither signs nor name,
Neither country nor village:

Only the wet shell,
Of his footprint
Only this syllable
That the sand picked up
And the Earth - Veronica
That murmurs to me

(Middle Section)

And his daughter, the blood,
Who shouts after him:
The footprint, my God,
The painted footprint:
The mouthless scream,
The footprint, the footprint!