

Michael Murray

Genevieve's Cats

for soprano and piano

1. The Kitten (William Wordsworth)
2. The Cat and the Moon (William Butler Yeats)
3. To Mrs Reynolds's Cat (John Keats)

(2017)

www.michaelmurraymusic.com

duration ca. 10'

1. THE KITTEN

(from "The Kitten and the Falling Leaves")

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

See the kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Withered leaves--one--two--and three--
From the lofty elder-tree!
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair . . .
—But the kitten, how she starts;
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!

First at one, and then its fellow
Just as light and just as yellow;
There are many now--now one--
Now they stop and there are none.
What intensesness of desire
In her upward eye of fire!
With a tiger-leap half way
Now she meets the coming prey,
Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again:
Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjuror;
Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart.

2. THE CAT AND THE MOON

W. B. Yeats (1865-1939)

THE CAT went here and there
And the moon spun round like a top,
And the nearest kin of the moon,
The creeping cat, looked up.
Black Minnaloushe stared at the moon,
For, wander and wail as he would,
The pure cold light in the sky
Troubled his animal blood.
Minnaloushe runs in the grass
Lifting his delicate feet.
Do you dance, Minnaloushe, do you dance?
When two close kindred meet,
What better than call a dance?
Maybe the moon may learn,
Tired of that courtly fashion,
A new dance turn.
Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
From moonlit place to place,
The sacred moon overhead
Has taken a new phase.
Does Minnaloushe know that his pupils
Will pass from change to change,
And that from round to crescent,
From crescent to round they range?
Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
Alone, important and wise,
And lifts to the changing moon
His changing eyes.

3. TO MRS REYNOLDS'S CAT

John Keats (1795-1821)

Cat! who hast passed thy grand climacteric,
How many mice and rats hast in thy days
Destroyed? How many tit-bits stolen? Gaze
With those bright languid segments green, and prick
Those velvet ears - but prithee do not stick
Thy latent talons in me, and up-raise
Thy gentle mew, and tell me all thy frays
Of fish and mice, and rats and tender chick.
Nay, look not down, nor lick thy dainty wrists -
For all thy wheezy asthma, and for all
Thy tail's tip is nicked off, and though the fists
Of many a maid have given thee many a maul,
Still is that fur as soft as when the lists
In youth thou enteredst on glass-bottled wall.

Program Note

Genevieve's Cats was written for soprano and cat lover Genevieve Fulks, who selected the poems in this set. The three poems feature cats at different stages of their lives, from Wordsworth's kitten through Yeats' adult cat to Keats' older cat, although features distinctive to the feline species are common to all. The creation of this piece was made possible through the generous support of the Osage Arts Community residency program located in Belle, Missouri.

1. The Kitten

William Wordsworth

Michael Murray

Playfully ♩ = 108

The piano introduction consists of two systems of music. The first system (measures 1-3) is in 4/4 time, marked *mf*. The right hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes, while the left hand has whole rests. The second system (measures 4-8) is also in 4/4 time, marked *p*. The right hand has whole rests, and the left hand plays a sequence of chords and single notes. Measure 8 ends with a fermata and a triangle symbol.

The first line of lyrics is "See the kit - ten on the wall,". The vocal line (measures 9-10) is in 4/4 time, marked *mf*. The piano accompaniment (measures 9-10) is in 4/4 time, marked *mf*. Measure 10 includes a 3/4 time signature change. The piano part features a bass line with a flat sign and a fermata.

The second line of lyrics is "Sport-ing with the leaves that fall, _____ With-ered leaves,". The vocal line (measures 11-13) is marked *rit.* and *Slower* ♩ = 90. The piano accompaniment (measures 11-13) is marked *p*. Measure 11 is in 4/4 time, measure 12 is in 6/4 time, and measure 13 is in 5/4 time. The piano part features a bass line with a flat sign and a fermata.

1. The Kitten

14 *mp* one, two and three, *p* from the lof-ty eld-er tree!

14 15 16

Slower ♩ = 84

17 Through the calm and fros-ty air Of this morning

17 18 19

Tempo I ♩ = 108

20 bright and fair... But the kit-ten, how she starts;

20 21 22

23 *rit.* 24 25 *a tempo (suddenly)* 26

Crouch-es, stretch - es, paws, — and darts!

p *f*

27 28

First at one, and then its fel - low Just as

8va *mf*

29 30

light and just as yel - low;

(8va) *8va* *8va*

1. The Kitten

31 *8va* There are ma - ny now, now one, Now they stop

32 *8va*

33 and there are none. What in - tense-ness of de-sire In her

34 *p*

35 *f*

36 up-ward eye of fire! With a ti - ger leap half way

37 *mf* *8va*

38 39

Now she meets the com - ing prey,

38 39

40 41

Lets it go as fast, and then

(8va)

40 41

42 43 44

Has it in her power a - gain:

8va

f *p*

42 43 44

45 *mf* Now she works with three _____ or four, _____

48 Like an In - di - an con - jur - or;

49 50 *p*

51 Quick as he in feats of art, Far be - yond _____ in joy of heart.

52 *rit.* 53 54 *mp*

2. The Cat and the Moon

W. B. Yeats

Michael Murray

Mysteriously ♩. = 36

The musical score is written in 6/8 time and consists of three systems. The first system (measures 1-7) features a vocal line with lyrics "The cat went" and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes dynamic markings *p* and *mp*, and performance instructions like *gva* and *Leg.*. The second system (measures 8-10) continues the vocal line with lyrics "here and there And the moon spun round like a". The third system (measures 11-13) concludes the vocal line with lyrics "top, And the near - est kin of the moon The". The piano accompaniment throughout the piece is characterized by sustained chords and melodic lines in both hands.

14 15 16 17

creep - ing cat looked up. _____

mf

Freely *p* (mysteriously, like a whisper) **a little quicker** *f* ♩ = 48

18 19 20 21 22

Black Min-na - loushe stared at the moon, For wan - der and wail _____

mf

♩ = ♩ (sempre)

23 24 25 26

— as he would The pure cold light in the sky

mp *p*

27 Trou-bled his an-i-mal blood.

mf

28 29 30

Ped.

quicker ♩ = 60

31 Min-na-loushe runs in the grass, Lift-ing his del-i-cate

f

32 33 34 35

*

36 feet. Do you dance, Min-na - loushe, do you dance?

mp

36 37 38 39 40 41

42 43 44 45 46

spoken: When two close kindred meet, What better than call a dance?
Maybe the moon may learn, Tired of that courtly fashion, A new dance turn.

repeat as needed

slower ♩ = 54

mp

47 48 49 50

Min - na - loushe creeps through the grass From

p

51 52 53 54

moon - lit place to place, The sac - red moon ov - er-head

55 *mf* **slower** ♩ = 48

Has tak - en _____ a new phase. Does Min - na - loushe know that his

56 57 58 59

60 *mp*

pu - pils _____ will pass from change to change, And that from

61 62 63

64 *mf*

round to cres - cent, _____ From cres - cent to round they range?

65 66

slower $\text{♩} = 42$

Freely

67 68 69 *p* 70

Min - na-loushe creeps through the

67 68 69 70

$\text{♩} = 42$

71 72 73 74

grass A - lone, im - port - ant and wise, And lifts to the chang - ing

p

71 72 73 74

gva

slower $\text{♩} = 36$

75 76 77 78

moon His chang - ing eyes.

75 76 77 78

gva

3. To Mrs Reynolds's Cat

John Keats

Michael Murray

Patently ♩ = 90

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The music is in 4/4 time and begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The melody in the upper staff features a series of eighth notes with slurs and fingerings (2, 3, 4, 5). The bass line in the lower staff consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment with fingerings (2, 3, 4, 5). The system concludes with a repeat sign and the instruction *Red. (sempre to m. 37)*.

The second system of the musical score continues from the first system, spanning measures 6 to 10. The upper staff (treble clef) and lower staff (bass clef) maintain the same melodic and accompanimental patterns. The key signature changes to one sharp (F#) in measure 6. The system ends with a repeat sign.

The third system of the musical score includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment, spanning measures 11 to 16. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains the vocal melody with lyrics: "Cat! — Cat! — Cat! — who hast passed thy grand cli -". The lower staff is in bass clef and provides the piano accompaniment. The dynamic is marked mezzo-forte (*mf*). The system concludes with a repeat sign.

3. To Mrs Reynolds's Cat

17 mac - ter - ic, 18 How ma - ny 19 mice and 20 rats 21 hast in thy

22 days de - stroyed? 23 How ma - ny 24 tit - bits 25 sto - len? 26

27 Gaze With those 28 bright 29 lan - 30 guid 31

32 33 34 35 36

seg - ments green, and prick Those vel - vet ears _____

Agitated ♩ = 168

37 38 39 40

f but pri - thee do not stick Thy la - tent

41 42 43 44 45

tal - ons in me, — and up - raise Thy gen - tle mew, —

46 and tell me all thy frays Of fish and mice, and

46 47 48 49 50

Tempo primo (♩ = 90)

51 rats and ten - der chick.

51 52 53 54 55

mp

Red. (to m. 63)

56 Nay, — nay, — nay, — look not down, nor lick thy

56 57 58 59 60 61

mf

f Agitated ♩ = 168

62 dain-ty wrists 63 For 64 all thy whee-zy 65 asth - ma, 66 and for

62 63 64 65 66

67 all Thy tail's 68 tip 69 is nick-ed off, 70 and though the fists of 71

67 68 69 70 71

72 ma - ny a maid have 73 giv - en thee 74 ma - ny a maul, — 75 76

72 73 74 75 76

Tempo primo (♩ = 90)

77 *mf* 78 79 80 81

Still is thy fur — as soft as when the lists In youth thou

mp

77 78 79 80 81

Ped. (to end)

82 83 84 85 86

ent - er - edst on glass - bot - tled wall.

82 83 84 85 86