

THE OLD SWIMMIN'-HOLE, Barda
SBMP1871

Two-Part
(opt. descant)
piano

The Old Swimmin'-Hole

with text from James Whitcomb Riley's poem
"The Old Swimmin'-Hole"

Music by
Courage Barda



Herbert Washington
Choral Series

Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc.

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About the composer

Courage Barda (b. 2003) is a composer, media artist, and countertenor whose work spans choral and vocal music, interdisciplinary performance, and multimedia art. Playfulness lies at the center of his practice, inviting audiences into experiences of humor, grief, and absurdity. A recurring thread in his recent work is his return to dance after a disabling neurological event. Navigating physical limitations, he has developed an adaptive and expressive movement vocabulary that he explores in intimate, vulnerable performance pieces.

His music has been performed by the Young New Yorkers' Chorus, the Phoenix Boys Choir, The Capital Hearings, the International Brazilian Opera Company, Hub New Music, the Choral Arts Initiative, and NOTUS, The Indiana University's contemporary vocal ensemble.

Barda is pursuing bachelor's degrees in composition and historical voice performance at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. He currently studies composition with Gabriel Jenks and Aaron Travers, and voice with Thomas Cooley. His previous teachers include Don Freund and David Dzubay in composition, and Judith Malafrente and Steven Rickards in voice.

Composer notes and text on page 15

Ranges

The image shows a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are as follows:

Part	Notes
Desc.	F#4, G4, A4
Part 1	B3, C4, D4
Part 2	E4, F#4, G4



recording and rehearsal tracks available at sbmp.com

The Old Swimmin'-Hole

James Whitcomb Riley (1849-1916)

Courage Barda

Lively ♩ = 144 Tutti, unis. *mf* A

Part 1
Part 2

Oh! the old swim - min' -

Piano *f* *mp*

6
hole! whare the crick so still and dee

12
Looked like a ba - by - riv - er that was lay - ing half a - sleep,

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1871-3

B

And the gur-gle of the wor-ter round the

drift jest be-low

Sound-ed like h of some-thing we onc't

ust to know Be -

C

37

fore we could re - mem - ber an - y - thing but the eyes

42

Of the an - gels look - in' out as we

47

(clap) left Par - a - dise But the *sub. p*

D

53

mer - ry days of youth is be - yond our con - trole, *f* And it's *sub. p*

59

hard to part fer - ev - er with the old swim - min' - hole.

E

65

mf

Oh! the old swim - min' - hole! In the hap - py days of yore,

71

mp

F

p

When I ust to lean a - bove it on the

77

p

When I ust to lean a - bove it on the

83

old_ sick - a - more, Oh! it

loco

8va

G

89

warm

showed me a face_ in its warm

(8va)

loco

PREVIEW

96

That gazed back_ at me so gay and glor - i - fied,

(8va)

loco

H

102

f It

made

me

It made me love my - self, as I

8va

loco

f

107

leaped to ca - ress

My

PREVIEW

113

(clap)

shad - der smil - in' up at me with sich ten - der - ness.

Ped

119

Unis. *sub. p*

I

But the mer - ry days of youth is be - yond

sub. p

(Ped)

124

f

our con - trole, _____ And I need to part fer - ev - er with the old

f

(Ped)

130

J

swim - min' - hole.

mf

136 Opt. Descant

f

Oh! the

Parts 1 and 2

f

Oh! the

K

141

old swim - min' - hole! whare the crick s... still and deep

old swim - min' - hole! whare the crick s... so still and deep

mf full, grand

147

Looked like a ba - by - riv - er that was lay - ing half a - sleep,

Looked like a ba - by - riv - er that was lay - ing half a - sleep,

L

153

And the gur - gle of the
And the gur - gle of the

158

wor - ter round the drift just be - low
wor - ter round the drift just low

164

Sound - ed like the laugh of some-thing we onc't_ ust to know
Sound - ed like the laugh of some-thing we onc't_ ust to know

169

M

Be - fore we could re -

Be - fore we could re -

174

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179

End Opt. Descant

Of the an - gels look - in' out as we left Par - a - dise;

Of the an - gels look - in' out as we left Par - a - dise;

185

rit.

Parts 1 and 2
sub. *p*

N Relaxed ♩ = 112

But the mer - ry days of youth is be-

191

Tempo I ♩ = 144

yond our con - trol, ——— At it's hard to part fer - ev - er with the old

198

(clap)

swim - min' - hole

Composer notes

I composed “The Old Swimmin’-Hole” for the Phoenix Boys Choir's 2024 New Works Rising composition competition. The competition's theme was "True North", which I interpreted as something that provides guidance and grounding for an individual — something familiar and comforting.

The poem I chose to set is James Whitcomb Riley's “The Old Swimmin’-Hole,” which my elementary school librarian read to me and my class years ago. I fondly remember how she introduced me to poetry with the same enthusiasm that I now have for it. When I think of her, I am reminded of all the people who have helped shape who I am today. This includes not only my elementary school librarian, but also my family, friends, teachers and neighbours. The thought that I am a product of people who care about me is grounding. It comforts me to know that those people exist, and that I can be one of those people for someone else, too.

Riley’s poem fits the theme especially well, as the speaker reflects on a childhood swimming hole that occupies a special place in their memory. It guides them towards the innocence and simplicity of life they had as children. Although the speaker seems sad that those days are behind them, the memory of this swimming hole consoles them.

What's more, James Whitcomb Riley and I are both from Indiana. Although the Hoosier dialect has changed since Riley's time, I feel connected to his writing and how it reminds me of my roots.

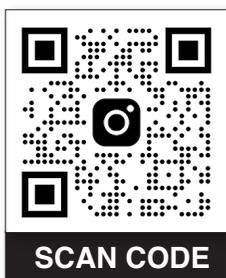
Text

“Oh! the old swimmin’-hole! whare the crick so still and deep
Looked like a baby-river that was laying half asleep,
And the gurgle of the worter round the drift jest below
Sounded like the laugh of something we onc't ust to know
Before we could remember anything but the eyes
Of the angels lookin' out as we left Paradise;
But the merry days of youth is beyond our controle,
And it's hard to part ferever with the old swimmin’-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin’-hole! In the happy days of yore,
When I ust to lean above it on the old sickamore,
Oh! it showed me a face in its warm sunny tide
That gazed back at me so gay and glorified,
It made me love myself, as I leaped to caress
My shadder smilin' up at me with sich tenderness.

But the merry days of youth is beyond our controle,
And it's hard to part ferever with the old swimmin’-hole.

*Includes text from James Whitcomb Riley’s poem
“The Old Swimmin’-Hole”*



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