



The
CONGO

Poem by
VACHEL LINDSAY

Music by
ARTHUR BERGH

A Cycle of Songs



OLIVER DITSON COMPANY

81979

A CYCLE OF SONGS FOR BARITONE

THE CONGO

POEM BY
VACHEL LINDSAY

MUSIC BY
ARTHUR BERGH



1.25

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THE CONGO

A STUDY OF THE NEGRO RACE

I

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings with feet unstable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able, Boom, Boom, Boom!
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, Boomlay, Boomlay, Boom!
Then I had religion, then I had a vision,
I could not turn from their revels in derision.
Then I saw the Congo creeping through the Black,
Cutting through the jungle with a golden track.
Then along that river bank a thousand miles,
Tattooed cannibals danced in files,
Then I heard the boom of the blood lust song,
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong.
And Blood! screamed the whistles and the fifes of the
warriors,
Blood! screamed the skull-faced lean witch doctors,
Whirl ye the deadly voodoo rattle,
Harry the uplands, steal all the cattle,
Rattle, rattle, rattle, rattle, Bing!
Boomlay, Boomlay, Boomlay, Boom!
A roaring epic ragtime tune,
From the mouth of the Congo to the mountains of the
moon.
Death is an elephant, torch-eyed and horrible,
Foam-flanked and terrible, Boom, steal the pygmies,
Boom, kill the Arabs, Boom, kill the white men,
Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!
Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost,
Burning in hell for his hand-maimed host,
Hear how the demons chuckle and yell,
Cutting his hands off down in hell.
Listen to the sleepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest nation,
Blown past the white ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play.
Be careful what you do or Mumbo Jumbo, God of the
Congo,
And all of the other Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo Jumbo will hoodoo you.

II

Wild crap shooters with a whoop and a call
Danced the juba in their gambling hall,
And laughed fit to kill and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen, and laughed them down,
With a Boomlay, Boomlay, Boomlay, Boom!
Then I saw the Congo creeping through the Black,
Cutting through the jungle with a golden track,
A negro fairy-land swung into view,
A minstrel river where dreams come true,
The ebony palace soared on high,
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky,
The inlaid porches and casements shone
With gold and ivory and elephant bone.
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That thrilled on the bushes of that magic land.
A troupe of skull-faced witch men came
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,
Yea, longtailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond dust,
And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call,
And danced the juba from wall to wall.
But the witch men suddenly stilled the throng
With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song,
Mumbo Jumbo will hoodoo you.
Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes,
Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats.
Came with a brilliant lacquer shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.
And they pranced with their butterfly partners there,
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair.
Knee skirts trimmed with the jassamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black feet,
And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
Of the witch men lean, and laughed them down.
Oh, rare was the revel and well worth while,
That made those glowering witch men smile.
The cake-walk royalty then began
To walk for a cake that was big as a man
To the tune of Boomlay, Boomlay, Boom!
While the witch men laughed with a sinister air,
And sang with the scalawags prancing there,
Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo Jumbo will hoodoo you,
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, Boomlay, Boomlay, Boom!
Oh, rare was the revel and well worth while,
That made those glowering witch men smile.

III

A good old negro in the slums of the town
Preached at a sister for her velvet gown,
Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
His prowling, guzzling sneak-thief days,
Beat on the Bible till he wore it out,
Starting the jubilee revival shout,
And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
And sang of Jacob and the golden stairs.
And they all repented a thousand strong,
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong,
And slammed with their hymn books till they shook
the room,
Of "Glory, Glory, Glory" and "Boom, Boom, Boom!"
Then I saw the Congo creeping through the Black,
Cutting through the jungle with a golden track.
And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
And showed the apostles with their coats of mail.
In bright white steel they were seated round,
And their fire eyes watched where the Congo wound.
And the twelve apostles from their thrones on high
Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry,
"Mumbo Jumbo will die in the jungle,
Never again will he hoodoo you."
Then along that river a thousand miles
The vine-snared trees fell down in files,
Pioneer angels cleared the way
For a Congo Paradise for babes at play,
For sacred capitals, temples clean.
Gone were the skull-faced witch men lean,
There where the wild ghost gods had wailed,
A million boats of the angels sailed,
With oars of silver and prows of blue,
And silken pennants the sun shone through.
'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation,
Oh, a singing wind swept the negro nation,
And on through the backwoods clearing flew,
"Mumbo Jumbo will die in the jungle,
Never again will he hoodoo you."
Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men,
And only the vulture dared again,
By the far lone mountains of the moon,
To cry in silence, the Congo tune,
"Mumbo Jumbo will hoodoo you."

VACHEL LINDSAY.

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THE CONGO

A STUDY OF THE NEGRO RACE

VACHEL LINDSAY

ARTHUR BERGH, Op. 25

I (THEIR BASIC SAVAGERY)

Allegro moderato

f

VOICE

Fat black bucks in a wine-bar-rel room,

PIANO

ff

f

The first system of music features a voice line in bass clef and a piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs. The piano part consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato' and the dynamic is 'f'.

Bar-rel-house kings with feet un - sta - ble, Sagg'd and reel'd and

The second system continues the musical piece with the same voice and piano parts. The piano accompaniment maintains a steady rhythmic pattern.

pound-ed on the ta-ble, pound-ed on the ta-ble, Beat an

The third system concludes the piece with the final vocal phrase and piano accompaniment. The piano part features a final chord with a dynamic marking of 'f'.

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emp - ty bar - rel with the han - dle of a broom,

ff

8va basso.....

Hard as they were a - ble, Boom, Boom, Boom!

rit.

rit.

ff

mf

8va basso.....

a tempo With a silk - um - brel - la and the

mf

han - dle of a broom, Boom - lay, Boom - lay, Boom - lay, Boom!

poco rit.

poco rit.

f

Andante con espressione *p*

Then I had re - li - gion, then I had a

The first system of the score features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower two staves. The tempo is marked 'Andante con espressione' and the dynamic is 'p'. The lyrics are 'Then I had re - li - gion, then I had a'. The piano part includes triplets and various chordal textures.

vis - ion,

The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'vis - ion,'. The piano part features a prominent triplet in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand.

I could not turn from their rev-els in de - ris - ion.

The third system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'I could not turn from their rev-els in de - ris - ion.' The piano part includes a 'mf' dynamic marking and features a more active accompaniment with moving lines in both hands.

Maestoso (Spoken, very deliberate)

Then I saw the Congo creeping thro' the Black, Cutting thro' the jungle with a golden track.

The fourth system is marked 'Maestoso' and '(Spoken, very deliberate)'. The lyrics are 'Then I saw the Congo creeping thro' the Black, Cutting thro' the jungle with a golden track.' The piano part features a heavy, block-like accompaniment with 'ff' and 'p' dynamics, and includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) section at the end.

*) South East African melody "Thata Nabandii"

Allegro

Then a-long that riv-er bank a thou - sand miles, Tat - toed can - ni - bals

danced in files, Then I heard the boom of the blood - lust song, And a

thigh-bone beat - ing on a tin - pan gong. And Blood! scream'd the whis - tles and the

fifes of the war - riors, Blood! scream'd the skull - faced lean witch doc - tors,

p cresc.

Whirl ye the dead - ly voo - doo rat - tle, Har - ry the up - lands,

p cresc.

steal all the cat - tle, Rat - tle, rat - tle, rat - tle, rat - tle, Bing!

f *accel.*

f *ff* *accel.*

ff rit. molto *Moderato assai*

Boom - lay, Boom - lay, Boom - lay, Boom! A roar - ing ep - ic

rit. molto *mf*

rag - time tune, From the mouth of the Con - go to the moun - tains of the moon.

rit. *f* *rit.*

Allegro

mf

Death is an el-e-phant, torch-eyed and hor-ri-ble, Foam - flank'd and

mf *cresc. molto*

ter-ri-ble, Boom, steal the pyg-mies, Boom, kill the A-rabs,

f

Boom, kill the white men, Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!

dim. *p* *ff*

Lis-ten to the yell of Le-o-pold's ghost, Burn-ing in hell for his

fff *mf*

hand - maim'd host, Hear how the de - mons chuck-le and yell,

Cut-ting his hands off down in hell. — *poco rit.*

Andante sostenuto
p Lis-ten to the sleep - y pro - cla - ma - tion, Blown thro' the lairs of the

dolce cantabile
 for - est na - tion, Blown past the white_ ants' hill_ of clay,
p dolce cantabile

f ad lib.

Blown past the marsh where the but-ter-flies play. Be care-ful what you do, or

The first system of music consists of a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by another triplet, and then a half note. The piano accompaniment features a similar triplet pattern in the right hand and a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) is present in the piano part.

mf Tempo I

Mum - bo Jum - bo, God of the Con - go, And all of the oth - er Gods of the Con - go,

mf a rigore di tempo

The second system of music features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a tempo instruction of *Tempo I*. The piano accompaniment is marked *mf a rigore di tempo* and consists of a steady eighth-note bass line and a right hand with chords and eighth notes.

Mum - bo Jum - bo will hoo - doo you, Mum - bo Jum - bo will hoo - doo you,

The third system of music continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a melodic line with a slight rise and then a fall. The piano accompaniment remains consistent with the previous systems.

Mum - bo Jum - bo will hoo - doo you.

The fourth system of music concludes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line ends with a long note and a fermata. The piano accompaniment features a final chord with a fermata.

II
(THEIR IRREPRESSIBLE HIGH SPIRITS)

ARTHUR BERGH

Allegro moderato (In the manner of an American coon song)

PIANO

ff

The first system of the piano introduction, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef). The music is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It begins with a forte (ff) dynamic and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand, with a bass line of quarter notes in the left hand.

The second system of the piano introduction, continuing the rhythmic pattern from the first system. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps.

The third system of the piano introduction, continuing the rhythmic pattern. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps. A dynamic marking of *f* appears at the end of the system.

Wild crap

The fourth system of the piano introduction, continuing the rhythmic pattern. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps. A dynamic marking of *mf* appears in the middle of the system.

shoot-ers with a whoop and a call Danced the ju-ba in their gam-bling

hall, And laugh'd fit to kill and shook the town, And guy'd the po-

lice-men and laugh'd them down, With a Boom-lay, Boom-lay, Boom-lay, Boom!

Maestoso (spoken)

Then I saw the Congo creeping thro' the black, Cutting through the jungle with a golden track,

Andante espressivo

A ne-gro fai-ry-land swung in-to view, A

min - strel riv - er where dreams come true, The eb - o - ny pal - ace soar'd on

pp *p cresc.*

high, Thro' the blos - som - ing trees — to the eve - ning sky,

mf *pp*

The in - laid porch - es and case - ments shone With gold and i - vry and

el - e - phant bone. And the

mf *rit.* *mf*

Allegretto moderato

black crowd laugh'd till their sides— were sore At the

ba - boon but - ler in the a - - gate door, And the

well - known tunes of the par - rot band That

poco rit.
trill'd on the bush - es of that mag - ic land.

mf poco rit.

Allegro non troppo

A

ff

decresc.

troupe of skull-faced witch men came Thro' the a - gate door - way in

mf sempre marcato

suits of flame, Yea, long - tail'd coats with a gold - leaf crust And

hats that were cov - er'd with dia - mond dust, And the crowd in the court gave a

cresc.

f

whoop and a call, And danced the ju - ba from wall to wall.

(boisterously)
f cresc.

But the

cresc. ed accel. *ff*

Largamente

witch men sud - den - ly still'd the throng With a stern cold glare and a

p stern old song, Mum - bo Jum - bo will hoo - doo you. *mf* Just

p *pp*

8va *bassa*.....

Allegro

then from the door - way, as fat as shotes, Came the cake walk prin - ces in their

mf

long red coats, Came with a bril - liant lac - quer shine, And

tall silk hats that were red as wine.

ff

And they pranced with their but-ter-fly part-ners there,

p subito

Coal-black maid-ens with pearls in their hair, Knee skirts trimm'd with the

jas-sa-mine sweet, And bells on their an-kles and lit-tle black feet, And the

cou-ples rail'd at the chant and the frown, Of the witch men lean, and

cresc. ed accel.

cresc. ed accel.

laugh'd them down. Oh,

Largamente

rare was the revel and well worth while, That made those glow-er-ing witchmen smile!

Tempo I

The cake walk

roy - al - ty then be - gan To walk for a cake that was

big as a man To the tune of Boom-lay, Boom-lay, Boom! While the

(spoken)

mf

witch men laughed with a sinister air, And sang with the scalawags prancing there,

(rhythm indicated)

Walk with care, walk with care, Or Mumbo Jumbo,

f. *p*

God of the Congo, And all of the other Gods of the Congo,

fff

(In strict rhythm)

Mumbo Jumbo will hoodoo you, Be - ware, be - ware, walk with care,

Boom-lay, Boom-lay, Boom-lay, Boom, Boom-lay, Boom-lay, Boom-lay, Boom, Boom-lay, Boom-lay,

p *cresc.* - *ed* -

p *L.H. cresc.* - *ed* -

Pedal

Boom-lay, Boom, Boom-lay, Boom-lay, Boom-lay, Boom! Oh, rare was the revel and

accel. - *Largamente* *f*

accel. - *ffz* *f*

well worth while, That madethose glow-er-ing witch men smile.

p *rit.* *3* *3* *L.H.* *rit.* *p*

III

(THE HOPE OF THEIR RELIGION)

ARTHUR BERGH

Allegro (*Spoken*)

VOICE

A good old negro in the

PIANO

ff *f*

slums of the town Preached at a sister for her velvet gown, Howled at a brother

for his low down ways, His prowling, guzzling sneak thief days, Beat on the Bible

till he wore it out, Starting the jubilee revival shout, And some had visions, as

^{*)} American Negro melody "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel."

they stood on chairs, And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs And they all re-pent-ed a

thou-sand strong, From their stu - por and sav - a - gery and sin - and wrong.

Allegro

Moderato e marcato

Allegro

And slamm'd with their-hymn books till they shook the room,

Moderato

Of "Glo - ry, Glo - ry, Glo - ry" and

rit. *f* *p*

"Boom, Boom, Boom!" *rit.*

Andantino

(Spoken)

Then I saw the Congo
creeping through the black,

Allegro moderato
Quasi recitativo

Cutting through the jungle with a golden track. And the gray sky o-pen'd like a new- rent

veil, And show'd the a-pos-tles with their coats of

mail. In bright white steel they were seat-ed round,

And their fire eyes watch'd where the Con-go wound.

ff *rit.*

L.H. *mf*

And the twelve a - pos - tles from their thrones on high Thrill'd

mf

*) Andante con moto

all the for - est with their heavn - ly cry, "Mum - bo Jum - bo will

p

*) "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices"

die in the jun - gle, Nev - er a - gain will he hoo - doo you,

Nev-er a-gain will he hoo-doo you''

pp

Andante espressivo

Then a - long that riv-er, a

p

thou - sand miles, The vine snared trees fell down in files,

p

Pi-o-neer an-gels clear'd the way For a Con-go Pa-ra - dise for

The first system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It contains three measures of music, each starting with a triplet of eighth notes. The lyrics are "Pi-o-neer an-gels clear'd the way For a Con-go Pa-ra - dise for". The piano accompaniment is shown in grand staff notation (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays chords and moving lines, while the left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and mezzo-forte (*mf*).

babes at play, a Pa-ra - dise for babes at play, For

The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has three measures, with the lyrics "babes at play, a Pa-ra - dise for babes at play, For". The piano accompaniment continues with similar textures. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and mezzo-forte (*mf*).

sa - cred cap-i - tals, tem-ples clean.

The third system concludes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has three measures with the lyrics "sa - cred cap-i - tals, tem-ples clean.". The piano accompaniment continues. Dynamics include mezzo-forte (*mf*).

recitative
mf Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.

rit.

The fourth system is a recitative section. The vocal line is marked *recitative* and *mf*. It has three measures with the lyrics "Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.". The piano accompaniment is sparse, with chords and single notes. The tempo is marked *rit.* (ritardando). The system ends with a 3/4 time signature change.

Moderato assai

mf

There where the wild ghost gods had wail'd A

8 *rit.*
mf *p a tempo*

mil-lion boats of the an-gels sail'd, With oars of sil-ver and

f *p*

prows of blue, And silk-en pen-nants the sun shone thro'.

f

a tempo

'Twas a land trans-fig-ured,

a tempo

rit. molto *f* *ff* *ff*

f *Con moto*

'twas a new cre-a-tion,— Oh, a sing-ing wind — swept the

rit.

ne - gro na - tion, And on thro' the back woods clear-ing flew,

rit.

p meno mosso

"Mum- bo Jum - bo will die in the jun - gle, Nev-er a-gain will he hoo - doo you,

p meno mosso

Largamente

Nev-er a - gain will he hoo - doo you." Re -

rit. molto

mf *ffz*

Moderato maestoso

deem'd were the for - ests, the beasts and the men, And on - ly the vul - ture

mf *cresc.* *L.H.* *f*

dared a-gain, By the far lone moun-tains of the moon, ——— To cry in the si-lence, the

p *f* *mf*

rit. molto *p a tempo*

Con - go tune, "Mum-bo Jum - bo will hoo-doo you, Mum - bo Jum - bo will

rit. molto *a tempo* *p* *pp*

hoo-doo you, Mum-bo Jum - bo will hoo-doo you."

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