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To facilitate rehearsals of the opera, the page numbers in this edition match those of the piano/vocal score, hence the gaps in page numbering and blank pages for even/odd page numbers.

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Commissioned and first performed by Texas State University,
Dr. Samuel Mungo, Opera Director

Lady Bird
First Lady of the Land
an Opera in One Act

Libretto by **Sheldon Harnick**

Music by **Henry Mollicone**

Duration: 60:00

Cast (Principle Roles)

Lady Bird Johnson Soprano
Young Lady Bird Soprano (younger)
Luci Baines Johnson (daughter) Soprano
Lynda Bird Johnson (daughter) Mezzo-Soprano
Young Lyndon Johnson Tenor
President Lyndon Johnson Baritone
SATB Chorus of at least 24 voices

Smaller Roles (may be cast from the Chorus)

3 Advisors to LBJ Tenor, Baritone and Bass (or Baritone)
Announcer on Train (local politicians) Baritone
Three Rednecks Tenor, 2 Baritones
(should NOT have trained voices, and sing in a "Hillbilly" style with a "mountain" accent.)
Young man Need not be a professional voice
(black if possible for the "Civil Rights" number)
Judge Sarah Hughes (middle aged woman) Speaking Role
a Steward Speaking Role
Justice Earl Warren Speaking Role
Jackie Kennedy Female Supernumerary (non-speaking)

Available Editions

Piano/Vocal Score, 8506
Choral Part, 8506A
Additional Orchestra Score, 8507
Additional Chamber Ensemble Score, 8508
Full Scores and Instrumental Parts, Rental

Synopsis

It is November 22, 1963. John F. Kennedy has been assassinated. On Airforce One, Lyndon Baines Johnson is being sworn in as the new president. A small group, including Lady Bird Johnson and Jacqueline Kennedy, witnesses the ceremony. In an internal monologue, Lady Bird reminisces; as long as she has known him, LBJ has always wanted to be president. She remembers the breakfast she shared with him thirty years earlier in Dallas. We see this breakfast acted out by a young LBJ and a young Lady Bird. Although this was their very first date, to her astonishment and amusement, it ended with LBJ proposing to her, and we learn that, improbably, within two months of that meeting, she and LBJ were married.

We see a series of projections reminding us of the way black activists struggled to win civil rights for their people. This is accompanied by the chorus singing a semi-gospel song: *A Long Time Coming*. This culminates in a projection telling us that LBJ has managed to persuade Congress to pass a Civil Rights Bill.

Now we witness a meeting between LBJ and his political advisors. Having just become president in 1963, LBJ finds that he must already begin to campaign for the presidential election in 1964. His advisors remind him that the Civil Rights Bill has in all probability cost him the South. They convince him that he must find some well-liked Southerner who can campaign for him in the Southern states.

The scene shifts to the Johnson home. In a scene with Lady Bird and the Johnson daughters, Lynda, and Luci, LBJ asks for their opinions: should he run again? Lady Bird, Lynda and Luci all enthusiastically agree that he should. But, when LBJ asks Lady Bird to campaign for him in the South, she demurs. She tells him that she is too shy and inexperienced to do as he asks. As an inducement, LBJ tells her that if he is re-elected, he will pass a bill to beautify the country, and he will put her in charge.

Alone, Lady Bird considers LBJ's request. A suppressed memory rises to the surface of her mind. She recalls a horrific incident she witnessed as a young woman. This memory is then acted out: several drunken rednecks murder a black man. This appalling memory convinces her that she must overcome her fears and campaign for her husband.

What follows are three scenes in which Lady Bird campaigns for LBJ in the South. She travels on the Ladybird Express and addresses crowds from the rear platform of the train. On the second of the stops, Lynda and Luci do some campaigning themselves. We see that the further south they go, the angrier and more resentful the crowds are about LBJ's promulgation of the Civil Rights Bill. An FBI man tells Lady Bird to cancel the rest of the tour because there is a possibility that a bomb has been planted on the train. Lady Bird is firm in her decision to continue the tour. During the three campaign stops, we see the dignity, intelligence, and bravery with which Lady Bird handles the obstreperous crowds.

A new projection tells us that LBJ has won the presidency in a landslide. In the final scene of the opera, once again LBJ is being sworn in, and once again we hear Lady Bird's internal thoughts as she looks forward to her new role as the person who will "beautify this blessed land." As Lady Bird sings, our chorus joins her in a grand choral finale, while we see projections of field after field of beautiful flowers.

Sheldon Harnick (b. 1924)

For biographical information visit:
www.masterworksbroadway.com/artist/sheldon-harnick

Henry Mollicone (b. 1946)

For biographical information visit:
www.henrymollicone.com

Lady Bird

First Lady of the Land

an Opera in One Act

Sheldon Harnick

Henry Mollicone (BMI)

Prelude

Allegro non troppo ♩ = 120

Piano

f

3

(lower octave optional)

5

7

10

mf cresc.

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HUGHES: *Good luck, Mr. President.*

LBJ kisses BIRD
on the cheek.

LIGHTS fade as the
plane set vanishes.
ALL EXIT.

LBJ: *...the Constitution of the United States.*

15 *lunga*

Scene 4

[Projection: Washington, D. C., 1963]

A MAN (preferably African-American) enters, holding the hand of his little boy, looking happy. Chorus is unseen.

Largo ♩ = 58

BARITONE
or TENOR *Solo** *p legato*

T B

It's been a long time com-ing but jus-tice is at hand. Been a

Largo ♩ = 58

p

CHORUS is now seen

Moderate Gospel tempo ♩ = 84

4

S A

T B

All Women *f*

All Men *f*

Why_ it

Why_ it

long time com-ing but jus-tice is at hand.

Moderate Gospel tempo ♩ = 84

f

*Cue-sized notes are to be substituted when this solo is performed by a Tenor.

[PROJECTION: We now see pictures of the March on Washington.]

7

S
A

came so slow - ly is hard to un - der - stand. Been a

T
B

came so slow - ly is hard to un - der - stand. Been a

stacc. sempre

9

S
A

long time com - ing but jus - tice is at hand.

T
B

long time com - ing but jus - tice is at hand. Four

unis. mf

11

S
A

Could - n't

T
B

hun - dred years of heart - ache, then thou - sands took a stand.

mf

13

S
A

bear much more heart-ache so thou-sands took a stand, chas-ing the

T
B

chas-ing the

15

S
A

dream life de-nied them year by end-less year. Been a

T
B

dream life de-nied them year by end-less year. Been a

17

S
A

long time com-ing but now at last it's here.

T
B

long time com-ing but now at last it's here.

19

S A *f* It's been a long time com - ing — but jus - tice is at hand. Been a

T B *f* It's been a long time com - ing — but jus - tice is at hand. Been a

staccato

22

S A long time com - ing — but jus - tice is at hand. They had to

T B long time com - ing — but jus - tice is at hand.

unis. marcato

24

S A *mf* march through Ge - hen - na to reach the prom - ised land. —

T B *mf* To reach the prom - ised land. — *unis.* Had to

8vb

26

S A

To reach the prom - ised land. — They had to

T B

march through Ge - hen - na to reach the prom - ised land. — They had to

8vb loco

28

S A

march, — they had to march, — they had to

T B

march, — they had to march, — they had to

un. cresc.

un. cresc.

p cresc.

30

S A

march through Ge - hen - na to reach the prom - ised land. — Had to

T B

march through Ge - hen - na to reach the prom - ised land. — Had to

f

[PROJECTION: Congress passes the Civil Right's Bill]

32

S
A

T
B

poco rit.
cresc.

Poco meno mosso
ff

march through Ge - hen - na to reach the prom - ised land. — Been - a

march through Ge - hen - na to reach the prom - ised land. — Been - a

poco rit.

Poco meno mosso
sf
ff

34

S
A
T
B

staccato

long time com - ing but just - ice is at hand. Been a

long time com - ing but just - ice is at hand. Been a

long time com - ing but just - ice is at hand. Been a

long time com - ing but just - ice is at hand. Been a

Scene 9

LADY BIRD waves to the CROWD, then steps back into the train. Lights dim on the train but remain up on the ENSEMBLE. The "Lady Bird Express" music begins and the ENSEMBLE moves to new positions onstage (conveying the idea that the train has travelled to a new location). Two members of the ENSEMBLE exit into the wings and return with two more signs: "Say Nay to LBJ" and "LBJ, We Will Barry you!"

Moderato ♩ = 112

Train whistle

1

4

7

10

12

f *sf* *f*

14

S *f*
Yup! With - out a doubt this is the La - dy Bird Ex - press.

A *f*
Yup! With - out a doubt this is the La - dy Bird Ex - press.

T *f*
Yup! With - out a doubt this is the La - dy Bird Ex - press. *p* I

B *f*
Yup! With - out a doubt this is the La - dy Bird Ex - press. *p* I

sf (*f*)

17

S *p* *mf* *f*
I won - der how she'll dress. She's

A *p* *mf* *f*
I won - der how she'll dress. She's

T *f*
won - der what she'll say to us. She's

B *f*
won - der what she'll say to us. She's

p *mf* *sf*

19

S
gon - na find that feel - ings here are run - ning ver - y strong. *p* So

A
gon - na find that feel - ings here are run - ning ver - y strong. *p* So

T
gon - na find that feel - ings here are run - ning ver - y strong.

B
gon - na find that feel - ings here are run - ning ver - y strong.

The piano accompaniment for measures 19-20 features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a more complex melody in the right hand, primarily using eighth and sixteenth notes. The music is in a minor key, indicated by the key signature of two flats.

21

S
e - ven if she speaks well,

A
e - ven if she speaks well, *mf* She'll

T
mp I know she won't con - vince me.

B
mp I know she won't con - vince me. *mf* She'll

The piano accompaniment for measures 21-24 continues with the same rhythmic pattern. Measures 21-22 are marked *p*, while measures 23-24 are marked *mp*. The accompaniment provides a harmonic and rhythmic foundation for the vocal lines.

23

S *f* when he was wrong! -

A say that L - B - J did what was right

T *f* when he was wrong! -

B say that L - B - J did what was right

mf cresc.

25

S *unis. f* NO! What he did was wrong!

A What he did was right! *sf (shouted)* What he did was right!

T NO! What he did was wrong!

B *unis. f* What he did was right! *sf (shouted)* What he did was right!

After the final projection, the lights come up on the ENSEMBLE and the train. Two ENSEMBLE members step into the wings and bring out two more signs: "Black Bird Fly Away" and "LBJ is a Communist."

10

sf *sf* *sf* *p cresc.*

13

(cresc.) *f*

15

S
A

f

Has to be her train, so an - y min - ute she'll ap - pear now.

T
B

f *unis. p*

Has to be her train, so an - y min - ute she'll ap - pear now. But