

SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A MOTHERLESS CHILD

Unison, optional Two-Part, accompanied

Traditional Spiritual

Arranged by
LYNN SHAW BAILEY

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Range:



Time: Approx. 2:50

*Difficulty: Moderate

Performance Notes

Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child is an intensely emotional song. This traditional Afro-American spiritual is believed to have originated late in the 19th century and captures the lamentations of a hurting yet hopeful soul.

But we might not know about this song or many other spirituals we sing today had it not been for the work of Henry “Harry” Thacker Burleigh.

Harry Burleigh was born in 1866 in Erie, Pennsylvania. His father was active in local Civil Rights and Abolition movements. His mother was a college graduate and a teacher, as well as the daughter of a freed slave named Hamilton Waters. Grandfather Waters frequently sang spirituals to Harry as they walked the streets together. Harry also had other positive influences in his life and a legacy of quiet heroes.

Burleigh became a world-famous composer, arranger and soloist, as well as an internationally-respected music editor and humanitarian. Burleigh was one of the first to compose American spirituals in classical composition form. He and Anton Dvorak spent time together. Through his passionate work, Harry T. Burleigh bridged cultures, races and nations by using the inspiring songs of his ancestors.

Because he popularized the spirituals and showed the world their great power and beauty, Harry T. Burleigh became known as the “Father of Spirituals.” Burleigh's arrangement of *Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child* was first published for accompanied solo voice in 1917 by G. Ricordi & Co. of New York. Burleigh placed the expression “Lamentoso” at the beginning of the piece, an Italian word indicating a plaintive, sad or mournful mood.

In the original performance notes to this piece, Burleigh shares that success in singing this song is “primarily dependent upon deep spiritual feeling. The voice is not nearly so important as the spirit.”

When singing these great spirituals, Burleigh says, “Their worth is weakened unless they are done impressively, for through all these songs there breathes a hope, a faith in the ultimate justice and brotherhood of man. The cadences of sorrow invariably turn to joy, and the message is ever manifest that eventually deliverance from all that hinders and oppresses the soul will come, and man--every man--will be free.”

So learn the right notes, words and rhythms. Sing with beautiful tone and dynamic integrity. Do all the right things from a "musical" perspective. But take it to the next level. Ask yourself, “What does it feel like to be an orphan?” Through the music, let your spirit feel and express the deep hurts and hopes of another. Create joy from the pain. Sow a seed of encouragement and love. Only then does your singing really nurture you and others. Only then does the music transcend the spiritual to become all the blessing it was created to be...

Soli Deo Gloria!

L.S.B.

Unison, optional Two-Part, accompanied

Arranged with Additional Music by
LYNN SHAW BAILEY (ASCAP)

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". It is written for voice and piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music is in common time, with a tempo marking of "mp" (moderato piano). The score consists of two systems. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a half note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note pattern. The score ends with a double bar line.

4
I
II
(opt.)

unis. *mp*

Some-times I feel like a moth-er-less child. —

The musical score is for a piano piece. It features a vocal line (I, II, (opt.)) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo/mood is marked 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The lyrics are 'Some-times I feel like a moth-er-less child. —'. The piano part consists of a right hand with flowing sixteenth-note passages and a left hand with block chords. A large red watermark 'Screen Int or Copy' is visible across the score.

7

Some-times I feel like a moth-er-less child. Oh, some-times I feel like a

The musical score is for a song in G major (one sharp). It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: 'Some-times I feel like a moth-er-less child. Oh, some-times I feel like a'. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: a right hand with a treble clef and a left hand with a bass clef. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note bass line, while the right hand plays chords and single notes. The score is marked with a '7' at the beginning, indicating a specific measure or section.

10

I

moth-er-less child, _ far, far a - way from home; _ a

II (opt.)

moth-er-less child, _ far, far a - way from home; _ a

13

mf

long, long way _ from home. _ Some-times I feel like I'm

mf

long, long way _ from home. _ Ah, _

16

al-read - y gone. _ Some-times I feel like I'm al-read-y gone. _ Oh,

ah, _ Oh,

19

some-times I feel like I'm al-read-y gone, far, far a -

ah, far, far a -

22

way from home, a long, long way from home. way from home, a long, long way from home.

way from home, a long, long way from home. way from home, a long, long way from home.

More driven and desperate

25

Oh, my Lord, my heart is break-in'. I feel so sad, my Oh, my Lord, my heart is break-in'. I feel so sad, my

More driven and desperate

More driven and desperate

bones are ach-in'. Oh, my soul, well it wants to be glad, but I'm

bones are ach-in' Oh, my soul, well it wants to be glad, but I'm

mf

mf

mf

tired of be-ing a-lone. Oh, my Lord, I

tired of be-ing a-lone. Oh, my Lord, I

mf

wan-na go home.

wan-na go home.

mf

37 *mp* *f with frustration*

Some-times I feel like a moth-er-less child._ Some-times I feel like a

mp *f with frustration*

Some-times I feel like a moth-er-less child._ Some-times I feel like a

mp *f*

40 *mf* *pensive mood*

moth-er-less child._ Oh, some-times I feel like a moth-er-less child,_

mf *pensive mood*

moth-er-less child._ Oh, some-times I feel like a moth-er-less child,_

mf

43

far, far a - way from home;_ a long, long way_ from home._

far, far a - way from home;_ a long, long way_ from home._

mp
I'm a long, long way from home.

mp
I'm a long, long way from home.

mp

p slight rit.

p slight rit.

p slight rit.

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