

J O A N S Z Y M K O

# At the Shore of the World

*My heart beats her waves at the shore of the world  
and writes upon it her signature,  
in tears with the words:  
"I love thee"*

## NOTES from the COMPOSER

The “seed” of this work is a chant I composed while I was a Fellow at *Instituto Sacatar*, an artist residency in Bahia, Brazil (2009). I was there in part to observe music and festivities surrounding the large annual *Festival de Iemanjá* on February 2. I also explored the mythology and music of the African sourced spirituality, *candomblé* with its pantheon of Afro Brazilian gods and goddesses, called *orixás*. *Yemanjá* (Yoruba spelling) is the *orixá* of “the waters.” All life is dependent on water and so *Yemanjá* is also considered the Mother of Life. Two short *candomblé* song texts (one in the original Yoruba language, the other translated into Portuguese) honoring *Yemanjá* are combined with a lovely poem by Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore that, in this work, serves as the voice of *Yemanjá*. And so this is a love song of sorts between the world (people) and the waters (*Yemanjá*). For some time now, I have been of the belief the human race is coming to a “threshold”— a point of no return, in regards to our relationship to our planet. My hope is that this work will be sung to bring awareness to our dependence on our Mother Earth and on her suffering.

The traditional rhythm, *Ijexá* is an integral part of “At the Shore of the World.” It is one of the *candomblé* rhythms used to accompany songs honoring *Yemanjá*. (*Ijexá* tutorials can be found on YouTube.) Conga type drums are preferred. *Lé* and *Rumpi* are drums used in *candomblé*. A high (*quinto*) and medium (*conga*) conga styled drums are the best approximation. It is important that the drummers play what’s in the score. Once the patterns start, they don’t vary. ( Although there are important stops and dynamics to observe.) In selecting an agogo (2-tone Brazilian bell) take care that the pitches of the bell do not clash with tonality the piece. If an agogo bell with compatible pitches is not available, a single cowbell or wood block of indiscriminate pitch can be used (playing both high and low notes). The piece can stand on its own with just the percussion as accompaniment; although piano is definitely preferred when available. A separate percussion score is available.

### PERCUSSION KEY

S = slap tone

O = open tone

M = muffled

t = touch with fingertips (ghost notes)

Regarding Ms.61-65: the “sh” of shore should be lengthened— make half the duration of the note preceding the word “shore” an “SH” sound that intensifies an opens to the vowel. (the white noise of the “SH” employed so as to sound like waves crashing on the shore).

—Joan Szymko

## TEXT

*A wà ààbò a yó Yemanjá* (trad. candomblé song text)

*Iemanjá do rio somos seus filhos* (trad. candomblé song text)

My heart beats her waves  
at the shore of the world  
and writes upon it her  
signature in tears with the  
words “I love thee.” (R. Tagore)

## TRANSLATION

*A wà ààbò a yó Yemanjá* (Yoruba)  
Yemanjá, protect us and fill us with contentment

(Portuguese)  
Yemanja of the river/waters, we are your children

(About the spelling of the goddess name:  
For consistency’s sake, I elected to use just the Yoruba  
spelling and one pronunciation. Yoruba is the African  
language of *candomblé*)

## PRONUNCIATION

*A wà ààbò a yó* ah wàh àh boh ah yoh  
- “à” is brighter as in “ask”  
- no diphthong on “oh”

Yemanjá yay-mā-zhah  
- ā (nasalized)  
- “zh” as in “azure”

*Iemanjá do rio* yay-mā-zhah (as before)  
doo -HEE- ooh

*somos seus filhos* SOH-mohs SAY-oos  
FEE-leeyoos

For information about the composer  
see: [www.joanszymko.com](http://www.joanszymko.com)

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in memory of Leslie Farrell Threadgill.

# At the Shore of the World

Traditional *Candomblé* song texts  
for Orixá, Yemanjá (source: Bahia, Brazil)  
and Rabindranth Tagore (1861-1941)

Joan Szymko

The musical score is arranged for a chamber ensemble. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 84. The percussion parts (Agogo and Congas) play a rhythmic pattern in 4/4 time, with the Agogo marked *mp*. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The Soprano part is marked *Lyrical*. The Tenor part has a section marked "solo (opt.) or section" starting in the second measure, with dynamics *mf* and *f*. The lyrics "Ye-man já, Ye man - já" are written under the Tenor line. The Piano part (Pno.) is in the bass clef and features a melodic line with dynamics *mp* and *mf*, including a fermata in the final measure.

5

Ag. *mp* S S O S t S O

Lé

S *mf* 3 3  
Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já

A

T *mf* Tutti 3 3  
À - wa àà - bò a yó, Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já

9

Ag. *p* cont. pattern to M72

Lé *p* cont. pattern to M53

Rum pi (conga) *p* S O O M S O O S cont. pattern to M45  
r l r l r l r l

S *mf* optional solo  
Ye-man-já do rio so - mos

T *mf*  
À - wa àà - bò a yó,

Piano *mp*

13

S

A

T

B

*Tutti*

*(poco port.)*

se - us fil - hos \_\_\_\_\_ Ye - man - já do ri - o, \_\_\_\_\_ so - mos se - us fil -

Ye - man - já do ri - o, \_\_\_\_\_ so - mos se - us fil -



17

*mf*

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

Ye - man - já \_\_\_\_\_ Ye - man - já,

- hos, \_\_\_\_\_ Ye - man - já \_\_\_\_\_ Ye - man - já,

Ye - man - já,

- hos, \_\_\_\_\_ Ye - man - já \_\_\_\_\_ Ye - man - já,

21

Ye - man - já, à - wa àà - bo a yó

Ye - man - já, à - wa àà - bo a yó

Ye - man - já, à - wa àà - bo a yó

Ye - man - já, à - wa àà - bo a yó

25 *brighter, as if calling out*

*f sempre* À-wa àà-bo a yó, à-wa àà-bo a yó

À-wa àà-bo a yó à-wa àà-bo a yó Ye - man

Ye-man - já, Ye - man - já

À - wa àà-bo a yó,

*simile*

29

*f* — Ye-man-já, *mf* À-wa àà-bo a yó, à-wa àà-bo a yó — Ye-man-já,

já, À-wa àà-bo a yó, à-wa àà-bo a yó Ye-man - já.

*mf* — Ye-man - já, Ye-man - já.

à - wa àà - bo a yó Ye - man - já.

33 *lyrical*

*f* Ye-man-já do ri - o — so-mos se - us fil - hos — *mf* Ye - man-

*mf* Ye-man-já do ri - o so-mos se - us fil - hos — *mf* Ye - man-

*mf* Ye-man-já do ri - o so-mos se - us fil - hos — *mf* Ye - man-

*mf* Ye-man-já do ri - o so-mos se - us fil - hos — *mf* Ye - man-

*calling out, as before*

37

*mf* *div.* *f*

S *mf* *f*

A *mf*

T *f*

B

já do ri - o so - mos se - us fil - hos Ye - man - já,

já do ri - o so - mos se - us fil - hos so - mos

já do ri - o Ye - man - já,

já do ri - o

41

*mf* *f* *mf*

S1 *mf* *f* *mf*

S2 *f* *mf*

A

T

B

Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já

Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já,

se - us fil - hos so - mos se - us fil -

Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já,

Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já,



44

tacit to M57

*p*

*p*

44

*f* *molto legato*  
*mp* solo

up. div.

S1 À-wa àà-bo a yó, My heart

S2 À-wa àà-bo a yó. My heart

A hos, À-wa àà-bo a yó, My heart

T 8 à - wa àà - bo a yó.

B À-wa àà-bo a yó.

*mf* *f* *mp*

48

48 *mf*  
beats her waves

S1 *mp*  
beats her waves

S2 *mp*  
My heart

A *mp*  
beats her waves my heart,

T *mp*  
Ye-man-já

B *mp*  
Mm

The musical score is for a piece titled "At the Shore of the World" (JS-070). It features a piano accompaniment at the top and six vocal parts: solo, S1, S2, A, T, and B. The score begins at measure 48. The piano part consists of a rhythmic melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The vocal parts enter at measure 48 with lyrics: "beats her waves" (Solo, S1, A), "My heart" (S2), and "Ye-man-já" (T). The Solo part has a dynamic marking of *mf* and a crescendo hairpin. S1, A, and T have dynamic markings of *mp*. The B part has a dynamic marking of *mp* and a long note with a slur. The piano part continues with a rhythmic accompaniment.

52

52

*mf*

My heart beats her waves

My heart

*mp*

my heart,

*mp*

my heart,

*mf*

Ye - man - já Ye - man - já Ye - man

*mp*

Ye - ma - já

The score consists of a piano accompaniment at the top and six vocal parts below. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The vocal parts are: Solo (treble clef), S1 and S2 (treble clef), A (treble clef), T (treble clef, starting on an 8), and B (bass clef). The lyrics are: 'My heart beats her waves', 'My heart', 'my heart,', 'my heart,', 'Ye - man - já', and 'Ye - ma - já'. Dynamic markings include *mf* and *mp*. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).

56 cont. pattern to M72

*mf* cont. pattern to M82

*mf* cont. pattern to M65

56 *f* *ff* *p*

at the shore of the world, my heart, My

S1 *f* *p*

S2 my heart, my heart, My

A *f*

my heart, my heart,

T *mf* *p*

já Yemanjá, Yemanjá, My

B *mf* *p*

Ye-ma - já My

*f* *ff* *f*

61

*pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

solo *molto* *ff* *mf* *mp* *p* *molto* *ffmp*

S1 *molto* *ff* *mf* *mp* *p* *molto* *ff* *mp*

S2 *molto* *ff* *mf* *mp* *p* *molto* *ff* *mp*

A *p* *molto* *ff* *p* *mp* *p*

T *molto* *ff* *mf* *p* *molto*

B *ff* *p*

*mp* *mf* *mp*

heart beats her waves at the shore of the world. My heart beats her waves at the shore. —

heart beats her waves at the shore of the world, My heart beats her waves at the shore —

My heart beats her waves at the shore. My heart beats her

heart beats her waves at the shore of the world. My heart beats her waves

heart beats her waves at the shore, My heart beats her waves at the

61

cont. pattern to M72

The musical score is set in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It begins at measure 64. The piano accompaniment consists of three staves: a right-hand treble staff with a melodic line of eighth notes, a middle treble staff with a similar eighth-note pattern, and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamics include *mf* and *p*. The vocal soloists (S1, S2, A, T, B) enter at measure 64 with a melodic line. S1 and S2 have lyrics: "My heart beats her waves at the shore of the world". A, T, and B have lyrics: "waves at the shore My heart beats her waves at the shore of the world". The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *ff*, *f*, *mf*, and *p*. The score concludes with a piano solo section marked "end solo" and a final piano accompaniment section.

69

*mp* *mf* *mp*

S *mf* *mp* *mf*

A *mf* *mp* *mf*

and writes up-on it her sig-na-ture in tears with the words "I

*p* *mp*

75

*mf* *mf* *mf*

S *f* *f*

A *f* *f*

love thee" "I love thee."

love thee" "I love thee."

*mp* *mf* *mf* *mf*

8 Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já,

*mf*

78

S (all)  
S S S S S T T

78

"I love thee." À-wa àà-bo a yó.

"I love thee." À-wa àà-bo a yó,

*f*  
3  
8  
Ye-man -já à-wa àà-bo a yó.

*f*  
3  
Ye-man -já À-wa àà-bo a yó.

*mf* *f*