



HELSINKI JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
A Scientific Publication of Helsinki University, Finland.
Volume: 10 Issue: 1 February, 2026
Pages: 137-148, 2026; Publication No: HJSSH.49072
ISSN: 3442-3567

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

THE MISSING CUP: THE STORY OF JOSEPH AND THE SILVER CUP IN OPERATIC MUSICAL COMPOSITION (A COMPOSITION FOR VOICE AND THE PIANO)

Evangeline B. Giami PhD

*Department of Music, Faculty of Humanities,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria.*

evangeline.giami@ajue.edu.ng

INTRODUCTION

This operatic composition depicts a dramatic scene in which Joseph's brothers find themselves in a predicament with their unidentified brother. In order to reveal his identity to his brothers, Joseph instructs his guard to place his silver cup in the sack of his youngest brother, who is deeply beloved by their father. The composition, entitled "The Missing Cup," is a scene from the opera book "Joseph and His Brothers," written by the author. This dramatic encounter between Joseph's brothers and Joseph in Egypt serves as a narrative device to convey a moral message about the dangers of envy and hatred. The composition's themes include forgiveness and redemption, brotherly love and sacrifice, and the providence and plan of God.

Pre-compositional Consideration

Title: The Missing Cup
Key: G major
Time signature: 4/4
Tempo: Allegretto, lento Andante slowly
Length: 181 bars
Form: Through composed

Sections	A	B	C	D	E	F
Bars	1-22	23-47	50-68	71-142	143-161	163-178
Modulation	-	E major	Home key, A	E, A, E majors	C#, A	A
Cadence	Imperfect Authentic	Imperfect Authentic	Perfect Authentic	Perfect Authentic	-	Imperfect Authentic

Texture: Monophonic
Media: Voice with piano accompaniment
Scale: Diatonic
Mood: Soberly
Dynamic: f, rit
Language: English
Audience: Church and Concert hall



Genre:

Opera

Cadence:

Perfect authentic cadence

IV-I64 -V7 – I

Performance Interpretation: For the optimal performance of this work, the following should be considered.

A good musical interpretation of the text.

A good breath control.

A good articulation of words.

A good costume

Non-harmonic Tones

Non-harmonic tones are used in various bars in this composition below. Benward & Saker (2009) discussed “Non-harmonic tones (nonchord tones) are pitches that sound along with a chord but are not chord pitches. Most non-harmonic tones are dissonant and create intervals of a second, fourth, or seventh.” (p. 102).

Passing tone: Bar 32

Appoggiaturas: Bar 89 beat 3, 91 beat 1, 97,

Note of anticipation: Bar 180

There are presents of the dominant 7 chord, non-dominant 7 chord, and added 6th all over the composition.

Modulation

As tone of speech changes in this operatic work, modulations are created to reflect the changes in speech. Benward and Saker in Giami (2025) discuss modulation as “a process that results in a shift of tonal center. The term applies to those occasions in music when one established tonal center gives way to another”. (P. 315). Modulation also is the process of moving from the home key of a musical composition to establish another key within the piece of music. The modulation journey is within E major and C# major.

The Empathy Theory

This theory was propounded by Leo Tolstoy in the year 1897. In this theory, Popova in Giami (2019) states Tolstoy while defining art given empathy theory as:

A form of consciousness that frames the essential role of art as a vehicle of communication and empathy. The activity of art is based on the fact that a man, receiving, through his sense of hearing or sight another man's expression of feelings, is capable of experiencing the emotion which moved the man who expressed it. It is upon this capacity of man to receive another man's expression of feelings and experience those feelings himself that the activity of art is based. (p. 1).

The performers of this composition are expected to be empathic in the act to deliver in the exact manner and mood the story convened. The absent of empathy in this performance shall not only destroy the act, but also thwart the expected outcome of the performance.

THE MISSING CUP

Dr. Evangeline B. Giami

TENOR *Allegretto f* *mf* Joseph

What is this thing that you have done?

BASS *Allegretto*

Piano

what is this thing that you have done? Do you not re-a-lise, that such a man as I can

cer-tain-ly de-tect that know by di-vi-na-tion.

Lento

E Judah

What shall we

Lento

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems. The first system shows the Tenor and Bass vocal lines and the Piano accompaniment. The Tenor part begins with a rest followed by the lyrics 'What is this thing that you have done?'. The Piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system continues the vocal lines with the lyrics 'what is this thing that you have done? Do you not re-a-lise, that such a man as I can'. The Piano part continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. The third system shows the vocal lines with the lyrics 'cer-tain-ly de-tect that know by di-vi-na-tion.' and 'E Judah' and 'What shall we'. The Piano part concludes with a final chord. The tempo markings are *Allegretto f*, *mf*, and *Lento*.



Andante

say to my lord. what shall we say to my lord, what shall we say? or how we shall

Andante

clear our-selves, since God has found the i - ni-qui-ty of your_ ser- vant.

Be- hold, we are my lord's slaves, the rest of us, as

A Joseph

God for - bid, that
well as he, with whom the cup is found.

The first system of the musical score consists of two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal staves are in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand. The lyrics are: "God for - bid, that well as he, with whom the cup is found."

I should do that, God for - bid, but the man in whose hand the cup is found

The second system continues the musical score. The vocal staves have the lyrics: "I should do that, God for - bid, but the man in whose hand the cup is found". The piano accompaniment continues with similar harmonic support.

he shall be my - ser-vant as for you all, as for you all, a - rise and

The third system concludes the musical score. The vocal staves have the lyrics: "he shall be my - ser-vant as for you all, as for you all, a - rise and". The piano accompaniment provides the final harmonic context.



Adagio

go in peace to your fa - ther.

E

O my lord, I pray you to

Adagio

speak a word to you in pri - vate, and let not your an - ger blaze a - gainst me, for you are as Pha - roah.

Slow

A

E

My lord asked his ser - vant's says, have you a fa - ther or bro - ther? We

Slow



an-swer say we have a fa-ther an old man and a young child of his old age, and his bro-ther is dead,

and his's left a-lone of his mo-ther, and his fa-ther loved him, but you say to

us, bring him here that I may set my eyes on him, and we say my Lord,



Andante

the lad can not leave his fa-ther for his fa-ther would die. But, you said to us,

Andante

un - less your young - est bro - ther come, ye shall not see my face. And

when we re - turned and we told our fa - ther what my lord says, and our fa - ther said,

my wife, Ra-chal born me two sons, and one went out from me, I said sure-ly

he is torn to piece - s, and I have not seen him, if you take this son from me al - so and

harm should be-fore him, you will bring my gray - hairs with sor-row and e - vil to sheol.

Now, when I come to my fa-ther, and the lad is not there,

A

he shall - die, and I - shall be blamed, for I took sure-ty for the lad, and say, if I

do not bring him to you, I will bear the blame for-e- ver. Now, I pray you, let your



ser-vent re-main in-stead of the lad, and let the lad go home with his bro-thers. For, how can I

go to my fa-ther if the lad is not here, lest I wit-ness the woe and the

e-vil that will come up-on my fa-ther.

REFERENCES

Giami, B. E. (2025). The man speaks roughly to us. *Journal of Musical Composition* 1 (1), 100-106.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

This Open Access article is Under a Creative Commons [license](#)

Giami, B. E. (2019). The relevance of creativity, empathy and expression theory to a musical composer. *ICHEKE: Journal of the Faculty of Humanities*, 17 (4), 213-226.

Benward, B & Saker, M. (2009). *Music in theory and practice*. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Cast

Joseph

Judah

Judah's brothers

