

"Summary by the Pawns"

*This short work is part of the seven-song set, **An Hour to Dance** (poetry by Virginia Hamilton Adair). Each of the poems selected for musical setting has a different character.*

"Pawns" is, of course, about chess! And the two most salient characteristics of this song are its "four-square" rhythms, and its focus on "black and white." The meter is 4/4, and the rhythmic patterns are generally even quarter-notes, with the occasional eighth. These are the pawns moving, in a four-square manner, about the chessboard.

Great care was taken in forming a theme whereby the adjective "white" fell on a white note of the piano keys, and the adjective "black" fell on a black note. One sees this thematic construction at the beginning, in mm. 5-6, and at the conclusion, mm. 76-80. It was this search for literal poetic setting that led the song to have its non-tonal melodic shape, emphasizing the raised 4th degree of the scale (F# in the key of C Minor) in order for the singers to sing "black" on the black note F#.