

THE BALLAD OF MILT FAMEY

a chamber opera for 3 male voices & piano

DAVID MORNEAU

duration: circa 8:30

Dedicated to Edward “Skip” Morneau
baseball fan and Milt Famey enthusiast

composed for The Remarkable Theater Brigade’s *Opera Shorts*

David Morneau is a composer of an entirely undecided genre, a provider of exclusive unprecedented experiments. In his work he endeavors to explore ideas about our culture, issues concerning creativity, and even the very nature of music itself. Learn more @ <http://5of4.com>

The Ballad of Milt Famey tells the story of the 1920 World Series between the Brooklyn Dodgers and the Cleveland Indians. The pitcher for the Dodgers was a young Milt Famey, whose had compiled the greatest win-loss record in the history of the National League. His ERA was incredibly low, a stunning 0.38. In the season leading to the World Series Famey had won 38 flawlessly pitched games with zero losses. This amazing feat has never since been matched.

So why don't we all know who he is? We know Babe Ruth and Jackie Robinson and Hank Aaron, but not Milt Famey. For all of his skill and prowess he never won the World Series. Famey struggled with alcohol, and attempted to close the seventh game of the 1920 series while severely drunk. This great pitcher threw four balls, walking Elmer Smith and losing the game and the series. He never recovered from that loss, and the rest of his career was unremarkable.

[based on research by Edward Morneau]

Cast

Skip Charles: sportscaster [tenor]

Tris Speaker: manager, Cleveland Indians [tenor or baritone]

Wilbert Robinson: manager, Brooklyn Dodgers [baritone]

Chorus (optional) of Indians fans to cheer at appropriate places in the score.

Setting

The 1920 World Series, game 7 at League Park in Cleveland, Ohio. Skip Charles is upstage center, sitting on a stool and singing into an old-fashioned microphone. Wilbert Robinson is standing stage left, in the visitor's dugout. Tris Speaker stands stage right, in the home dugout. The chorus (if used) should be seated behind the managers. Home plate (though not seen) is downstage center so that the pitcher's mound is somewhere out in the house.

THE BALLAD OF MILT FAMEY

Brantley Aull

David Morneau

Dramatic (♩=30) *accel.*

Skip Charles (SC) *mf* A-noth-er

Tris Speaker (TS)

Wilbert Robinson (WR)

The CRACK of the bat, and a GROAN from the crowd.

Dramatic (♩=30) *accel.*

Piano *mf* *ff*



Gentle Ragtime (♩=66)

SC hit, a-noth-er run, For those Trol-ley_Dodg-ers of Brook-lyn!

Gentle Ragtime (♩=66)

mp *mf sub* *p sub*

10 *mf* *f*

SC If the Cleve - land In - di - ans_ want the pen - nant, They'll have_ to show

mp *mf sub*



16 *mp* *f* Dramatic (♩=30) accel.

SC their hearts are in it! Another CRACK, another GROAN. Top

p *ff* Dramatic (♩=30) accel.



Gentle Ragtime (♩=66) *mf*

SC _ of the sev - enth, the Dod - gers strike a - gain!_ Filled_ with pride is skip - per

Gentle Ragtime (♩=66) *mp*

27

SC

mp

Will Rob - in- son! In the dug-out, Milt Fa - mey, the

p sub *mp*

33

SC

f *freely* *mf*

— great Brook-lyn arm, Who sil - enced the In - juns with no - hit-ters and charm. He toasts his fair

f *mp sub* *freely*

39

SC

a tempo

team and their flur-ry of hits With a case and a half of ice-cold Schlitz!—

a tempo *mf*

Dramatic (♩=30) *accel.* ♩=66

SC 45 *f* "Not so fast" — says Tris Speak-er, —

Another CRACK, now a CHEER from the crowd.

Dramatic (♩=30) *accel.* ♩=66

p *ff*

SC 50 *p sub* **Gentle Ragtime** *mf*

Cleve-land's great — lead-er. The

Gentle Ragtime

mf *mp*

SC 55 In - di - ans — have tied it, hit-ting curve ball and heat-er! —

Another CRACK and CHEER!

ff *mp sub*

61 *mp* *cresc* -----

SC An-oth-er hit! Bas-es load-ed! Tie game! Bot-tom ninth!_____

cresc -----

66 *ff* *freely in time* *mf*

SC Two outs!_ Game Sev-en!_____ El-mer Smith approach-es the bat-ter's box!

freely in time

ff

72

SC _____ What will Rob - in - son do?!_____

mp *f*

79

f [excited]

TS

Hot damn!_____

f [angry] *mf*

WR

Damn! What is hap-pen-ing? Where did our pitch-er_____learn to throw!

mp



85

mf

TS

Just one more hit. One more run._____

f [spoken]

WR

TIME!

mf *mf*

Robinson signals a time-out to an invisible umpire. He stands there, looking around, wondering what to do next. Suddenly he lights up.

92 *p* *mf*

WR Fam-ey!_ That's the an-swer, it's Fam-ey!_ He may have had nine beers by now, but for just one

99 *f* *mp*

TS Fa - mey?! He can't be ser-i - ous, there's just no way. He's

WR *f* *mp* out, he'll find a way how._

106 *f* **Energetic (♩=100)** *f*

TS pitched three games be-fore to - day! No!

WR *ff* *mf* Fa-mey!_ Get up, get_ out there and throw!

Energetic (♩=100) *f* *mp*

114

TS *f* God damn you Fa-mey!_____

a la Al Jolson ("Swanee")

WR *f* Fa - mey! How I love ya, how I love ya!

mf



122

TS *mf* Just one more hit.

WR *mp* You can do it, just one more out. Just one more out!

p cresc f mp sub

129

SC *p* Can I be-lieve my eyes!?!_____

TS *mp* *f* Just one more hit! No! Fam-ey!_____

WR *f* Yes! Fam-ey!_____

f sub *p sub*



138

SC *mf* *f* _____ Can this_____ be true!_____ Milt Fam-ey walks towards the mound!

mf *f*

146 **Bright Ragtime** (♩=92)

SC With the stoned-faced look of Kea-ton's Gen-er-al,

Bright Ragtime (♩=92)

mp

suddenly slower

151 *mp* [puzzled] a tempo *f*

SC and.... the stum-bl-ing gait of Chap-lin's Tramp, he strides on-to the field!

suddenly slower a tempo

p *mp*

156 *mf* suddenly slower

SC He stands on the mound! Tall, as-sured, wob-bl ing

8va *mf* *mp* suddenly slower

160

a tempo *f*

SC *3*
ev-er so slight-ly!___ Smith steps in. Milt shakes off___ the sign. The pitch!

a tempo
mf



167

SC *mp* *f*
Ball one, but Famey's not mused! Such con - fi -

TS *mp*
That's o kay!___

WR *mp*
That's o kay!_____

f *mp* *mp*

174

SC *mp* *freely*

dence! "In the room the wo - men come and go," but they're not talk-ing of

p *freely*

==

179

SC *f* *a tempo*

Mich-el - an - gel - o! _____ The pitch!_

a tempo *mf* *f*

185

mp

SC Ball two! _____ *f* Smith smiles, and Fam - ey _____

f [in disbelief]

TS Hot damn! _____

f [in disgust]

WR Damn! _____

mp

mf

8va



191

SC shrugs! Per-haps Milt teas-es Smith be-fore_ *mp* [spoken] he bounc-es it?

f

Melancholy (♩=50)

198

SC

p

Milt Fam-ey:_____ the man who could find the strike zone_____ with

p

203

SC

mf

Har-old Lloyd hang-ing from his arm_____ and sweet Ma-ry_Pick-ford's daz-z-ling locks_____

mf

208

SC

p *mp* *mf*

bounc-ing_ in his per-iph-er- y? Where_____ has_____ he_____

p sub *pp* *p* *mf*

215

SC *p*

gone?

TS *f* [excited]

Smith! Take it all the way!

WR *f* [angry, puzzled]

3
Fam-ey! what's wrong?—

pp *p*



accel. Gentle Ragtime (♩=66)

223

SC *mf*

Zeus_him-self_stands on__ the mound, one pitch a - way from hand-ing the

TS

accel. Gentle Ragtime (♩=66)

mp

229

SC *mp* *f*

In - di - ans glor - y on a plati-num plat-ter!___ Oh Fam - ey,

p sub *f*



236

SC *p* *mp*

Sure-ly not! Ball four.

TS *p*

Sure - ly!

WR *p*

Sure-ly not!

p *pp* *f* *pp*

A CHEER erupts from the crowd. Speaker raises his arms, Robinson falls to his knees.

244 **Slow March** (♩=72)

mp



Will.



mp

Tris. How man-y pitch-es?_

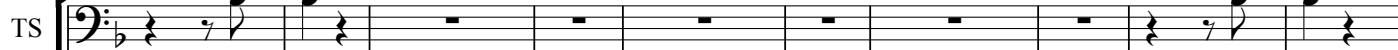
*Robinson stays there on his knees,
shaking his head in disbelief. Finally,
Speaker joins him, holding out a hand.*

*Robinson takes Speaker's
hand and stands up.*

Slow March (♩=72)



254

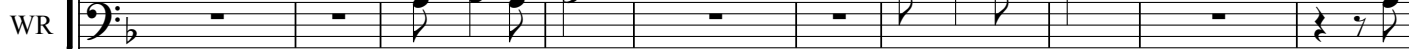


Four.____

[Shakes head.]

Four.____

f



mf

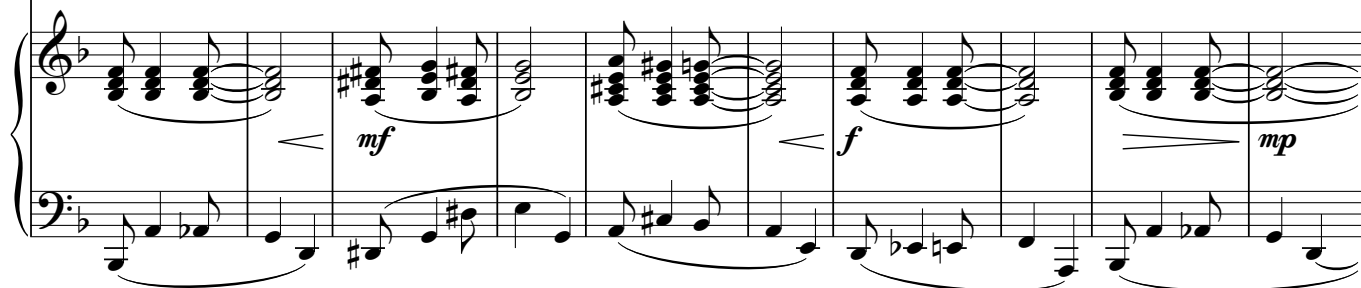
f

mp

How man-y strikes?

How man-y balls?

The



264

TS *mp* *mf*

Whose beer cans? He was lit?_

WR *mp*

son of a bitch._ Fam - ey's._

Speaker nods as Robinson hides his face in his hands. Speaker looks around.

p pp mp

274

TS *f* *mf*

On Schlitz?_ Will, old bud-dy._

WR *mf* *mp*

Just a bit._ The lit-tle shit.

Speaker smiles, puts his arm around Robinson and laughs.

moving ahead (♩=80)

mf p mf

283

TS

f *mp*

I do be - lieve___ it was the beer,___ it was the beer,___



rit.

291

TS

mf *f*

it was the beer,___ it was the beer that made Milt Fam - ey walk___ us._____

rit.

The Ballad of Milt Famey

libretto by Brantley Aufill

PART I

SKIP CHARLES: Another hit, another run,
For those Trolley Dodgers of Brooklyn!
If the Cleveland Indians want the pennant,
They'll have to show their hearts are in it!

Top of the seventh, the Dodgers strike again!
Filled with pride is skipper Will Robinson!

In the dugout, Milt Famey, the great Brooklyn arm,
Who silenced the Injuns with no-hitters and charm.
He toasts his fair team and their flurry of hits
With a case and a half of ice-cold Schlitz!

"Not so fast" says Tris Speaker, Cleveland's great leader.
The Indians have tied it, hitting curve ball and heater!

Another hit! Bases loaded!
Tie game! Bottom ninth!
Two outs! Game Seven!
Elmer Smith approaches the batter's box!
What will Robinson do?!

PART II

WILBERT ROBINSON: Damn!

TRIS SPEAKER: Hot damn!

WR: What is happening? Where did our pitcher learn to throw!

TS: Just one more hit. One more run.

WR: TIME! *[pause]* Famey! That's the answer, it's Famey! He may have had nine beers by now, but for just one out,
he'll find a way how.

TS: Famey?! He can't be serious, there's just no way. He's pitched three games before today!

WR: Famey! Get up, get out there and throw!

TS: No!

WR: *[a la "Swanee"]* Faaaamey! How I love ya, how I love ya!

TS: God damn you Famey!

WR: You can do it, just one more out.

TS: Just one more hit.

WR: Just one more out!

TS: Just one more hit!

WR: Yes!

TS: No!

WR: Famey!

TS: Famey!

PART III

SC: Can I believe my eyes!? Can this be true! Milt Famey walks toward the mound! With the stoned-faced look of Keaton's General, and... the stumbling gait of Chaplin's Tramp, he strides onto the field! He stands on the mound! Tall, assured... wobbling ever so slightly!

Smith steps in. Milt shakes off the sign. The pitch! Ball one,

WR: That's okay!

TS: That's okay!

SC: but Famey's not mussed! Such confidence! "In the room the women come and go", but they're not talking of Michelangelo!

The pitch! Ball two!

WR: Damn!

TS: Hot damn!

SC: Smith smiles, and Famey shrugs! Perhaps Milt teases Smith before...he bounces it?

Milt Famey: the man who could find the strike zone with Harold Lloyd hanging from his arm and sweet Mary Pickford's dazzling locks bouncing in his periphery? Where has he gone?

WR: Famey! What's wrong?

TS: Smith! Take it all the way!

SC: Zeus himself stands on the mound, one pitch away from handing the Indians glory on a platinum platter! Oh Famey, surely not!

WR: Surely not!

TS: Surely!

SC: Ball four.

PART IV

TS: Will.

WR: Tris. How many pitches?

TS: Four.

WR: How many strikes?

TS: *[shakes head]*

WR: How many balls?

TS: Four.

WR: The son of a bitch.

TS: Whose beer cans?

WR: Famey's.

TS: He was lit?

WR: Just a bit.

TS: On Schlitz?

WR: The little shit.

TS: Will, old buddy. I do believe it was the beer that made Milt Famey walk us.