

VOICES IN THE NIGHT

A SONG CYCLE FOR
BARITONE VOICE & PIANO
MUSIC BY PAUL THOMAS
TEXT BY DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

PROGRAM NOTES

A pastor, theologian, spy, prisoner, and martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) served as a voice of resistance in the face of Nazism and its influence over the German church. As a double-agent, Bonhoeffer played a role in a number of failed Hitler assassination attempts and would eventually be arrested by the Nazis for conspiracy. He would spend the final two years of his life in prison only to be executed a few weeks before the end of the war. While in prison Bonhoeffer wrote ten poems along with an outline for a book on the future of the church, a future he imagined would bring forth a “religionless Christianity” that would put an end to the “deus ex machina” - or God who serves simply as a means to an end. *Voices in the Night* is the longest of the ten poems and describes the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual experience of being locked in a prison cell. Feelings of nostalgia and longing for freedom are juxtaposed against the dark, cold reality of isolated confinement and the looming weight of death. A sense of guilt seizes Bonhoeffer midway through the poem as he realizes his own complicity in not defending the Jews and other victims. This leads to an act of contrition before God and a resolve to stand for his convictions. While his surroundings grow bleaker and his fellow prisoners are executed, Bonhoeffer finds strength through his faith to stand his ground and beckons us, the readers, to live for those who have died unjustly.

The poem is spread across eight songs. A recurring motive between the pitches D and B appears throughout the song cycle and serves as a musical signature for Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The signature is transformed, distorted, and eventually restored as Bonhoeffer experiences feelings of dread, terror, and finally hope. Quotation and musical allusions to classical forms and hymnody also play an important role in creating a variety of sonic sensations, including displacement, unease, irony, nostalgia, and resolve. While quotation and allusion of older musical styles appear in a number of my works, the music of Schubert, for which I held little affinity towards prior to writing this piece, came as a surprising inspiration. Schubert’s influence appears most notably in song II, which quotes a waltz attributed to the composer, and song III, which reharmonizes and overlays new text on “Der Doppelgänger” from *Schwanengesang*. The piece reaches a climax during the sixth song where chants of accusations are followed by stanzas of a Lutheran hymn where the singer admits his indifference towards the injustice and violence that surrounded him.

ORDER

(performance duration approximately 25 minutes)

- I. Stretched out upon my prison bed
- II. In the stillness of the night
- III. Their songs they hide
- IV. Twelve cold, thin strokes
- V. Evil concealed is revealed
- VI. Suddenly, I wake up
- VII. The first light of morning
- VIII. Stretched out upon my prison bed (Reprise)

VOICES IN THE NIGHT

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)
translations by Edwin Robertson

Paul David Thomas (b. 1981)

I
Stretched out upon my prison bed

Baritone $\text{♩} = 80$

Piano $\text{♩} = 80$ *mf* $8va$

Bar. 6 **A** *p*

Bar. wall. Out - side, a sum - mer eve - ning, re -

Pno.

Bar. 10 *mf*

Bar. gard - less of me, goes sing - - ing in - to the

Pno.

Bar. 14 *p*

Pno.

II

In the stillness of the night

J = 72

p freely, not rushed

Baritone In the still-ness of the night, I list - en.

Piano *pp*

2ed. * *2ed.*

7 *hushed, hurried*

Bar. On-ly foot-steps and shouts of the guards, a lov-ing coup-le in the dis-tance,

Pno.

* *2ed.* *

12 *slower, still quiet* Spoken: "Can you hear nothing else,
you sluggish sleeper?"

Bar. stifl-ed laugh- ter. I hear, I hear,

Pno.

2ed. *

A *J = 88*

Bar. *mf* I hear voic-es like shouts Like cries for help the

Pno. *mp*

VOICES IN THE NIGHT | II

21 *mf*

Bar. wak-ing dreams of fel-low suf-fer ers,— dumb thoughts in the *rit.*

Pno. { *mf*

24 **B** A Tempo *p*

Bar. night. I hear the rest-less

Pno. { A Tempo *pp*

28 *3* *3* *3* *3*

Bar. creak-ing of the beds, I hear chains. I hear men toss and turn in

Pno. {

* *Ped.* *

31 *3* *3* *mf*

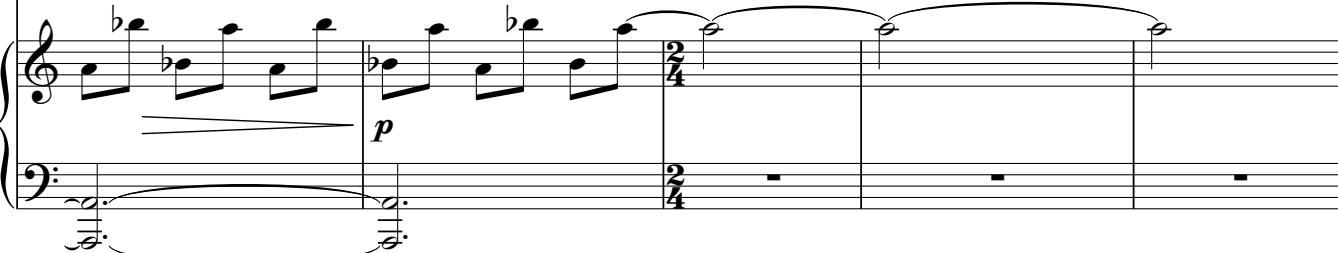
Bar. sleep - less - ness,— long - ing for free - dom and venge - ful act - ion.

Pno. { *mf*

Ped. *

35

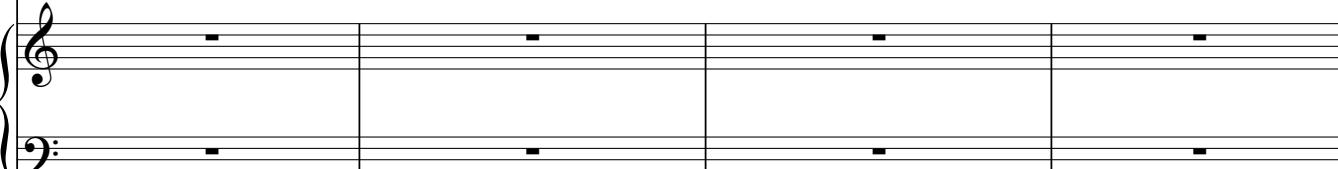
Bar. 

Pno. 

When sleep o-ver-comes them in the morn-ing

40

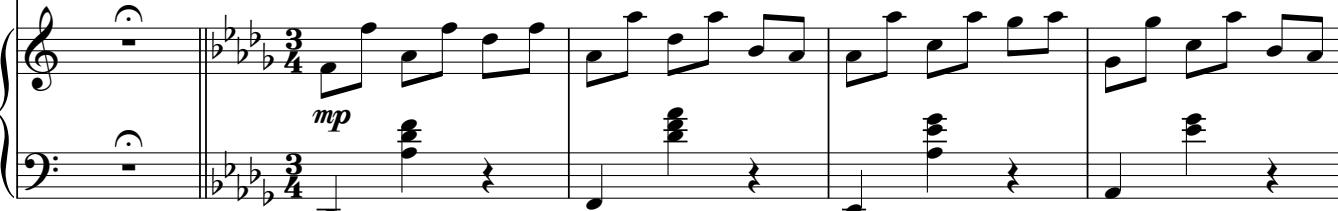
Bar. 

Pno. 

hours, they mur - mur in their dreams of wife and chil - dren.

44

Bar. 

Pno. 

I hear the lisp-ing plea sures of half - grown boys, en-

49

Bar. 

Pno. 

joy - ing their child - ish dreams I hear them pull

VOICES IN THE NIGHT | II

54

Bar. *f*

Bassoon: up their blank - ets _____ and hide them-selves from the horr - i - ble

Pno. { *mf*

59

Bar. night - mares. _____ I hear the sighs and light breath- ing from the

Pno. {

D

Bar. *p* *meno mosso*
old, who pre-pare them-selves qui-³et-ly for the great

Pno. { *p*

68

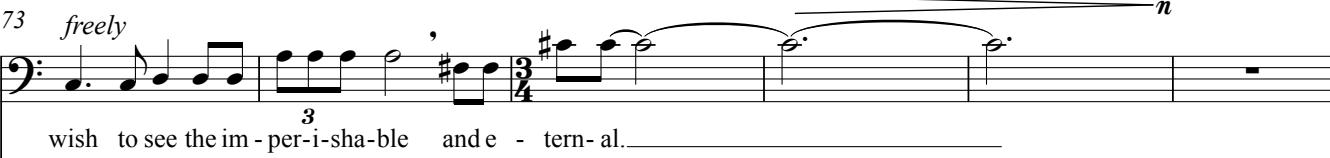
Bar. *A Tempo*
journ- ey... They have seen right and wrong come and go, now they

Pno. { *pp*

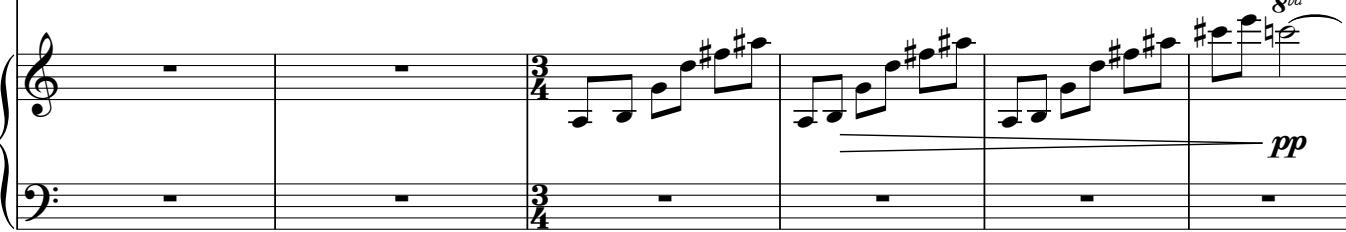
A Tempo

R&d. * *R&d.*

73 *freely*

Bar. 

wish to see the im - per-i-sha-ble and e - tern- al.

Pno. 

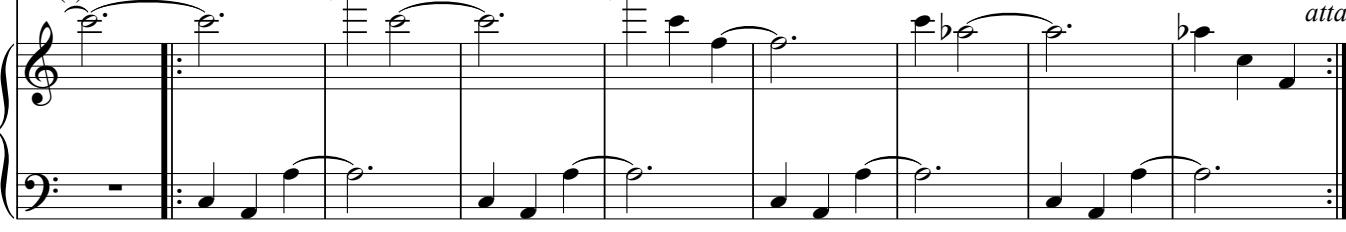
pp

* *Ped.*

79 **Spoken:** "Night and silence. Only footsteps and shouts of the guards.
Do you not hear it in this silenced house, shaking, breaking and collapsing,
as hundreds kindle the glowing ember of their hearts?" *attacca*

Bar. 

VAMP *loco*

Pno. 

(8) * *Ped.* attacca

III

Their songs they hide

rit.

♩ = 76

Baritone

♩ = 60 ♩ = 76

Their songs they hide, my ears are o - pen wide.

Piano

♩ = 60 rit. ♩ = 76

6

mp

Bar.

We who are old, and we who are young,—

Pno.

II

A

Bar.

we chil-dren of ev - ery tongue,— we who are strong, and we who find it

Pno.

16

cresc. poco a poco

Bar.

hard, we who sleep, and we who guard, we who are poor,—

Pno.

cresc. poco a poco

21 *f* *mp*

Bar. and we who have all, to-geth - er in - to fail - ure fall,

Pno. { *f* *p*

25 *cresc. poco a poco*

Bar. we who are good and who are un - clean, what-ev - er we have been, we

Pno. { *cresc. poco a poco*

29 *f* *mp slower* **B**

Bar. men with scars we can-not hide, we wit-ness-es of those who

Pno. { *f* *p*

34 > *cresc. and accel. poco a poco*

Bar. died we who are de - fi - ant and we who are be - mused, we who are in - no - cent and we who are ac

Pno. { *cresc. and accel. poco a poco*

VOICES IN THE NIGHT | III

38

f

mp slowly

Bar. cused, by long i - so - la - tion, sore - ly a -

Pno.

f

C A Tempo

p

Bar. bused. Broth - er, we seek and

Pno.

A Tempo

47

pp

Bar. call for thee! Broth - er_____ do you hear me?

rit.

A Tempo

Pno. {
 rit.
 A Tempo
 pp

IV

Twelve cold, thin strokes

Baritone $\text{♩} = 124$

f

Twelve cold, thin strokes of the

Piano $\text{♩} = 124$

3

Bar. $\text{♩} = 124$

tow - er clock a - wak - en me.

Pno.

5

Bar. $\text{♩} = 124$

There is in them no mus - ic, no warmth,

Pno.

7

Bar.

to shelt - er and com - fort me.

Pno.

17 *cresc. poco a poco*

Bar. Bass: find-ing noth-ing new, noth-ing bet - ter, and in a short time

Pno. { *mf*

19

Bar. Bass: end like this what can it

Pno. { *f*

21

Bar. Bass: mean to me? *ff* rit.

Pno. { *ff* rit.

B $\text{J} = 88$ norm. *mp*

Bar. Bass: I see the times change, when signs light up the heav - ens, $\text{J} = 88$

Pno. { *mp*

28

Bar. new bells ring o - ver the peop - le, grow-ing loud-er

Pno.

rit. $\text{♩} = 50$

32 and loud - er. I wait for that

Pno.

rit. $\text{♩} = 50$

36 rit. $\boxed{\text{C}}$ $\text{♩} = 124-134$

Bar. mid - night, rit. $\text{♩} = 124-134$

Pno.

38 in which the shin - ing splen - dor daz - zles

Pno.

40

Bar. 

and de - stroys the e - vil in our fear.

Pno. 

42

Bar. 

to es - tab - lish with joy that which is

Pno. 

44

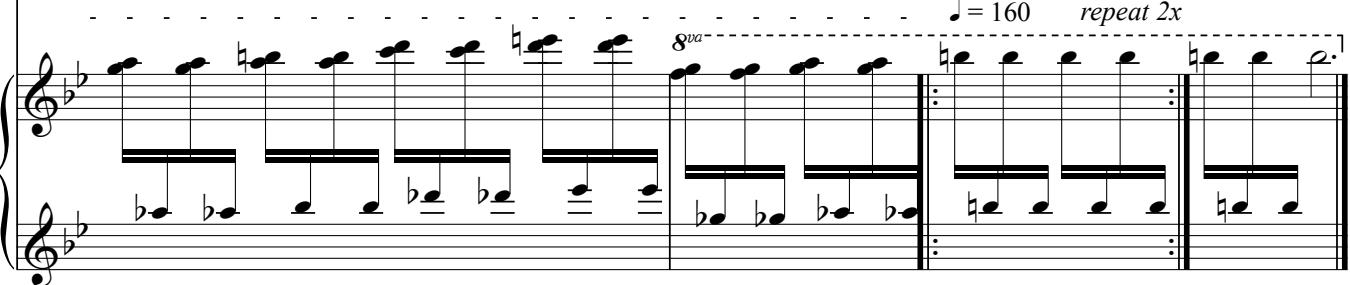
Bar. 

right.

accel. 

46

Bar. 



repeat 2x

V

Evil concealed is revealed

Baritone

p

$\text{♩} = 78$

E - vil con - cealed is re-vealed at the bar. Be - trayal and tricks in -

Piano

p

$\text{♩} = 78$

Bar.

6

3

-tol -ra - ble con - flicts will find a - tone - ment soon.

accel.

A $\text{♩} = 84$ *with hope mp*

Let

Pno.

Bar.

10

peo - ple con - fess the pow'r of good - ness, works, righ-teous- ness.

Pno.

Bar.

14

mf

Re - joice and de - clare: jus - tice and

Pno.

18 *rall.* **B** A Tempo

Bar. *care to a new gen er - a - tion.* *Heav - en give*

Pno. *rall.* **A Tempo**

22 *cresc. poco a poco* **poco accel.** *ff*

Bar. *birth to peace and worth for the sons of earth.*

Pno. *poco accel.* *cresc. poco a poco* *ff*

26 *rit.* *mp*

Bar. *Earth will see,*

Pno. *rit.* *mp*

31 *decresc.* *rit.* *p*

Bar. *peo-ple be - come free, be free, free.*

Pno. *rit.* *p*

VI

Suddenly, I wake up

Baritone

Piano

Bar.

Pno.

Bar.

Pno.

Bar.

Pno.

Bar.

Pno.

J. = 92

* Ped.

* pedal sim.

3

Sud den-ly, I wake up,

* * * * *

5

as though from a sink-ing ship, I sight-ed land,

* * * * *

7

as though there was some-thing firm to grasp, as though fruit was rip-en-ing to

* * * * *

9 *mf*

Bar. Bass: gold.

Pno. *mf*

But when I look, grasp, or

II *b>*

Bar. Bass: hold, there is on - ly an im - pen - e - tra - ble mass of dark - ness.

Pno. *b>* *9/8* *9/8* *9/8*

13 *molto rit.*

Bar. Bass: *9/8* *12/8* *4/4*

Pno. *molto rit.* *ff*

A $\text{♩} = 94$

Bar. Bass: *f*

Pno. $\text{♩} = 94$ *f*

I sink in - to

17

Bar. Pno.

brood - ing, — I low - er my - self in - to the heart of

19

Bar. Pno.

dark - ness... You, night, full of hor - or and

21

Bar. Pno.

e - vil, — make your - self known 3 to me! _____

23

Bar. Pno.

25

Bar. Why and how long will you gnaw at our pa - tience?

Pno.

27

Bar. Si - lence, deep and long,

Pno.

B *slightly slower*

Bar. - - - - - then I hear the night,
slightly slower

Pno. *sub. p*

32

Bar. as it comes down to me: "I am not dark, the dark - ness is your

Pno.

VOICES IN THE NIGHT | VI

(♩ = ♩) Fast (in two)

Bar. 35 **f**

Pno.

guilt!" Guilt! I hear a trem-bl-ling and a

(♩ = ♩) Fast (in two)

Bar. 41 **C** (♩ = ♩)

shud - der a mur-mur and a cry,

Pno.

ff 3 6

Bar. 44 **ff**

I hear men in an - gry mood.

Pno.

3 3 6

Bar. 46

In - nu-m'rable voic - es in wild con -

Pno.

48

Bar. fu-sion, a dumb choir assaults the ear of God.

Pno. { 3 3 6 8va-----1

50

Bar. -

Pno. { 3 3

D *f in an accusational manner; recite freely*

Bar. Hunt - ed by men and ma - ligned, de - fense - less and guil - ty to their mind,

Pno. { f

53

Bar. By in - tol - er - a - ble bur - dens a - bused, yet we de - clare them the ac - cused.

Pno. { 8

54

Bar.  ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

Our eyes must see violence, entangling us in their guilt of - fense:

Pno. 

55

Bar.  ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

Then as they silence our voice, like dumb dogs we have no choice.

Pno. 

E*mf*

Bar.  ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

We learned to call lies just uniting ourselves with the unjust.

freely fluctuate tremolo tempo, do not coordinate rhythm with soloist

Pno. 

mf

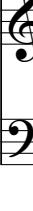


with pedal

57

Bar.  ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

When violence was done to the weak, our cold eyes did not speak.

Pno. 



58

Bar.   

Sa - cred bonds by which we once were bound are now torn and fal - len to the ground,

Pno.  

59

Bar.   

friend-ship and truth be - trayed, tears and re - morse in rid - i - cule dis - played.

Pno.   

F ca. $\text{♩} = 69$ * *mp*

Bar.   

We sons from up- right men de-scend-ed, who.

slowly  *freely, not in tempo* 

Pno.   

with pedal/l.v.

64

Bar.   

once rights and truth de - fend - ed, have now be - come de - spis-ers of God and

ad lib.

Pno.   

* Tune from the hymn "Savior of the nations, come"

68

Bar. man, a - midst the mock-ing laugh - er of hell's plan.

Pno. *ad lib.*

71 **p**

Bar. On - ly be - fore Thee, mak - er of all, be - fore Thee a - lone are we sin - ners.

Pno. **p**

72

Bar. Shrink-ing from pain and poor in deeds, we have be - trayed Thee be - fore men.

Pno.

G ca. $\text{J} = 69$ **mp**

Bar. Though we saw lies raise their head, we dis - hon - ored the

Pno. ca. $\text{J} = 69$ **mp**

78

Bar. 

truth in - stead. We saw bro-thers dy-ing while we had breath

82

Bar. 

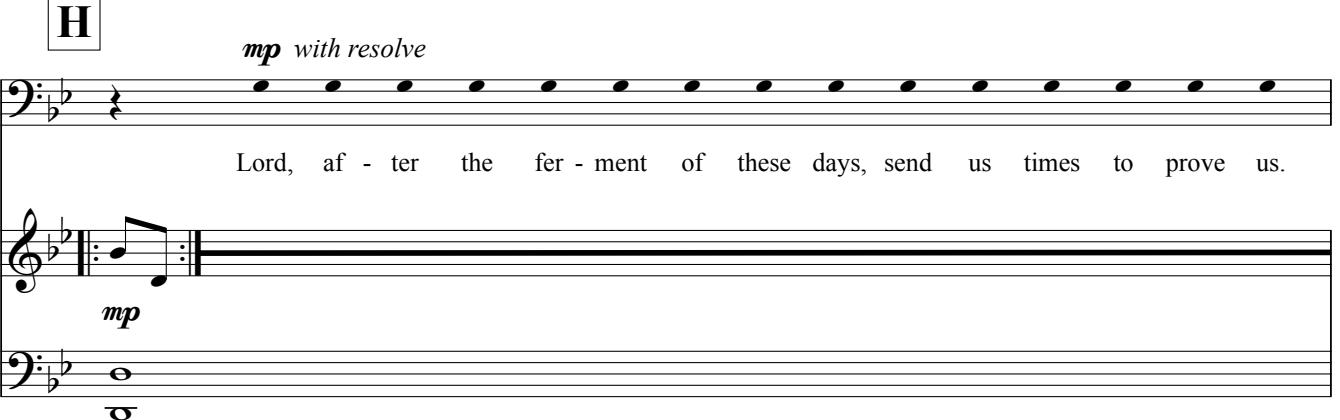
and feared on - ly our own death. We come be - fore Thee

87

Bar. 

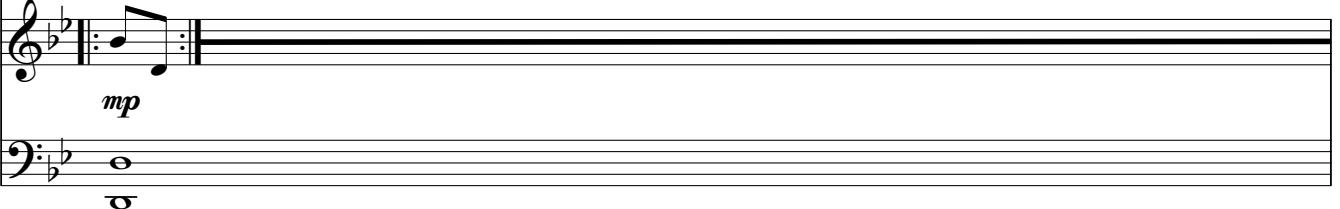
as men, con - fess-ing our sins.

H

Bar. 

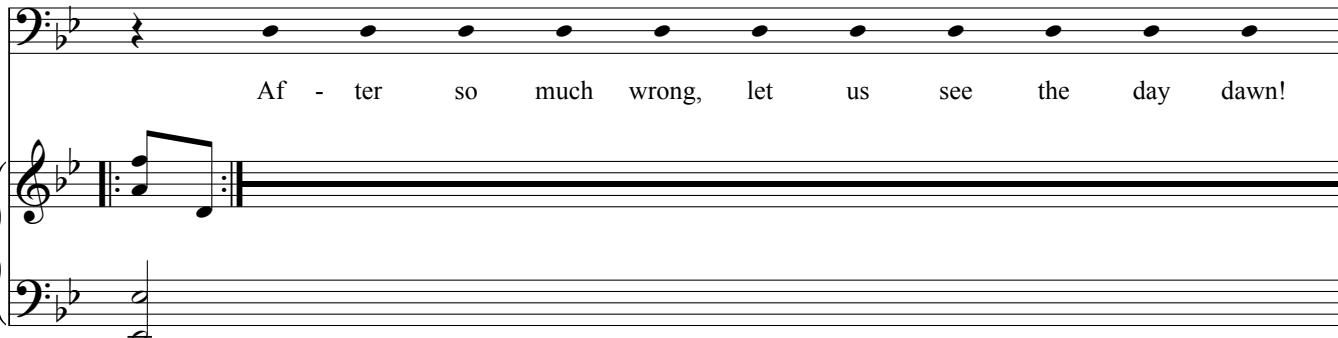
mp with resolve

Lord, af - ter the fer - ment of these days, send us times to prove us.

Pno. 

mp

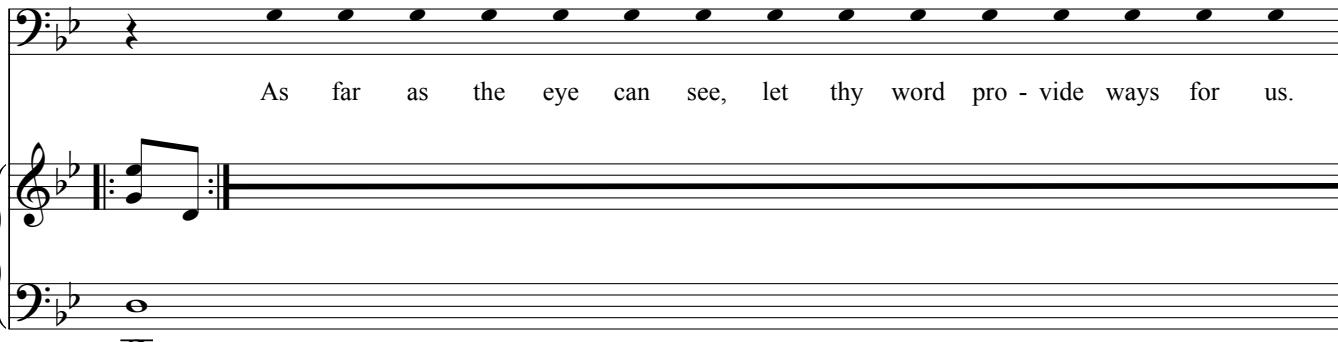
92

Bar. 

Af - ter so much wrong, let us see the day dawn!

Pno.

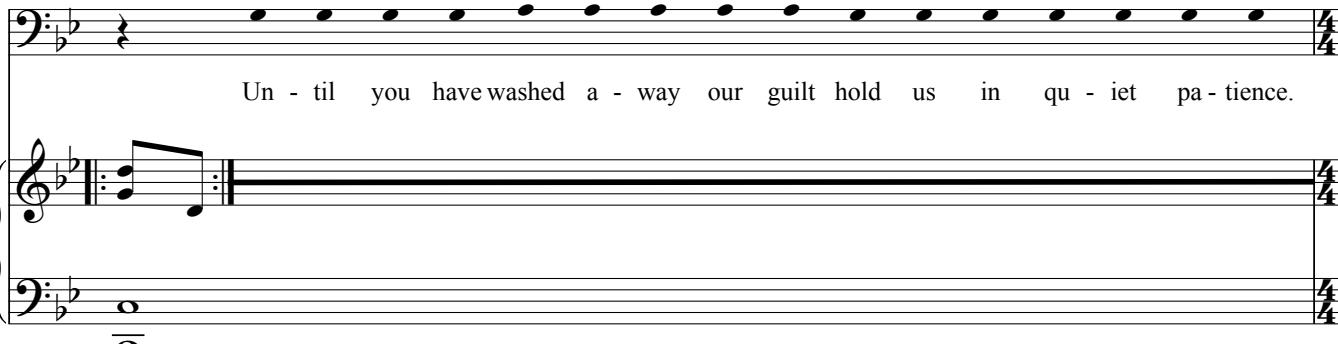
93

Bar. 

As far as the eye can see, let thy word pro - vide ways for us.

Pno.

94

Bar. 

Un - til you have washed a - way our guilt hold us in qu - iet pa - tience.

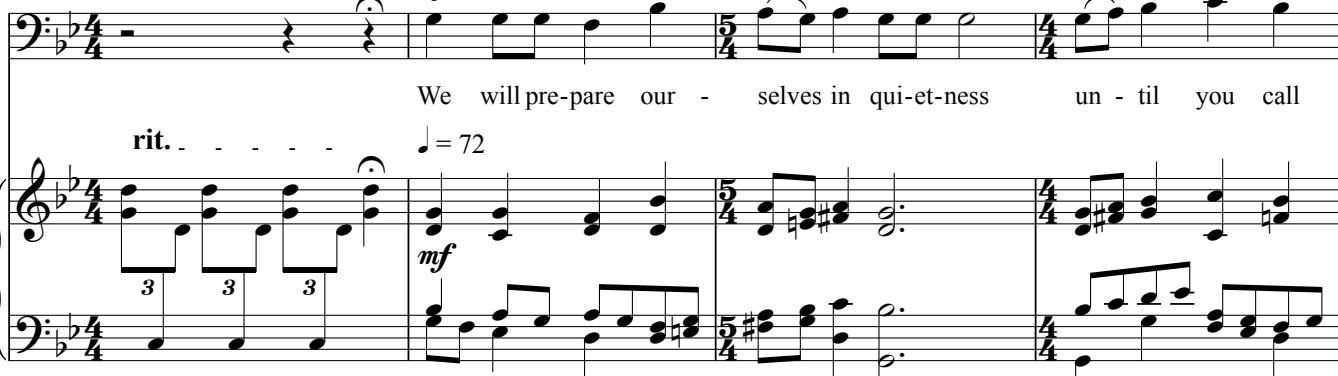
Pno.

Bar. 

I rit. $\text{♩} = 72$

We will pre-pare our - selves in qui-et-ness un - til you call

rit. $\text{♩} = 72$

Pno. 

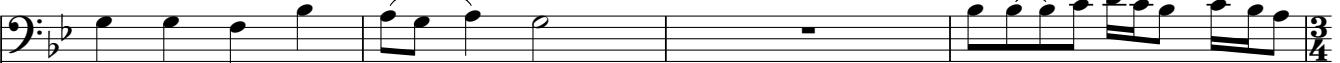
99

Bar. 

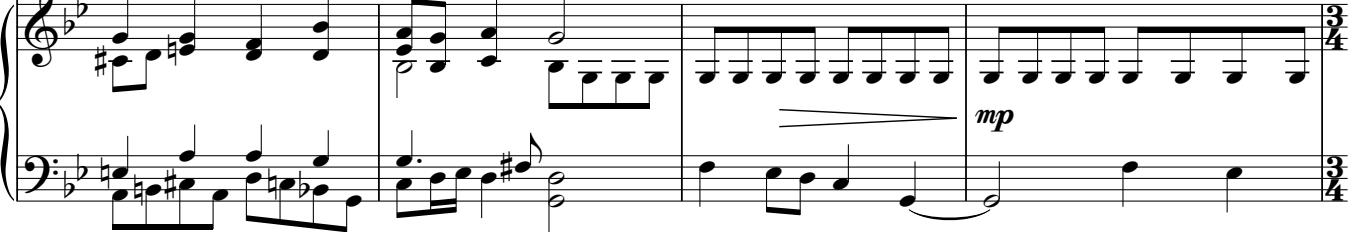
us to new times. Un - til you still the storm and a - bate_ the flood,

Pno. 

103

Bar. 

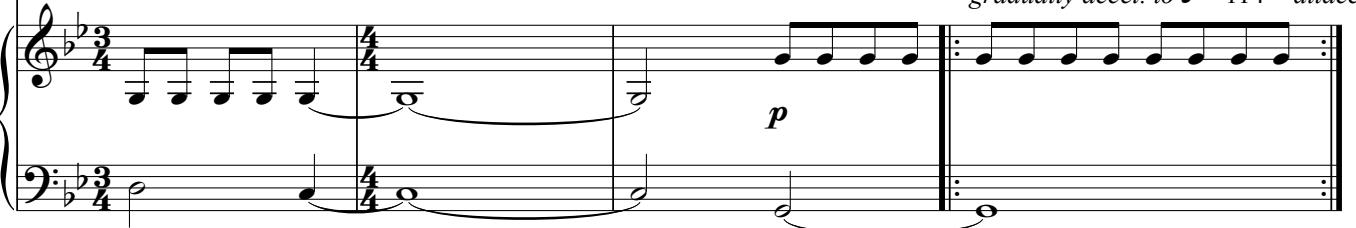
and your will works won - ders. Bro thers un-til_the night is
rit.

Pno. 

107

Bar. 

passed. pray for me!

Pno. 

VII

The first light of morning

The first light of morning

Baritone $\text{♩} = 114$ *mp*

Piano $\text{♩} = 114$ *p*

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is for the Baritone, starting with a rest followed by a melodic line. The piano accompaniment begins with eighth-note chords. The lyrics "The first light of morning" are written below the piano part. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 114$ and the dynamic is *mp*. The bottom staff is for the Piano, with a dynamic marking of *p*. The piano part continues with eighth-note chords throughout the piece.

5

Bar.

steals through my win - dow, pale and bleak.

Pno.

9

A

Bar. 5

A light wind brush-es my brow with the

Pno.

13

17

Bar. 

"love-ly sum-mer's day." What might it bring to me?

Pno. 

21 **molto rit.** **B**

Bar. 

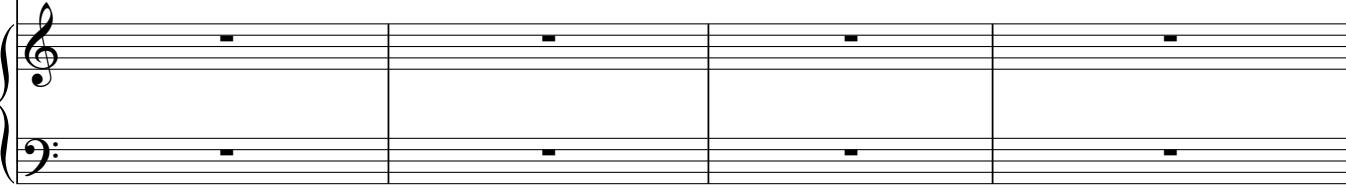
Out side I hear hur-ried, hes - i - tant steps go by. They sud-den-ly stop by me.

Pno. 

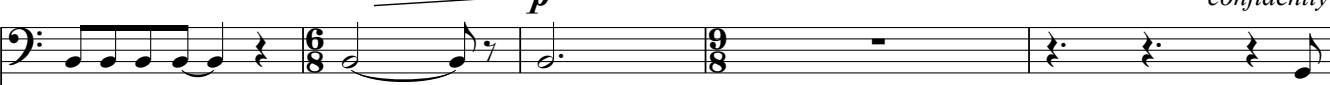
25 *freely*

Bar. 

I go hot and cold,— I know, oh, I know! Hold fast, bro- ther,— soon it will

Pno. 

29 $\text{J.} = 60$ **p** *confidently*

Bar. 

be all o - ver,— soon, soon. I

Pno. 

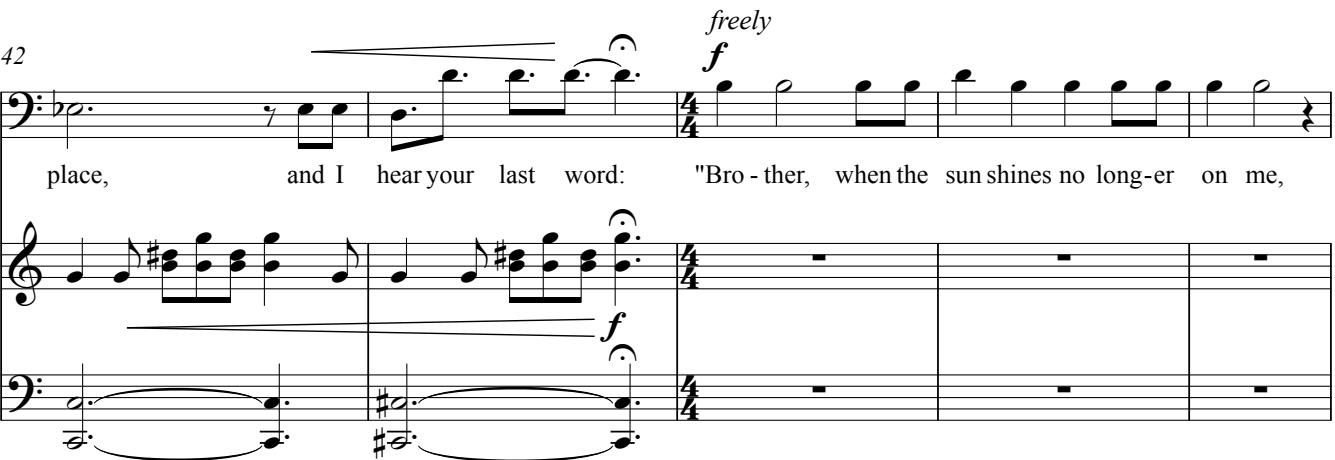
C

Bar. 

hear you march with brave and proud steps. This mo-ment you see no long -

Bar. 38 

er, your eyes are on fu-ture times, I go with you, bro-ther, to that

Bar. 42 

place, and I hear your last word: "Bro - brother, when the sun shines no long-er on me,

Bar. 47 

you must live for me!"— 

attacca

VIII

Stretched out upon my prison bed (Reprise)

Baritone $\text{J} = 80$ ***mf***
 Stretched out u - pon my pri - son bed, I
Piano $\text{J} = 80$ ***8va*** ***mf***

Bar. ***p***
 stare at the emp - ty wall. Out - side, a sum - mer
Pno. ***loc*** ***p legato***

Bar. morn - ing re - gard - less of me, goes re - joic -
Pno.

Bar. ***mf*** ***p*** **A** ***poco rit.***
 -ing in - to the coun - try. ***poco rit.***
Pno. ***mf*** ***p***

Denton, TX 2014