

JS 029

ca. 2 minutes, 15 seconds

Wanderer's Nightsong

For High Voice and Piano

Text by

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Music by

Joshua Shank

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

Note from the composer

This is one of Goethe's most famous poems. He's said to have scrolled it onto the wall of a wooden gamekeeper lodge near the top of Kickelhahn mountain in central Germany in 1780. What I love about the poem is that the overarching image is one of peace, but the text is actually about the opposite. The speaker is addressing a "wanderer"—perhaps himself—who is *aspiring* to be as calm as the bucolic scene Goethe describes. We've all had moments where I'm sure we can relate.

Wanderer's Nightsong is dedicated with love and admiration to the soprano it was originally written for, the wonderful Dr. Sonya Newstrom.

The Text

By Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

English translation by the composer

Over every peak
There is peace,
In the treetops
You hear
Hardly a breath;
The birds in the forest are silent.
Just wait,
Soon, you will be peaceful too.

Wanderer's Nightsong

for Sonya Stoltze

Text by
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe,
English translation
by the composer

Music by
Joshua Shank

Calmly, with rubato (♩ = ca. 55)

Voice

Piano

p

poco rit.

O - ver e - very peak

7

5

a tempo

poco rit.

a tempo

There is peace, In the tree - tops

a tempo

poco rit.

a tempo

poco rit.

Ped.

a tempo *poco rit.*

You hear Hard ly a

This system contains the first two staves of music. The vocal line is in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The tempo starts at *a tempo* and changes to *poco rit.* after the first measure. The lyrics are "You hear Hard ly a".

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

15 *mf* *poco rit.*

breath; The birds in the fo - rest are si - - -

This system contains the second two staves of music. The vocal line starts at measure 13 with a *mf* dynamic. The piano accompaniment also has a *mf* dynamic. The tempo is *poco rit.* The lyrics are "breath; The birds in the fo - rest are si - - -".

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

poco rit. **19** *mp a tempo*

lent. Just wait, just wait,

This system contains the third two staves of music. The vocal line starts at measure 18 with a *poco rit.* tempo. At measure 19, the tempo changes to *mp a tempo*. The lyrics are "lent. Just wait, just wait,".

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

22 *f* *rit.*

soon, soon,

f *rit.*

Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo.

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27 *mp* *p*

Slowly

You will be peace - ful too.

p

Reo. Reo.

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Decorah, July 2002
Revised: Cambridge, November 2020

“This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...”