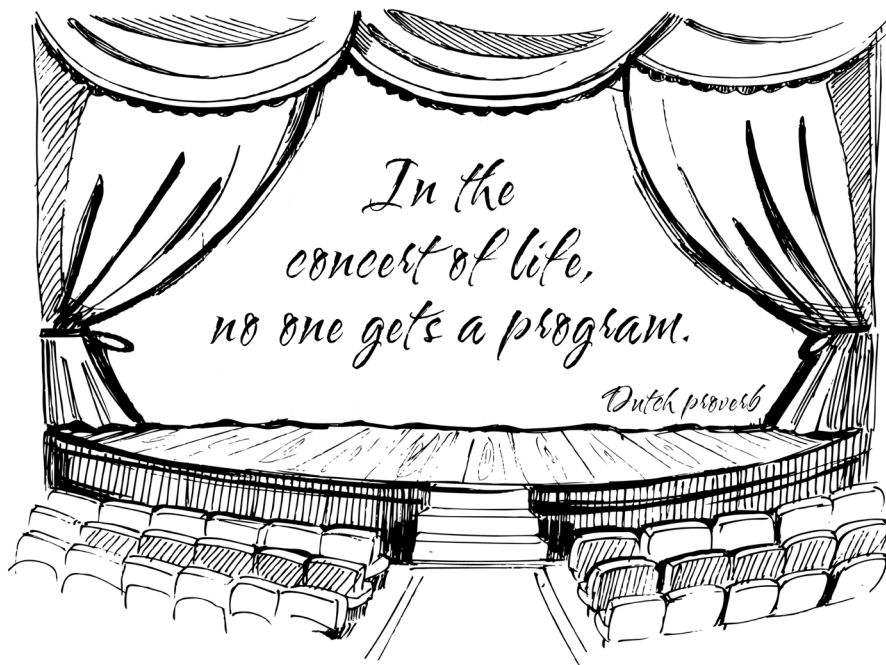


# No One Gets a Program

*A sassy take on a wise old saying*

1 or 2 medium voices and piano



Elizabeth Alexander

*Seafarer Press*

## No One Gets a Program

*“Van het concert des levens krijgt niemand een program.” - Dutch proverb*

*(“In the concert of life, no one gets a program.”)*

The world was making music long before I joined the show,  
I still have lots to learn, but there is one thing that I know:  
No one gets a program in the concert hall of life.

You never see the music, you never see the text,  
You know you're on when someone hollers: Honey, you're up next!  
No one gets a program in the concert hall of life.

Sometimes you'll find your courage, sometimes you'll lose your nerve,  
Sometimes you won't be ready when life pitches you a curve:  
No one gets a program in the concert hall of life.

In all my years of living, there's one thing that I've learned:  
You never know when you're gonna get burned.  
No one has the brain or intuition  
To predict the Spanish Inquisition.  
No one, no one, no one!

Sometimes you're suddenly dancing a waltz,  
And when you're just getting used to it,  
Out of the blue comes a polka – grab a partner! –  
Enjoy it while you can, for it won't last forever.  
There will be days when you sing songs of praise,  
There will be elegies, there will be lullabies.

So tap your feet, and take it in, and sing along, my friend,  
Enjoy it while you can, 'cause you don't know when it will end.  
No one gets a program in this concert hall.  
There is no dress rehearsal or a crystal ball.  
But everyone who sings their heart out gets a curtain call.  
There's an opening in the chorus.

Come and join us in the concert hall of life.

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**Composer Note:** No one gets a program for this song — and that includes the composer herself! Performers may take liberties with any aspect of performance, from small vocal nuances and ornamentations all the way to improvised riffs and unabashed cadenzas. Although this song is written as a vocal duet, there's no reason a solo singer couldn't take this on, and also no reason a bevy of singers couldn't sing it. Similarly, instrumentation possibilities include anything from a solo pianist to any assortment of warm-bodied players.

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# No One Gets a Program

"In the concert of life, no one gets a program." Dutch Proverb

for 1 or 2 medium voices and piano

Playfully. Improvisation and wild abandon are welcome

(♩ = 108-116) Eighth note swing except where indicated

Elizabeth Alexander

pedal with walking bass

5 **Singer #1** Find your own rhythms and nuances for this riff\*

1. The world was mak - ing mu - sic, long be - fore I joined the show, I

8 still have lots to learn, but there is one thing that I know: No one gets a pro - gram,

legato walking bass, simile

11 No one gets a pro - gram,

\* Suggestions for "who sings what" are just that: SUGGESTIONS! You may adapt this song to best express the story you wish to tell. Feel free to add nuances, change or omit the spoken "wisecracks," substitute your own piano riffs, or get theatrical. If you're singing this as a solo you may sing the Singer #1 part, the Singer #2 part, or any other notes you feel like singing.

14

No one gets a pro-gram in the con - cert hall of life. 2. You

**A** 18

nev-er see the mu-sic, you nev-er see the text, You know you're on when some - one hol - lers: *Honey, you're up next!*

Singer #1...or maybe the pianist?  
Shouted:

22

Singer #2 No one gets a program, Singer #1 No \_\_\_\_\_ one gets a pro-gram,

26

**Tutti** No one gets a pro-gram in the con - cert hall of life. 3. Some-

Singer #2

Opal Palmer Adisa, poet • Paul Adams, technological hero • Stephen Alexander, lyric consultant • Ginny Allen, Agile coach and friend • The great people at American Composers Forum • Yehuda Amichai, poet • A. R. Ammons, poet • Jennifer Anderson, conductor and composer advocate • Scott Bates, poet • Abbie Betinis, initiator of collaborative endeavors • Beth Norton, conductor and composer advocate • Dennis Blubaugh, more than just a music dealer • Michael deVernon Boblett, poet • Edna Busby, my first piano teacher • Ray Bradbury, writer • Augustin Cadena, translator • Norbert Capek, minister and advocate for religious freedom • Jessica Corbett, editor • David Cummings, poet • Philip Dacey, poet • Catherine Dalton, composer and serum partner • Emily Dickinson, poet • Evelyn Dudley, poet and caregiver • Rob Eller-Isaacs, minister and composer advocate • Ralph Waldo Emerson, philosopher and poet • Louise Erdrich, writer • David Allan Evans, poet • Sophia Lyon Fahs, writer • Richard M. Fewkes, minister and writer • Pasha Gertler, poet • Jack Gallagher, composer and teacher • Paul Gerike, proofreader • Jocelyn Hagen and Michael Hagan, founders of Graphite Marketplace • Steve Harper, just about everything • Steve Harkins, web designer • Edie Hill, composer and friend • Langston Hughes, poet • Margaret and George Heald, piano technician • Karel Husa, composer and teacher • David Ignatow, poet • Kabir, mystic • Linda Kachelmeier, composer and serum partner • Ruth Palmer, conductor and composer advocate • Joan Wolf Prefontaine, poet • Paul Rardin, conductor and composer advocate • Kalidasa, poet • Steve Kaul, recording engineer • Søren Kierkegaard, philosopher and poet • Dorothy Knost, piano teacher • Ben Krywosz, artistic director of Nautilus Music-Theater • Denise Levertov, poet • George Ella Lyon, poet • Jonathan Machen, vocalist • Dawna Markova, writer • Anne Matlack, conductor and composer advocate • Nancy Menk, composer advocate • Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet • Jane Ramseyer Miller, conductor, composer, social activist • Joe Mish, conductor and composer advocate • J. David Moore, composer • Gerald Rich, poet • Carl Sandburg, poet • friend • King Sigismund III, religious reformer • Ann Silsbee, composer, poet and friend • Simon Alexander-Adams, sounding board, fellow creative, and awesome son • Steven Stucky, composer and teacher • Rabindranath Tagore, poet • Sister Peronne Marie Thibert, teacher and writer • Oliver Alexander-Adams, unconventional thinker and light of my life • Howard Thurman, civil rights leader and writer • Everyone whose work supports the Association for Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries • Charles Varney, high school choral director • Anna Vonhuben, illustrator and graphic designer • Nancy White, poet • John Greenleaf Whittier, poet • Theodore Chickering Williams, poet • Daniel Winter, pianist and teacher • Nancy Wood, poet • Yehudi Wyner, composer and teacher

**A lot of hard work  
and creativity went  
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music to you...**



**...and some of it  
was even mine.**

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42 **C**

all my years of liv - in' there's one thing — that I've learned: You nev - er know when you're

*D7#9* *Eb7#9* *D7* *Eb7#9* *D7*

45 **Singer #2**

gon - na get burned! — No one has the brains or in - tu - i - tion —

*G7*

48 **Tutti**

to pre - dict the Spa - nish In - qui - si - tion! — No one, no one,

*D7* *A7*

51

no one! —

*G7* *D7#9* *Bb7* *Em7(b5)* *F#7(b9)*

**D**

**Straight rhythm**

(♩. = 54-56, which means the triplets in the previous measure suddenly turn into quarter notes)

54

Some - - times you're sud - den - ly danc - ing a waltz,

*Ped. \** *Ped. \** *Ped. \** *Ped. \** *Ped. \** *Ped. \**

60

Then when you're just get - ting used to it,

*Ped. \** *Ped. \** *Ped. \** *Ped. \** *Ped. \** *Ped. \**

**A tiny polka moment**

(♩ = 108-116, which is the same tempo as at the beginning!)

67

out of the blue comes a pol - ka; grab a part - ner; en - joy it while you can, for it

*Ped. \** *Ped. \**

72

won't last for - ev - er. There will be

*Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

76

days when you sing songs of praise. There will be el - e - gies.

D B Bmin

Ped. Ped. Ped.

81

There will be lul - la - bies.

Ab7

Ped. Ped.

Tiny amount of swing rhythm here, pensively

86

Db7 Ab7 8va

3 3

Ped. Ped. \* Ped. Ped. Ped.

90

rit. Singer #2

So

B7 G7 F7 Eb7(13)

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

**E** Very free tempo from here to the end  
 (♩ = 96-108 perhaps, or some amount slower than opening tempo)

94 Singer #1

tap your feet and take it in, and sing a - long, my friend, En - joy it while you can 'cause you don't

D7 G7 D7

Ped. Ped. Ped.

97 Singer #2

know when it will end, 'cause no one gets a pro-gram, *No one I know.*

*port.*

3 3 G7 3 3

*pedal with walking bass*

100 Singer #1 Singer #2 Singer #1

no one gets a pro-gram, *You gotta go with the flow* No one gets a pro-gram in this con - cert hall, There

D7 A7 G7

104 Singer #2 Tutti *straight rhythm, deliberately*

is no dress re - hears - al, or a crys - tal ball, But ev - 'ry - one who sings their heart out

F7 Bb6 Em7(b5) A7 Dm G#7

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

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