

Alex Berko

# A House on the Hill

for SATB chorus and marimba (opt. piano)

Ab

ALEX BERKO MUSIC

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Co-commissioned by Erin & Logan Henke and Roots in the Sky, Logan Henke, Conductor

First performance on May 11, 2024 at Northwestern University in Chicago, IL  
conducted by Logan Henke

*walking the long way home  
walking ever so slow  
talking to be  
wholly in this world of wonder  
standing still  
waiting  
standing in the center  
of a long and winding  
dirt road  
leading uphill  
to a small house  
surrounded by lilacs  
black-eyed susans  
roses and honeysuckle vines  
a bench at the bottom  
that bodies may rest  
before they climb*

*-bell hooks*

*Appalachian Elegy: Poetry and Place. pg. 42 © 2012 Gloria Jean Watkins. Used by permission of The University Press of Kentucky.*

Duration: ca. 5 minutes

**- PROGRAM NOTE -**

I discovered bell hooks and her beautiful poetry while living in Kentucky for my residency with the Louisville Orchestra. I was struck by the directness of her language, the internal breath of the meter, and clear sense of place and history evoked in the text. This poem is part of bell's collection of poetry entitled *Appalachian Elegy* which draws on her experience growing up in the hills of Kentucky.

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# A House on the Hill

bell hooks  
(1952-2021)

(2024)

Alex Berko  
(b. 1995)

Flowing with rubato, ♩ = 72

Soprano  
Alto  
Tenor  
Bass  
Marimba

*p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p* *pp* echo

5 *p* poco rit. . . a tempo

S.  
A.  
T.  
B.  
Mar.

walk - ing the long way home  
walk - ing the long way home

*p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

9

S. walk - ing ev - er so slow talk - ing to be

A. walk - ing ev - er so slow talk - ing to be

T. walk - ing ev - er so slow talk - ing to be

B. walk - ing ev - er so slow talk - ing to be

Mar.

*mf* *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

12

S. whol - ly in this world of won - - - - - der, this world of

A. whol - ly in this world of won - - - - - der,

T. whol - ly in this world of won - - - - - der,

B. whol - ly in this world of won - - - - - der,

Mar.

*mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

18

poco rit. ----- a tempo

*p* transparent

16 *mp*

S. won - - der oo

A. *pp* won - - der

T. *pp* won - - der

B. *pp* won - - der

Mar. *p* *mp* *pp*

22

poco rit. ----- a tempo *mp*

20

S. oo stand - ing still

A. *pp* oo stand - ing still

T. stand - ing still

B. stand - ing still

Mar. *p*

23 *mf* *a tempo* *mp*

S. wait - ing stand - ing in the cen - ter of a

A. wait - ing stand - ing in the cen - ter of a

T. stand - ing

B. stand - ing

Mar. *mf* *p*

26 *f* *p* poco rit. . . .

S. long and wind - - - ing dirt road

A. long and wind - - - ing dirt road

T.

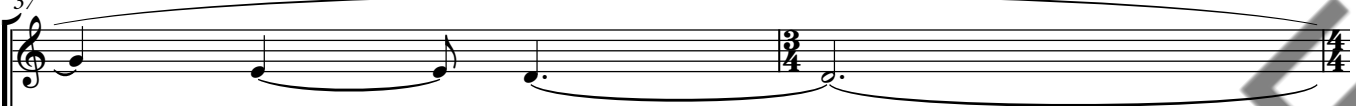
B.

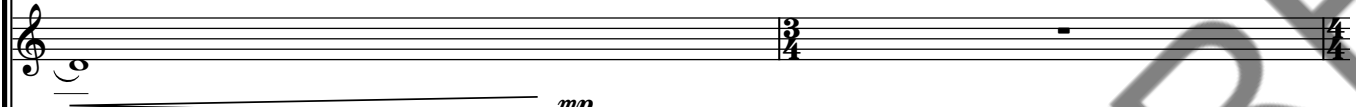
Mar. *f* *p* *pp*

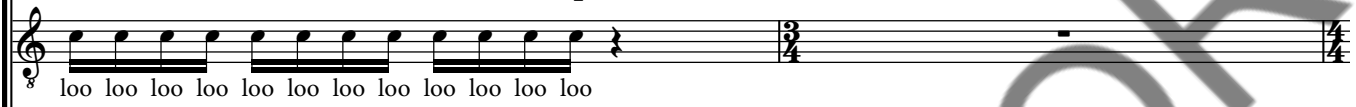


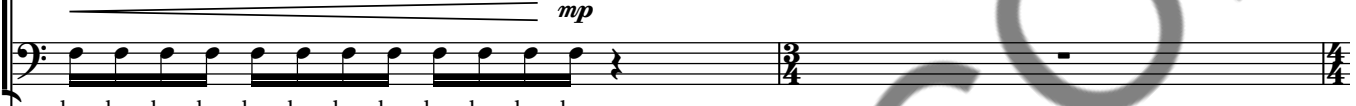
37

accel. -----

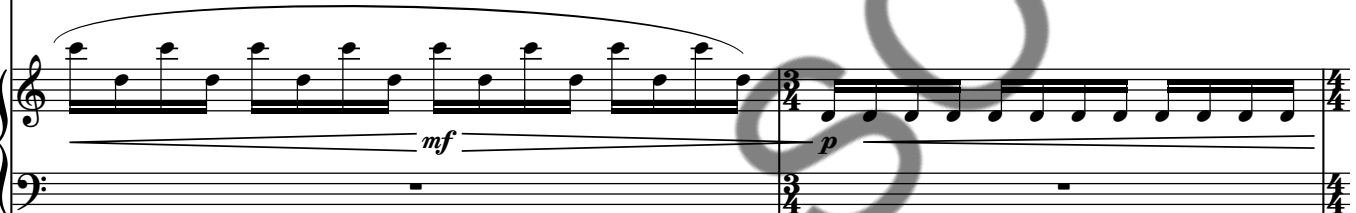
S. 

A. 

T. 

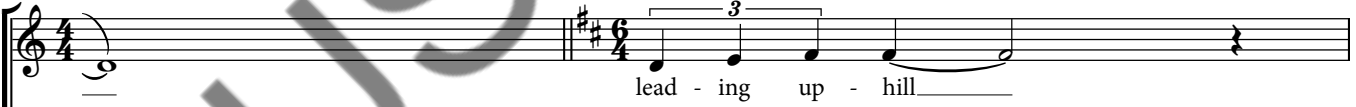
B. 

loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo


Mar. 

40 Climbing, ♩ = 80

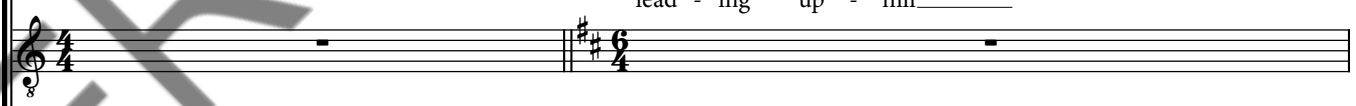
39


S. 


lead - ing up - hill

A. 

lead - ing up - hill

T. 

B. 

Mar. 

41

S. *3* to a small house sur - round - ed by li - lacs black - eyed su -

A. *3* to a small house sur - round - ed by li - lacs black - eyed su -

T. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

Mar. \_\_\_\_\_

43

S. sans, *mp* lead - ing up - hill

A. sans, *mp* lead - ing up - hill

T. *p* lead - ing up - hill

B. \_\_\_\_\_

Mar. \_\_\_\_\_

45

S. *mf* to a small house sur - round - ed by li - lacs,

A. to a small house sur - round - ed by li - lacs black - eyed su -

T. to a small house sur - round - ed by li - lacs black - eyed su -

B.

Mar. *mf*

48

S. *mf* li lacs and ros - es and hon - ey - suck - le vines,

A. *mf* sans, lead - ing up hill to a small house

T. *mp* sans, lead - ing up hill to a small

B. *mp* lead - ing up hill to a small

Mar. *mf*

50

S. li - lacs and ros - es and hon - ey - suck - le vines, li - lacs and ros - es and

A. sur - round - ed by li - lacs black - eyed su - - sans,

T. house sur - round - ed by li - lacs black - eyed su - - sans,

B. house sur - round - ed by li - lacs black - eyed su - - sans,

Mar.

53

S. hon - ey - suck - le vines, and li - lacs and ros - es, and li - lacs

A. li - lacs and ros - es and hon - ey - suck - le vines, and

T. li - lacs and ros - es, and li - lacs and

B. li - lacs and ros - es, and li - lacs and

Mar.

*cresc. poco a poco*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*p*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*p*

*cresc. poco a poco*



60

S. hon - ey - suck - le vines, hon - ey - suck - le vines,

A. hon - ey - suck - le vines, hon - ey - suck - le vines,

T. - hill to a small

B. - hill to a small

Mar. *fp*

62

S. hon - ey - suck - le vines, hon - ey - suck - le vines, hon -

A. hon - ey - suck - le vines, hon - ey - suck - le vines,

T. house sur - round - ed by

B. house sur - round - ed by

Mar. *fp*

64

S. *ey - suck - le vines, — hon - ey - suck - le vines, —*

A. *hon - ey - suck - le vines, — hon - ey - suck - le vines, —*

T. *li - lacs black - eyed su - sans hon - ey - suck - le vines, —*

B. *li - lacs black - eyed su - sans hon - ey - suck - le vines, —*

Mar. *fp* *fp*

67

*poco rit.* ----- *Tempo I, with rubato* (♩ = 72)

66

S. *hon - ey - suck - le vines, —* *ff* //  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

A. *ff* //  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

T. *ff* //  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

B. *ff* //  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

Mar. *ff* //  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$  *p* *mf* *p*

69 *poco rit.* ----- *a tempo*

S. *p*

A. *p*

T. *p* a bench at the bot - tom that

B. *p* a bench at the bot - tom that

Mar. *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

74 *rit.* -----

S.

A.

T. *p* bod - ies may rest be - fore they climb,

B. *p* bod - ies may rest be - fore they climb,

Mar. *p* *mf* *p* *pp* echo *p* *mf* *p*

78

78 *a tempo* *p* transparent

S. oo

A. oo

T. be - fore they

B. be - fore they climb,

Mar. *p*

81

S. oo

A. oo

T. climb, be - fore they

B. be - fore they climb,

Mar.

84

S. oo

A. oo  
*no dim.*

T. climb

B. *no dim.*  
be - fore they\_\_ climb

Mar. *f*