

Alex Berko

Limits of Your Longing

for SATB chorus, piano, and violoncello



ALEX BERKO MUSIC

Commissioned by Coro Mundi in honor of Thomas Jackson
Stephen Kushner, Music Director

First performance on October 13, 2024 at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania by Coro Mundi conducted by Stephen Kushner

*God speaks to each of us as he makes us,
then walks with us silently out of the night.*

These are the words we dimly hear:

*You, sent out beyond your recall,
go to the limits of your longing.
Embody me.*

*Flare up like a flame
and make big shadows I can move in.*

*Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final.
Don't let yourself lose me.*

*Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its seriousness.*

Give me your hand.

- Rainer Maria Rilke
Book of Hours, I 59

Duration: ca. 5 minutes

- PROGRAM NOTE -

In early 2024, I was approached by Stephen Kushner, music director of the Philadelphia-based choir, Coro Mundi. He asked if I would be willing to create a new work in honor of a dear friend, Thomas who had passed away the previous summer. In learning about Thomas, I came to understand that he was a deeply spiritual person who devoted his life to the well-being and healing of others.

We decided on a beautiful and meditative text by Rilke, one that reflected the spirit of Thomas and a poem that I had my eye on for some time. The poetry is comforting and introspective; each stanza acting almost like a small mantra. The work also includes piano and a cello which I imagined to be the spiritual force that lives within the seams of the music.

I consider it a great responsibility to create a work that embodies the spirit of an individual and would like to thank Stephen for trusting me to do so. We each have loved ones who used to be in our lives, now living in our memory and through what they've left behind. It's in the revisitation of their memory that we get to be with them again, if only for a moment.

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Limits of Your Longing

(2024)

Rainer Maria Rilke
(1875-1926)

Alex Berko
(b. 1995)

Violoncello

Reflective, ♩ = 69 poco rit. a tempo

Soprano

solo *p*

God speaks

Piano

Reflective, ♩ = 69 poco rit. a tempo

p

5

Vc.

S.

to each of us as he

Pno

poco rit. a tempo

6

Vc.

S.


makes us, then walks

Pno


mp

10

14

Vc. 

S. 

Pno 

rit.-----a tempo

flutter, bow ad lib.
sul A

19 

Vc. 

rit.-----a tempo

S. 

A. 

T. 

B. 

19

rit.-----a tempo

Pno 

23

Vc. *n* *mp* *mp* *pp*

S. *mf* us. These words we

A. These are the words we

25

Pno *mp*

27

Vc. *pp* *mf* *espressivo* *p*

S. dim - - - ly hear: You, sent out, sent out be -

S. dim - - - ly hear: You, sent out, sent out be -

A. dim - - - ly hear: You, sent out, sent out be -

T. You, sent out, sent out be -

B. You, sent out,

Pno *mf*

31

Vc. *mf* - yond your re - call, *p* go, *mf* go to the lim

S. *mf* - yond your re - call, *p* go, *mf* go to the lim

A. *mf* - yond your re - call, *p* go, *mf* go, to the lim

T. *mf* - yond your re - call, *p* go, *mf* go to the lim

B. *mf* - yond your re - call, *p* go, *mf* go to the lim

33

Pno

36

Vc. *n*

S. *p* - its, the lim - - - its of your long - - - ing.

A. *p* - its, the lim - - - its of your long - - - ing. Em -

T. *p* - its, the lim - - - its of your long - - - ing.

B. *p* - its, lim - - - its of your long - - - ing.

37

Pno

41

Vc. *pp* *f* *rit.*

S. *p* *f*
Em - bod - y me. Flare,
Em - bod - y me. Flare,

A. *mf* *f*
- bod - y me. Em - bod - y me. Flare,

T. *p*
Em - bod - y me.

B. *p*
Em - bod - y me.
Em - bod - y me.

Pno *rit.*

45 **45** a tempo

Vc. *fp* *ff* *fp*

S. Flare up, Flare up
up like a flame and

A. *f* Flare up like a flame

T. *f* Flare up like a flame

B. *f* Flare up like a flame

Pno *f*

49 **45** a tempo

Vc. *ff* *ff*

S. and make big sha - dows I can move in.
make big shad - ows I can move in.

A. and make big shad - ows I can move in.

T. and make big shad - ows I can move

B. and make big shad - ows I can move

Pno *f*

52 53

Vc. *p* *mf*

S. *p*

A. *p*

T. *mp sub.*

B. *mp sub.*

in. Let eve - ry - thing hap - pen_ to_ you: beau - ty and ter - - -

in. Let eve - ry - thing hap - pen_ to_ you: beau - ty and ter - - - -

Pno *mp*

56 *sul A* *rit.*

Vc. *p* *f* *p* *n*

S. *p* *3*

A. *p* *3*

T. *p* *3*

B. *p* *3*

No feel - ing is fi - nal. Don't lose me.

Just keep go - ing. Don't let your - self lose me.

-ror. No feel - ing is fi - nal. Don't lose me.

-ror. Just keep go - ing. Don't lose me.

rit.

Pno *p* *pp*

60 **60** a tempo poco rit.-----a tempo

Vc. *pp* sul tasto

S. *solo mp*
Near - by is a coun - try they call life.

T. *pp*
hm

B. *pp*
hm

Pno **60** a tempo poco rit.-----a tempo

65

Vc.

S. You will know it by its se - ri - ous - ness.

T. hm hm

B. hm

Pno

70

Vc. *p* *pp*

unis. *pp*

S. Give me your hand. Give me your hand.

A. Give me your hand. Give me your hand.

T. Give me your hand. Give me your hand.

B. Give me your hand. Give me your hand.

Pno *p*

|| *molto rit.*..... *a tempo*

74

Vc. *pp*

ord. sul A

S. Give me your hand.

A. Give me your hand.

T. Give me your hand.

B. Give me your hand.

molto rit...... *a tempo*

Pno