

031.30

SHARA NOVA

The Last Light

From "Winter Hymns"

for SSA choir with divisi, harp, and viola (2024)

Blue Sword Publishing

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Music and Lyrics by
Shara Nova, 2024.

Instrumental arrangements and
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The Last Light

from “Winter Hymns”

for SSA choir with divisi, harp, and viola

Shara Nova, 2024 — Instrumentals arr. J. Clay Gonzalez — Duration ca. 3’10”

Divisi

The choir is divided into three equal-sized sections; Soprano 1, Soprano 2, and Alto. Alto is further divided into A1 and A2.

Commissioning Information

Commissioned by iSing Silicon Valley, conducted by Jennah Delp. Premiered December 2, 2023 at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church featuring harpist Jieyin Wu and violist Lesley Roberston.

Instrumentation

For this piece, the choir is accompanied by a viola and a harp. The harp part can be substituted for a piano in no harp is available, though some adaptation may be needed to make the part idiomatic.

Program Note

As midwinter approaches, many people slow down a bit to reflect, and to listen to the world around them. The internality of the season invites us to take stock of what we have, and grieve what we’ve lost. For many, it’s a time to pay attention to the relationships that give our lives meaning.

“Winter Hymns” brings us into the emotional world that characterizes these end-of-year reflections, often using nature as a lens.

Winter is a time of profound changes in the natural world, where the colors of fall give way to the austerity of December. These changes affect us deeply, shaping our moods and outlook. Within winter’s gloom, though, are hints of abundance. The vibrancy of an evergreen in snow. A glimpse of a silent barred owl. Stars emerging from a brilliant winter sunset. A flash of red as a cardinal flies by.

In “Winter Hymns,” these images lead us into a space of celebration and reflection, where we consider what connects us to loves ones, to nature, and to home.

Editions

This piece is a movement of the larger work “Winter Hymns,” excerpted for stand alone performance.

[031.30] “The Last Light” from Winter Hymns

The other three movements from “Winter Hymns” are also available as separate editions.

[031.10] “Come ‘Round the Evergreen,” from Winter Hymns

[031.20] “Owl Song” from Winter Hymns

[031.40] “When Cardinals Appear, Spirits Are Near” from Winter Hymns.

Finally, all four movements are available in a single edition.

[031.00] Winter Hymns, for SSA choir, harp, and viola

Lyrics

The last star, ah
The last starlight, ah,
The last star, ah,
The last starlight, ah.

To appear in the night sky,
above the top of the trees,
Shines to tell me,
I have made it the long way home.

The last light, ah,
Light, ah.

VOCAL RANGES

The image displays four musical staves, each representing a different vocal range. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are as follows:

- Soprano Solo:** A half note on G4 (middle C), followed by a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on Bb4.
- Soprano 1:** A half note on G4, followed by a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on Bb4.
- Soprano 2:** A half note on G4, followed by a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on Bb4.
- Alto:** A half note on G4, followed by a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on Bb4.

The notes for Soprano Solo, Soprano 1, and Soprano 2 are positioned on the same staff lines, while the Alto part is positioned on a lower staff line.

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from "Winter Hymns"

SHARA NOVA

SHARA NOVA (2024)
ARR. J. Clay Gonzalez

Relentlessly, ♩ = 148

mf

S1

The last star,

S2

The last star,

A1

The last star,

A2

The last star,

Relentlessly, ♩ = 148

Viola

metronomically, never slowing down

Harp

sempre p

sim.

5

S1
ah, The

S2
ah, The

A1
ah, The

A2
ah, The

Vla.
ff *p*

Hp.
ff *pp*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score for 'The Last Light' from 'Winter Hymns' by Shara Nova. It features five vocal staves (S1, S2, A1, A2) and two piano staves (Viola and Harp). The vocal parts are in soprano and alto clefs. S1 and A1 have a melodic line with a long note followed by a triplet of eighth notes, with lyrics 'ah,' and 'The'. S2 and A2 have a similar melodic line with lyrics 'ah,' and 'The'. The Viola part starts with a long note, then rests, with dynamics *ff* and *p*. The Harp part has a rhythmic accompaniment of triplets in both hands, with dynamics *ff* and *pp*. A large watermark 'Perusahaan Perusasa' is visible across the page.

The musical score is arranged in a system with six staves. The vocal parts (S1, S2, A1, A2) are in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. They all begin with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The lyrics are: "last star light,". A boxed letter "A" is placed above the first measure of the vocal lines. The Viola part (Vla.) is in alto clef with a 3/4 time signature, starting with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and the instruction "sappy, vibrant". It features triplet markings and a dynamic change to mezzo-piano (*mp*) at the start of the second measure. A boxed letter "A" is placed above the first measure of the Viola part. The Harp part (Hp.) is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and consists of a continuous triplet accompaniment pattern.

The musical score is arranged in a system with the following parts and details:

- S1 (Soprano 1):** Treble clef, 13-measure rest, then a melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics: *f*. Includes the vocalization "ah,".
- S2 (Soprano 2):** Treble clef, 13-measure rest, then a melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics: *f*. Includes the vocalization "ah,".
- A1 (Alto 1):** Treble clef, 13-measure rest, then a melodic line starting with a half note. Dynamics: *f*. Includes the vocalization "ah,".
- A2 (Alto 2):** Treble clef, 13-measure rest, then a melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics: *f*. Includes the vocalization "ah,".
- Vla. (Viola):** Alto clef, 13-measure rest, then a melodic line with dynamics *ff*, *p*, and *ff*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.
- Hp. (Harp):** Grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays a continuous triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics: *f* and *fff*.

B
mf

S1
The last star,

S2
The last star,

A1
The last star,

A2
The last star,

B
p

Vla.

Hp.
ff *pp*

21

S1

S2

A1

A2

Vla.

Hp.

ah, ah, ah, ah, The

ff *mp*

25 *f* **C** *f*

S1 last star light,

S2 star light,

A1 star light,

A2 last star light,

Vla. **C** sweetly

Hp.

Detailed description: This page of a musical score for 'The Last Light' features six staves. The vocal staves (S1, S2, A1, A2) are in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. S1 and S2 sing 'last star light,' while A1 and A2 sing 'star light,'. The Viola part (Vla.) is in alto clef with a key signature of one flat, playing a triplet-based accompaniment. The Harp part (Hp.) is in grand staff with a key signature of one flat, also featuring a triplet-based accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present at the beginning of each vocal line. A common time signature 'C' is indicated above the vocal parts. The Viola part includes a 'sweetly' marking. The Harp part consists of continuous triplet patterns in both hands.

The musical score is arranged in a system with seven staves. The vocal parts (S1, S2, A1, A2) are in soprano, alto, and tenor clefs. The Viola (Vla.) is in alto clef. The Harp (Hp.) is in grand staff. The score begins at measure 29. The vocal parts feature long, sustained notes with fermatas, and some parts include triplet markings. The Viola part has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The Harp part features a complex rhythmic pattern of triplets, with a dynamic marking of *p* in the final measure. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

D

with quiet energy
mp

33

S1

To ap-pear

Detailed description: This is the first vocal staff, labeled S1. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The music starts at measure 33 with a long, sustained note on a high pitch, held across several measures. The lyrics "To ap-pear" are written below the staff, with a horizontal line under "ap-pear" indicating a long note.

with quiet energy
mp

S2

To ap-pear

Detailed description: This is the second vocal staff, labeled S2. It follows the same musical structure as S1, with a long, sustained note at the beginning and the lyrics "To ap-pear" below.

with quiet energy
mp

A1

To ap-pear

Detailed description: This is the third vocal staff, labeled A1. It follows the same musical structure as the soprano parts, with a long, sustained note at the beginning and the lyrics "To ap-pear" below.

with quiet energy
mp

A2

To ap-pear

Detailed description: This is the fourth vocal staff, labeled A2. It follows the same musical structure as the other vocal parts, with a long, sustained note at the beginning and the lyrics "To ap-pear" below.

sul pont.
ghostly, with quiet energy

D

Vla.

pp

Detailed description: This is the Viola staff. It features a continuous pattern of triplets in the left hand. The dynamics are marked as **pp** (pianissimo). The music is written in a 12/8 time signature.

Hp.

ppp **f**

Detailed description: This is the Harp staff. The left hand plays a rhythmic pattern of triplets, while the right hand has long, sustained notes. The dynamics transition from **ppp** (pianississimo) to **f** (forte). The music is written in a 12/8 time signature.

37 *mf*

S1 in the night sky, A - bove

S2 in the night sky, A - bove

A1 in the night sky, A - bove

A2 in the night sky,

Vla. *mf*

Hp.

41 *f*

S1 the top of the trees, Shines

S2 the top of the trees, Shines

A1 the top of the trees, Shines

A2

Vla. *to ord.*

Hp. *p mp*

E *mf*

45

S1 *mf*
to tell

S2 *mf*
to tell

A1 *mf*
to tell

A2

Vla. *mp*
ord. *mp*

gently bisbig. *pp* *ppp*

Hp. *f* *pp* *ppp*
mf

49

S1
me,

S2
me, I have made it the

A1
me, I have made it the

A2

Vla.
dying away
pp

Hp.

54 **F**
p

S1 I have made it the long way home...

S2 long way, the long way home...

A1 long way, the long way, mm.

A2 the long way, mm.

Vla.

Hp.

62 *pp* **G** *n* *rit.*

S1

S2

A1

A2

Vla. **G** *mp* *f* *rit.*

Hp.

69

S1

S2

A1

A2

Vla.

Hp.

freely 3

The musical score for "The Last Light" features the following parts and details:

- S1 (Soprano 1):** Treble clef, *mf* dynamic. Includes a tempo marking of 90. Lyrics: "ah,". Features a triplet of eighth notes and a long melisma.
- S2 (Soprano 2):** Treble clef, *mf* dynamic. Includes a tempo marking of 90. Lyrics: "ah,". Features a triplet of eighth notes and a long melisma.
- A1 (Alto 1):** Treble clef, *mf* dynamic. Includes a tempo marking of 90. Lyrics: "ah,". Features a long melisma.
- A2 (Alto 2):** Treble clef, *mf* dynamic. Includes a tempo marking of 90. Lyrics: "ah,". Features a triplet of eighth notes and a long melisma.
- Vla. (Viola):** Bass clef, rests throughout the passage.
- Hp. (Harp):** Treble and bass clefs. Treble clef contains a triplet of eighth notes. Bass clef contains rests.

93 *p*

S1

S2

A1

A2

Vla. *p* arco

Hp.