

031.80

SHARA NOVA

# The Last Light

From "Winter Hymns"

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

Blue Sword Publishing

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Music and Lyrics by  
Shara Nova, 2024.

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# The Last Light

from “Winter Hymns”

for SSA choir with divisi, piano, 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 piano.

## 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

The original version of “Winter Hymns” is written for SSA choir, harp, and viola.

The following edition contains all four movements:

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

Additionally, each movement is available as stand-alone works.

[031.10] “Come ‘Round the Evergreen,” from Winter Hymns, for SSA choir, harp, and viola

[031.20] “Owl Song” from Winter Hymns, for SSA choir, harp, and viola

[031.30] “The Last Light” from Winter Hymns, for SSA choir, harp, and viola

[031.40] “When Cardinals Appear, Spirits Are Near”, for SSA choir, harp, and viola

An edition that includes all four movements and substitutes the harp for a piano is available, rewriting various passages to be more idomatic for the piano.

[031.50] Winter Hymns, for SSA choir, piano, and viola

This edition features the third movement as a stand-alone work, with the harp substituted for piano.

[031.80] “The Last Light” from Winter Hymns, for SSA choir, piano, and viola

The other three movements, as arrangements for SSA, piano, and viola, are also available stand-alone.

[031.60] “Come ‘Round the Evergreen,” from Winter Hymns, for SSA choir, piano, and viola

*(continued on next page)*

*Editions, continued.*

[031.70] “Owl Song” from Winter Hymns, for SSA choir, piano, and viola

[031.90] “When Cardinals Appear, Spirits Are Near”, for SSA choir, piano, and viola

Finally, versions of all these editions for SSA and piano only are also available.

[031.A0] Winter Hymns, for SSA choir and piano

[031.B0] “Come ‘Round the Evergreen,” from Winter Hymns, for SSA choir and piano

[031.C0] “Owl Song” from Winter Hymns, for SSA choir and piano

[031.D0] “The Last Light” from Winter Hymns, for SSA choir and piano

[031.E0] “When Cardinals Appear, Spirits Are Near”, for SSA choir and piano

**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 (below the staff), a quarter note on A4 (first line), and a quarter note on Bb4 (first space).
- Soprano 1:** A half note on G4 (first line), a quarter note on A4 (first space), and a quarter note on Bb4 (second line).
- Soprano 2:** A half note on G4 (first space), a quarter note on A4 (second line), and a quarter note on Bb4 (second space).
- Alto:** A half note on G4 (second space), a quarter note on A4 (third line), and a quarter note on Bb4 (third space).



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SHARA NOVA

SHARA NOVA (2024)  
ARR. J. Clay Gonzalez

Relentlessly, ♩ = 148

*mf*

S1

The last star,

*mf*

S2

The last star,

*mf*

A1

The last star,

*mf*

A2

The last star,

Relentlessly, ♩ = 148

Viola

metronomically, never slowing down

*sim.*

Piano

*sempre p*

*Ad.*

5

S1  
ah, The

S2  
ah, The

A1  
ah, The

A2  
ah, The

Vla.  
*ff* *p*

Pno.  
*ff* *pp*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score contains five vocal staves (S1, S2, A1, A2) and two piano staves (Vla., Pno.). The vocal parts are in treble clef with a soprano C-clef. S1 and A1 have lyrics 'ah, The' and feature a triplet of eighth notes. S2 and A2 have lyrics 'ah, The' and feature a half note followed by a quarter note. The Viola part is in alto clef with a 6/8 time signature, starting with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and a half note, then moving to piano (*p*) for the remainder of the page. The Piano part is in grand staff with a 6/8 time signature, featuring a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes and triplets, starting with fortissimo (*ff*) and ending with pianissimo (*pp*).

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. The Viola part is in alto clef with a key signature of one flat. The Piano part is in grand staff. The lyrics are: "last star light,". A box labeled 'A' is placed above the vocal staves at the beginning of the second measure of the vocal line. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The Viola part includes the instruction "sappy, vibrant" and features triplet markings. The Piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern of triplets in the right hand.

9 *f* **A** *f*

S1 last star light,

S2 last star light,

A1 last star light,

A2 last star light,

Vla. sappy, vibrant *mf* **A** *mp*

Pno.

13

S1 *f* ah,

S2 *f* ah,

A1 *f* ah,

A2 *f* ah,

Vla. *ff* *p* *ff*

Pno. *f* *fff*

**B** *mf*

S1 The last star,

S2 The last star,

A1 The last star,

A2 The last star,

Vla. **B** *p*

Pno. *ff* *pp*

21

S1

ah,

S2

ah,

A1

ah,

A2

ah, The

Vla.

*ff*

Pno.

*ff*

*mp*

*mp*



29

S1 ah.

S2 ah.

A1 ah.

A2 ah.

Vla. *mp*

Pno. *p*

**D**

*with quiet energy*  
**mp**

33

S1

To ap-pear

Detailed description: Musical staff for Soprano 1 (S1) in treble clef. It begins with a measure number '33'. The staff contains a melodic line with a long note and a slur. The lyrics 'To ap-pear' are written below the staff.

*with quiet energy*  
**mp**

S2

To ap-pear

Detailed description: Musical staff for Soprano 2 (S2) in treble clef. It contains a melodic line with a long note and a slur. The lyrics 'To ap-pear' are written below the staff.

*with quiet energy*  
**mp**

A1

To ap-pear

Detailed description: Musical staff for Alto 1 (A1) in treble clef. It contains a melodic line with a long note and a slur. The lyrics 'To ap-pear' are written below the staff.

*with quiet energy*  
**mp**

A2

To ap-pear

Detailed description: Musical staff for Alto 2 (A2) in treble clef. It contains a melodic line with a long note and a slur. The lyrics 'To ap-pear' are written below the staff.

*sul pont.*  
*ghostly, with quiet energy*

**D**

Vla.

**pp**

Detailed description: Musical staff for Viola (Vla.) in alto clef. It features a continuous triplet pattern of eighth notes. The dynamic marking **pp** is indicated below the staff.

pedal ad. lib to expand the sound, but don't let it bleed too much.

Pno.

**ppp** **f**

Detailed description: Musical staff for Piano (Pno.) in grand staff. The left hand plays a triplet pattern of eighth notes. The right hand has a few notes. Dynamic markings **ppp** and **f** are shown. A pedal instruction is written above the staff.

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*

Pno.

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.*

Pno. *no ped.*  
*p mp*

45

S1 *mf* **E**  
to tell

S2

A1 *mf*  
to tell

A2

Vla. *mp* **E**  
ord.  
gently sparkling tremolo

Pno. *mf* *pp*

48

S1  
me,

S2  
*mf* to tell me, *p* I have made

A1  
me, *p* I have made

A2

Vla.  
dying away *pp*

Pno.  
(8) *ppp*

53

**F**  
*p*

S1 I have made it the long way

S2 it the long way, the long way

A1 it the long way, the long way,

A2 the long way,

**F**

Vla.

Pno.

61

**G**

*pp* *n* **rit.**

S1  
home.

*pp* *n*

S2  
home.

*pp* *n*

A1  
mm.

*pp* *n*

A2  
mm.

**G**

*mp* *f* **rit.**

Vla.

Pno.

68

S1

S2

A1

A2

Vla.

Pno.

freely

3

3

3

**H**

75 **a tempo**

S1

S2

A1

*mp*  
The last

A2

*mp*  
The last

**H**

**a tempo**

Vla.

Pno.

*mf* *mp*

78

*f*  
light,

*f*  
light,

*f*  
light,

*f*  
light,

*ff* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

*f* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Pno. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3