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Night Songs

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Night Songs

for

Mezzo-soprano, Violoncello and Piano

Music by John Newell
Words by Sara Teasdale

ABIERTO MUSIC

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Sara Teasdale (1884 – 1933) was truly a lyric poet, one whose works are notable for their very personal emotions and clarity of expression. These qualities have made her work beg to be set to music. Many of her poems deal with the theme of night, and I had great difficulty choosing which of her poems to set for this work. All those chosen are cast in the first person.

Sara was born and grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, leading a very sheltered life. She was the youngest child of a well-to-do family; throughout her life she was physically frail and struggled with depression. She was courted by several young men, including the poet Vachel Lindsay. She turned down Lindsay's proposal of marriage, choosing instead Ernst Filsinger, a St. Louis manufacturer, whom she married in 1914. They moved to the Upper West Side of New York City two years later.

In 1918 Sara's work *Love Songs* was awarded what would later become known as the first Pulitzer Prize for poetry. In all she had published eight volumes of work. The initial happiness of Sara's marriage eroded as her husband's travels increased her loneliness. She divorced him in 1929; after a period of serious health issues she took her own life in 1933.

The poems in this set address a variety of emotions: a warm reminiscence of evenings spent in New York's Riverside Park; the innocence of a child running to her neighbor's house, accompanied by the moon; a lament that her inner turmoil prevents her from resting in the beauty of the night.

Ultimately the night and the stars seem to have become sources of solace and objects of adoration. The final poem, *Winter Stars*, was apparently written during the first World War; it is a paean to the "faithful beauty of the stars" that still holds forth through the sorrow she feels for "the young blood flowing beyond the sea."

- I. There Will Be Stars (from *Dark of the Moon*, 1926)
- II. Summer Night, Riverside (from *Love Songs*, 1917)
- III. Spring Night (from *Love Songs*, 1917)
- IV. The Kind Moon (from *Helen of Troy and Other Poems*, 1911)
- V. June Night (from *Flame and Shadow*, 1920)
- VI. Stars (from *Flame and Shadow*, 1920)
- VII. Winter Stars (from *Flame & Shadow*, 1920)

Night Songs was composed for, and is dedicated to, the Resinosa Ensemble:
Jöelle Morris (mezzo-soprano), Eliza Meyer ('cello) and Bridget Convey (piano).

Night Songs

I. There Will Be Stars

Sara Teasdale

John Newell

Sostenuto molto ♩ = 52 - 56

p *espressivo*

Mezzo-Soprano

'Cello

Piano

LH

pp

Ped.

Note: Begin all *arpeggios* on the beat.

5

There will be stars ov-er the place for -

Ped.

9

ev - er; Tho' the

Ped.

♩ = 76

12

house we loved and the street we loved are lost, _____ Ev' - ry time the earth cir - cles her

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *p*

15

or - bit On the night the au - tumn e - qui - nox is crossed, Two

Ped. *simile*

18

stars we know, poised on the peak of mid - night _____ Will reach their ze - nith; _____

crescendo *f* *crescendo* *f*

21 *ritard.* ♩ = 56 *poco ritard.* *a tempo*

still - ness will be deep;

Ped. *

25 *p* *3*

There will be stars ov-er the place for - ev - er, ___

pp LH *pp* *Ped.* *

29 *ritard.* *3*

There will be stars for - ev - er, ___ while we sleep.

pp LH *pp* *Ped.* *

II. Summer Night, Riverside

Gently rocking $\text{♩} = 52$

Cello

Piano

p

con Ped.

5

9

13

p

2

In the wild soft sum - mer dark - ness

16

How ma - ny and ma - ny a night we two to - ge - ther _____

19

Sat in the park and watched the Hud - son Wear - ing her lights ___ like gol - den

22

spang - les Glint - ing on black sa - tin. _____

25

Musical score for measures 25-28. The vocal line consists of whole rests. The bass line features eighth-note patterns with slurs and a fermata in measure 28. The piano accompaniment includes chords and eighth-note patterns with slurs and a fermata in measure 28.

29

Musical score for measures 29-31. The vocal line contains the lyrics: "The rail _____ a - long the curv - ing path - way ___ Was". The bass line has dotted notes. The piano accompaniment features eighth-note patterns with slurs.

32

Musical score for measures 32-35. The vocal line contains the lyrics: "low in a hap - py place to let us cross, _____ And down the". The bass line has eighth-note patterns with slurs. The piano accompaniment includes chords and eighth-note patterns with slurs.

35

hill a tree that dripped with bloom

38

Shel-tered us, While your kiss-es and the flow-ers,

40

Fall-ing, fall-ing, Fall-ing, fall-ing, Tang-led in my

42

hair.

2 2

This system contains measures 42 and 43. It features three staves: a vocal line in treble clef, a bass line in bass clef, and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The time signature is 12/8. The vocal line has a slur over two notes with the word 'hair.' underneath. The bass line has two pairs of eighth notes beamed together, each with a '2' below it. The piano accompaniment has a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand and rests in the right hand.

44

The frail white stars moved slow - ly ov - er the sky.

2 2 2 2

This system contains measures 44 and 45. It features three staves: a vocal line in treble clef, a bass line in bass clef, and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The time signature is 15/8. The vocal line has a slur over four notes with the lyrics 'The frail white stars moved slow - ly ov - er the sky.' underneath. The bass line has four pairs of eighth notes beamed together, each with a '2' below it. The piano accompaniment has a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand and rests in the right hand.

47

This system contains measures 47, 48, 49, and 50. It features three staves: a vocal line in bass clef, a piano treble staff, and a piano bass staff. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand and rests in the right hand. The vocal line in the bass clef has a slur over four notes.

51

51

55

And now, far off In the frag - rant

55

59

dark - ness The tree is tre - mu - lous a - gain with bloom For

59

62

June comes back. To-night what girl Dream - i - ly be-fore her mir-ror

65

shakes from her hair This year's blos - soms, cling - ing to its coils?

poco rit. *a tempo*

p

68

ritard.

III. Spring Night

Restless, despairing ♩ = 80

f

Oh, _____ is it not e - nough _____ to be

p

ped.

4

Here with this beau - ty o-ver me? _____ My throat should ache with

ped.

ped.

7

praise, and I Should kneel in joy be-neath the sky. _____

simile

10

O, Beau - ty are you not e - nough? Why am I

13

cry - ing af - ter love, With youth, a sing - ing voice and

16

eyes To take earth's won - der with sur - prise?

19

Why have I put off my pride, Why am I un - sat - is -

22

fied, I for whom the pen - sive night Binds her cloud - y hair with

25

light, I for whom all beau - ty burns Like in - cense

28

in a mil-lion urns? O,

This system contains measures 28, 29, and 30. The vocal line starts in 3/8 time, moves to 2/4, and then to 4/4. The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes and triplets, marked with '6' and '3'.

31

Beau - ty, are you not e - nough? O, beau - ty are you

This system contains measures 31, 32, and 33. The vocal line is in 3/4 time and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern, marked with '6'.

34

not e - nough? O Why am I cry - ing af - ter

This system contains measures 34, 35, and 36. The vocal line starts with a triplet of eighth notes and then moves to 2/4 time. The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes and triplets, marked with '6'.

37

love?

39

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

41

ritard.

ppp

ppp *

IV. The Kind Moon

Flowing calmly ♩ = 69 *tenderly*

mf I think the moon is ve - ry kind To take such trou - ble just for

p

4

me. He came a - long with me from home To keep me com - pa - ny. He

7

went as fast as I could run; I won - der how he crossed the sky? I'm sure he has - n't legs and

The musical score is arranged in three systems. Each system contains a vocal line (treble clef), a bass line (bass clef), and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The tempo is marked 'Flowing calmly' with a quarter note equal to 69 beats per minute, and the mood is 'tenderly'. The first system starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic for the vocal line and piano (*p*) for the piano accompaniment. The second system begins at measure 4. The third system begins at measure 7. The piano accompaniment features a consistent harmonic texture with sustained chords and moving lines in both hands.

10

feet Or an - y wings to fly. Yet here he is a - bove their

13

roof; Per - haps he thinks it is - n't right For me to go so far a -

15

poco ritard.

lone, Tho' mo - ther said I might.

V. June Night

Espressivo ♩ = 100

Musical score for measures 1-4. The piece is in 4/4 time. The upper staves (treble and bass clef) contain rests. The piano part (grand staff) features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The right hand melody consists of eighth notes with various accidentals. The left hand bass line consists of sustained chords. Performance markings include *mf* and *deliberately* for the piano part, and *mf* for the bass line. A *con Ped.* marking is present under the first two measures.

Musical score for measures 5-8. The piece continues in 4/4 time. The upper staves (treble and bass clef) contain rests. The piano part (grand staff) features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The right hand melody consists of eighth notes with various accidentals. The left hand bass line consists of sustained chords. Performance markings include *passionately* for the piano part.

Musical score for measures 9-12. The piece continues in 4/4 time. The upper staves (treble and bass clef) contain rests. The piano part (grand staff) features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The right hand melody consists of eighth notes with various accidentals. The left hand bass line consists of sustained chords. Performance markings include *passionately* and *mf* for the piano part. The lyrics "Oh Earth, you are too dear to - night," are written below the piano part.

13

How can I sleep, while all a - round Floats rain - y frag - rance and the

17

far Deep voice of the o - cean that talks to the ground?

21

ritard. *a tempo*

mf

diminuendo *mf*

25

mf Oh Earth, you gave me all I have, _____

This system contains measures 25 through 28. It features a vocal line with lyrics, a bass line, and a piano accompaniment. The time signature changes from 5/4 to 3/4, then to 6/4, and finally to 4/4. The piano part consists of sustained chords in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand.

29

I love you, I love you, oh

This system contains measures 29 through 32. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "I love you, I love you, oh". The time signature changes from 5/4 to 2/4, then to 5/4, and finally to 2/4. The piano accompaniment continues with sustained chords and a melodic line.

33

what have I That I can give you in re - turn _____ Ex - cept my

This system contains measures 33 through 36. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "what have I That I can give you in re - turn _____ Ex - cept my". The time signature changes from 5/4 to 4/4, then to 6/4, and finally to 2/4. The piano accompaniment continues with sustained chords and a melodic line.

37

bo - dy af - ter I die?

41 *ritard. al fine*

diminuendo

diminuendo

VI. Stars

In wonder $\text{♩} = 62$

p A - lone in the night On a

p sempre

con Ped.

5

dark hill With pines a - round me Spi - cey and still.

9

And a hea - ven full of stars O - ver my

13

White and to - And mis - ty

16

My - ri - ads with beat - ing Hearts of fire The ae - ons Can - not vex or

20

crescendo

tire; Up the dome of hea - ven Like a great hill I

23

watch them march - ing State - ly and still And I know that I Am

This system contains measures 23, 24, and 25. It features a vocal line with lyrics, a bass line, and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature changes from 6/4 to 4/4. Measure 23 includes a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand.

26

poco diminuendo

ho - nored _____ to be Wit - ness _____ Of so much ma - jes - ty. _____

This system contains measures 26, 27, 28, and 29. It features a vocal line with lyrics, a bass line, and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo marking *poco diminuendo* is present. The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand.

30

ritard.

This system contains measures 30, 31, 32, and 33. It features a vocal line, a bass line, and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo marking *ritard.* is present. The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. The system concludes with a double bar line.

VII. Winter Stars

Appassionata ♩ = 72

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with a whole rest in 4/4 time, then moving to 7/8 time with the lyrics "I went out at night a -". The middle staff is the right-hand piano part, featuring a series of sixteenth-note runs with slurs and dynamic markings of *ff* *molto espressivo* and *p*. The bottom staff is the left-hand piano part, which is mostly silent with some chords in the first measure. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

The second system continues the musical score. The vocal line starts with the word "lone;" followed by a line of music and then "The". The piano accompaniment continues with sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The key signature changes to one flat (B-flat) in the second measure. The system includes dynamic markings of *p* and *molto*.

The third system of the musical score features the vocal line with the lyrics "young blood flow - ing be - yond the sea seemed to have drenched my spi - rit's". The piano accompaniment includes a triplet of sixteenth notes in the right hand. The key signature changes to two flats (B-flat and E-flat) in the second measure. The system includes the marking *poco ritard.*

a tempo

wings, _____ I

p

poco

p *l. v.*

poco meno mosso

bore my sor - row heav - i - ly. _____ But

p

a tempo

when I lift - ed up my head From sha - dows sha - ken on the snow, _____ I

21

saw O - ri - on in the east Burn
stead - i - ly as long a - go.

LH

l. v.

25

From win - dows in my fa - ther's house, Dan - cing my dreams on

29

win - ter nights, I watched O - ri - on as a girl A - bove a - noth - er ci - ty's

32

lights. _____

l. v.

35

Years go, dreams go, and youth _____ goes

l. v.

39

too, _____ The world's heart breaks be - neath its wars, _____ All things are

poco meno mosso

43

changed, save in the east The faith - ful beau - ty of the

l. v.

46

ritard.

stars.

8va

l. v.

8vb

April, 2018

John Newell

Composer John Newell draws from a variety of musical traditions. His objective is to create works that reflect his personal sensibility, and that are inspiring and rewarding for performers and listeners alike. John's works have long been noted for their originality, clarity and a lyrical expressivity. He is equally at home composing for orchestra, solo instruments, vocal ensembles and chamber groups.

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, John graduated from Duke University, having pursued studies in composition, piano and conducting. He earned his M.F.A from California Institute of the Arts, where his primary teacher was Mel Powell. John completed his formal training at SUNY Buffalo, working with Morton Feldman as recipient of the first Edgard Varèse Fellowship. Since earning his Ph.D. in 1979 he has pursued an independent creative path.

Organizations that have commissioned works include Eight Strings & a Whistle, Atlantic Sinfonietta and Bowery Ensemble (New York), Monday Evening Concerts (Los Angeles), Enid Symphony Orchestra (Oklahoma), Resinosa Ensemble and Passamaquoddy Bay Symphony Orchestra (Maine).

His work has received support from the American Music Center, the Massachusetts Cultural Council and Meet the Composer. John's works are self-published through Abierto Music and he is a member of Broadcast Music Inc. More information is available at his web site: johnnewellmusic.com.

An accomplished pianist and conductor, John is experienced in collaborating with performers to create and present new works. He lives in Eastport, Maine; he is on the faculty of the Summerkeys program and founding director of the choral ensemble *Quoddy Voices*.

John Newell

Selected Solo and Chamber Works

Night Songs mezzo-soprano, 'cello, piano

Summer Music flute, oboe, 'cello

Fantasy viola, 'cello, piano

In Autumn violin, piano

...and nothing remains the same. flute, viola, 'cello

Three Preludes flute

A Day's Journey string quartet

Variations on Amazing Grace piano

Sequoia Quintet flute/piccolo, clarinet, oboe, horn, bassoon

Sky Music flute, clarinet, harp

Companions II piano

Song of Compassion 2 violas, keyboard, percussion

Rhapsody horn, piano

Lavender Axes flute/picc, clarinet, oboe/eh, bassoon, percussion, piano

Rondos Eb clarinet, trumpet, trombone, tuba, percussion

Knossos piano

Heterophony alto voices, violin, viola, english horn

Text soprano, violin, flute, clarinet, guitar, percussion

Image, Song, Vision flute, clarinet, violin, 'cello

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