

# E l e g y

for

Baritone & String Quartet

Rainer Maria Rilke

Allen Brings

Piano-Vocal Score

The following dynamic levels should be observed in the performance of this composition: *ff, più f, f, poco f, mf, mp, poco p, p, più p, pp.*

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## Remarks -

My setting of Rainer Maria Rilke's third Duino elegy could be regarded as a kind of sung recitation, in which the music determines pitch, rhythm and principal dynamic levels but few of those qualities which characterize an interpretation truly reflective of the meaning of the poetry. Although these qualities were certainly considered in composing the music, their examples are so numerous and subtle that they defy indication and, in any case, are probably best left to the soloist, who, if he has studied Rilke's text in any depth, will prefer to develop his own ideas of how the observer-commentator who speaks out of the poem should be portrayed. To guide the singer in this task a literal translation is provided below, one that retains both Rilke's idiosyncratic punctuation and as much of the word order as English will allow. For truly idiomatic and poetic translations one would do better to read those by J.B. Leishman and Stephen Spender, published by W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., and by C.F. MacIntyre, published by the University of California Press. No attempt has been or should be made to provide this setting with a practical translation since it is my wish that it be sung only in its original language.

Allen Brings

### ELEGY

It is one thing to sing of the beloved. Another, alas, of that hidden, guilty river-god of the blood. He whom she knows from a distance, her young lover, what does *he* know of the lord of desire, he who often out of his loneliness, before the girl even put him at ease, often also as if she were not there, oh, dripping from what unknown, raised his godhead, arousing the night to endless ferment. O Neptune of the blood, O his frightening trident. O the dark wind of his breast from the tortuous mussel. Listen, how the night digs itself troughs and hollows itself. You stars, doesn't the lover's desire for the beloved's face originate in you? Doesn't he have the deep insight into her pure face from the pure star?

You did not, alas, nor did his mother bend the bow of his brow thus to expectancy. Not to you, girl feeling him, not toward you did his lip bend to fruitful expression. Do you really mean, your lightly approaching steps could have upset him so, you, who wander like an early wind? It is true you terrified his heart; still older terrors shot into him at the moment of touching contact. Call him . . . you do not call him completely from gloomy discourse. Truly, he *wants* to, he *does* escape; relieved, he makes himself at home in your secret heart and takes and begins himself. But did he really begin himself? Mother, *you* made him small, you it was, who began him; to you he was new, you bent over his new eyes the friendly world and defended him from the strange. Oh, where are the years *when* with your slender figure you simply took the place of roiling chaos for him? You hid much from him then; the nightly suspicious room you rendered harmless, from your heart full of refuge you mixed a more human space with his nightspace. Not in the darkness, no, in your closer presence you placed the nightlight, and it shone as from friendship. Nowhere a creak, that, smiling, you did not explain, as if you knew for a long time, when the floorboard behaves that way . . . And he listened and was consoled. So much was your getting up tenderly capable of doing; behind the

closet his fate, tall in a coat, stepped, and into the folds of the curtain, which were lightly rearranging themselves, his restless future fitted itself.

And he himself, as he lay, one at ease, under the drowsy eyelids of your light figure, sweetly surrendering to the approach of needed sleep—: *seemed* one guarded . . . But *within* who restrained, impeded the floods of origin within him? Ah, there *was* no caution in the sleeping youth; sleeping, but dreaming, but in a fever: how he gave in. He, the new, the shy one, how he was snared by the increasingly grasping tendrils of the event within twisted already into patterns, to strangling growth, to animal-like preying shapes. How he gave in to it—. Loved. Loved his inner self, the wildness of his inner self, the primeval forest in him, on the mute ruins of which his heart stood lit green. Loved. It left, went into its own roots and out into a powerful source, where his little birth was already outlived. Lovingly, he climbed down into the older blood, into the ravines, where the terrible lay, still sated with the fathers. And each terror recognized him, winked, was as if well-informed. Yes, the horrible smiled . . . You rarely smiled so tenderly, Mother. How could he not love it, when it smiled at him. *Before* you he loved it, then, when you already bore him, it was dissolved in the water, that makes the sprouting seed buoyant.

See, we do not love, like the flowers, for a single year; this sap from time immemorial makes its way up into our arms, where we love. O girl, *this* that we loved *in* ourselves not one, one to come, but one fermenting limitlessly; not a single child but the fathers, who like the fragments of a mountain rest in our depths; but the dry riverbed of former mothers—; but the entire silent landscape beneath cloudy or clear destiny—: *this*, girl, anticipated you.

And you yourself, what do you know—, you conjured up times past in your lover. What feelings were stirred up out of bygone beings. What women hated you then. What kind of morose men did you stir up in the veins of the youth? Dead children wanted to reach you. . . Oh, gently, gently, do in his company a loving, a dependable day's work,—lead him close to the garden, give him a preponderance of nights . . .

Restrain him . . .

$\text{♩} = \text{c.}54$

Voice      Piano

Ei - nes ist, die Ge - lieb - te zu

poco p

5

cresc.

sin - gen. Ein and' - res, we - he, je - 3nen ver - bor - ge - nen schul - di - gen Fluß - Gott des

cresc.

a tempo

f

Bluts. Den sie von wei - temer - kennt, ih - ren Jüng - ling, was

poco f

poco p

mf

[10]

*cresc.*

weiß er selbst von dem Her-ren der Lust, der aus dem ein-sa - men oft, e - he das Mäd-chen noch

[15]

*mf* *f*

lin-der-te, oft auch als wäre sie nicht, ach, von wel-chem Un-kennt-li-chen trie-fend, das

*poco f*

Gott-haupt auf-hob, auf - ru - fend die Nacht zu un - end-li - chem Auf - ruhr.

*< dim<sub>3</sub>*

[20]

*a tempo*  
*p*  
*cresc.*  
 des Blu-tes

[25]

*mp*  
*mf dim.*  
*poco p*

Nep-tun, o sein furcht-ba-rer Drei-zack. O der dunk'-le Wind sei-ner Brust aus ge-wun-de-ner Mus-chel.

Horch, wie die

[30]

Nacht sich mul - det und höhlt.  
Ihr Ster - ne,

poco dim.

stammt nicht von euch des Lie - ben-den Lust zu dem Ant - litz sei - ner Ge -

poco p dim.

[35]

lieb - ten? Hat er die in - ni - ge Ein - sicht in ihr rei - nes Ge -

più p



50

*poco cresc.*

*mf*

Aus - druck. Meinst du wirk-lich, ihn hät-te dein leich-ter Auf-tritt al-<sup>3</sup>so er-schüt-tert, du,

*poco p*

*cresc.*

*mp*

*poco a poco cresc.*

*> mp*

die wan-delt wie Früh- wind? Zwar du er-schrakst ihm das Herz; doch ält' - re Schreck-en

*> p*

*mp*

*poco f*

55

stürz - ten in ihn bei dem be - rüh - ren - den An - - stoß.

*mf*

*dim.*

*< f*

Ruf ihn ... du rufst ihn

*poco p*      *poco f*

[60]

nicht ganz aus dun-ke-lem Um-gang.

*poco p*      *mf*      *< poco f > dim.*      *più p*

*poco p*

Frei - lich, er will, er ent-springt; er - leich - tert ge-wöhnt er sich in dein

[65]                          *dim.*                          <      *più p*

heim - li - ches Herz und nimmt und be - ginnt sich.

[70]                          *p*      <      >      <      >      <      *poco p*      >

A - ber be - gann er sich je?      Mut - ter,      du mach - test ihn

*dim.*      *pp*      *pp*

[75]                          *p*      <      >      <      >      <      *poco cresc.*

klein,      du warsts,      die ihn an - fing;      dir war er neu,      du beug - test ü - ber die

>      *più p*      <

*mp dim.*

neu-en Au - gen die freund-li- che Welt und wehr - test der frem - den.

*poco p* *dim.* *bd.*

*più p*

[80] *poco rit.*

*a tempo*

*p*

Wo, ach, hin sind die

*dim.* *pp* *più p*

[85] *cresc.*

*mf*

Jah - re, da du ihm ein-fach mit der schlan-ken Ge-stalt wal-len-des Chaos ver-

*cresc.* *mf*

*cresc.* *mp*

13

*mp* > *mf* <> *dim.*

tratst? Vie-les ver-bargst du ihm so; das nächt-lich-ver-däch-ti-ge Zim-mer mach-test du

*poco p* > *cresc.* [90] *poco f* *dim.* *mf* *dim.*

harm - los, aus dei-nem Her-zen voll Zu - flucht misch-test du mensch - li-chern Raum sei-nem Nacht-Raum hin-

*mp* > *p* <> *cresc.* [95] *pp* *<più p* < *cresc.*

zu. Nicht in die Fin-ster-nis, nein, in dein näh' - res

dim.

Da-sein hast du das Nacht-licht ge-stellt, und es schien wie aus Freund-schaft. Nir-gends ein

100

Knis-tern, das du nicht lä-chelnd er-klär-test, so als wüß-test du längst, *wann sich die Die-le be-*

105

nimmt... Und er horch-te und lin-der-te sich. So vie-les ver-moch-te zärt-lich dein

poco f >

Auf - stehn; hin-ter den Schrank trat hoch im Man - tel sein Schick - sal, und in die

110 cresc.

Fal-ten des Vor-hangs paß-te, die leicht sich ver-schob, sei-ne un-ruh'-ge Zu - kunft. Und er

poco f > <

115 poco a poco dim.

selbst, wie er lag, der Er - leich-ter-te, un-ter schläfern-den Li-dern dei-ner leich-ten Ge - stal-tung Sü - ße

poco a poco dim.

*poco p*

lö send in den ge-kos - te- ten Vor-schlaf—: schien ein Ge - hü-te-ter...

120

*più p < >* *cresc.*

A-ber in - nen: — wer wehr-te, hin-derte

125 *mf > cresc.*

in - nen in ihm die Flu-ten der Her - kunft? Ach, da war kei-ne Vor-sicht im Schla-fen-den;

*agitando*  
*poco a poco cresc.*

schla - fend, a - ber träu<sup>3</sup> - mend, a - ber in Fie-bern: wie er sich ein -

*poco a poco cresc.*

ließ. Er, der Neu-e, Scheu-en - de, wie er ver-strickt war, mit des

in - <sup>3</sup> nern Ge - schehns wei - ter - schlä - gen - den Ran - ken schon zu Mus - tern ver -

*mf* > > *mp* << *mf* >

schlun- gen, zu wür- gen-dem Wach - stum, zu tier - haft ja - gen-den

*3* *3* *3* *3*

*5* *5* *5* *5*

*poco dim.*

140

stürzt-sein licht-grün sein Herz stand.

poco p

145

Lieb - te. Ver-ließ es, ging die ei - ge-nen Wur-zeln hi-naus in ge-wal-ti - gen

più p

poco dim.

Ur - sprung, wo sei-ne klei-ne Ge-burt schon ü - ber-lebt war. Lie - bend

150

stieg er hi - nab in das äl - te - re Blut, in die Schluch - ten, wo \_\_ das Furcht-ba - re

*p*

*p cresc.*

*mf*

lag, noch satt von den Vä - tern. Und je - des Schreck-li - che kann-te ihn,

*< dim.*

*pp*

*cresc.*

155

blin-zel-te, war wie ver - stän - digit. Ja, das Ent - setz-li - che lä - chel-te... Sel - ten hast

*mp*

*poco f dim.*

*mp*

*cresc.*

du so zärt - lich ge-lä - chelt, \_ Mut - ter. Wie soll-te er's nicht lie - ben, da

*mf dim.*

*p*

*cresc.*

160

*<poco f*

es ihm lä - chel-te. Vor dir hat ers ge - liebt, denn, da du ihn trugst\_ schon, war es im

*mf*

165

*f*

*poco dim.*

*>mf cresc.*

Was - ser ge-löst, das den Kei - men-den leicht macht. Sieh', wir lie - ben nicht, wie die

*poco f*

*dim.*

*mp*

poco f > > mp ————— mf > < cresc. >

Blu - men, aus ei - nem ein - zi - gen Jahr; uns steigt, wo wir

mf ————— p > < cresc.

lie - ben, un - vor - denk - li - cher Saft in die Ar - me. O Mäd - chen, dies: daß wir lieb - ten in

170 poco a poco cresc. f > mp < > < > 3

poco f ————— poco p poco a poco cresc.

> 3 uns, nicht Ei - nes, ein Künf - ti - ges, son-dern das zahl - los Brau-en - de; nicht ein ein - zel - nes

poco f

175

dim.

mf

Kind, son-dern die Vä-ter,— du wie Trüm-mer Ge-birgs uns im Grun-de be - ruhn; son-dern das tro-cke-ne

dim.

mp

poco f > dim. mf > dim. mp > cresc.

Fluß-bett ein-sti- ger Müt-ter—; son-dern die gan-ze laut-lo - se Land-schaft un-ter dem wol-ki - gen

mf > dim. < mp > cresc.

poco f > f >

o - der rei-nen Ver-häng-nis—; dies kam dir, Mäd - chen, zu - vor.

mf

poco f

185

*poco cresc.*

*p*

Und du selber, was

190

*mp dim.*

*poco p*

*cresc.*

weißt du, du lock-test Vor-zeit em-por in dem Lie-ben-den. Wel-che Ge-füh - le

*dim.*

*mf*

*mp*

*cresc.*

*3*

*mp*

*cresc.*

wühl-ten he - rauf aus ent - wan-del - ten We - sen. Wel-che Frau - en haß-ten dich

195

da Was für fin - ste - re Män - ner reg - test du auf im Ge - ä - der des

poco f dim.

poco f > mp cresc. poco f

Jüng - lings? To-te Kin - der woll - ten zu dir ...

> poco p mf dim.

**200**

O lei - - se, lei - - se,

più p

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the piano, showing bass and treble clefs with various dynamics like forte (f), mezzo-forte (mf), piano (p), and crescendo (cresc.). The middle staff is for the voice, with lyrics in German. The bottom staff is also for the piano. Measure 195 starts with a piano forte dynamic (f) followed by a piano dynamic (mf). The vocal line begins with "da" and continues with lyrics like "Was für fin - ste - re Män - ner" and "reg - test du auf im Ge - ä - der des". The piano part includes a dynamic instruction "poco f dim.". Measures 196-197 show a piano dynamic (poco f) followed by a piano dynamic (mp) with a crescendo (cresc.). The vocal line continues with "Jüng - lings?" and "To-te Kin - der woll - ten zu dir ...". The piano part includes a dynamic instruction "> poco p" and a dynamic (mf) followed by a dynamic (dim.). Measures 198-199 show a piano dynamic (mf) followed by a piano dynamic (dim.). The vocal line continues with the lyrics. Measure 200 starts with a piano dynamic (p) followed by a piano dynamic (mf). The vocal line begins with "O lei - - se, lei - - se,". The piano part includes a dynamic instruction "più p". The score uses various time signatures including common time (4/4), 3/4, and 2/4.

tu ein lie - bes vor ihm, ein verläßli - ches Tag - werk,— führ ihn

205

nah an der Gar - ten he - ran, gieb ihm der Näch - te Ü - ber - ge - wicht..... Ver-

210

*più p*

halt ihn.....

Ad maiorem gloriam Dei  
Wilton, April 2, 1991