

Sure On This Shining Night

Sure on this shining night
Of starmade shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.

The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wand'ring far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

—James Agee

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From *Nocturnes*, The American Choral Directors Association
2005 Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission

Premiere performance of the *Nocturnes* at the ACDA Los Angeles National Convention,
February, 2005 by the Donald Brinegar Singers and Morten Lauridsen, piano

The first three *Nocturnes*—*Sa Nuit d'Été* (R.M. Rilke), *Soneto de la Noche* (Pablo Neruda) and *Sure On This Shining Night*—may be performed either separately or as a cycle (in that order and including the *Epilogue*). The *Epilogue: Voici le soir*, premiered by the Los Angeles Master Chorale at Walt Disney Concert Hall conducted by Grant Gershon with the composer at the piano, is only to be performed if the entire cycle is done, following *Sure On This Shining Night*. In that case, the final chord of *Sure On This Shining Night* is held with a fermata and then the chorus begins the *Epilogue* without a break between these two movements. I set poet James Agee's marvelous verse very much like a song from the American musical theater and it should be sung in that manner.

Composer Morten Lauridsen is most noted for his seven vocal cycles—*Les Chansons des Roses*, *Madrigali*, *Mid-Winter Songs*, *Cuatro Canciones*, *A Winter Come*, *Nocturnes*, and *Lux Aeterna*—and his series of a *cappella* motets (including *O Magnum Mysterium* and *O Nata Lux*) which are regularly performed and recorded by distinguished ensembles and vocal artists throughout the world. The first three *Nocturnes* have been recorded by Polyphony, conducted by Stephen Layton, on *Lauridsen – Nocturnes* (Hyperion); the entire cycle is recorded by Voce, on *Sure On This Shining Night* (available at voceinc.com) and *Lauridsen – Mid-Winter Songs* by The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists. All three recordings are accompanied by the composer at the piano. Designated an “American Choral Master” by the National Endowment for the Arts in 2006, Mr. Lauridsen (b. 1943) is Distinguished Professor of Composition at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music and served as Composer-in-Residence of the Los Angeles Master Chorale from 1994 to 2001. In 2007, Lauridsen was awarded the National Medal of Arts for his “radiant choral works combining musical power, beauty and spiritual depth that have thrilled audiences worldwide.”

For more about Morten Lauridsen:
www.peermusicClassical.com and www.mortenlauridsen.com

Sure On This Shining Night

James Agee

Morten Lauridsen

Flowing, tempo rubato (♩ = ca. 72)

poco rit.

a tempo

Piano

p espressivo

Red.

T

4

rit.

a tempo

mp

Sure on this shin - ing

mp

B

rit.

a tempo

Sure on this shin - ing

7

poco rit.

night of star-made shad-ows round, kind-ness must watch for me this side—the ground, on this

night of star-made shad-ows round, kind-ness must watch for me this side—the ground, on this

poco rit.

*Omit if the low As are out of range.

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10 *a tempo* *rit. a tempo*

shin - - - ing night, this shin - -

shin - - - ing night, this shin - -

a tempo *rit. a tempo*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

13 *rit. a tempo rit.*

- - - ing night.

- - - ing night.

rit. a tempo rit.

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

16 **B** *a tempo mp*

S Sure on this shin-ing night of star-made shad-ows round, kind-ness must watch for me this

A Sure on this shin-ing night of star-made shad-ows round, kind-ness must watch for me this

T Sure on this shin-ing night, sure on this shin - - - ing -

B Sure on this shin-ing

B *a tempo*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

19

side the ground, on this shin ing night, this

side the ground, on this shin ing night, this

night, sure on this shin-ing night, this

night, sure on this shin ing night, this

rit.

Ped. Ped. Ped.

22

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

shin ing night.

shin ing night.

shin ing night.

shin ing night.

a tempo *molto rit.* **C** *a tempo* *mp*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

*Omit if the low As are out of range.

25

T

B

mp

The late year lies —

The late year lies —

Ped.

28

(no breath)

down the north, All — is healed, all — is health. High

down the north, All — is healed, all — is health. High

Ped.

31

S

A

T

B

mp

The late year lies — down the north, All — is

The late year lies — down the north, All — is

sum-mer holds the earth. — Hearts all whole. All — is healed, —

sum-mer holds the earth. — Hearts all whole. All — is healed, —

Ped.

34 (no breath) *mf*

healed, all is health. High summer holds the earth. Hearts all

healed, all is health. High summer holds the earth. Hearts all

all is health, all is health. High summer holds the earth. Hearts all

all is health, all is health. High summer holds the earth. Hearts all

mf

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

37 *meno mosso rit. a tempo* **D** *f*

whole. Sure on this shining night, sure on this shining,

whole. Sure on this shining night, sure on this

whole. Sure on this shining night, sure on this

whole. Sure on this shining night, sure on this

meno mosso rit. a tempo **D** *f*

Ped. Ped.

40

rit. *ff* *a tempo*

shin - - ing night, sure on this shin - -

shin - - ing night, sure on this shin - -

shin - - ing night, sure on this shin - -

shin - - ing night, sure on this shin - -

rit. *ff* *a tempo*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

43

rit. *mp* *a tempo* *p*

- ing night. I weep for won-der wan-d'ring far a - lone. of

mp *p*

- ing night. I weep a - lone. of

mp *p*

- ing night. I weep for won-der wan-d'ring far a - lone. of

mp *p*

- ing night. I weep a - lone. of

rit. *a tempo*

mp *p*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

meno mosso rit.

molto rit. molto lunga **E** *Molto meno mosso, with a sense of wonder*
ppp hushed

46

shad - ows on the stars. Sure on this

shad - ows on the stars.

shad - ows on the stars.

shad - ows on the stars. Sure on this shin-ing

meno mosso rit.

molto rit. molto lunga (no break) **E** *Molto meno mosso, with a sense of wonder*
ppp

Ped. Ped. Ped. ppp Ped.

49

shin-ing night, this shin - - ing night, on this

ppp hushed

Sure on this shin - - ing night, on this

ppp hushed

Sure on this shin-ing night, on this

night of star-made shadows round, kind-ness must watch for me this side the ground, on this

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

*Omit if the low As are out of range.

52

shin - - - ing night, this shin - - -

shin - - - ing night, this shin - - -

shin - - - ing night, this shin - - -

shin - - - ing night, this shin - - -

56

rit.

F *Meno mosso*

- - - ing night, - - -

- - - ing night, - - -

- - - ing night, - - -

- - - ing night, - - -

rit.

F *Meno mosso*

P

Ped. *Ped.*

59

meno mosso

rit.

molto meno mosso

sure on this shin - ing

sure on this shin - ing

sure on this shin - ing

sure on this shin - ing

meno mosso

rit.

molto meno mosso

Ped.

62

Tempo I

rit.

molto rit.

lunga

night.

night.

night.

night.

Tempo I

rit.

molto rit.

lunga

mp

p

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

(for Jama)
(ca. 4'45")