

GERALD COHEN

Adonai Ro'i
Lo Echsar

Psalm 23

for SATB Chorus
and Piano

PERUSAL SCORE

Adonai Ro'i was originally written, on the loss of a friend, as a solo a cappella melody. I am a cantor, and a dear friend and congregant died of cancer at the age of 42 in 1989. Her husband asked me to sing at her funeral, and I decided to write a setting of Psalm 23, which is traditionally sung at Jewish funerals and memorial services. This was indeed one of those cases of a piece of music just writing itself, in the course of perhaps 30 minutes, as I was filled with the emotions of my friend's death.

As I started singing the piece at other services, I received a very strong response to it, and decided to make a piano accompaniment. This was published in 1995, and soon was used by cantors all over the country, as well as in churches and other services and concerts. It is a very curious thing for a composer: I write many pieces of music of all kinds, and it is hard to know exactly why one particular piece captures people's emotions so strongly, but that is what happened with this particular piece.

I was soon asked by the Zamir Chorale of Boston to write a version for SATB chorus, the version that is presented in this sheet music, and that version has also been widely performed. I have also arranged it for solo voice and orchestra, and chorus and orchestra; these versions have been performed by such ensembles as the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the San Diego Symphony.

I just have to assume that the piece somehow taps into the strong emotions that I felt as I was writing it (I had also lost my father about 8 years before, so I am sure that loss is present as well), and that this then communicates itself to performers, listeners, and mourners. In 2003, I had the sad but powerful experience of singing the piece at my mother's funeral.

I am grateful that this piece has become a way for so many to express deep and delicate feelings. I hope that, if it is a piece that is meaningful to you, that you will feel free to contact me about your experience with it.

--Gerald Cohen

Adonai ro'i, lo echsar,
binot deshe yarkis yim,
al mey m'nuckot y'nahaleyni.
Nafshi y'shoveyv,
yancheyni v'magley tsedek,
l'maan sh'mo.
Gam ki eyleych b'gey tsalmavet,
lo ira ra ki ata imadi,
shivt'cha umishantecha heyma y'nachamuni.
Taaroach l'fanay shulchan neged tsor'ray,
dishanta vashemen roshi,
kosi r'vaya.
Ach tov vachessed yird'funi
kol y'mey chayai,
v'shavti b'veit adonai l'orech yamim.

Adonai is my shepherd, I shall not want.
God gives me repose in green meadows,
God leads me beside the still waters.
God revives my spirit,
and guides me on the right path,
for that is God's nature.
Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no harm, for You are with me,
Your staff and your rod comfort me.
You prepare a banquet for me in the presence of my foes,
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and kindness shall be my portion
all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in the House of Adonai forever.

In memory of Marcia Scharf

This arrangement for SATB chorus was commissioned by
the Zamir Chorale of Boston and its conductor, Joshua Jacobson

Adonai Ro'i Lo Echsar (Psalm 23)

Gerald Cohen

Adonai is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Gently flowing, not too slow ♩ = 100-108

God gives me repose in green meadows,

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass
Piano

p

A - do - nai ro - i lo ech - sar, bin - ot de - she yar - bi -

Gently flowing, not too slow ♩ = 100-108

p

with ped. throughout

Note: M. 1-16 can also be sung as a solo, in either register.

God leads me beside the still waters.

S.
A.
T.
B.
Piano

7

tzei - ni, al mei m' - nu - chot, al mei m' - nu - chot y' - na - ha -

7

p

14 *God revives my spirit,*

S. lei - - - ni. *p* Naf - shi y' - sho - veiv, y' - sho - veiv,

A. *p* Naf - shi y' - sho - veiv, y' - sho - veiv,

T. *p* Naf - - - shi y' - sho -

B. *p* Naf - - - shi y' - sho -

20 *and guides me on the right path*

S. yan - chei - ni v' - mag - lei tse - dek, yan - chei - - -

A. yan - chei - ni v' - mag - lei tse - dek, yan - chei - - -

T. *p* veiv, yan - - - chei - ni mag - lei tse - - - dek, yan -

B. *p* veiv, yan - - - - - chei - - - - ni v' - mag - - -

20 *sempre legato*
simile (sustain)

26 *for that is God's nature.*

S. ni v'-mag-lei tse - - - dek l' - ma - - - an sh' -

A. ni v'-mag-lei tse - - - dek l' - ma - - - an sh' -

T. 8 chei - ni mag - lei tse - dek l' - - ma - an sh' -

B. lei tse - - - dek l' - ma - - - an sh' -

31 *Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death,*

S. mo. *p sotto voce* Lu - lu lu - lu lu - lu *simile*

A. mo. *p sotto voce* Lu - lu lu - lu lu - lu *simile*

T. 8 mo. *mp cantabile* Gam ki ei - leich b' - gei

B. mo. *mp* Gam ki ei - leich b' - gei tsal - ma -

mo. Gam ki ei - - -

Note: From the upbeat to m.33 through m.40, several 2nd altos may sing the tenor part, and several 2nd sopranos may sing the alto part, so that the soprano line can be light, and the tenor line can be prominent but not strained.

I fear no harm, for You are with me,

Your staff and your rod
comfort me.

36

S. lu—lu, lu—lu lu—lu a - ta i - ma - di, shiv - t' -

A. ma - vet, lo i - - ra ra a - ta i - ma - di, shiv - t' -

T. vet, lo i - ra ra ki a - ta i - ma - di, shiv - t' -

B. leich, a - - - ta i - m - di, shiv - t' -

36

42

S. cha u - mi - shan - te - cha hei - ma y' - na - cha - mu - - ni, mp

A. cha u - mi - shan - te - cha hei - ma y' - na - cha - mu - - ni, ah. mp

T. cha u - mi - shan - te - cha hei - - - - ma, ah. mp

B. cha u - mi - shan - te - cha hei - - - - ma, ah. mp

42

cha u - mi - shan - te - cha hei - - - - ma, ah. rit.

poco allarg. *a tempo* *rit.*

49 *rit.* ----- *a tempo* *You prepare a banquet for me in the presence of my foes,*

S. *p* Ta - a - roch l' - fa - nai shul -

A. *p* Ta - a - roch l' - fa - nai shul - - -

T. *p, mp* Ta - a - roch l' - fa - nai l' - fa - nai shul - chan

B. *p mp* Ta - a - roch l' - fa - nai l' - fa - nai shul - chan

55 *poco cresc.* *You anoint my head with oil;*

S. chan ne - ged tso - r' - rai, di - shan - - - ta va -

A. chan ne - ged tso - r' - rai, di - shan - - - ta va -

T. ne - ged tso - r' - rai, di - shan - - - ta va - she - men ro -

B. ne - ged tso - r' - rai, di - shan - - - ta va - she - men ro -

55 *sempre legato*

simile (sustain)

Note: The melody in the tenors and basses should remain the most prominent voice in mm.58-65.

Surely goodness and kindness

my cup overflows.

Sop. solo: *p* *sweetly* A little slower, with rubato

61

S. she - men, ko - si - r' - va - ya. Ach tov *pp* *poco* va -

A. she - men, ko - si - r' - va - ya. Ach tov *p* *poco*

T. shi ko - si - r' - va - ya. Ach *pp* *poco*

B. shi ko - si - r' - va - ya. Ach *pp* *poco*

61

A little slower, with rubato

67 shall be my portion all the days of my life,

S. che-sed yir-d' - fu - ni kol y' - mei cha - yai, kol y' - mei cha -

A. che - sed yir d' - - fu - ni y' - mei cha - yai cha -

T. che - sed yir - d' - - fu - ni y' - mei cha - yai cha -

B. tov che - - - sed y' - - - mei cha - - -

67

poco *smile* *poco* *smile* *poco* *smile* *poco* *smile*

And I shall dwell in the house of Adonai forever.

a tempo (Tempo I)

poco
allarg. a tempo

73

73 yai, *f*

S. yai, v' - shav - - - ti b' - veit a - do - nai l' - - -

A. yai, shav - - - ti a - do - nai l' - o - - -

T. yai, v' - shav - ti a - do - nai l' - *f* - - -

B. yai, shav - - - ti a - do - nai l' - o - - -

73 yai, shav - - - ti a - do - nai l' - o - - -

a tempo (Tempo I) poco allarg. a tempo

79

rit. a tempo Adonai is my shepherd, I shall not want.

S. rech ya - mim. A - do - nai ro - i lo ech - sar,

A. rech ya - mim, ah. *mp* *p*

T. rech ya - mim, ah. *mp* *p* A - do - nai ro -

B. rech ya - mim, ah. *mp* *p* A - - - do - - - nai,

79 rit. a tempo

86 *pp* , rit. al fine *ppp*

S. — A-do nai ro - i lo ech - - - sar. *ppp*

A. — — — — — lo ech - - - sar. *ppp*

T. *pp* i, A-do nai ro - i lo, lo ech - - - sar. *ppp*

B. — — — — — lo ech - - - sar. *ppp*

86 *pp* , rit. al fine *ppp*

PERUSAL SCORE