

Mark Avison

The Darkling Thrush

Thomas Hardy

Written in 1899 with the original title 'By the Century's Deathbed'

I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-grey,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

The Darkling Thrush

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

Mark Avison (b. 1955)

$\text{♩} = 80$

SOPRANO
up a copp... gate frost spec - tre grey

ALTO
I leant on - copp - ice gate When was - grey -

TENOR

BASS

*Bars 4,7 11 etc. that contain a pause have an effective 5/4 time signature

Ah -

8

Win... dregs des... ..late weak - ening eye day tan... *poco a poco cresc.*

And ...ter's - made ...o - late The weak- ening of day The ...gled - *poco a poco cresc.*

The tan - *mf*

- Ah - Ah - Ah - Ah - Ah - Ah - Ah - Ah - *poco a poco cresc.*

15

bine scored sky strings of ...ken lyres

- stems the - Like strings - bro - ken -

gled - bine stems scored the sky Like strings - of bro - ken lyres

- Ah - Ah - Ah - Ah - Ah - Ah -

20

And all man kind that haun - ted - nigh - Had - sought - their house- hold - fires

And man - that ...ted - Had sought - house fires

all ...kind haun... nigh Had their ...hold

- Ah - - Ah - - Ah - - Ah - - Ah -

25

mf The land's - sharp fea-tures seemed to - be - The cen - tu - ry's

mf The land's - sharp fea-tures seemed to - be - The cen - tu - ry's

mf fires The land's- sharp - - to be The cen - tu-ry's

mf Ah - - Ah - - Ah - - Ah - - Ah -

30

corpse - out - leant - His - crypt the clou - dy can-o - py -

corpse - out - leant - His - crypt the clou - dy can-o - py -

corpse - out-leant - His crypt the clou - dy can - o - py

- Ah - - His crypt the clou - dy can-o - o - py -

35 *f* *rit.*

This wind his death - la - ment This wind his death - - - la -

This wind his death - la - ment This wind his death - - - la -

This wind his death - la - ment This wind his death - - - la -

This wind his death - la - ment This wind his death - - - la -

41 $\text{♩} = 64$ *p* *mf*

ment. The an - - - cient pulse -

ment - - - Ah - - - Ah - - - Ah - - - Ah - - -

ment - - - Ah - - - Ah - - - Ah - - - Ah - - -

ment. Ah Ah Ah Ah

46 *p* *mf*

- - - of germ and birth - was

Ah - - - Ah - - - Ah - - - Ah - - - Ah - - -

Ah - - - Ah - - - Ah - - - Ah - - - Ah - - -

Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah

51 *p* *mf*

shrunk - en hard - - - and dry - And - ev-ery spi-rit up-

p *mf*

Ah - Ah - Ah - Ah - - And ev - ery spi -

p *mf*

Ah - Ah - Ah - Ah - - And ev - ery spi -

p *mf*

Ah Ah Ah Ah And ev-ery spi-it up-on earth

56

on the earth Seemed fer-vour-less as I - - - And - ev-ery spi-rit up-

rit - Seemed fer-vour-less - as - I - - - And ev - ery spi -

rit - Seemed fer - vour - less as I - - - - And ev - ery spi -

seemed fer - vour - less - as I And ev-ery spi-rit up-on earth

60 *p* *mf*

on the earth seemed fer-vour less as I - - - fer-vour-less as I

rit - up - on the earth seemed fer - vour-less as I fer - vour - less as I -

rit up - on the earth seemed - as - - I fer - vour - less

seemed fer - vour - less - - as I fer - vour less -

64 *p* *mf* *rit.*

fer-vour-less as I fer - vour - less as I - At once a voice a-rose a-mong the

p *mf*

fer - vour - less as I - fer - vour less as I Ah Ah

p *mf*

fer - vour - less fer - vour - less as I - fer - vour - less as I - Ah Ah

p *mf*

-fer - vour - less - fer-vour-less as I - fer-vour-less as I - Ah Ah

68 *p* *A tempo*

bleak twigs o-ver head - In a full heart - ed e - - ven -

In a full - heart - ted e - - ven -

In a full heart - ed e - - ven -

In a full - heart - ed e - - ven -

76 $\text{♩} = 80$ *f* *p*

song Of - joy ...li.. ...ted; age... thrush gaunt, small blast

f *p*

song - Of - i - ...mi - ted; An ...ed - frail and small In be-

f

song

f

song Ah - Ah -

84



rit. - - - - -

97

Was writ-ten on ter-res-tri-al - things - A-far or - nigh a - round

Was ...ten - ter... ...trial things A-far or - nigh a - round

8 sound writ... on ...res... things A-far or - nigh a - round

- Ah - - Ah - - Ah - - A-far or - nigh a - round

legato con grazia

♩ = 64

103

mp

That - I - could think- there-trem - bled through - His hap - py good night

legato con grazia
mp

That - I - could - think there-trem-bled through - His hap - py - good- night

legato con graia
mp

8 That I think- there-trem - bled through - His hap - py good night

legato con grazia
mp

That I think trem - bled through His - hap - py good - night-

♩ = 72
sostenuto

rit.

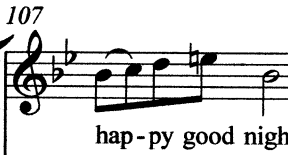
f

ff

mp

9

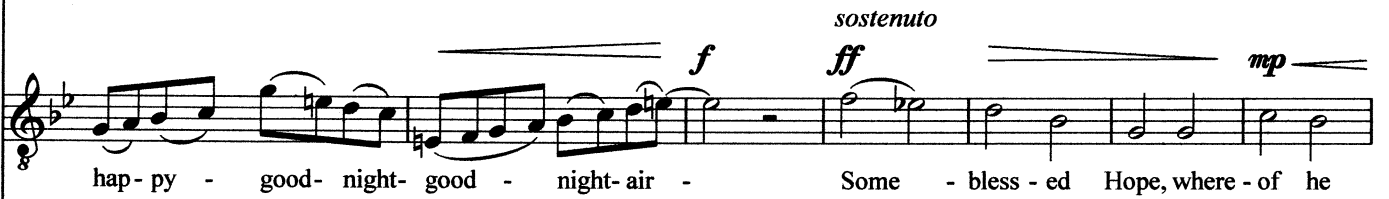
107



hap-py good night



good - night- air -

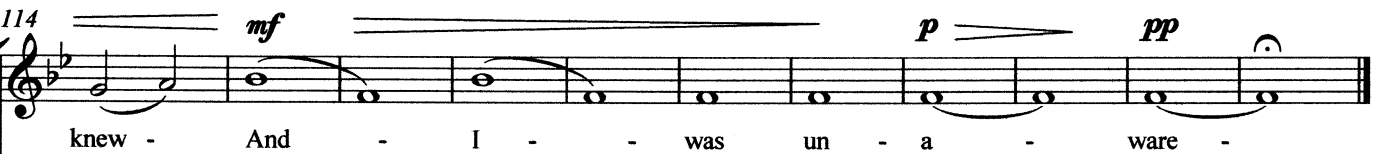


Some - bless - ed Hope, where - of he

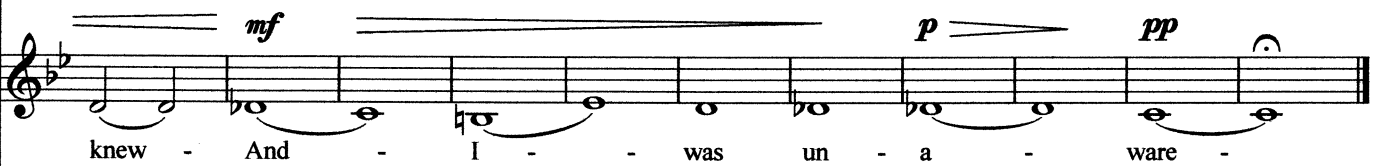


hap - py

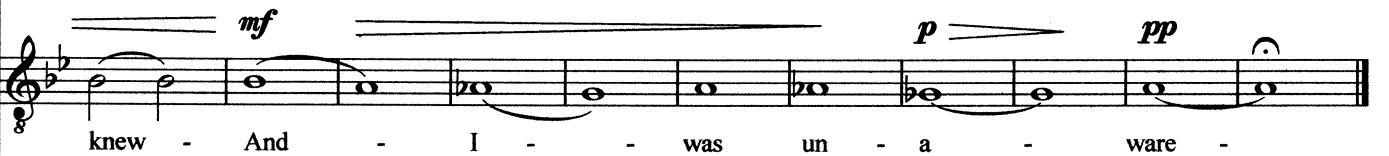
114



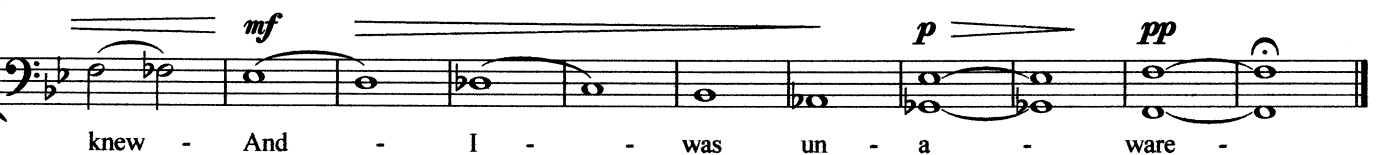
knew - And - I - - was un - a - ware -



knew - And - I - - was un - a - ware -



knew - And - I - - was un - a - ware -



knew - And - I - - was un - a - ware -