

Down in the River to Pray

Traditional African-American spiritual (1867)

This song holds a special place in my heart as I have grown up singing traditional gospel music and have a special love for it. The spiritual has had many versions through time as it was passed on. The first version of the song was entitled “The Good Old Way” and was featured in the book *Slave Songs of the United States* which was published in 1867. It is interesting to see in some versions the phrase “in the river” is changed to “to the river”. The reason for this is that most African American spirituals had hidden messages of escapes from their captures during the time of slavery. I have enjoyed working on this piece and challenging myself to find my style within the music. I wanted to make sure it still holds the values of an African-American spiritual while also combining the aspects of modern gospel music.

As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown
Good Lord, show me the way
O sisters, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
O sisters, let's go down
Down in the river to pray
As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe and crown
Good Lord, show me the way
O brothers, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on, brothers, let's go down
Down in the river to pray
As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown
Good Lord, show me the way
O fathers, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
O fathers, let's go down
Down in the river to pray
As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe and crown
Good Lord, show me the way
O mothers, let's go down
Come on down, don't you wanna go down?
Come on, mothers, let's go down
Down in the river to pray
As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown
Good Lord, show me the way
O sinners, let's go down

Let's go down, come on down
O sinners, let's go down
Down in the river to pray
As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe and crown
Good Lord, show me the way

**24 Preludes Opus 28, No. 6 in B minor, Lento assai
No. 7 in A major, Andantino**

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Frédéric Chopin (born 1810 in Warsaw, Poland, died 1849 in Paris, France), was a famous Polish-French composer during the Romantic time period. Chopin grew up in a family of artists, and is said to have been fascinated by the sound of the piano even in his infancy. When he was six years old, he began replicating the songs that he heard his mother (or possibly his sister) play, as well as creating original compositions himself. Chopin's first public appearance as a pianist was at the age of eight, and three years later he was given the honor of performing for Russian Tsar Alexander I. The child prodigy was eventually enrolled in the Warsaw Conservatory of Music, and his original compositions continued to grow into an impressive list.

The 24 Preludes, Opus 28 were written to be "explorations of the characters of various keys" (Britannica). They were likely inspired by Johann Sebastian Bach, who had written a prelude for each major and minor key with an accompanying fugue for each. Chopin chose to write one prelude for each major and minor key without fugues to go with them, and the work lasts about 45 minutes altogether. He is said to have been in an unhappy place in life while composing these pieces, particularly the last prelude in D-minor, though it can be seen in the other minor preludes as well.

Comfort Ye and Ev'ry Valley Shall Be Exalted

**From Messiah HWV56
George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)**

This piece of music comes from the late Baroque Period. This is a classical art period that lasted from the 1600s to the 1750s. During this period the classical arts were expanding in ornate and elaborate styles. This piece is an Oratorio meaning that when performed it wouldn't require costumes or orchestras to accompany it. Handel produced many types of works like organ concertos, anthems, and over 40 opere serie. The Messiah is often performed at Christmas time, however was originally written for the celebration of Easter! Ev'ry Valley takes its lyrics from the scripture Isaiah 40:4.

Comfort ye
Comfort ye my people
Comfort ye
Comfort ye my people
Saith your God
Saith your God
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem
And cry unto her
That her warfare

Her warfare is accomplished
That her iniquity is pardoned
That her iniquity is pardoned
The voice of Him
That crieth in the wilderness
Prepare ye the way of the Lord
Make straight in the desert
A highway for our God
Every valley
Every valley shall be exalted
Shall be exalted
Shall be exalted
Shall be exalted
And ev'ry mountain and hill made low
The crooked straight
And the rough places plain
The crooked straight
The crooked straight
And the rough places plain
And the rough places plain
Every valley
Every valley shall be exalted
Every valley
Every valley
Shall be exalted
And ev'ry moutain and hill made low
The crooked straight
The crooked straight
The crooked straight
And the rough places plain
And the rough places plain
And the rough places plain
The crooked straight
And the rough places plain

From Far, From Eve And Morning

**from the song cycle On Wenlock Edge
Ralph Vaugh Williams (1872-1958)**

The song cycle that this piece is from was written in 1909. It features six songs, all set to poems by Alfred Edward Housman. Housman was a classical scholar and poet who published three poetry collections in his life. This piece talks of the things that make us who we are. "From far from eve and morning" is referring to the sun rising and setting from the east and the west. Somehow the "stuff of life" came together to create an identity. From everywhere, without explanation now stands something full of life: "Here am I".

From far, from eve and morning
And yon twelve-winded sky,
The stuff of life to knit me
Blew hither: here am I.

Now for a breath I tarry
Nor yet disperse apart.
Take my hand quick and tell me,
What have you in your heart.
Speak now, and I will answer;
How shall I help you, say;
Ere to the wind's twelve quarters
I take my endless way.

I Go On

**Mass: XIII. The Lord's Prayer:2. Trope: "I Go On"
Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)**

This musical theater work incorporates the Hebrew, Latin, and English language while illustrating a message of faith and perseverance. The musicality of the song speaks to the message of moving forward, heard in the shaping of the phrases. The project, which was due to premiere in September of 1971 needed help in May of that same year, so Bernstein collaborated with Stephen Schwartz to meet the deadline and premier the show on September 8th, 1971 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

When the thunder rumbles now the age of gold is dead.
And the dreams we've clung to, dying to stay young
Have left us parched and old instead.
When my courage crumbles, when I feel confused and frail.
When my spirit falters, on decaying alters
And my illusions fade.
I go on right then.
I go on again.
I go on to say I will celebrate another day.
I go on.
If tomorrow tumbles, and everything I love is gone,
I will face regret, All my days and yet I will still go on.
Lauda lauda laudae.
Lauda lauda-de-da-de-dae.

Bagatelle Opus 33, No. 2, Scherzo

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Ludwig van Beethoven (baptized December 17, 1770 in Germany, died March 26, 1827 in Vienna, Austria), is often referred to as the greatest composer who has ever lived. He was the dominant musician during the span of time that bridged the Classical and Romantic eras, and no one has come close to his level of musical impact on a time period before him or after. Joseph Haydn and Mozart inspired Beethoven through their Classic traditionalism, but he was also inspired by the humanism and "incipient nationalism" that Goethe and Schiller displayed in their literary works (Britannica). From a political standpoint, Beethoven was drawn to the ideals of Kant and the French Revolution, and aimed to use music as a means of expressing philosophy without verbally saying anything. He is most known for writing works in forms such as sonatas, concertos, and quartets. The last ten years of his life simultaneously held the rise of his most important compositions and his battle against deafness.

The Bagatelles, Op. 33, were composed around 1801 to 1802. There are seven of them, and they reveal many characteristics of the Classical period of music. The second one in C major, is said to be the

second hardest out of seven due to its third scales and arpeggios. The hardest one is No. 5, also in C major. The Bagatelles are, respectively, in the keys of E-flat major, C major, F major, A major, C major, D major, and A-flat major.

Wie Melodien Zieht es mir

Funf Lieder, Op. 105 No. 1 Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Many of Brahms' works were inspired by different composers and poets. Wie. Melodien Zieht es mir is a poem written by Klaus Groth and was composed into a classical arts song by Brahms in 1886. This piece is one of many that Brahms set to Groth's works. The two artists had a familial connection that led them to know each other and then work together. This piece tells the story of thoughts of love and peace. Thoughts of love are beautiful like flowers but can die just as easily.

Wie Melodien zieht es
Mir leise durch den Sinn,
Wie Frühlingsblumen blüht es,
Und schwebt wie Duft dahin.
Doch kommt das Wort und faßt es
Und führt es vor das Aug',
Wie Nebelgrau erblaßt es
Und schwindet wie ein Hauch.
Und dennoch ruht im Reime
Verborgen wohl ein Duft,
Den mild aus stillem Keime
Sin feuchtes Auge ruft.

It moves like a melody,
Gently through my mind;
It blossoms like spring flowers
And wafts away like fragrance.
But when it is captured in words,
And placed before my eyes,
It turns pale like a gray mist
And disappears like a breath
And yet, remaining in my rhymes
There hides still a fragrance,
Which mildly from the quiet bud
My moist eyes call forth

Vaghissima Sembianza (Beautiful portrait of my past love)

36 Arie di Stile Antico, No. 14. Stefano Donaudy (1880-1941)

This piece is from a collection of 36 Italian Arias published in 1915. Vaghissima Sembianza is one of Donaudy's most famous pieces. This piece illustrates the thoughts of a man who has now fallen in love with a woman who resembles his past love. Through her, he sees the similarities between his formerly

loved one. When studying this piece I have interpreted the formerly loved woman to be deceased. So therefore not only are there thoughts of love but also grief.

Vaghiſſima ſembianza d'antica donna amata,
chi, dunque, v'ha ritratta contanta ſimiglianza
ch'io guardo, e parlo, e credo d'avervi a me
davanti come ai bei di d'amor?
La cara rimembranza che in cor mi s'è deſtata
ſi ardente v'ha già fatta rinaſcer la ſperanza,
che un bacio, un voto, un grido d'amore
più non chiedo che a lei che muta è ognor.

Very charming image of a woman formerly loved,
who, then, has portrayed you with ſo much ſimilarity
that I look, and I ſpeak, and I believe to have you
before me as in the beautiful days of love?
The dear remembrance which has been awakened
in my heart ſo ardently has revived my hopes,
ſo that a kiſs, a vow, a cry of love?
more I do not aſk of her who is ſilent forever.

Chevauchée caſaque (Cossack's Prayer for His Horse) Felix-Alfred Fourdrain (1880-1923)

Fourdrain not only wrote claſſical art ſongs, but he was alſo a known organist and opera compoſer. This ſong is a ſoldier's prayer to his horſe during the war. The French language does not come eaſy to me, but through my time working with this piece I have come to appreciate its muſicality and ſtorytelling.

Et pour mon bon cheval auſſi
Qui va m'emporter vers la guerre,
Pour ce doux compaĝnon naguère
Songeur dans le ſteppe fleuri,
Pitié, Seigneur! Veille ſur lui.
Apaie ſa charge; prends ſoin
Qu'il rencontre l'eau des fontaines,
Et qu'il trouve des granges pleines
De paille fraîche et de ſain foin
Dont, en route, il aura beſoin.
Seigneur, roi des humbles, Seigneur,
Faiſ que mon bon cheval henniſſe,
D'immense joie et de délice,
Quand tout près naîtra la rumeur
Du beau combat libérateur;
Et galopant, ſes fiers naseaux
Exaltés de rage Coſaque,
Faiſ qu'il bondiſſe dans l'attaque,

Ah! Pour écraser de ses sabots D'enfer,
Ce peuple de corbeaux!

And for my good horse too
Who will take me to war,
For this sweet companion, formerly [a]
Dreamer in the flowery steppe,
Have pity, Lord! Watch over him.
[Ease] his load; take care
That he [comes across] the water of fountains
And that he finds barns full
Of fresh straw and healthful hay
Which, on [the] way, he will need.
Lord, king of the humble, Lord,
Make my good horse neigh
With great joy and delight,
When near will be born the rumble
Of the beautiful, liberating battle;
And galloping, his proud nostrils
[Invigorated] with Cossack rage,
Make him jump in the attack,
Ah! To crush [with] his hooves of Hell
This [crow-like] people!

Seven Anniversaries No. 1, For Aaron Copland

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

Leonard Bernstein (born August 25, 1918 in Massachusetts and died October 14, 1990 in New York), was a man of many musical talents. He was known as an American pianist and composer, as well as an acclaimed conductor. Bernstein began playing the piano early in his childhood, and his adulthood was filled with international tours as a pianist and conductor, namely as the first American-born conductor/music director of the famous New York Philharmonic. His compositions are celebrated for their diversity in inspirations, most notably from Jewish liturgy, jazz, poetry, and biblical themes. One of his best-recognized works both within and outside of the musician community is the musical *West Side Story*, which he wrote alongside Stephen Sondheim and Jerome Robbins.

Seven Anniversaries is a collection of shorter piano pieces written in honor of the people who had a meaningful impact on Bernstein's life. Aaron Copland, who the first piece was written for, was another famous musician and mentor to Bernstein. The piece "features plain spoken, diatonic harmonies and phrases" consistent with Copland's own style of composition, which heavily influenced and inspired Bernstein both in his work and in his life outside of music (Interlude).

Maria

**from West Side Story
Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)**

West Side Story is a modern retelling of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. It takes place during a turf war in the slums of New York City in the 1950s. The show itself handles topics on racial inequality and segregation. The character of Tony is consumed in his daydream after meeting and kissing Maria. This song is unique as Maria is sung 30 times throughout the song. The song states "I'll never stop saying

Maria”. The lyricist, Stephen Sondheim used this as a way to make the actor produce multiple colors in their tone to make every “Maria” different and more meaningful than the one before it.

The most beautiful sound I ever heard:

Maria, Maria, Maria, Maria

All the beautiful sounds of the world

In a single word:

Maria, Maria, Maria, Maira

Maria!

I've just meet a girl named Maria,

And suddenly that name

Will never be the same to me.

Maria!

I've just kissed a girl named Maria,

And suddenly I've found

How wonderful a sound can be!

Maria!

Say it loud and there's music playing,

Say it soft and it's almost like praying.

Maria,

I'll never stop saying Maria!

The most beautiful sound I ever heard.

Maria.

She Loves Me

from She Loves Me

Jerry Bock(1928-2010), Sheldon Harnick (1924-2023)

This comedic golden age musical is about two employees who are unaware that they are each other's secret penpals. *She Loves Me* was adapted from the play *Parfumerie* written by Miklós László. The show also had a revival in 2016 which was the first Broadway show to be livestreamed. The music in the show uses ideas of operatic storytelling in its style. Throughout the musical, they find themselves slowly falling in love with one another despite their ongoing differences. This song showcases Georg as he realizes that He and Amalia are in love with each other, but she doesn't know it yet.

Well! Well! Well! Well! Well!

Well! Well! Well! Well! Well!

Will wonders never cease?

I didn't like her!

I didn't like her!

I couldn't stand her

I couldn't stand her!

I wouldn't have her!

I never knew her,

But now I do!
And I could...
And I would...
And I know...
She loves me
And to my amazement
I love it knowing that she loves me
She loves me,
True, she doesn't show it
How could she,
When she doesn't know it.
Yesterday she loathed me, bah!
Now today she likes me, ah!
And tomorrow, tomorrow...
AAAAAAAAAAAAAh!
My teeth ache from the urge to touch her
I'm speechless for I mustn't tell her
It's wrong now, but it won't be long now
Before my love discovers
That she and I are lovers
Imagine how surprised she's bound to be,
She loves me!
I love her, isn't that a wonder?
I wonder why I didn't want her.
I want her, that's the thing that matters,
And matters are improving daily.
Yesterday I loathed her, bah!
Now today I love her, ah!
And tomorrow, tomorrow...
AAAAAAAAAAAAAh!
I'm tingling, such delicious tingles,
I'm trembling, what the hell does that mean?
I'm freezing that's because it's cold out.
But still I'm incandescent
And like some adolescent
I'd like to scrawl on ev'ry wall I see
She loves me!
She loves me!

Sonatina Op. 88, No. 3

Allegro con affetto

Andantino

Allegro burlesco

Friedrich Kuhlau (born September 11, 1786 in Uelzen, North Germany, died March 12, 1832 in Copenhagen, Denmark), was a Danish pianist and composer most well known for his flute compositions,

Friedrich Kuhlau (1786-1832)

though he is known fairly well among pianists as well. He was a primary figure during the Danish Golden Age and a leading force in the rise of Danish romanticism. Though he lost his right eye at the age of seven, he was a successful composer and concert pianist, and was named the Chamber-Musician to the King of Denmark. Perhaps his most famous work is the opera, *Elverhøj* (or, Elves' Hill). It was commissioned by Frederik VI for his daughter's wedding, and the overture is still famous in Denmark today. It was viewed as a tribute to the Danish monarchy and includes both Danish and Swedish folk tunes.

Kuhlau and Beethoven were good friends, and Kuhlau's piano music is often used as a precursor before moving on to the more challenging compositions of Beethoven. Kuhlau's Sonatina Op. 88, No. 3, begins with Allegro con affetto in A minor. This movement is characterized by its scale runs and A minor chord progressions. The second movement, Andantino, takes the work as a whole through F major to provide some contrast in both key and style. Allegro burlesco, the third movement, brings the sonatina back to A minor and features quick scales and runs in a vibrant conclusion.

Bells of New York City
Part of Illuminations Albums
Josh Groban (1981)

American Singer and Songwriter Josh Groban is known for his multi-platinum albums starring roles in Broadway musicals such as *Sweeney Todd*, and even TV appearances in shows like *Glee*. *Bells of New York City* has become a favorite song in my repertoire. I like how this song crosses over the genres of musical theater and pop. This song speaks into my life because of the message of New York City calling out to him and beckoning him to come and stay.

There's a pale winter moon in the sky coming through my window
And the park is laid out like a bed below
It's a cold, dark night and my heart melts like the snow
And the bells of New York City tell me not to go
Oh-oh-oh, oh-oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh, oh-oh-oh-oh
It's always this time of year that my thoughts undo me
With the ghosts of many lifetimes all around
But from these mad heights I can always hear the sound
Of the bells of New York City singing all around
Oh-oh-oh, oh-oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh, oh-oh-oh-oh
Stay with me
Stay with me
Refuge from these broken dreams
Wait right here, oh wait with me
On silent snow-filled streets
Sing to me one song for joy and one for redemption
And whatever is in between that I call mine
With the streetlamp light to illuminate the gray
And the bells of New York City calling me to stay
The bells of New York City calling me to stay
Oh-oh-oh, oh-oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh, oh-oh-oh-oh

Oh-oh-oh, oh-oh-oh-oh
Oh-oh-oh, oh-oh-oh-oh

Waltz Op. 39, No. 15
Hungarian Dance No. 5

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Johannes Brahms (born May 7, 1833 in Hamburg, Germany, died April 3, 1879 in Vienna, Austria), was a successful German composer and pianist during the Romantic time period. His first music teacher was his father, Jakob Brahms, who was also a well-known horn and double-bass player. Johannes performed in Hamburg inns to earn money as he composed his own work. In 1853, he was introduced to Joseph Joachim, a violin virtuoso, who recommended Brahms to Robert Schumann. They became friends instantly, and though they encountered controversy and conflict, grew closer and closer as the years went on. In fact, they were so close that Brahms stepped in to help Schumann's wife with the management of her household after Schumann himself first fell sick to mental illness in 1854.

Brahms' *Sixteen Waltzes* are well-known for their "modest and intimate" nature, and number fifteen in particular for its "gently rocking melody" (Henle). The four-hands version was published first, though his publisher requested a piano solo version of the waltz shortly after. The Hungarian Dance No. 5 is perhaps one of Brahms' most famous compositions and familiar tunes. The many Hungarian Dances that Brahms composed gained popularity initially because piano duet was a social activity at the time. They are characterized by a "distinct Central European folk style," although not all of the tunes themselves were actually written by Brahms or are ethnically Hungarian. No. 5 is the most popular and familiar, but although Brahms thought the tune he was adapting was a folksong, it in actuality belonged to a German-Hungarian bandmaster.