

Ode to a Nightingale

For Baritone, Clarinet, Viola, and Percussion

Words by John Keats

Music by Elysia A. Arntzen

approx. 13'09"

Instrumentation

Clarinet in Bb

Viola

Percussion:

high woodblock with hard rubber mallets
suspended cymbal with brushes and a bow

Baritone

Program Notes

In setting Keats' famous poem, I had a few goals. First, I wanted the mood of the piece to match the text without getting too dark. The instrumentation is light and mostly sits higher than the vocal line, which gives the impression of a person sitting alone and listening to natural sounds. The piece is through-composed and the tonality is vague, with a few recurring motives, which follows the train of thought of the poem. My second goal was to evoke the nightingale itself without using real recordings. The instruments I have chosen can make a few of the nightingale's sounds, but no one instrument can mimic its song entirely. The nightingale sounds pass between the players and sometimes disappear entirely as the person is lost in thought. The result is a piece that is wandering and not overly dramatic, while still being expressive.

About the Composer

Elysia Arntzen is a current DMA student at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She holds a MM and BM in Composition from Ball State University. She is a composer, soprano, and pianist and enjoys performing in operas and musical theatre. Many of her works are for voice with or without accompaniment. Hobbies include cycling, video games, and studying other languages.

Ode to a Nightingale

by John Keats

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

Ode to a Nightingale

John Keats

approx. 13'09"

Elysia A. Arntzen

Clarinet in B \flat
Tempo: $\text{♩} = 72$
Dynamics: *mp*, *mf*, *f*

Viola
Dynamics: *mp*, *mf*, *p*

Percussion
4/4
high woodblock hard rubber mallets
suspended cymbal brushes
Dynamics: *f*

Baritone
4/4
Dynamics: *mp*
Lyrics: My heart aches and a

Piano (rehearsal only)
Tempo: $\text{♩} = 72$
Dynamics: *mp*, *mf*, *p*

B \flat Cl.
7
Dynamics: *mp*, *mf*, *mf* (triple), *f*
Tempo: *accel.*, *a tempo*

Vla.
7
Dynamics: *mf*

Perc.
7
brush in circle
Dynamics: *p*, *mf*

B
7
Lyrics: drow-sy numb-ness pains my sense, as though of hem-lock I had drunk

Pno.
7
Dynamics: *mp*, *mf*, *mf* (triple), *f*
Tempo: *accel.*, *a tempo*

Ode to a Nightingale

5
accel.

13

B \flat Cl. *p*

Vla. *p* *mp*

Perc. *p* brush in circle

B *p* *mp*
or emp-tied some dull o-pi-ate to the drains one min-ute past and Lethe-wards had sunk

Pno. *p* *mp* *accel.*

20

B \flat Cl. *mf* *mp*

Vla. *p* *mf* *mp* Sul pont.

Perc. L.R. woodblock *f*

B *mf*
tis not through en - vy of thy hap-py

Pno. *mf* *mp*

♩ = 108

Ode to a Nightingale

6

26

B♭ Cl. *mp* *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Perc. cymbal brush in circle L.R. *p* *mf* L.R.

B lot but be-ing too hap-py — in thine hap-pi-ness, — That thou, light-wing-ed Dry-ad of the trees

Pno. *mf*

31

B♭ Cl. *f*

Vla. *f* *mf* Sul pont.

Perc. woodblock *f* *f*

B In some mel-o-di-ous plot Of beech-en green, and sha-dows num-ber-less, — Sing - est of sum-mer in full - throat-ed

Pno. *f*

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35

B♭ Cl. *mf*

Vla. *f* Sul pont.

Perc. cymbal brush in circle roll woodblock *f* cymbal bowed *f*

B *mf* ease.

Pno. *mf*

39

B♭ Cl. *f* rit. ♩ = 72

Vla.

Perc.

B *f*

Pno. *f* rit. ♩ = 72

O, for a draught of vint - age! — that hath been

Ode to a Nightingale

8

43

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth, Tast-ing of Flo-ra

47

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

pizz.

arco

mf

L.R.

cymbal

f

and the coun-try green, Dance, and Pro-ven-çal song, and sun-burnt mirth! O for a beak-er full

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51

B \flat Cl. *mf* *mp*

Vla. *mp* pizz.

Perc.

B *mf* *mp*

— of the warm South, Full of the true, the blush-ful Hip-po-crene, with bead-ed bub-les wink-ing at the

Pno. *mf* *mp*

56

B \flat Cl.

Vla. *mf* *mp* arco

Perc.

B *mf* *mp*

brim, And pur-ple-stained mouth; That I might drink, and leave the world un - seen, And with

Pno. *mf* *mp*

Ode to a Nightingale

10
61

B♭ Cl. *p*

Vla. *p*

Perc. woodblock *p* cymbal bowed *pp* *mf*

B
thee fade a-way in-to the for-est dim.

Pno. *p*

67 *accel.* *rit.* ♩ = 90

B♭ Cl. *mp* *f* *p* *mf*

Vla. *p* *mf*

Perc. L.R. woodblock *f* cymbal brushes *p*

B
Fade far a - way, dis - solve, and quite for - get What

Pno. *mp* *f* *p* *mf*

Ode to a Nightingale

74

B♭ Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

mp

mp

mp

thou a-mong the leaves hast ne-ver known, The wear-i-ness, the fe-ver, and the fret

79

B♭ Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

pp

mp

Here, where men sit and hear each oth-er groan; _____

Ode to a Nightingale

12
85

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

Where pal - sy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs, Where youth grows pale, and spec-tre-thin, and

p

p < *f* *p* *pp*

8^{va}

p

91

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

dies; Where but to think is to be full of sor-row And lead-en-eyed des-pairs,

mp

f *p* < *f*

mp

mp

Ode to a Nightingale

♩ = 72 13

96

B♭ Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

pp *p* *mf* *p*

brush in circle

mf *mf*

Where Beau - ty can-not keep — her lust-rous eyes, Or new Love pine at them — be-yond to-mor - row. —

♩ = 72

102

B♭ Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

pp *mf*

f *mp*

L.R.

woodblock

f *mf*

Ode to a Nightingale

108

B♭ Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

mf

expressive and free

f

A - way! a-way! for I will fly _____ to thee, Not char-i - ot-ed by Bac - chus —

Pno.

113

B♭ Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

f

mp

cymbal brushes L.R. brush in circle L.R.

— and his pards, But on the view - less wings of Po - e - sy — Though the

Pno.

Ode to a Nightingale

♩ = 90

15

117

B♭ Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

dull brain per - plex-es and re-tards: Al-read-y with thee! ten - der is the night, And hap-ly ___ the

117

Pno.

♩ = 90

124

B♭ Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Queen-Moon is on her throne, Clus-ter'd a-round by all ___ her star-ry Fays; But here there is no light,

124

Pno.

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16
130

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

brush in circle L.R.

Save what from hea-ven is with the breez-es blown _____ Through ver-dur-ous glooms and wind-ing moss-y ways. _____

135 freely, recitative

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

p

p

I can-not see what flo-wers are at my feet, Nor what soft in-cense hangs

freely, recitative

140

B \flat Cl. *pp* *mf*

Vla. 140

Perc. 140

B 140
— up - on the boughs, But em - bal - med dark - ness, guess each sweet Where with the sea - son - a - ble month en -

Pno. 140 *pp*

145

B \flat Cl. *pp* *mp*

Vla. 145

Perc. 145

B 145 *mf*
dows The grass, the thick - et, and the fruit - tree wild; White haw - thorn — and the pas - tor - al eg - lan - tine;

Pno. 145 *mf* *mp*

Ode to a Nightingale

18

149

B \flat Cl. *p* *mf*

Vla. *p*

Perc.

B. *p* *mf* *p*

Fast fad-ing vi - o - lets cov-er'd up in leaves; And mid - May's eld - est child, The com - ing

Pno. *p* *mf* *p*

154

B \flat Cl. *p*

Vla. *mf* *p*

Perc. cymbal bowed *p* *pp*

B. *mp*

musk-rose, full of dew-y wine, The mur - mur-ous haunt of flies on sum - mer eyes.

Pno. *mf* *p*

Ode to a Nightingale

159 $\text{♩} = 90$

B \flat Cl. *pp* *mp* *p* *mf*

Vla. *p* *mp*

Perc.

B

Pno. *pp* *mp* *p* *mf*

163

B \flat Cl. *pp* *pp*

Vla. *pp* *pp*

Perc.

B *p*

Dark - ling I lis - ten; and, for man - y a time — I have been

Pno. *pp* *pp*

Ode to a Nightingale

20

168

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

woodblock

mp > *pp*

half in love with ease - ful Death, Call'd him soft names in man - y a mus - ed

174

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

p

pp

cymbal brush in circle L.R.

mp > *pp*

rhyme, To take in - to the air my qui - et breath

Ode to a Nightingale

178

B \flat Cl. *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Perc.

B *mf*

Now more than ev-er seems it rich to die, To cease up-on the mid-night with no

Pno. *mp*

183

B \flat Cl. *f* *mp*

Vla.

Perc. woodblock *f* *pp*

B *f*

pain, While thou art pour-ing forth thy soul a-broad In such ec-sta-sy! —

Pno. *f* *mp*

188 **freely, recitative**

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B *mf* *f* \triangleright *pp*

Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain To thy high re-qui-em be - come a sod.

Pno.

freely, recitative

193 **broader** $\text{♩} = 72$

B \flat Cl. *f* *mf* *f*

Vla. *f* Sul pont.

Perc. *f* \triangleright *pp*

B *f* *f* *pp*

Thou wast not born for death,

Pno. *f* *mf* *f*

broader $\text{♩} = 72$

Ode to a Nightingale

196

B \flat Cl. *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Perc. *p*

B

im - mor - - - tal Bird! No

Pno. *mf*

199

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc. *p*

B

hun - gry gen - er - a - tions tread thee down; The voice I

Pno.

Ode to a Nightingale

24
203

B \flat Cl. *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Perc. *p*

B

hear _____ this pass - ing night was

Pno.

206

B \flat Cl. *f* *mp*

Vla.

Perc. *f*

B

heard _____ In an - cient days by em - per - or _____ and clown:

Pno.

Ode to a Nightingale

210

B \flat Cl. *f* *mp* freely, recitative

Vla. *f* Sul pont. *mp*

Perc. *f* *f*

B *mp*
Per-haps the self-same song that found a

Pno. *f* *mp* freely, recitative

216

B \flat Cl. *p*

Vla. *p*

Perc.

B *p*
path Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home, she stood in tears a - mid the

Pno. *p*

Ode to a Nightingale

26

221

B♭ Cl. *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Perc. *pp* cymbal brush in circle *pp* bowed

B *mf*
a - li - en corn; The same that oft-times hath Charm'd ma - gic case - ments, o - pen - ing on the foam of pe - ri - lous

Pno. *mp* *mp*

226

B♭ Cl. *f* *pp* $\text{♩} = 80$

Vla. *f* *pp*

Perc. *mp* *ff*

B *p*
seas, in fae - ry lands — for - lorn. For - lorn! the ve - ry word is like a bell To toll me

Pno. *f* *pp* $\text{♩} = 80$

Ode to a Nightingale

231

B \flat Cl. *mf* *p*

Vla.

Perc. L.R. brushes L.R. *p* *ff* *mp*

B *mp* *mf* *f*
back from thee to my sole self! A -

Pno. *mf* *p*

236

B \flat Cl. *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Perc. woodblock cymbal brushes *p*

B *mf*
dieu! the fan - cy can-not cheat so well As she is famed to do, de-ceiv-ing elf. A -

Pno. *mf*

241

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

dieu! a-dieu! thy plain-tive an- them fades Past the near mea-dows, o-ver the still stream,

f *mf*

245

B \flat Cl.

Vla.

Perc.

B

Pno.

brush in circle

Up the hill-side; and now 'tis bur-ied deep — In the next val-ley-glades: — Was it a vi-sion, or a

p *mp*

Ode to a Nightingale

250

B \flat Cl. *pp* *mp*

Vla. *pp* *p*

Perc. L.R. brush in circle *p* *mf* *p*

B *mf* *p*
wak - ing dream? Fled is that mu - sic: Do I wake or sleep?

Pno. *pp* *mp*

256

B \flat Cl. *mf*

Vla. *mp* *f*

Perc. L.R. woodblock *mp* *f* a niente

B

Pno. *f* *mf*