

Hineni: Here I am

For Solo Soprano and Piano
(2023)

Haiku by Ruth Steinberg
Music by Kenrick Ho

Performance Note

This piece is for solo soprano with piano accompaniment. The voice part is comprised of 9 short haikus written by Ruth Steinberg, which describe 9 fragments of her husband Len's life story from 1937 Krakow to 1985 Leeds. Some of these haikus are sung, but most of them are to be recited slowly and freely over the piano part.

The soprano part is notated in 9 cards. Cards with text only should be spoken, and cards with both text and pitch should be sung. For spoken texts, try to recite the haikus word by word, slowly, without projecting too much emotion. For sung texts, treat the card as a recitative where only pitch is notated and rhythm is free for the singer to interpret. Some piano harmonies may work better than others, so the singer may wish to hold notes for longer or resolve to a neighboring note if it feels right to do so. The sung lines should have an improvisatory feel to it, and the singer is free to explore how they want to approach the material, even if it means deviating from the notated cards.

The 9 haikus can be used in any order, and the soprano is encouraged to use a different order in each performance. One way of achieving this randomization is to cut out each card on the soprano score, and shuffle them to create a new order. Otherwise, simply write down a new numerical order on the soprano score to follow during the performance.

The haikus do not necessarily need to be read/sung in immediate succession. The soprano may wish to take time between each one, especially before the sung ones, to make time to find pitch.

The piano part is fixedly notated. The dynamics should be generally quiet throughout, though expression and rubato is encouraged, especially as a reaction to the text of the soprano part. The extent and interpretation of which is entirely up to the pianist.

The piece finishes where the piano part ends. Due to the indeterminate rhythm and duration of the soprano part, there might be soprano cards leftover by the end of the piece. It is fine when that happens, but the pianist should signify to the soprano when the end is approaching so she can arrive at the ending 'musically'. Therefore, the soprano should also try to remain aware of the gestures of the piano part to know when to come to an end.

Haikus

Striding Ilkley Moor
Skylark vertical journey
Thank you, Len whispers

Teacher and healer
Dundee Leeds to Ecuador
and India Dr Len

Nineteen thirty nine
Earth trembles worlds overturn
Len tossed on the wind

Len doctor again
Covid calls and he answers
"What's worrying you?"

I was born in Krakow
with the budding linden trees
March thirty seven

On Otley Chevin
Doctor Len boots on breathes in
Heart sings with the wind

Wutsk to Asino
Cattle truck jolt spilling soup
Siberia this time

Here I am, always
Hineni in Hebrew tongue
Just like Moses said

Leeds is last stop
Doctor healer listener
Roundhay Park delight

ca. 3'30"

Soprano Part

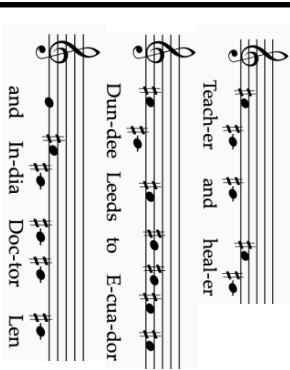
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Striding Ilkley Moor
Skylark vertical journey
Thank you, Len Whispers

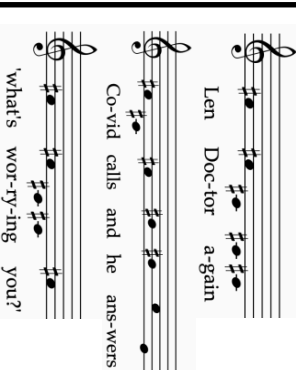
Musks to Asino
Cattle truck jolt spilling soup
Siberia this time



Teach-er and heal-er
Dun-dee Leeds to E-cua-dor
and In-dia Doc-tor Len

Nineteen thirty nine
Earth trembles worlds overturn
Len tossed on the Wind

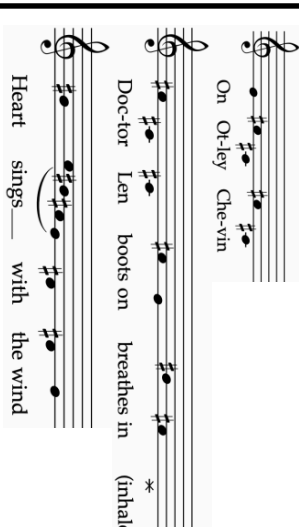
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Len Doc-tor a-gain
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On Ot-ley Che-vin
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Recite haikus in free tempo, in any order (see part score)
Begin after 1st piano chord

Soprano Solo

Expressive and Rubato (reacting to soprano text)

$\text{♩} = 69$ Calm, Moderately slow

p sempre

6
Sop.

11
Sop.

16

Sop.

Pno.

Measures 16-21. The Soprano part is a single whole rest. The Piano part features a complex texture with multiple accidentals (sharps and naturals) and various note values including eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together. The key signature changes from one sharp to two sharps between measures 18 and 19.

22

Sop.

Pno.

Measures 22-27. The Soprano part is a single whole rest. The Piano part continues with complex textures, including many accidentals and beamed notes. A long slur covers measures 25 and 26, indicating a sustained or tied passage. The key signature remains two sharps.

28

Sop.

Pno.

Measures 28-32. The Soprano part is a single whole rest. The Piano part features complex textures with many accidentals and beamed notes. A long slur covers measures 30 and 31, indicating a sustained or tied passage. The key signature remains two sharps.

33

Sop.

Pno.

Measures 33-38. The Soprano part is a single whole rest. The Piano part continues with complex textures, including many accidentals and beamed notes. A long slur covers measures 36 and 37, indicating a sustained or tied passage. The key signature remains two sharps.

38

Sop.

Pno.

43

Sop.

Pno.

48

Sop.

Pno.

53

Sop.

Pno.