

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art

for piano solo

Op. 10a

piano transcription of the original song

Lance Mok

London: April 2022

ca. 2½ mins

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art is a transcription of the composer's setting of John Keats's sonnet. The song is set to a modified AABA form with a codetta ending in a deceptive cadence as the sonnet deviates from the ideal of eternal love to contemplating death, and thus love's mortality. The stable pulse and tonality echo the tranquillity of the night and the steadfastness the poet vows to his love.

The piece was premiered by the composer on 1 May 2022 at Acton Hill Church, London, United Kingdom.

Text

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

John Keats

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Adagietto ♩ = 66

Musical notation for the first system, measures 1-2. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The tempo is Adagietto with a quarter note equal to 66 beats per minute. The first system consists of two measures. The right hand starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Both hands feature a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure of each system. The bass line includes a pedaling instruction: "8va Ped." with a line underneath the notes.

Musical notation for the second system, measures 3-4. This system continues the piece with two measures. It features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand at the beginning of each measure. The bass line continues with a steady accompaniment.

Musical notation for the third system, measures 5-6. This system consists of two measures. The right hand has a dynamic marking of mezzo-piano (*mp*) in the first measure, which changes to piano (*p*) in the second measure. The piece concludes with a *sim.* (ritardando) marking at the end of the second measure.

Musical notation for the fourth system, measures 7-8. This system consists of two measures. The right hand features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure. The piece ends with a final chord in the right hand.