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

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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

Score

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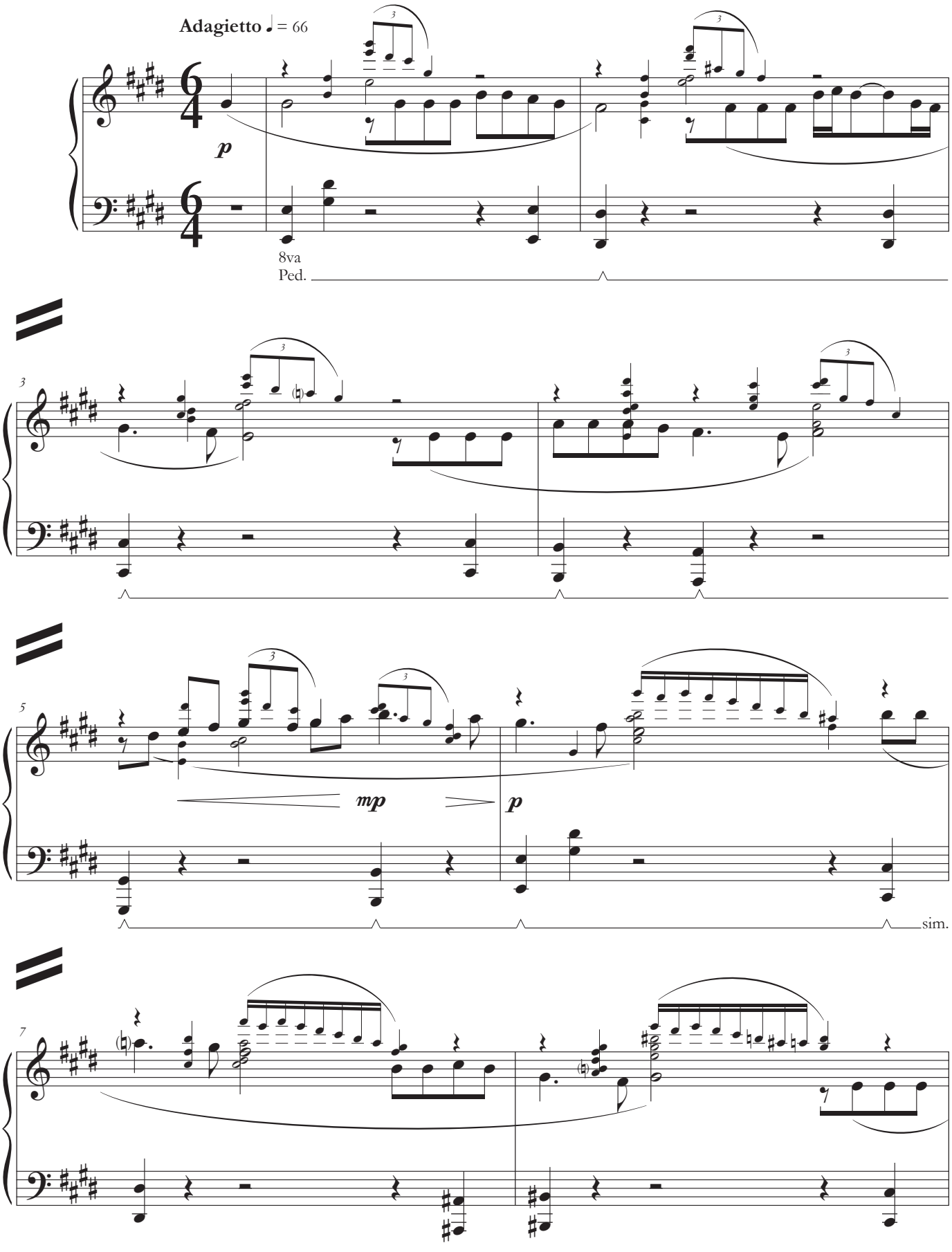

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