

Seth Houston, choral composer

WWW.SETHHOUSTON.COM • 6533 BARNACLE ST. • BOULDER, CO 80301 • SETH@SETHHOUSTON.COM

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Waldmorgen
“Forest Morning”

By Josef Rheinberger, 1874
Text by Franz Albert Muth
Edited by Seth Houston, 2007
The University of Colorado

Editorial Notes

Composer, organist, conductor, and educator Josef Gabriel Rheinberger (1839-1901) was a major figure in German musical circles in the nineteenth century. His prodigious musical talents were apparent from an early age, and he received his first church organist position when he was just seven years old. Rheinberger's diverse and extensive compositional output includes orchestral, choral, and organ works. He was also a noted teacher.

Rheinberger turned his attention to composing for male choruses in 1869, after being inspired by a performance of Wagner's male-choir oratorio *Das Liebesmahl der Apostel*. Many of his early works for male choir were composed for the Munich Akademischer Gesangverein, of which he was an honorary member. Two works from his opus 44, *Jung Werner (Young Werner)* and *Tragische Geschichte (Tragic Story)*, were especially popular among male choirs during Rheinberger's lifetime.

Waldmorgen (Forest Morning) is the first of six settings of poetry by Franz Albert Muth that comprise Rheinberger's opus 90, written between 1874 and 1876. Barbara Mohn, in her introduction to the critical edition, writes: "*Waldmorgen...* is a musical miniature. Dreamily, with delicate sounds, Rheinberger evokes the atmosphere of night at a low pitch, pianissimo, and with motives which suggest the almost inaudibly nodding flowers and treetops. Then restrained tone painting depicts the songs of awakening birds, finally bells are heard, and the composition rises, with daybreak, into mighty praise of God by all voices."¹ The lush but accessible romantic tonal language, punctuated by moments of effective dissonance and dramatic climax, make for a compelling musical journey.

When performing this piece, choirs should be sure to savor Rheinberger's word-painting, and to convey it by observing the composer's "Getragen" (sustainedly) indication, articulations, and dynamic markings. As in other choral works from the Romantic period, the tempo should ebb and flow to match the expressive intent of the text and music. Strive for a mellifluous, velvet sound, in which the listener can hear each detail of the coming dawn.

This edition is based on the recently-published critical edition (*Rheinberger Sämtliche Werke, Band 19: Weltliche Chormusic*, ed. Günter Graulich and Hannfried Lucke. Stuttgart: Carlus-Verlag, 2002. 148-151). All dynamics are in the original. The editor has provided a piano reduction, courtesy accidentals, and an English translation. Special thanks to Dr. Joan Conlon, Dr. Lawrence Kaptein, and Alexa Doeble for their inspiration and assistance in preparing this edition.

¹ From the Foreword to the critical edition (*Rheinberger Sämtliche Werke, Band 19: Weltliche Chormusic*, edited by Günter Graulich and Hannfried Lucke. Stuttgart: Carlus-Verlag, 2002) by Barbara Mohn, translated by John Coombs, xxvi.

Translation

*Es ist so still die Maien nacht,
so still des Waldes Hallen;
im Grunde kühl der Bach nur wacht,
tät still vorüber wallen.
Es nicken die Blumen leis im Traum,
von goldnen Tagen rauscht's im Baum,
so leise, so heimlich sacht.*

*Horch, eine Amsel in hellem Ton
weckt durch des Waldes Schweigen.
Ihr Schläfer es glüht im Osten schon,
der Wipfel will sich neigen;
empor, o Lerche, den Himmel grüß,
schlag in der Bläue so laut, so süß,
so fliehet die Nacht davon!*

*Noch einmal klingt's wie Alphornklang,
da, horch! ist Antwort kommen;
o Amsel, hörst du nicht den Sang?[?]
Der Wald hat dich vernommen.
Es ruft der Pirol so hell im Tal,
der Kuckuck ruft mit einemal
das ganze Tal entlang.*

*Der Glocke Ton von fern darein
beginnet süß zu singen,
und in dem Herzen süß und fein
sich alle Glocken schwingen;
das ist ein Singen, ist ein Klang:
Gott soll gelobet sein, das singet:
Gott soll gelobet sein!*

It is so still, this May night,
so still through the halls of the forest.
In the cool ground, only the creek is awake,
quietly flowing by.
The flowers nod quietly, as in a dream.
Golden daylight rustles the trees,
so quietly, so secretly still.

Listen! The blackbird, with bright tone,
wakes the forest from its silence.
Sleepers, the sun glows in the east,
the treetops seem to lean.
Rise up, O Lark, and greet the sky,
pierce the blue, so loudly and so sweetly
that the nighttime flies away!

Once more there is a sound like an alpenhorn.
Listen! The reply is coming.
O blackbird, don't you hear the song?[?]
The forest has heard you.
The oriole calls so brightly in the valley,
All at once, the cuckou calls
along the whole valley.

The far-off bells
sweetly begins to sing,
and in their hearts, sweetly and finely,
their clappers swing.
What a singing, what a sound:
"Praise be to God!" they sing,
"Praise be to God!"

Waldmorgen

Franz Alfred Muth
(1839-1890)

“Forest Morning”

op. 90 no. 1
for TTBB chorus

Josef Gabriel Rheinberger
(1839-1901)
Edited by Seth Houston

It is so still, this May night,

so still through the halls of the forest.

Getragen (sustainedly) ♩ = 60

p dolce

Es ist so still — die Mai-en nacht, — so still des Wal - des Hal-len; im

p

Es ist so still die Mai-en nacht, so still des Wal - des Hal-len; im

p

Es ist so still die Mai-en nacht, so still des Wal - des Hal-len; im

p

Es ist so still die Mai-en nacht, so still des Wal - des Hal-len; im

For rehearsal only

p dolce

p

Waldmorgen

In the cool ground, only the creek is awake,

quietly flowing by.

The flowers nod quietly, as in a dream.

5

8

Grun-de kühl der Bach nur wacht, tät still vo-rü ber wal-len. Es ni-cken die Blu-men —

8

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8

Grun-de kühl der Bach nur wacht, tät still vo-rü ber wal-len. Es ni-cken die Blu-men —

8

Grun-de kühl der Bach nur wacht, tät still vo-rü ber wal-len. Es ni-cken die Blu-men —

5

5

pp

Golden daylight rustles the trees,

so quietly, so secretly still.

10

dolce

8

leis im Traum, von gold-nen-Ta-gen-rauscht's im Baum, so lei-se, so lei-se, so —

8

leis im Traum, von gold-nen-Ta-gen-rauscht's im Baum, so lei-se, so lei-se, so —

8

leis im Traum, von gold-nen-Ta-gen-rauscht's im Baum, so lei-se, so lei-se, so —

8

leis im Traum, von gold-nen-Ta-gen-rauscht's im Baum, so lei-se, so lei-se, so —

10

8

dolce

10

Listen! The blackbird, with bright tone,

wakes the forest from its silence.

15 *p* *pp* *cresc.*

heim - lich sacht. — Horch, ei - ne Am - sel in hel - lem Ton weckt durch des Wal - des

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15 *p* *pp* *cresc.*

Sleepers, the sun glows in the east,

20 *ff*

Schwei - gen. Ihr Schlä - fer, ihr Schlä - fer, es glüht im Os - ten schon, —

Schwei - gen. Ihr Schlä - fer, ihr Schlä - fer, es glüht im Os - ten schon,

Schwei - gen. Ihr Schlä - fer, ihr Schlä - fer, es glüht im Os - ten schon,

Schwei - gen. Ihr Schlä - fer, ihr Schlä - fer, es glüht im Os - ten schon,

20 *ff*

the treetops seem to lean.

25 *p dolce*

der Wip-fel will sich nei-gen, der Wip-fel will sich nei-gen;

der Wip-fel will sich nei-gen;

der Wip-fel will sich nei-gen; em-por, em-por o

der Wip-fel will sich nei-gen;

25 *p dolce*

25 *f*

Rise up, O Lark, and greet the sky,

29 *f* *dim.* *pp dolce*

em-por, em-por, o Ler-che, den Him-mel

em-por, em-por, o Ler-che, den Him-mel

Ler-che, den Him-mel grüß, den Him-mel grüß, schlag in der Bläu-e so

em-por, em-por, o Ler-che, den Him-mel

29 *f* *dim.* *pp*

29 *pp*

Once more there is a sound like an alpenhorn.

Listen! The reply is coming.

40 *pp*

ein - mal kling't's wie Alp - horn - klang, da, horch! ist Ant-wort kom-men; o

ein - mal kling't's — Alp - horn - klang, da, horch! ist Ant-wort kom-men; o

— wie Alp - horn-klang, — da, horch! ist Ant-wort kom-men; o

ein - mal kling't's wie Alp - horn-klang, da horch! ist Ant-wort kom-men; o

40 *pp*

O blackbird, don't you hear the song?

The forest has heard you.

44 *p*

Am - sel, hörst du nicht den Sang? Der Wald hat dich ver - nom - men. Es

Am - sel, hörst du nicht den Sang? Der Wald hat dich ver - nom - men. Es

Am - sel, hörst du nicht den Sang? Der Wald hat dich ver - nom - men. Es

Am - sel, hörst du nicht den Sang? Der Wald hat dich ver - nom - men. Es

44 *p*

*The oriole calls so brightly in the valley,**All at once, the cuckoo calls*

48 *cresc.* *f*

ruft der Pi-rol so hell im Tal, der Ku-ckuck ruft mit ei - ne-mal das

ruft der Pi-rol so hell im Tal, der Ku-ckuck ruft mit ei - ne-mal das

ruft der Pi-rol so hell in Tal, der Ku - ckuckuft mit ei - ne-mal das

ruft der Pi - rol so hell im Tal, der Ku - ckuck-ruft mit ei - ne-mal das

48 *cresc.* *f*

along the whole valley.

52

gan - ze Tal ent - lang, das gan - ze Tal, das gan - ze Tal ent -

gan - ze Tal ent - lang, das gan - ze Tal ent - lang.

gan - ze Tal ent - lang, das gan - ze Tal, das gan - ze Tal ent -

gan - ze Tal ent - lang, das gan - ze Tal ent - lang.

52

57 *p dolce*

lang. Der Glo-cke Ton von fern da - rein be - gin - net süß zu sin - gen, und

p

— Der Glo-cke Ton von fern da - rein be - gin - net süß zu sin - gen, und

p

lang. Der Glo-cke Ton von fern da - rein be - gin - net süß zu sin - gen, und

p

— Der Glo-cke Ton von fern da - rein be - gin - net süß zu sin - gen, und

57 *p*

and in their hearts, sweetly and finely,

their clappers swing.

What a singing, what a sound:

62

in - dem Her - zen süß und fein sich al - le Glo-cken schwin - gen;

in - dem Her - zen süß und fein sich al - le Glo-cken schwin - gen;

in - dem Her - zen süß und fein sich al - le Glo-cken schwin - gen; das ist ein Sin-gen,

in - dem Her - zen süß und fein sich al - le Glo-cken schwin - gen; das ist ein Sin-gen,

62

62

"Praise be to God!" they sing,

67 *f* *ff*

das ist ein Sin-gen, ist ein Klang, — ein Klang: Gott soll ge - lo - bet sein, ge -

das ist ein Sin-gen, ist ein Klang, — ein Klang: Gott soll ge - lo - bet sein, ge -

ist ein Klang, das klingt und singt die Welt ent - lang: Gott soll ge - lo - bet sein, ge -

ist ein Klang, das klingt und singt die Welt ent-lang: — Gott soll ge - lo - bet sein, ge -

67 *ff*

"Praise be to God!"

72 *ff* *poco rit.*

lo - bet — sein, das sin-get: Gott soll ge - lo - bet sein, ge - lo - - - bet sein!

lo - bet sein, das sin-get: Gott soll ge - lo - bet sein, ge - lo - - - bet sein!

lo - bet sein, das sin-get: Gott soll ge - lo - bet sein, ge - lo - - - bet sein!

lo - bet sein, das sin-get: Gott soll ge - lo - bet sein, ge - lobt, ge lo - bet sein!

72 *ff* *poco rit.*