

Songs of Youth

Chinese proverb

SSA, flute, piano and optional vibraphone

Elizabeth Alexander

Songs of Youth

Elizabeth Alexander and students from Waunakee Middle School

I. When?

Stretching, seeking, slumbering —

What a world of shapes and colors,
gentle hands and lullabies.

Crawling, reaching —

Will there be a time to use my
eager arms and open eyes?

Waiting, watching, wondering —

When?

II. Now!

Sailing, soaring, running, racing,
Speeding, sporting, cheering, chasing,
Shouting, sharing, doing, daring —
No more wondering when!

Working, wishing, dreaming, dancing,
Reaching, risking, choosing, chancing,
Growing, giving, learning, living —
No more wondering when!

Trusting... trying... loving... crying...

Sailing, soaring, running, racing,
Speeding, sporting, cheering, chasing,
Shouting, sharing, doing, daring — Flying!

Now! Straightaway! At once! No delay!
It's now or never, here and now,
Without hesitation the moment to live is Now!

Songs of Youth was commissioned in 1991-1992 by the public schools of Waunakee, Wisconsin, in honor of the dedication of a new middle school. I composed this piece in collaboration with students who would be attending the new school. In addition to celebrating their school's theme for the year, "Flight," the students decided they wanted their song to address their own continuing growth as active, thoughtful and creative individuals.

After writing two poems, the students decided what musical "building blocks" they would use to reflect the poems' characters. The first poem, *When?*, is from a young child's point of view, searching for direction and independence. When setting it to music, we used symmetric scales which had no clear tonal center: the half step/whole step scale and the half step/minor third scale. We wrote melodies which wandered aimlessly down and up, taking tiny baby steps.

In the second movement, *Now!*, we chose to feature that most decisive interval, the perfect fifth. As the words acquired a confident direction, the music took on a strong rhythmic pulse and a firmly grounded tonality, with melodies which reached ever upward. Without a doubt, this movement had to end with a bang. - E.A.

Elizabeth Alexander spent her childhood in the Carolinas and southern Ohio. She received her education at the College of Wooster and Cornell University, where she earned her doctoral degree in music composition. Her music has been performed by Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, and Wooster Symphony Orchestra; by chamber music ensembles such as Sounds New, North/South Consonance and Society for New Music; and by hundreds of choirs, including Gregg Smith Singers, Plymouth Music Series (VocalEssence) and Elmer Eisler Singers. She has composed over twenty commissioned works, and has received numerous national and international awards, grants and fellowships.

For more information about her music, or to let her know about your performance of this song, visit
www.elizabethalexander.com

Songs of Youth

Elizabeth Alexander, and
Waunakee Middle School students

(♩ = 66-69) **Placidly** *I. When?*

S I
S II
A
Flute
Vibraphone (or Piano)

p *mf*

Ped. (keep pedal depressed until change is indicated)

6

S I
S II
A
Fl
Vib (Pno)

p *p*

When?
When?

11

S I
S II
A
Vib (Pno)

p *p* *p*

Stretch-ing,
Seek ing,
Slum-ber - ing, _

16 *p*

S I What a world of shapes and col - ors

S II

A

Vib (Pno)

p Shapes and col - ors,

Ped.

20

S I

S II gen - tle hands and lul - la - bies,

A *p* Gen - tle hands and lul - la - bies,

Vib (Pno)

2/4 4/4

24 *mp*

S I Crawl - ing, crawl - ing,

S II *mp* Reach - ing, reach - ing,

A *mp* Crawl - ing,

Vib (Pno) *mp*

Ped.

Opal Palmer Adisa, poet ◦ Margaret & George Alexander, parents ◦ Yehuda Amichai, poet ◦ Bjorn Arneson, generous web designer ◦ Scott Bates, poet ◦ Abbie Betinis, composer/colleague ◦ Dennis Blubaugh, music dealer ◦ Michael deVernon Boblett, poet ◦ Ray Bradbury, writer ◦ Norbert Capek, visionary ◦ e. e. cummings, poet ◦ Philip Dacey, poet ◦ Emily Dickinson, poet ◦ Evelyn Dudley, poet ◦ Rob Eller-Isaacs, minister/writer ◦ Sophia Lyon Fahs, writer ◦ Richard M. Fewkes, writer ◦ Peshua Gertler, poet ◦ Richard S. Gilbert, minister/writer ◦ Jack Gallagher, composer/teacher ◦ Paul Gerike, proofreader ◦ Steve Harper, technical advisor ◦ Steve Hawkins, generous web designer ◦ Edie Hill, composer/colleague ◦ Langston Hughes, poet ◦ Mark Humphrey, piano technician ◦ Karel Husa, composer/teacher ◦ Kalidasa, poet ◦ Garrison Keillor, storyteller ◦ Denise Levertov, poet ◦ George Ella Lyon, poet ◦ Jonathan Machen, artist ◦ Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet ◦ J. David Moore, composer/colleague ◦ Joan Wolf Prefontaine, poet ◦ Gerald Rich, poet ◦ Carl Sandburg, poet ◦ King Sigismund III, religious reformer ◦ Steven Stucky, composer/teacher ◦ Rabindranath Tagore, poet ◦ Howard Thurman, civil rights leader/writer ◦ John Greenleaf Whittier, poet ◦ Theodore Tuckering Williams, poet ◦ Daniel Winter, pianist/teacher ◦ Nancy Wood, poet ◦ Yehudi Wyner, composer/teacher ◦ Paul Adams, technical advisor

A LOT OF HARD WORK & CREATIVITY WENT INTO BRINGING THIS MUSIC TO YOU...



...AND SOME OF IT
WAS EVEN MINE.

THIS PAGE HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

(YOU KNOW WHY.)

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Seafarer Press
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43

S I

S II

A

Vib (Pno)

Wait - ing,

Watch - ing,

p

48

S I

S II

A

Vib (Pno)

watch - ing,

wait - ing,

won - der - ing,

Won - der - ing,

p

52

S I

S II

A

Fl

Vib (Pno)

whispered: *mp* lunga

When?

whispered: *mp* lunga

When?

whispered: *mp* lunga

When?

When? lunga

p

lunga

ped. *attacca*

II. Now!

57 (♩ = 126-132) With vitality spoken: *p*

S I

S II

A

Pno

mf

p

Ped. * Ped. *

Now,

63 *mp* *mf*

S I

S II

A

Pno

mp *mf*

mf

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Now, Now! Now! Now! Now!

spoken: *mp* spoken: *mf*

69 *p*

S I

S II

A

Pno

p *p*

p

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Speed - ing, sport - ing,
Reach - ing, risk - ing,

Sail - ing, soar - ing, run - ing, rac - ing, speed - ing, sport - ing,
Work - ing, wish - ing, dream - ing, danc - ing, reach - ing, risk - ing,

Sail - ing, soar - ing, run - ing, rac - ing, speed - ing, sport - ing,
Work - ing, wish - ing, dream - ing, danc - ing, reach - ing, risk - ing,

75 *mf*

S I
cheer - ing, chas - ing, shout - ing, shar - ing, do - ing, dar - ing,
choos - ing, chanc - ing, grow - ing, giv - ing, learn - ing, liv - ing,

S II
cheer - ing, chas - ing, shout - ing, shar - ing, do - ing, dar - ing,
choos - ing, chanc - ing, grow - ing, giv - ing, learn - ing, liv - ing,

A
cheer - ing, chas - ing, shout - ing, shar - ing, do - ing, dar - ing,
choos - ing, chanc - ing, grow - ing, giv - ing, learn - ing, liv - ing,

Pno
Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

81 *mf* *mp*

Pno
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

85 *mp*

Tutti
No more won - dering when, no more won - dering when,

Pno
Ped. * Ped. *

89

Tutti
no more won - dering when,

Pno
Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * (*p*)

94 *p warmly*

S I
Trust- ing, _____ try - ing, _____
Lov - ing, _____ cry - ing, _____

S II
p warmly
Trust- ing, _____ try - ing, _____
Lov - ing, _____ cry - ing, _____

A
p warmly
Trust- ing, _____ try - ing, _____
Lov - ing, _____ cry - ing, _____

Fl
p

Pno
p
Ped.

101

S I
Trust- ing, _____ try - ing, _____ lov - ing, cry - ing, _____

S II
Trust- ing, _____ try - ing, _____ lov - ing, cry - ing, _____

A
Trust- ing, _____ try - ing, _____ lov - ing, cry - ing, _____

Fl
p

Pno
p
Ped. Ped. Ped.

109

S I *p* No more won-dering when,

S II

A

Fl

Pno *mf* *p*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

114

S I *mp* no more won-dering when, *mf* no more won-dering when,

S II *mp* no more won-dering when, *mf* no more won-dering when,

A *mf* no more won-dering when,

Fl *tr*

Pno *mp* *mf*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

119

Fl *(tr)*

Pno *f*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Opal Palmer Adisa, poet ◦ Margaret & George Alexander, parents ◦ Yehuda Amichai, poet ◦ Bjorn Arneson, generous web designer ◦ Scott Bates, poet ◦ Abbie Betinis, composer/colleague ◦ Dennis Blubaugh, music dealer ◦ Michael deVernon Boblett, poet ◦ Ray Bradbury, writer ◦ Norbert Capek, visionary ◦ e. e. cummings, poet ◦ Philip Dacey, poet ◦ Emily Dickinson, poet ◦ Evelyn Dudley, poet ◦ Rob Eller-Isaacs, minister/writer ◦ Sophia Lyon Fahs, writer ◦ Richard M. Fewkes, writer ◦ Peshia Gertler, poet ◦ Richard S. Gilbert, minister/writer ◦ Jack Gallagher, composer/teacher ◦ Paul Gerike, proofreader ◦ Steve Harper, technical advisor ◦ Steve Hawkins, generous web designer ◦ Edie Hill, composer/colleague ◦ Langston Hughes, poet ◦ Mark Humphrey, piano technician ◦ Karel Husa, composer/teacher ◦ Kalidasa, poet ◦ Garrison Keillor, storyteller ◦ Denise Levertov, poet ◦ George Ella Lyon, poet ◦ Jonathan Machen, artist ◦ Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet ◦ J. David Moore, composer/colleague ◦ Joan Wolf Prefontaine, poet ◦ Gerald Rich, poet ◦ Carl Sandburg, poet ◦ King Sigismund III, religious reformer ◦ Steven Stucky, composer/teacher ◦ Rabindranath Tagore, poet ◦ Howard Thurman, civil rights leader/writer ◦ John Greenleaf Whittier, poet ◦ Theodore S. Lockerer Williams, poet ◦ Daniel Winter, pianist/teacher ◦ Nancy Wood, poet ◦ Yehudi Wyner, composer/teacher ◦ Paul Adams, technical advisor

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137 *f*

S I
Fly - - ing!

S II
Fly - - ing!

A
Fly - - ing!

Fl
f
marcato
(high notes optional)

Pno
mf
Ped. * Ped. * Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

141

S I
Now! Straight-a - way! At once! No de - lay! It's

S II
Now! Straight-a - way! At once! No de - lay! It's

A
Now! Straight-a - way! At once! No de - lay! It's

Fl

Pno
f
Ped. * Ped. *

145

S I
now or nev - er, here and now, with - out he - si - ta - tion the

S II
now or nev - er, here and now,

A
now or nev - er, here and now, with - out he - si - ta - tion the

Fl

Pno

Ped. *

148

S I
mo-ment to live _____ is Now!

S II
ff marcato
No more won - dering when Now!

A
shouted: ff
mo-ment to live _____ is Now!

Fl

Pno

Ped. *

shouted: ff