

Composer's Notes

I was drawn to arrange this beautiful folk song both for the melody and for the universal themes that lie within the text. It is a well-known song, having been covered by countless artists from all over the world, and I hope this choral arrangement allows the singers to find a path through the music that is both moving for the audience and fun to sing. The melody can be found across most of the different voices and I would encourage the performance to be led by those lines—there can be a feeling of space, but without too much wallowing. Certain moments can move forwards a little too, such as the bridge passage between the chorus and verse. The sparse upper voice harmony over the lower voice solo should be icy and glass-like; then the choir can dramatically grow together to the climax of the work before finally drifting to a contemplative conclusion, perhaps imagining the voyager disappearing into the distance.

I wrote this arrangement originally for the VOCES8 Foundation, and I'm thrilled that it has appeared on the Apollo5 album, *Haven*. I'm also delighted that an upper voice version of the piece has now been recorded by our newest member to the VOCES8 Foundation family, Lyyra. It has also featured in some of our global education programs with massed choirs of all ages and abilities singing alongside VOCES8 and the VOCES8 Scholars. I'm grateful to everyone who chooses to bring this arrangement to life.

—Paul Smith,
September 2024

Text

I am a poor wayfaring stranger,
While traveling through this world of woe,
Yet there's no sickness, toil, or danger
In that bright world to which I go.

I'm going there to see my Father;
I'm going there no more to roam,
I'm only going over Jordan,
I'm only going over home.

I know dark clouds will gather round me;
I know my way is rough and steep,
But golden fields lie out before me
Where God's redeemed shall ever sleep.

I'm going there to see my Mother;
She said she'd meet me when I come.
I'm only going over Jordan,
I'm only going over home.

I'll soon be free from ev'ry trial,
My body sleep in the churchyard;
I'll drop the cross of self-denial
And enter on my great reward.

I'm going there to see my Saviour,
To sing His praise for evermore.
I'm only going over Jordan,
I'm only going over home.

—American Folk Song

The **VOCES8** Foundation Series celebrates and cultivates diverse musical expression. Curated by **VOCES8** co-founders Paul and Barnaby Smith, alongside members of the ensemble, series repertoire is intended to support the Foundation's mission of 'Music Education for All' as well as to inspire both musicians and audiences to share the joy of singing.

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The Wayfaring Stranger

for SATTB Chorus unaccompanied

Traditional American folk song

arr. Paul Smith

(PRS)

Hauntingly, with flow ♩ = 36

Soprano

Alto

opt. Solo mp*

I am a poor — way-far-ing strang-er, — while trav'l-ing

4

through — this world of woe, yet there's no sick - - ness, toil nor

7

opt. Solo mf*

I'm go-ing

dan-ger — in that bright world — to which I go.

10

mp

there — to see my Fa-ther; — I'm go-ing there — no more to roam, I'm on-ly

mp

I'm on-ly

*Optional Soprano and Alto soli through measure 36.

14

S go - ing o - ver Jor - dan, — I'm on - ly go - ing o - ver home.

A go - ing o - ver Jor - dan, — I'm on - ly go - ing o - ver home.

T1

T2

B

mp

Home. —

mp

Home. —

for rehearsal only

18

mp

I know dark clouds — will gath - er

p

Dark —

p

Dark

22

round me; I know my way is rough and steep, but gold-en fields lie out be-

clouds, round me; fields be-

clouds, round me; fields

26

mf I'm go-ing there to see my

fore me where God's re-deemed shall ev-er sleep.

mf When

mf When

30

mo-ther; she said she'd meet me when I come. I'm on-ly go - ing o-ver

mf

I'm on-ly go - ing o-ver

I come, o - - -

I come, o - - -

34

Jor - dan, I'm on - ly go - - ing o - ver home,

Jor - dan, I'm on - ly go - - ing o - ver home,

ver Jor - - - - dan,

ver Jor - - - - dan, home.

A little more movement

poco rit.

37

Tutti p

home. _____

p

home. _____

A little more movement

poco rit.

42 *a tempo*

S *p*

Free from tri - - al,

A *p*

Free from tri - - al,

T1

opt. Solo mp*

T2

I'll soon be free _____ from ev' - ry tri - al, _____ my bod - y

a tempo

*Optional Tenor solo through measure 50.

45

bod - y sleep; self - de - - -

bod - y sleep; self - de - - - *p*

self - de - - -

sleep in the church - yard; I'll drop the cross of self - de -

48

cresc. *f*

S ni - - al, and great re - - ward. I'm go - ing

cresc. *f*

A ni - - al, and great re - - ward. I'm go - ing

cresc. *f*

T1 ni - - al, and great re - - ward. I'm go - ing

cresc. *Tutti f*

T2 ni - al and en - ter on my great re - ward. I'm go - ing

mp cresc. *f*

B great re - - ward. I'm go - ing

51

S
there _____ to see my Sa-vior, _____ to sing his praise _____ for - ev - er -

A
there _____ to see my Sa-vior, _____ to sing his praise _____ for - ev - er -

T1
8 there _____ to see my Sa-vior, _____ to sing his praise _____ for - ev - er -

T2
B there, _____ ev - er - -

54

more. I'm on - ly go - - ing o - ver Jor-dan, _____ I'm on - ly

more. I'm on - ly go - - ing o - ver Jor-dan, _____ I'm on - ly

8 more. I'm on - ly go - - ing o - ver Jor-dan, _____ I'm on - ly

more. I'm on - ly o - ver Jor - - dan,

57 *mp* *rit.*

go - - ing o - ver home, I'm on - ly go - - ing o - ver

go - - ing o - ver home, I'm on - ly go - - ing o - ver

8 go - - ing o - ver home, go - ing

o - ver home, go - ing

rit.

60 **Slower** *p*

home, I'm on - ly go - - ing o - ver home.

home, I'm on - ly go - - ing o - ver home.

8 home, home.

home, home.

Slower