

Anthony Gunadi

Listen

Text by Octavio Paz

For Arushi Das (soprano) and Angela Ng (piano)

Duration – ca. 7'

(2023)

Program Note

I wanted to write a song for Arushi Das' captivating voice which has a dark and powerful sound. My collaboration with Arushi Das did not only involve getting to know her voice, but she also chose the text, helped with the text interpretation, and suggested the singing into the piano technique. The piano part has a more orchestral sound in mind because it was written with the pianist Angela Ng in mind, who is very agile in her playing and can deploy a thunderous sound when the music calls for it.

The text that this song is set to is "As One Listens to the Rain" by Octavio Paz, which is one of the most emotionally moving poems I have ever read. It is serene and gives me a sense of timelessness and weightlessness, a comforting dream-like state. Sections of the song are separated by the repetition of the words 'listen to me'. For me this poem is about being asleep yet awake, not concerned about the trivial worries of the world and just being at peace in the present moment. The climax depicts a beautiful rebirth using imagery of nature.

“As One Listens to the Rain” by Octavio Paz (edited by Anthony Gunadi and Arushi Das for “Listen” song):

Listen to me as one listens to the rain,
not attentive, not distracted,
light footsteps, thin drizzle,
water that is air, air that is time,
figurations of mist
figurations of time
at the bend in this pause,
listen to me as one listens to the rain,
without listening, hear what I say
with eyes open inward, asleep
with all five senses awake,
it's raining, light footsteps, a murmur of syllables,
air and water,
what we are and are,
the days and years, this moment,
weightless time and heavy sorrow,
you and your face of night,
your hair, unhurried lightning,
you enter my forehead,
footsteps of water across my eyes,
listen to me as one listens to the rain,
your fingers of water dampen my forehead,
your fingers of flame burn my eyes,
your fingers of air open eyelids of time,
a spring of visions and resurrections,
listen to me as one listens to the rain,
the years go by, the moments return,
do you hear the footsteps in the next room?
not here, not there: you hear them
in another time that is now,
listen to the rain

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Text by Octavio Paz

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Measure 1:

Soprano: *mp* Lis-ten to me as one lis-tens to the

Piano: *pp* *senza ped.* *p leggiero*

Measure 2:

Soprano: rain not at-ten - tive not dis-tract - ed

Piano: *Ped.*

Measure 3:

Soprano: *mf* light foot-steps thin driz - zle wa - ter that is air

Piano: *mp*

8

S. *f*
air that is time fi - gu - ra - tions of mist

Pno. *mf*

10

S. *p*
fi-gu-ra-tions of time at the bend in this pause. —

Pno. *pp*

15^{mb} loco

13 ♩ = 60

Pno. *p dolce*

17 poco rit.

Pno.

3

21 A tempo

S. *mp*
Lis - ten to me as

Pno. *A tempo p*

23

S.
one lis - tens to the rain

Pno.

25

S.
with - out list - en - ing — hear what I say with

Pno. *pp mysterious*
una corda

27

S. eyes o - pen in - ward a - sleep with all five sen - ses

Pno.

29

S. a - - wake air and wa - ter__ what we are and

Pno. *p* *mf*

tre corde

31

S.

are we are and are

Pno.

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

8^{vb}

5 33

S. *p subito* the days and years this mo-ment *mp* weight-less time and heav-y

Pno. *pp subito* *p* *pp* *mp*

(8) *una corda*

35

S. *f* *molto rit.* *A tempo* sor - row

Pno. *p* *mf* *f* *mp* *pp*

(8) *tre corde*

37

S.

Pno.

39

S. *mf*
you and your face of

Pno. *p*
una corda

41

S. *f*
night your hair un - hurr - ied light - ning

Pno. *mp* *mf* *f*
tre corde

43

S. *sfz*
you en - ter my fore - head

Pno. *mf*
(no pedal change)

45 *molto rit.*

S. foot-steps of wa - ter a - cross my eyes

Pno. *molto rit.* *f*

47 *A tempo* *ff*

S. Lis - ten to me as one

Pno. *A tempo* *ff* *loco*

8vb

49

S. lis - tens to the rain your

Pno. 19

51

S. fin - gers of wa - ter damp - en my fore - head your

Pno. *mp*

53

S. fin - gers of flame burn my eyes your

Pno. *mf*

55

S. fin - gers of air o - pen the eye - lids of

Pno.

57

S. time a spring of

Pno. *f* *ff*

5

59

S. vi - - - sions and res - ur -

Pno. *f* *mf*

3

61

S. rec - - - - - tions

Pno. *f* *mp*

3

63 *mp* sing into the piano 10

S. Ah Ah

Pno. *pp* *ppp*

(hold pedal down until m. 79)
una corda

67

S.

Pno.

70

S. Ah Ah

Pno.

11

73

ord. (turn around)

S. *Ah*

Pno.

77

♩ = 50

mp

Lis - ten to me as

S.

Pno. *pp* *p leggiero*

senza ped.

79

one lis - tens to the rain

S.

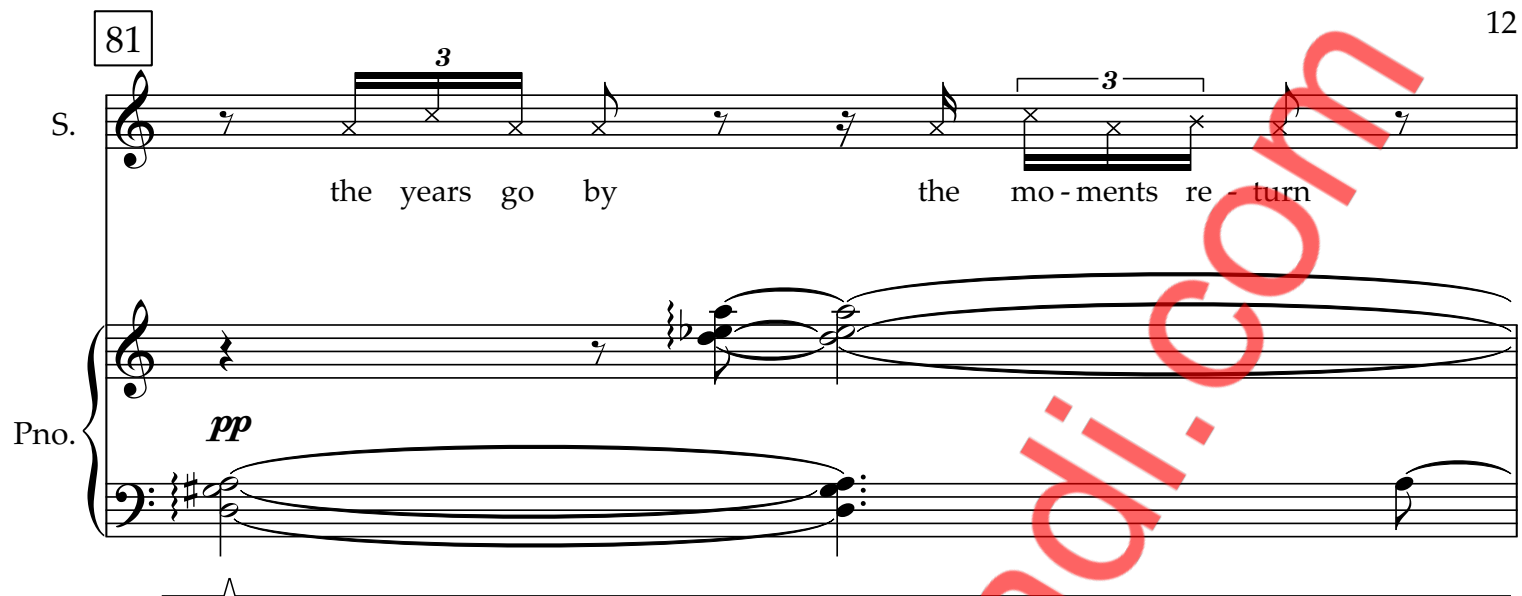
Pno.

Ped.

81

S. *the years go by the mo - ments re - turn*

Pno. *pp*



82 *recitative style*

S. *do you hear the foot - steps in the next room? not here*

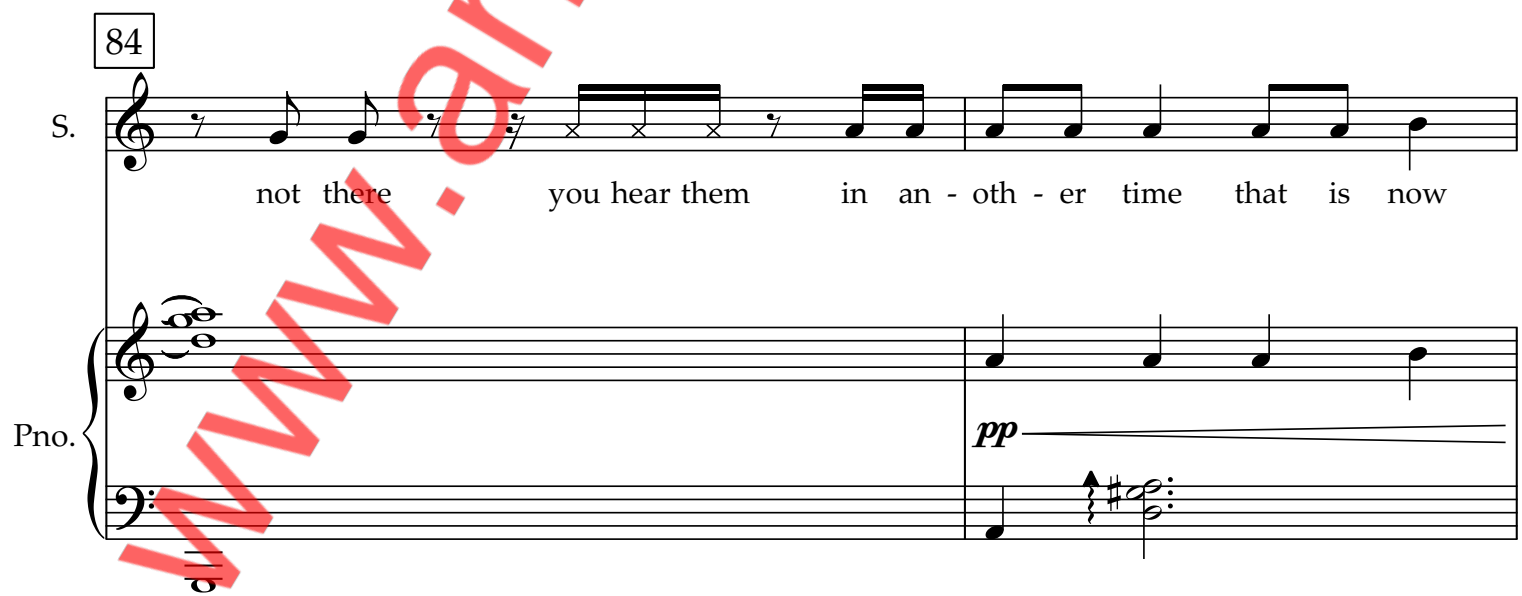
Pno.



84

S. *not there you hear them in an - oth - er time that is now*

Pno. *pp*



13

86

S. *mf*
lis - ten to the rain

Pno. *p*

88

S. *mf* *f* *mf*
list-en list-en list - en to the

Pno.

90

*molto rit.**A tempo*

S. *p*
rain

Pno. *p* *ppp*

molto rit. *A tempo*

8va *8vb* *loco*