

Holy Darkness

Inspired by John of the Cross

Dan Schutte

INTRO: *Peacefully* (♩ = 52)

G D/F# Em Em7/D F Am *rit.* Dsus4 D

REFRAIN:

mp - 3 times
mf - thereafter *a tempo*

G D/F# Em Em7/D C

Ho - ly dark - ness, _____ bless - ed night, _____ heav - en's an - swer

D Gsus4 G G/F# Em Em7/D

hid - den from our sight. _____ As we a - wait you, O God of

C C/B Am7 D

1-5 Gsus4 G * to Verses

Final G *Fine*

si - lence, _____ we em - brace your ho - ly night. _____ night.

VERSES 1-3: *Slightly faster*

D D/F# G G/B

1. I have tried you in fires of af - flic - tion; _____ I have
2. I have taught you the price of com - pas - sion; _____ you have
3. Were you there when I raised up the moun - tains? _____ Can you

E Am Am7/G D D/C

1. taught your soul to grieve. _____ In the bar - ren soil of your
2. stood be - fore the grave. _____ Though my love can seem like a
3. guide the morn - ing star? _____ Does the hawk take flight when you

**Crescendo* before Verses 4-5 only.

G/B Em C *rit.* Am Dsus4 *molto rit.* D *D.S.*

1. lone - li - ness _____ there I will plant my seed. _____
 2. rag - ing storm, _____ this is the love that saves. _____
 3. give com - mand? _____ Why do you doubt my pow'r? _____

VERSES 4-5: *Faster, with more energy*

f C° B7 Em

4. In your deep - est hour of dark - ness _____ I will
 5. As the watch - man waits for morn - ing, _____ and the

C D Bm Em C° B7

4. give you wealth un - told. _____ When the si - lence stills your
 5. bride a - waits her groom, _____ so we wait to hear your

Em *mp* Fmaj7 *rit.* Am *molto rit.* Dsus4 D *D.S.*

4. spir - it, _____ will my rich - es fill your soul. _____
 5. foot - steps _____ as we rest be - neath your moon. _____

Performance Notes

This hymn offers the image of darkness as the place where God's silent, imperceptible love reaches out to us. This is in contrast to the vision of darkness as the place most void of God's presence. Inspired by the works of St. John of the Cross, the piece works well whenever the liturgy attempts to reach out to those who are experiencing God's darkness: the sick, the dying, the homeless, the desperate. In addition to the funeral and anointing liturgies, this song finds an obvious home during the early part of the Easter Vigil, sung perhaps in darkness before the lighting of the new fire.

Holy Darkness is quiet but not lifeless; serious but not somber. Even though it touches often painful, barren places in our souls, there is still a glimmer of hope in the feel of this song.

Though composed originally for keyboard, this piece works equally well with guitar accompaniment. It should be picked rather than strummed, using a simple, unobtrusive pattern.

As for *tempo*, this is one of those pieces that calls for much *rubato* to enhance the expression of the phrases. Do not let the accompaniment become mechanical.

The Refrain and Verses are in dialogue with each other. In the Refrain we sing of our darkness and our willingness to embrace it, while in the Verses God names our experience of the darkness and reassures us of the holiness of our "night." Because of this, there should be a slightly different feel to the Verses and Refrain.

—*D.S.*