



A Spotless Rose

*15th Century German Carol,
Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1869*

SATB Choir/Piano

About "A Spotless Rose"

Many musical settings of this text have been composed, some long ago but a large number even in recent years. The ascending three-note pattern that begins in the accompaniment forms the motivic basis for this piece. Although the key signature and opening bars seem to indicate a tonality of D-minor, the significance of two chords in particular (C major and G major) lend this setting a distinctly Dorian modal quality. The two verses are set essentially strophically, with the sopranos and altos opening the first verse and tenors and basses beginning the second. In each verse, the music expands through the first four lines and reaches its highest point both in dynamic and pitch range at the end of the fifth, before ending each verse with the same rising motive that began it. After the conclusion of the second verse, the piano takes the ascending motive and develops it further, while the choir meditates on the "cold winter's night," the last phrase of the text.

For the pianist: Nowhere in the second verse should the running 16th-note pattern come close to competing with the vocal line for attention.

At the very end, the piano pedal should catch the bottom note of the G-minor triad in m. 47, and hold that chord until the 4th beat of the last measure, allowing the D/A open fifth to continue resonating without being played again.

Text:

*A spotless Rose is blowing,
Sprung from a tender root,
Of ancient seers' foreshowing,
Of Jesse promis'd fruit;
Its fairest bud unfolds to light
Amid the cold, cold winter,
And in the dark midnight.*

*The Rose which I am singing,
Whereof Isaiah said,
Is from its sweet root springing
In Mary, purest Maid;
For through our God's great love and might
The Blessed Babe she bare us
In a cold, cold winter's night.*



Douglas Byler (b. 1988) is a composer and real estate entrepreneur from the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. He received a Bachelor of Music degree in Composition from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA and a Master of Music in Composition from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ. His music has won several awards and has been performed across the United States.

For Cristen Mitchell and the choirs at Tinkling Spring Presbyterian in Fishersville, VA

A Spotless Rose

15th Century German Carol,
Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1869

Douglas Byler (ASCAP)

not too fast ♩ = 104

Soprano
Alto

Tenor
Bass

Piano

p

sim.

5 *p dolce*

SA
A spot - less Rose is blow - ing Sprung from a ten - der

TB

5

Pno.

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A Spotless Rose

SA *mp*
root, Of an-cient seers' fore - show-ing, Of Jes - se prom - ised

TB *mp*
tenors

Pno.

SA *f* *p*
fruit; It's fair - est bud un - folds to light A -

TB *f* *p*
basses

Pno. *sf* *p* *mf* *sf*
pedal harmonically

9 9 13 13

3

PREVIEW SCORE Not for performance

A Spotless Rose

17 *rit.* *a tempo*

SA
mid the cold, cold win - ter and in the dark mid - night.

TB

Pno. *p rit.* *pp* *a tempo* *p legato*

sotto voce

21 *poco rit.* *a tempo*

SA

TB TB unis.
The Rose which I am

Pno. *sim.* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *sotto voce*

LH
RH

Preview Score for Performance

A Spotless Rose

25

SA

TB

Pno.

25

LH

RH

LH

RH

LH

RH

Ah pur-est maid,

29

SA

TB

Pno.

29

LH

RH

sf

LH

spring-ing, in Ma-ry, pur-est maid; For through our God's great

spring-ing In Ma-ry, pur-est maid;

rit.

This musical score is for the hymn "A Spotless Rose". It features three parts: Soprano Alto (SA), Tenor Bass (TB), and Piano (Pno.). The score is divided into two systems. The first system starts at measure 25 and includes vocal lines for SA and TB, and a piano accompaniment with left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) parts. The lyrics for this system are "sing-ing, Where-of I-sai-ah said, Is from its sweet root". The second system starts at measure 29 and includes vocal lines for SA and TB, and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics for this system are "Ah pur-est maid, spring-ing, in Ma-ry, pur-est maid; For through our God's great spring-ing In Ma-ry, pur-est maid;". The piano part in the second system includes a dynamic marking of *sf* (sforzando) and a *rit.* (ritardando) marking at the end of the system.

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33 *f* *p* *poco rit.*

SA
love and might The bless - ed babe she bare us In a

TB

Pno. *f* *p* *poco rit.*
pedal harmonically *sotto voce*

37 *a tempo*

SA
cold, cold win - ter's night, a cold win - ter's night,

TB

Pno. *a tempo* *mp*

A Spotless Rose

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system (measures 41-44) features vocal parts for Soprano Alto (SA) and Tenor Bass (TB) and piano accompaniment (Pno.). The SA part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a dotted quarter note, with dynamics *mf* and a *slide* marking. The TB part mirrors the SA's entry. The piano accompaniment starts with a *p* dynamic. The second system (measures 45-48) shows the vocalists with rests and the piano accompaniment continuing with a *rit.* marking. A large watermark 'Preview Score for performance' is overlaid diagonally across the score.

SA
41
mf
(slide)
a cold win-ter's night
(slide)

TB
mf

Pno.
41
p

SA
45
rit.

TB

Pno.
45
rit.