

Sure On This Shining Night  
SATB, Secular

Morten Lauridsen

Morten Lauridsen  
*Sure On This  
Shining Night*  
(James Agee)

from *Nocturnes*  
SATB and piano

## Sure On This Shining Night

Sure on this shining night  
Of starmade shadows round,  
Kindness must watch for me  
This side the ground.

The late year lies down the north.  
All is healed, all is health.  
High summer holds the earth.  
Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night  
I weep for wonder  
Wand'ring far alone  
Of shadows on the stars.

—James Agee

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From *Nocturnes*, The American Choral Directors Association  
2005 Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission

Premiere performance of the *Nocturnes* at the 2005 ACDA National Convention by the  
Donald Brinegar Singers and Morten Lauridsen, piano

I originally composed *Sure On This Shining Night* as the third movement for my choral cycle *Nocturnes* on poems by Rilke, Neruda and Agee. I set the verse very much like a song from the American musical theater stage and it should be sung in that manner. The first three *Nocturnes*—*Sa Nuit d'Été* (R.M. Rilke), *Soneto de la Noche* (Pablo Neruda) and *Sure On This Shining Night*—may be performed either separately or as a cycle (in that order and including the *Epilogue*). The *Epilogue: Voici le soir*, is only to be performed if the entire cycle is done, following *Sure On This Shining Night*. In that case, the final chord of *Sure On This Shining Night* is held with a fermata and then the chorus begins the *Epilogue* without a break between these two movements.

In addition to the original SATB/piano and TTBB/piano versions, *Sure On This Shining Night* is also available as a duet for soprano/mezzo-soprano and tenor/baritone with piano and as a solo song for baritone and piano combined with Dana Gioia's "Prayer," published by Peermusic as "Two Songs on American Poems." The complete *Nocturnes* are recorded on *Sure On This Shining Night - Voce Sings Lauridsen* and on *Lauridsen - Mid-Winter Songs* by The Singers - Minnesota Choral Artists, both accompanied by the composer at the piano.

—Morten Lauridsen

The music of Morten Lauridsen, Distinguished Professor of Composition at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music, occupies a permanent place in the standard vocal repertoire of the Twenty-First Century. He was Composer-in-Residence of the Los Angeles Master Chorale from 1994-2001 and is currently Honorary Artistic President of INTERKULTUR/World Choir Games. His works, including eight vocal cycles and a series of sacred motets, are regularly performed throughout the world and have been recorded on over 200 CDs, several of which have received Grammy nominations. An award-winning documentary by filmmaker Michael Stillwater, *Shining Night: A Portrait of Composer Morten Lauridsen*, was released in 2012. Information about the film is at [songwithoutborders.net](http://songwithoutborders.net).

Named an "American Choral Master" by the National Endowment for the Arts in 2005, he was awarded the 2007 National Medal of Arts, the highest artistic award in the United States, by the President in a White House ceremony "for his composition of radiant choral works combining musical beauty, power, and spiritual depth."

For more about Morten Lauridsen:  
[www.peermusicClassical.com](http://www.peermusicClassical.com)  
[www.mortenlauridsen.net](http://www.mortenlauridsen.net)

# Sure On This Shining Night

James Agee

Morten Lauridsen

Flowing, tempo rubato ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 72$ )      *poco rit.*      a tempo

Piano *p espressivo*

4 *rit.*      A a tempo *mp*

T Sure on this shin - ing

B Sure on this shin - ing

A a tempo

7 *poco rit.* \*

night of star-made shad-ows round,      kind-ness must watch for me this side\_\_\_the ground, on this

night of star-made shad-ows round,      kind-ness must watch for me this side\_\_\_the ground, on this *poco rit.*

\*Omit if the low As are out of range.

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10 *a tempo* *rit.* *a tempo*

shin - - - ing night, this shin - -

shin - - - ing night, this shin - -

*a tempo* *rit.* *a tempo*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

13 *rit.* *a tempo* *rit.*

- - - ing night.

- - - ing night.

*rit.* *a tempo* *rit.*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

16 **B** *a tempo* *mp*

S *mp* Sure on this shin-ing night of star-made shad-ows round, kind-ness must watch for me this

A *mp* Sure on this shin-ing night of star-made shad-ows round, kind-ness must watch for me this

T *mp* Sure on this shin-ing night, sure on this shin - - - ing

B *mp* Sure on this shin-ing

**B** *a tempo*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

19

side the ground, on this shin - - - ing night, this

side the ground, on this shin - - - ing night, this

night, sure on this shin-ing night, this

night, sure on this shin - - - ing night, this

*rit.*

*rit.*

Ped. Ped. Ped.

22

*a tempo* *molto rit.* **C** *a tempo*

shin - - - ing night.

shin - - - ing night.

shin - - - ing night.

shin - - - ing night.

*a tempo* *molto rit.* **C** *a tempo*

*mp*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

\*Omit if the low As are out of range.

25

T *mp* The late year lies —

B *mp* The late year lies —

*Red.*

28

(no breath)

down the north, All — is healed, all — is health. High

down the north, All — is healed, all — is health. High

*Red.*

31

S *mp* The late year lies — down the north, All — is

A *mp* The late year lies — down the north, All — is

T sum-mer holds the earth. — Hearts all whole. All — is healed, —

B sum-mer holds the earth. — Hearts all whole. All — is healed, —

*Red.*

34

(no breath)

*mf*

healed, \_\_\_\_\_ all is health. High sum-mer holds the earth. Hearts all

healed, \_\_\_\_\_ all is health. High sum-mer holds the earth. Hearts all

\_\_\_\_\_ all is health, all is health. High sum-mer holds the earth. Hearts all

\_\_\_\_\_ all is health, all is health. High sum-mer holds the earth. Hearts all

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

37

*meno mosso*

*rit.*

**D** a tempo

*f*

whole. \_\_\_\_\_ Sure on this shin - ing night, sure on this shin - ing,

whole. \_\_\_\_\_ Sure on this shin - ing night, sure on this

whole. \_\_\_\_\_ Sure on this shin - ing night, sure on this

whole. \_\_\_\_\_ Sure on this shin - ing night, sure on this

*meno mosso*

*rit.*

**D** a tempo

*f*

Ped. Ped.

40

*rit.* ***ff*** **a tempo**

shin - - ing night, — sure on this shin - -

shin - - ing night, sure on this shin

shin - - ing night, sure on this shin

shin - - ing night, sure on this shin

*rit.* ***ff*** **a tempo**

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

43

*rit.* ***mp*** **a tempo** ***p***

- ing night. I weep for won-der wan-d'ring far a - lone — of

***mp*** ***p***

- ing night. I weep — a - lone — of

***mp*** ***p***

- ing night. I weep for won-der wan-d'ring far a - lone — of

***mp*** ***p***

- ing night. I weep — a - lone — of

*rit.* ***mp*** **a tempo** ***p***

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.



meno mosso rit.

molto rit. **E** Molto meno mosso, with a sense of wonder  
molto lunga *ppp* hushed

46

shad - ows on the stars. Sure on this

shad - ows on the stars.

shad - ows on the stars.

shad - ows on the stars. Sure on this shin-ing

meno mosso rit.

molto rit. **E** Molto meno mosso, with a sense of wonder  
molto lunga (no break) *ppp*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

49

shin-ing night, this shin - - - ing night, on this

*ppp* hushed

Sure on this shin - - - ing night, on this

*ppp* hushed

Sure on this shin-ing night, on this

night of star-made shadows round, kind-ness must watch for me this side the ground, on this

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

\*Omit if the low As are out of range.

52

shin - - - ing night, this shin - -  
shin - - - ing night, this shin - -  
shin - - - ing night, this shin - -  
shin - - - ing night, this shin - -

rit. **F** *Meno mosso*

ing night,  
ing night,  
ing night,  
ing night,

*p*

Red. Red.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 52 through 55. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'shin - - - ing night, this shin - -'. The music is in a key with three flats and a 3/4 time signature. The piano part consists of chords and a melodic line. The tempo marking 'rit.' and 'F' are present above the first vocal staff, and 'Meno mosso' is written below it. The piano part has a 'p' dynamic marking and 'Red.' markings at the bottom.

56

ing night,  
ing night,  
ing night,  
ing night,

*p*

Red. Red.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 56 through 59. It features four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'ing night,'. The music is in a key with three flats and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo marking 'rit.' and 'F' are present above the first vocal staff, and 'Meno mosso' is written below it. The piano part has a 'p' dynamic marking and 'Red.' markings at the bottom.

59

*meno mosso*

*rit.*

*molto meno mosso*

sure on this shin - ing

sure on this shin - ing

sure on this shin - ing

sure on this shin - ing

*meno mosso* *rit.* *molto meno mosso*

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*

*Ped.*

62

*Tempo I*

*rit.*

*molto rit.*

*lunga*

night.

night.

night.

night.

*Tempo I* *rit.* *molto rit.* *lunga*

*mp*

*p*

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

(for Jama)  
(ca. 4'45")

**The Vocal Music of  
Morten Lauridsen**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>A Backyard Universe (Witt)</i> .....  | Tenor and Piano   |
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| .....  | Medium Voice and Piano or Organ   |
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| <i>Prayer (Gioia)</i> .....  | SATB Chorus and Piano   |
| .....  | Mixed Duet (High or Medium Voices) and Piano  |
| <i>Prayer (Gioia, from Two Songs on American Poems)</i> .....                    | Baritone and Piano  |
| .....  | Mixed Duet (Medium Voices) and Piano  |
| <i>Sure On This Shining Night (Agee)</i> .....                                   | SATB Chorus and Piano   |
| .....  | TTBB Chorus and Piano   |
| .....  | Medium Voice and Piano  |
| .....  | Mixed Duet (Medium Voices) and Piano  |
| <i>Sure On This Shining Night (Agee, from Two Songs on American Poems)</i> ..... | Baritone and Piano  |
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| .....  | Jazz Chorus a cappella  |
| <i>A Winter Come (Moss)</i> .....  | Medium Voice and Piano  |

**All - Morten Lauridsen Recordings**

- "Lauridsen: *Lux Aeterna*," Los Angeles Master Chorale, Sinfonia Orchestra and Morten Lauridsen (piano), Paul Salamunovich conducting, on the Grammy-nominated RCM CD 19705
- "Lauridsen: *Nocturnes*," Polyphony, Britten Sinfonia, Andrew Lumsden (organ) and Morten Lauridsen (piano), Stephen Layton conducting, on Hyperion CD 67580
- "Lauridsen: *Lux Aeterna*," Polyphony, Britten Sinfonia, Stephen Layton conducting, on the Grammy-nominated Hyperion CD 67449
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- "*Sure On This Shining Night*," Voce and the Voce Chamber Artists, Mark Singleton conducting, [voceinc.org](http://voceinc.org)
- "Lauridsen - *Mid-Winter Songs*," The Singers - Minnesota Choral Artists, Matthew Culloton conducting, [singersmca.org](http://singersmca.org)

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