

If the war goes on — by John L. Bell and Graham Maule

Notes for the piano accompanist, by Marilyn Houser Hamm

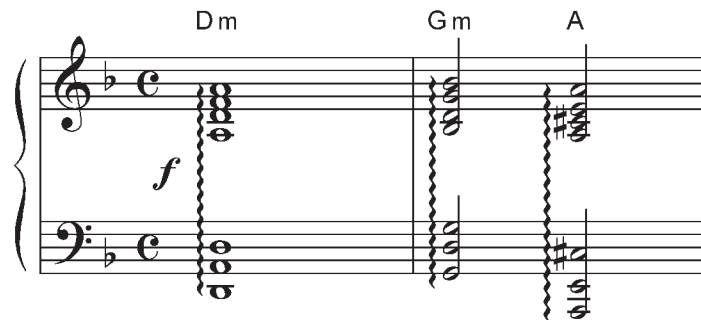
- This is a lament. Play with the sensitivity called for in the qualities of a plaintive Israeli folk melody.
- Tempo: QUARTER = c. 60, in a “measured” way. At the same time, feel the movement to the first beat of the bar.
- Shape the rise and fall of the phrase, but play each strain as one phrase. Use a fingering in the Right Hand that connects the notes as much as possible to create line.
- The stressed off-beats in the Left Hand can be weighted increasingly as the “pathos” of the lament requires. The same is true for RH quarter notes. Press more deeply into the key bed for a “weighted” sound as the volume increases. This will pull out the depth of the tone qualities of the piano.
- Allow the text to “speak” with sensitivity to dynamic levels. (For example, “And the women learn how to dance without a partner” can also diminish in sound.)
- If greater emphasis of the quarter note is needed to lift the text, create space between the quarter notes of the Right Hand by playing the notes almost fully, then lifting the hand between the notes. Pedaling throughout is still recommended so that the sounds are never abrupt.

Variation Possibilities

Stanza 2: Men’s Voices. Play the Right Hand down an octave, inverting the two notes of the Right Hand. (For example, in bar 1, place the A above the F, thus creating thirds, and play throughout the verse.)

Stanza 3: Women’s Voices. Follow the pattern of Stanza 2, but place RH up an octave rather than down an octave.

Stanza 5: A “sustained chord” accompaniment can also be created by following the chord structure of the piece. Use the following illustration as a guide, and please contact me if you need help!



Spiritual Attentiveness

- Always be aware that you are leading the congregation in prayer. In this case, the congregation is given permission to name the things that are often unnamed. Do not lift the hands from the keys abruptly at the end of the song.
- Ending: Let the sound linger to give the people permission to let the prayer “settle.” The sound is also “released into the silence” to join the prayers of the world for peace. Let the spirit of the singing have its own time to “end.” Do not allow “words” to follow the singing too quickly. Worshipers will share a corporate attentiveness to God, and to one another, if we allow this space.
- Remember that this song works equally well with no instrument, and may be more desirable in a gathering for sung prayer. A “C Instrument” (preferably a string instrument) doubling the melody also creates desirable qualities.

God’s strength to you as you lead your congregation and worship groups, and as we work together for peace in this warring time.

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