

Wayfaring Stranger

arranged for SATB Choir and Chamber Orchestra

by Douglas Mears

Orchestration

2 Flutes
Oboe
English Horn
2 Bassoons
4 Horns in F
2 Trombones
Bass Trombone
Tuba
Timpani
Percussion (2 players)
Triangle, Glockenspiel, Chimes, Bass Drum,
Suspended Cymbal, Tenor Drum
Celesta
Harp
SATB Choir
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Bass

Notes

“Wayfaring Stranger” (also known as “Poor Wayfaring Stranger” or “I Am a Poor Wayfaring Stranger”), is a well-known American folk spiritual, likely originating in the 18th century. It tells the story of a plaintive soul on the journey through life, longing to be home in God’s kingdom. As with most folk songs, many variations of the lyrics exist and many versions of this song have been published over the years. Yet they all tell of a weary pilgrim determined to reach the promised land despite the rough and steep path ahead.

This new setting for SATB choir and orchestra embraces the haunting and plaintive melody of the timeless spiritual and highlights the intense drama of its powerful lyrics.