

If Thou Be Near

(Bist Du Bei Mir)

J.S. Bach arr. Alfred Reed

Alfred Reed

ALFRED REED is a native New Yorker — born in Manhattan on January 25, 1921. His parents loved good music and made it part of their daily lives; as a result, he was well acquainted with most of the standard symphonic and operatic repertoire while still in elementary school.

Beginning formal music training at the age of ten, he studied trumpet and was playing professionally while still in High School. He worked on theory and harmony with John Sacco, and continued later as a scholarship student of Paul Yartlin.

After three years at the Radio Workshop in New York, he enlisted in the Air Force during World War II, and was assigned to the 529th Army Air Force Band. During his three and a half years with this organization, Alfred Reed became deeply interested in the Concert Band and its music. He produced nearly 100 compositions and arrangements for band before leaving the Service.

Following his release, he enrolled at the Juilliard School of Music as a student of Vittorio Giannini. In 1948 he became a staff composer and arranger with NBC and, subsequently, ABC in New York, where he wrote and arranged music for radio and television, as well as for record albums and films.

In 1953 Mr. Reed became conductor of the Baylor Symphony Orchestra at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, at the same time completing his interrupted academic work. His Master's thesis was the RHAPSODY FOR VIOLA AND ORCHESTRA, which later was to win the Luria Prize. It received its first performance in 1959, and was published in 1966. During the two years at Baylor he also became interested in the problems of educational music at all levels, especially in the development of repertoire material for band, orchestra and chorus. This led, in 1955, to his accepting the post of editor in a major publishing firm. He left this position in September, 1966, to join the faculty of the School of Music at the University of Miami, as Professor of Music, holding a joint appointment in the Theory-Composition and Music Education Departments, and to develop the Unique Music Merchandising Degree Program at that institution.

With over 200 published works for Concert Band, Wind Ensemble, Orchestra, Chorus and various smaller chamber music groups, many of which have been on the required performance lists for the past 15 years, Dr. Reed is one of the nation's most prolific and frequently performed composers. In addition to winning the Luria Prize in 1959, he has been awarded some 52 commissions to date...with more on the way! His work as a guest conductor and clinician has taken him to 40 states, Japan, Europe, Canada, Mexico, and South America, and for six consecutive years, six of his works have been on the required list of music for all Concert Bands in Japan. He left New York for Miami, Florida, in 1960, where he has made his home ever since.

In the Fall of 1980, following the retirement of Dr. Frederick Fenell, Dr. Reed was appointed conductor and music director of the University of Miami Symphonic Wind Ensemble.

NOTE TO CONDUCTOR

A well sustained, extremely smooth style of playing is vital to the successful performance of this piece, one of Bach's most beloved melodies.

The score and parts have been extensively cued and cross-cued to allow for missing or weak instruments, and the conductor is urged to make use of them freely if necessary. The pure clarinet tone quality of the opening phrase, and the double-reed tone quality of the third phrase (beginning at measure 19), should be adhered to as much as possible, with judicious choices of cues, when needed, so as to attempt to preserve the color contrasts which have been planned as an integral part of the instrumentation.

Where the Cornets join the Woodwinds and Saxophones in the final section (beginning at measure 46 and continuing to the end) they must act as reinforcing melodic lines only, and not overpower the essentially Woodwind and Saxophone color that the music obviously calls for. Also, in this regard, the Trumpets and Trombones are mainly background "choir" voices here, and, as with the Cornets, must never overbalance the remaining instruments.

Careful attention to sostenuto, blend, balance and continual beauty of sound will result in a warm, inspiring performance of another of Bach's incomparable smaller masterpieces.

Alfred Reed

PROGRAM NOTE

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), the great master composer of the late baroque, was married twice and fathered twenty children (of whom, due to a high rate of infant mortality in Bach's time, only nine survived infancy or childhood.)

Bach's second marriage, in 1721 when he was thirty-six, was to the twenty-one-year-old soprano, Anna Magdalena Wülken, the daughter of the court trumpeter of Weissenfels. In addition to being a fine singer, Anna Magdalena also played accompaniments on the harpsichord. Bach, a music teacher as well as an organist, choirmaster and composer, copied out two collections of music for his young wife, one in 1722, shortly after their marriage, and the second in 1725.

These two volumes of music have come to be known as the Anna Magdalena Notebooks. They contain works for keyboard, primarily, but also include a few vocal pieces. Some of the works in these collections are by other composers, but most are by Bach himself.

In the second of Anna Magdalena's notebooks are included several songs, one of which is BIST DU BEI MIR ("If You Are By My Side"), one of Bach's most frequently sung and best-loved songs. The song is #25 in the collection and was copied by Bach simply as a texted melody with a simple, unfigured bass line.

BIST DU BEI MIR is an expression of a deep and abiding love of a husband for his wife or a wife for her husband, and Anna Magdalena loved to sing and play the song. The text does reflect a musing on death (a thought which more than once came to Bach in his compositions) with the words (freely translated) "If you are by my side, I shall be able to surrender to death peacefully".

Recently, Bach scholars have implied that this well-known Bach song may have been, as were several other items in Anna Magdalena's notebooks, written by someone other than Bach himself. Those claiming that the song is indeed spurious, have put forth the name of a contemporary of Bach's, Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel (1690-1749), as its probable composer. The song continues, however to be presented as Bach's poignant love song to his beloved second wife, Anna Magdalena.

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IF THOU BE NEAR

(Bist Du Bei Mir)

Full Conductor Score
(No Condensed Published)

J. S. Bach
Freely transcribed by
Alfred Reed

A 1769

Molto andante e sostenuto (♩ = c.52)

Flutes 1 2

Piccolo Flute 3

Oboes 1 2

English Horn

E♭ Clarinet 1

B♭ Clarinets 2 3

E♭ Alto Clarinet

B♭ Bass Clarinet

B♭ Contrabass Clarinet

Bassoons 1 2
A.C.I.
B.C.I.

E♭ Alto Saxophones 1 2

B♭ Tenor Saxophone
A.C.I., Bsn. 1
B.C.I., Bsn. 2

E♭ Baritone Saxophone

F Horns 1 2 3 4

B♭ Trumpets 1 2 3

B♭ Cornets 1 2

Trombones 1 2 3

Baritone
B.C.I. (Bsn., Bar.Sax.)

Tuba

String Bass
Cb.Cl., St.Bs.

Timpani

10

Fls. 1
2

Picc.

Obs. 1
2

E.Hn.

E♭Cl.

1
2
3

Cl. 2

3

A.Cl.

B.Cl.

♭Cl.

Bass. 1
2

A.Sax. 1
2

T.Sax.

Bar.Sax.

10

Hns. 1
2
3
4

Trpts. 1
2
3

Cors. 1
2

Trbns. 1
2
3

Bar. 1 Bar.

1 Tube

Tuba

St. Ba.

Timp.

3222