

V. Expecting the Barbarians

For SATB Chorus and Piano

EXPECTING THE BARBARIANS

by Constantin Cavafy (1863-1933)

What are we waiting for, assembled in the public square?

The barbarians arrive today.

Why such inaction in the Senate?

Why do the Senators sit and pass no laws?

Because the barbarians arrive today.

What further laws can the Senators pass?

When the barbarians come they will make the laws.

Why did our emperor wake up so early and sits at the principal gate of the city on the throne in state wearing his crown?

Because the barbarians arrive today.

And the emperor waits to receive their chief. Indeed, he has prepared to give him a scroll. Therein he engraved many titles and names of honor.

Why have our two consuls come out today in their red embroidered togas?

Why do they wear amethyst studded bracelets, why do they wear rings with brilliant glittering emeralds; why are they carrying costly canes today superbly carved with silver and gold, silver and gold, silver and gold?

The barbarians arrive today, and such things dazzle the barbarians.

Why don't the worthy orators come as usual to make their speeches, to have their say?

Because the barbarians arrive today; and they get bored with eloquence and orations.

Why this sudden unrest and confusion. (How solemn their faces have become.)

Why are streets and squares clearing quickly and all return to homes, so deep in thought?

Because night is here but the barbarians have not come.

Some people arrived from the frontier, and they said there are no longer any barbarians.

And now what shall become of us without any barbarians?

Those people were a kind of solution.

for Jason

V. Expecting the Barbarians

Poem by Constantin Cavafy (1863-1933)

Bruce Trinkley

Allegro barbaro ♩ = 120 (♩ = ♩)

Piano

ff *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Soprano

mf distinctly

What are we wait-ing for, _____ as - sem - bled in the pub - lic

Alto

Tenor

mf distinctly

What are we wait-ing for, _____

Bass

mf distinctly

What are we wait-ing for, _____ as - sem - bled in the

Piano

mf

8

square? _____

mf distinctly

as - sem - bled in the pub - lic square?

ff

pub - lic square? _____ The bar - ba - ri - ans ar - rive to - day. _____

8

ff

12

mf

Why do the Sen - a - tors sit and pass no

mf

Why such in - ac - tion in the Sen - ate? _____

12

mf

16

Be - cause the bar - ba - ri - ans ar - rive to - day. What fur - ther laws can the Sen - a - tors

Be - cause the bar - ba - ri - ans ar - rive to - day. What fur - ther laws can the Sen - a - tors

laws? _____ ar - rive to - day. What fur - ther laws can the Sen - a - tors

the bar - ba - ri - ans ar - rive to - day. What fur - ther laws can the Sen - a - tors

16

ff

20

pass? _____ When the bar - ba - ri - ans come they will make the laws. _____

pass? When the bar - ba - ri - ans come they will make the laws. _____

pass? _____ When the bar - ba - ri - ans come they will make the laws. _____

pass? When the bar - ba - ri - ans come they will make the laws. _____

20

ff *sonore*

24

mf

Why did our em - pe - ror

24

sonore

mf

30

mf

and sits at the prin - ci - pal gate of the ci - ty in state

mp

mf

ear - ly on the throne

mf

and sits at the prin - ci - pal gate of the ci - ty in state

wake up so ear - ly on the throne

30

f

34

wear-ing his crown? _____ Be - cause the bar - ba - ri - ans ar - rive to -

wear-ing his crown? _____ Be - cause the bar - ba - ri - ans ar - rive to -

wear-ing his crown? _____

wear-ing his crown? _____

34

38 *mf*

day. And the em-pe - ror waits _____ to re - ceive their chief. In -

day. And the em-pe - ror waits _____ to re - ceive their chief. In -

mf

And the em-pe - ror waits to re - ceive their chief. In -

mf

And the em-pe - ror waits to re - ceive their chief. In -

38 *mf sempre staccato*