

Georg Schumann (1866-1952) was a prolific composer of music for chorus, orchestra, piano, organ, chamber ensembles and solo voice with piano. In addition, his tenure as conductor of the famous Berlin *Sing-Akademie* from 1900 to 1950 would by itself have established him as one of the most significant figures in the choral life of twentieth-century Germany. Although Schumann's music was much better known in his own day, interest in his choral works has enjoyed a revival in recent years through new research, republications and new recordings.

*Drei geistliche Gesänge*, Op. 31 (1902) are Georg Schumann's first a cappella motets, falling midway between his two early successful efforts for chorus and orchestra, *Amor und Psyche* (1888) and *Ruth* (1908). He was later to publish several other collections of motets, with Ops. 51, 52, 60, 71 and 75. The music of all the motets is in a lyrical, late Romantic style, with frequent modulations, expressive chromaticism, and subtle text painting. At the same time, Schumann, like Brahms, frequently draws on polyphonic techniques from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This edition was prepared from original 1902 partbooks in the choral library at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music.

The three Op. 31 motets are all based on Psalm texts. The first, *Und ob ich schon wanderte im finstren Tal* (Psalm 23:4) begins with an imitative passage on a theme suggesting the "wandering" referred to in the psalm verse, and culminating with a chromatic musical depiction of the "dark valley" in measures 11-17. The second half of the work then rises to a triumphant climax ("Thy rod and Thy staff shall comfort me") in measures 30-35 through a number of rapid modulations, finally returning to the tonic E major in measure 43. The brief coda reiterates the motive of comfort (*trösten mich*) over a bass pedal.

All three movements of Op. 31 are published under separate cover by Roger Dean Publishing Company:

- No. 1 *Und ob ich schon wanderte im finstren Tal* (Psalm 23:4) catalogue number 15/1816R
- No. 2 *Siehe, wie fein und lieblich ist es* (Psalm 133:1 and 3) catalogue number 15/1817R
- No. 3 *Herr, wie lang* (Psalm 13:1-3) catalogue number 15/1858R

These motets are suitable for church use, although they were more likely intended for concert performance. They are effective either as a set or when performed individually. Their lyrical melodies and rich harmonic palette have made them particularly attractive to many high school, collegiate, and community choruses.

William Weinert  
Eastman School of Music

The following translations are based on the King James Version, modified to provide a more direct translation of the German. Schumann occasionally repeats and re-orders phrases of text in his musical settings.

#### **Und ob ich schon wanderte im finstren Tal** (Psalm 23:4)

Und ob ich schon wanderte im finstren Tal, Fürchte ich kein Unglück;  
*And though I walk through the dark valley, I fear no evil;*

Denn Du bist bei mir, Dein Stecken und Stab trösten mich.  
*For Thou art with me, Thy rod and staff comfort me.*

# Und ob ich schon wanderte im finstren Tal

3

Psalm 23:4

SATB divisi, a cappella

Georg Schumann (1866-1952), Op. 31 No. 1

Edited by William Weinert

**Langsam, sehr ruhig (Slowly, very peacefully)**

**Langsam, sehr ruhig**

*sempre p* (for rehearsal only)

**Langsam, sehr ruhig**

*sempre p* (for rehearsal only)

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8

Ta - le — und ob ich schon wan - der - te im  
Tal, und ob ich schon wan - der - te, schon wan - der - te im  
wan - der - te im Tal, schon wan - der - te im  
fin - stren - Tal, und ob ich schon wan - der - te im

12

fin - stren - Tal,  
fin - stren - Tal, fürch - te ich - kein Un - glück, kein  
fin - stren - Tal, fürch - te ich - kein Un - glück, kein  
fin - stren - Tal, fürch - te ich - kein Un - glück, kein

16

*mf* molto espressivo con moto

ich fürch - te kein  
Un - glück, ich fürch - te kein

*dim.*      *pp*      *mf* molto espressivo con moto

20

*con anima*      *cresc.*

Un - glück; denn Du bist bei mir, ich fürch - te kein  
Un - glück; denn Du bist bei mir, ich fürch - te kein  
Un - glück; denn Du bist bei mir, ich fürch - te kein  
Un - glück; denn Du bist bei mir, ich fürch - te kein

*con anima*      *cresc.*

*con anima*      *cresc.*

*con anima*      *cresc.*

*con anima*      *cresc.*

24

Un - glück; denn Du bist bei mir, dein Steck - en und  
Un - glück; denn Du bist bei mir, dein Steck - en und  
Un - glück; denn Du bist bei mir, dein Steck - en und  
Un - glück; denn Du bist bei mir, dein Steck - en und

28

piu cresc. pesante ff tranquillo >  
Stab - sie tröst - en mich, dein Steck - en und dein  
piu cresc. pesante ff tranquillo <  
Stab - sie tröst - en mich, dein Steck - en und dein  
piu cresc. pesante ff tranquillo <  
Stab - sie tröst - en mich, dein Steck - en und dein  
piu cresc. pesante ff tranquillo <

33

Stab *dolce*

Stab *dolce*

Stab *dolce*

Stab *dolce*

Stab *dolce*

38

tröst - en mich, mein Gott, denn Du bist bei

tröst - en mich, mein Gott, denn Du bist bei

tröst - en mich, mein Gott, denn Du bist bei

tröst - en mich, mein Gott, denn Du bist bei