

En Etsi Valtaa, Loistoa

(We Seek No Power or Glory)

SATB, folk fiddle

Finnish lyrics by Martti Korpilahti (1909), a translation of the Swedish Christmas song *Giv mig ej glans, ej guld, ej prakt* by Zacharias Topelius (1887)

music and English lyrics by Sheena Phillips

The Christmas song *En Etsi Valtaa, Loistoa* is very well known and much loved in Finland. It is usually sung to a tune written by Jean Sibelius in 1895 (the fourth of his Five Christmas Songs, Opus 1). This piece takes just the first verse of the Finnish song, and sets it to a new melody which the fiddle plays first, echoed closely by the female voices of the choir. In the second half of the piece, the male voices and then all voices together take up the melody in a heartfelt prayer – sung in English – for peace on earth. Now the fiddle dances heavenward above the voices, before returning to earth – and echoing the singers – as the song closes.

duration 3:00

perusal score
not for rehearsal or performance

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En Etsi Valtaa, Loistoa

En etsi valtaa, loistoa, en kaipaa kultaakaan,
Mä pyydän taivaan valoa ja rauhaa päälle maan.
Se joulu suo, mi onnen tuo ja mielet nostaa Luojan luo,
Ei valtaa eikä kultaakaan, vaan rauhaa päälle maan.

We seek no power or glory, Lord, we seek no wealth or gold,
We only ask for heaven's light on this our earthly fold.
At Christmas we shall joyful be and raise our song of prayer to Thee:
Not power, nor glory, wealth nor gold, but peace here in this fold.

Finnish: Martti Korpilahti (1886 – 1938)

English: Sheena Phillips
(a paraphrase of the Finnish)

Pronunciation guide

a ~ as in English “father”
aa ~ a long version of the same vowel
ä ~ as in English “cat”
ää ~ a long version of the same vowel
e ~ as in English “bed”
i ~ as in “quiche”
o ~ as in English “on”
u ~ like “oo” in “wood”

j ~ like “y”
k, p, and t are not aspirated

diphthongs: ai, au, ei, oi, ou sound like a combination of the two vowels

word stress is always on the first syllable

IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) transcription

en etsi valta: loistoa en kaipa: kulta:ka:n
mä py:dæn taiva:n valoa ja rauha: pæ:lle ma:n
se jöulu suo mi önnen tuo ja mielet nosta: luöjan luo
ei valta: eikæ kulta:ka:n va:n rauha: pæ:lle mä:n

Word for word translation

En etsi valtaa, loistoa, en kaipaa kultaakaan,
I do not yearn for power, glory, I do not need gold,

Mä pyydän taivaan valoa ja rauhaa päälle maan.
I ask for heaven's light and peace on earth.

Se joulu suo, mi onnen tuo ja mielet nostaa Luojan luo,
That Christmas grants, which happiness brings and minds raises to the Creator,

Ei valtaa eikä kultaakaan, vaan rauhaa päälle maan.
Not power, nor gold, but peace on earth.

Lines 3 and 4 are written in a fairly archaic way and essentially mean:

That Christmas, which brings happiness and raises minds to the Creator, grants not power, nor gold, but and peace on earth.

En Etsi Valtaa, Loistoa

Not Power or Glory, but Light and Peace

Lyrics: Martti Korphilahti (Finnish)
Sheena Phillips (English)

Music: Sheena Phillips

Andantino grazioso (♩ = c. 96)

Violin *solo* *mp* *tranquillo* [end solo] *p* *mf*

Piano reduction (for rehearsal) *mp*

Vln. 10

S *mp* *semplice*
En et - si val - taa, lois - to - a, en kai - paa kul - taa - kaan, mä

A *mp* *semplice*
En et - si val - taa, lois - to - a, en kai - paa kul - taa - kaan, mä

T *mp* stagger breathing
8 Ooh,

B *mp* stagger breathing
8 Ooh,

10 *mp*

En Etsi Valtaa, Loistoa

Score

2

19

Vln.

S

A

T

B

pyy - dän tai - vaan va - lo - a ja rau - haa pääl - le maan. Se

pyy - dän tai - vaan va - lo - a ja rau - haa pääl - le maan. Se

mp *mf* *p*

19

27

Vln.

S

A

T

B

jou - lu su - o, mi on - nen tu - o ja mi - e - let nos - taa

jou - lu su - o, mi on - nen tu - o ja mi - e - let nos - taa

mp *mf* *f*

mp *mf*

27

mp *mf*

En Etsi Valtaa, Loistoa

Score

4
51

Vln. *poco animato*
p *mp* *p* *mf*

S
Ooh, ooh,
p *mp* *p* *mf*

A
Ooh, ooh,

T
8 seek no power or glo - ry, Lord, we seek no wealth or gold, We

B
seek no power or glo - ry, Lord, we seek no wealth or gold, We

51

Vln. *mp* *p* *mf*

S
ooh. *mp* *p* *mf*
At *mf*

A
ooh, *mp* *p* *mf*
At *mf*

T
8 on - ly ask for heav - en's light on this our earth - ly fold. At *mf*

B
on - ly ask for heav - en's light on this our earth - ly fold. At *mf*

59

mf

67 *giocoso*

Vln. 

S
Christ - mas we shall joy - ful be and raise our song of prayer to

A
Christ - mas we shall joy - ful be and raise our song of prayer to

T
Christ - mas we shall joy - ful be and raise our song of prayer to

B
Christ - mas we shall joy - ful be and raise our song of prayer to



74

Vln. 

S
Thee: Not power, nor glo - ry, wealth nor gold, but peace here in this

A
Thee: Not power, nor glo - ry, wealth nor gold, but peace here in this

T
Thee: Not power, nor glo - ry, wealth nor gold, but peace here in this

B
Thee: Not power, nor glo - ry, wealth nor gold, but peace here in this



En Etsi Valtaa, Loistoa

Score

6

82

Vln. *solo*
p dolce *mp*

S
fold. *p sereno*
Not power, nor

A
fold. *p sereno*
Not power, nor

T
fold. *p sereno*
Not power, nor

B
fold. *p sereno*
Not power, nor

82

p *p*

90

Vln. *poco rit.*
mf *p leggiero*

S
glo - ry, wealth nor gold, but peace, here in this fold.

A
glo - ry, wealth nor gold, but peace, here in this fold.

T
glo - ry, wealth nor gold, but peace, here in this fold.

B
glo - ry, wealth nor gold, but peace, here in this fold.

90