

SEAFARER'S PARTING SONG (Leave Her, Johnny)

for S.A.T.B. voices and piano*

Traditional Sea Shanty
Arranged by JACK ZAINO

Gently (♩ = ca. 92) Time to leave _

SOPRANO ALTO *mp*

TENOR BASS

PIANO *mp*

3 her. Time to leave her, to leave _

mp It's time to leave her. It's time to leave _

Time to leave her. Time to leave _

* See page 11 for background information.

Also available for S.S.A. (52292) and T.T.B. (52293). PianoTrax accompaniment available (A-00016667).
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6 *p* 8

her. I thought I heard the

9 *p*

old man say, Leave her John - ny, leave her. "To -

12

mor - row you will get your pay." And it's time for us to

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15 *mp* 17

leave _ her. Oh, the times was hard and the

mp

18 *mp*

wag - es _ low. Leave her John - ny, leave _ her. In _

21

one more day a - shore we'll _ go. And it's time for us _ _ _ to

25

24

mf

leave _ her. Leave her, John - ny, leave _ her. Oh, _

mf

27

leave her _ John - ny, leave _ her. Oh, the voy-age is done and the

30

opt. SOLO
mp

winds won't blow and it's time for us _ to leave _ her. Oh, the

33

(end solo) ALL

work was hard and the voy-age was — long. Leave her, John - ny,

mp

mp

36

leave — her. And the seas was high, and the gales was — strong. And it's

opt. SOLO (end solo) ALL

39

41 *mf*

time for us — to leave — her. Leave her, John - ny,

mf

42

leave her. Oh, leave her John - ny, leave her. Oh, the

mf

45

voy-age is done and the winds won't blow and it's time for us to

48

Time to leave her. It's time to leave

leave her. Time to leave

50

51 Time to leave her, to leave her.

her. It's time to leave her.

her. Time to leave her.

54 *p* 55

We swear by rote for want of more.

57

Leave her, John - ny, leave her. But now we're through, so we'll

60 *cresc.*

go on shore. And it's time for us to leave her.

cresc.

63 *mf*

Leave her, John - ny, leave her. Oh, leave her John - ny,

mf

mf

66 *poco rit. e decresc.*

leave her. Oh, the voy-age is done and the winds won't blow.

decresc.

poco rit. e decresc.

69

Slower (♩ = ca. 72)

poco accel.

Time

to leave

p

mf

And it's time for us to leave her.

Slower (♩ = ca. 72)

poco accel. e cresc.

Tempo I (♩ = ca. 92)

72

rit. al fine

her. Time to leave her. to leave

mf It's time to leave her. *cresc.* It's time to leave

Time to leave her. Time to leave

Tempo I (♩ = ca. 92)

mf *cresc.* *rit. al fine* *f*

75

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A sea shanty is a distinct genre of work song developed centuries ago aboard sailing ships. Shanties served as a way for crew members to synchronize their labor and stay focused on repetitive, demanding tasks. The songs needed to last as long as the job required, but end as soon as the work was finished. Therefore, a key feature of shanties is the absence of a proper storyline.

“Leave Her, Johnny” is an example of a pump shanty. Water leakage was common aboard ships, and crew members regularly needed to pump water out. The frequency (not to mention monotony) of operating the large pumps inspired this subgenre. Traditionally, verses alternated between a leader and the chorus. The word “her” in the lyrics refers to the ship itself:

Leader: Oh the times was hard and the wages low.
All: Leave her, Johnny, leave her.
Leader: In one more day, ashore we'll go.
All: And it's time for us to leave her.

This particular shanty was usually saved for the final round of pumping—the sailors' last task before leaving the ship and (finally) getting paid. It was also an opportunity for humor, allowing the crew to voice candid opinions on their grueling working conditions and demanding officers. An additional verse, not included in this arrangement, is:

Leader: It's rotten beef and weevily bread.
All: Leave her, Johnny, leave her.
Leader: It was “pump or drown,” the old man said.
All: And it's time for us to leave her.

Though this arrangement's slow tempo and legato nature imply melancholy, this is ultimately a hopeful song: Home was quite literally on the horizon.

J.Z.