

THE GIFT TO SING

for TTBB Voices and Piano

Poem by

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

Music by

BRUCE TRINKLEY

THE GIFT TO SING

*Sometimes the mist overhangs my path,
And blackening clouds about me cling;
But, oh, I have a magic way
To turn the gloom to cheerful day –
I softly sing.*

*And if the way grows darker still,
Shadowed by Sorrow's somber wing,
With glad defiance in my throat,
I pierce the darkness with a note,
And sing, and sing.*

*I brood not over the broken past,
No dread whatever time may bring;
No nights are dark, no days are long,
While in my heart there swells a song,
And I can sing.*

James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938) was an American poet, author, educator, lawyer, diplomat, songwriter, and civil rights activist. Johnson is best remembered for his leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), where he started working in 1916. He was known during the Harlem Renaissance for his poems, novels, and anthologies, collecting both poems and spirituals of black culture. He wrote the words to “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing” and his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, wrote the music. Johnson wrote the text in honor Booker T. Washington, the great Black educator, and the song was adopted by the NAACP as the Negro National Anthem.

The Gift To Sing was commissioned by The Ridgefield Chorale and conveys the ability of the human spirit to endure adversity via the simple act of singing.

The Gift To Sing

For TTBB Chorus and Piano

James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)
from *Fifty Years and Other Poems* (1917)

Bruce Trinkley

Largo maestoso $\text{♩} = 50$
espressivo

Piano *mf sempre sonore* *p* *mf*
con pedale *simile*

7 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *mf intensely* *mp*
Some-times the mist o - ver-hangs my path,

mf intensely *mp*
Some-times the mist o - ver-hangs my path,

mf intensely *mp*
Some-times the mist o - ver-hangs my path,

mf intensely *mp*
Some-times the mist o - ver-hangs my path,

7 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *mp* *mf* *mp*
Some-times the mist o - ver-hangs my path,

13 *p* And black-'ning clouds _____ a - bout me cling; *mp cresc.* But, oh, I

p And black-'ning clouds _____ a - bout me cling; *mp cresc.* But, oh, I

p And black-'ning clouds _____ a - bout me cling; *mp cresc.* I

p And black-'ning clouds _____ a - bout me cling; *mp cresc.* I

18 *mf* *sub. pp* have a mag - ic way _____ To turn the gloom to cheer - ful day, I

mf have a mag - ic way _____

mf *sub. pp* have a mag - ic way _____ To turn the gloom to cheer - ful day, I

mf have a mag - ic way _____

18 *mf* *sub. pp*

22 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *mp* *mf* *dim.*

soft - ly sing, _____ And if the way grows _____ dark - er

And if the way grows _____ dark - er

soft - ly sing, _____ And if the way grows _____ dark - er

And if the way grows _____ dark - er

22 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *mp* *mf* *dim.*

cresc.

27 *p cresc.* *mp pochiss. rit.*

still, _____ Sor - row's som - ber wing,

still, _____ Shad - owed by Sor - row's som - ber wing, _____

still, _____ Sor - row's som - ber

still, _____ Shad - owed by Sor - row's som - ber wing, _____

27 *pochiss. rit.* *molto cresc.*

p

32 *a tempo* *ff* *f* *mf*

With glad de - fi - ance, de - fi - ance in my throat,

With glad de - fi - ance, de - fi - ance in my throat,

wing, With glad de - fi - ance, de - fi - ance in my throat,

With glad de - fi - ance, de - fi - ance in my throat,

32 *a tempo* *ff* *f* *mf* *dim.*

36 *p* *mysteriously* *molto cresc.*

I pierce the dark - ness with a note, And sing.

p *mysteriously* *molto cresc.* *div. -*

I pierce the dark - ness with a note, And sing, and sing.

p *mysteriously* *molto cresc.*

I pierce the dark - ness with a note, And sing.

p *mysteriously* *molto cresc.* *div. -*

I pierce the dark - ness with a note, And sing, and sing.

36 *mysteriously* *p* *molto cresc.*

41 *ff* *f*

I brood not o - ver _____ the brok - en past, Nor dread what -

I brood not o - ver _____ the brok - en past, Nor dread what -

I brood not o - ver _____ the brok - en past, Nor dread what -

I brood not o - ver _____ the brok - en past, Nor dread what -

41 *ff* *f*

I brood not o - ver _____ the brok - en past, Nor dread what -

46 *ff* *ff* *defiantly*

ev - er, _____ what - ev - er time may bring; No nights are dark, _____

ev - er, _____ what - ev - er time may bring; No nights are dark, _____

ev - er, _____ what - ev - er time may bring; No nights are dark, No nights are

ev - er, _____ what - ev - er time may bring; No nights are dark, No nights are

46 *ff*

51 *mf* *mp* *poco rit.*

no days are long, While in my heart there swells a

no days are long, While in my heart there swells a

dark, no days are long, While in my heart there swells a

dark, no days are long, While in my heart there swells a

51 *mf* *mp* *poco rit.*

56 *a tempo* *ff* *defiantly*

song, No nights are dark, no days are long,

song, No nights are dark, no days are long,

song, there swells a song, No nights are dark, No nights are dark, no days are long,

song, No nights are dark, No nights are dark, no days are long,

56 *a tempo* *ff*

Allargando espressivo

61 *mf* *mp* *poco rit.*

While in my heart there swells a song, there swells a

While in my heart there swells a song, there swells a

While in my heart there swells a song, a song, a

While in my heart there swells a song, a song, a

Allargando espressivo

61 *mf* *mp* *poco rit.*

66 *p* *poco rit.*

song, And I, and I can sing.

song, And I, and I can sing.

song, And I can sing.

song, And I can sing. *optional div.*

66 *p* *poco rit.*