JOAN SZYMKO

МИР ЗАРАЗ
MYR, ZARAZ
Peace, Now

JOAN SZYMKO MUSIC

JOAN SZYMKO (b.1957)

Joan Szymko is widely regarded as an outstanding composer of choral music in America today. With a catalog of over 100 choral works in print, her music is sung regularly at choral festivals and competitions across North America and abroad and has been heard on stage or in sessions at every National Conference of the American Choral Director's Association since 2003. The ACDA recognized Szymko's lasting impact on the choral arts in North America by selecting her as a recipient of the prestigious Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission in 2010. Szymko has composed for professional, church, LGBTQ, children's and all manner of academic and community choirs. Her 2016 commissioned oratorio, *Shadow and Light*, a major new addition to the repertoire for chorus and orchestra, focuses on a tragic, yet loving journey with Alzheimer's dementia.

Szymko's embodied approach to sound, dedication to craft, and insistence on quality texts— all relate to her focus as a conductor and are reflected in her choral compositions. Her settings do not have a readily recognizable,"sound" but consistently display a discerning, insightful marriage of words and music. Her primary intention is to always illuminate and magnify the words she sets.

Joan lives and works in Portland, Oregon in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. A dynamic conductor, she workshops her compositions with choirs in a variety of educational and festival settings across the country and abroad. For more information, see www.joanszymko.com.

NOTES from the COMPOSER

During the last week of March 2022, I was focused on concert week preparations— Aurora Chorus was to perform ***Lifting As We Climb***, a multi-movement choral narrative that not only commemorates the travails of generations of women seeking to join the democratic franchise (culminating in the passage of the 19th Amendment) but that also shines the light of truth upon the current attacks on voting rights which are threatening democracy in the United States. I could not help but ponder the connection between the concert I was about to conduct and the growing fragility of democracy around the world— epitomized by the assault on Ukraine. My inclination over my long tenure with Aurora has been to respond to local or global events with concert programming that allows singers and audience to "feel collectively." And so with just three days before our performance, I was compelled to compose a brief, but potent declaration of solidarity with the people of Ukraine:

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PEACE NOW

I set the words so they would flow into an already planned encore: ***We Are All Bound Up Together,*** *(available as a separate octavo*). Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a black suffragist and poet spoke these words to what had become a divided progressive movement after the Civil War:

We are all bound up together in
one great bundle of humanity.

Ukraine's struggle is our struggle. Democracy must prevail over autocracy. In binding these two songs together, it was my hope to create a worthy vessel for singer and listener to hold grief and to feel solidarity with our brother and sisters in the Ukraine, and with those suffering anywhere in the world where violence dominates human discourse.

The transliteration of the Ukrainian "peace now" is MYR, ZARAZ. Pronunciation: mIr zaraz

Dedicated to the people of Ukraine,
and to all who are suffering the cruelty and violence of war.

МИР ЗАРАЗ

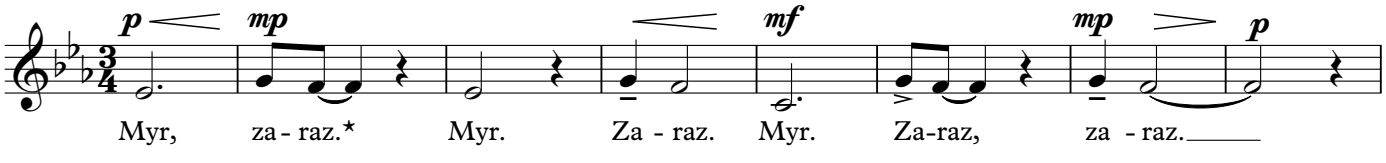
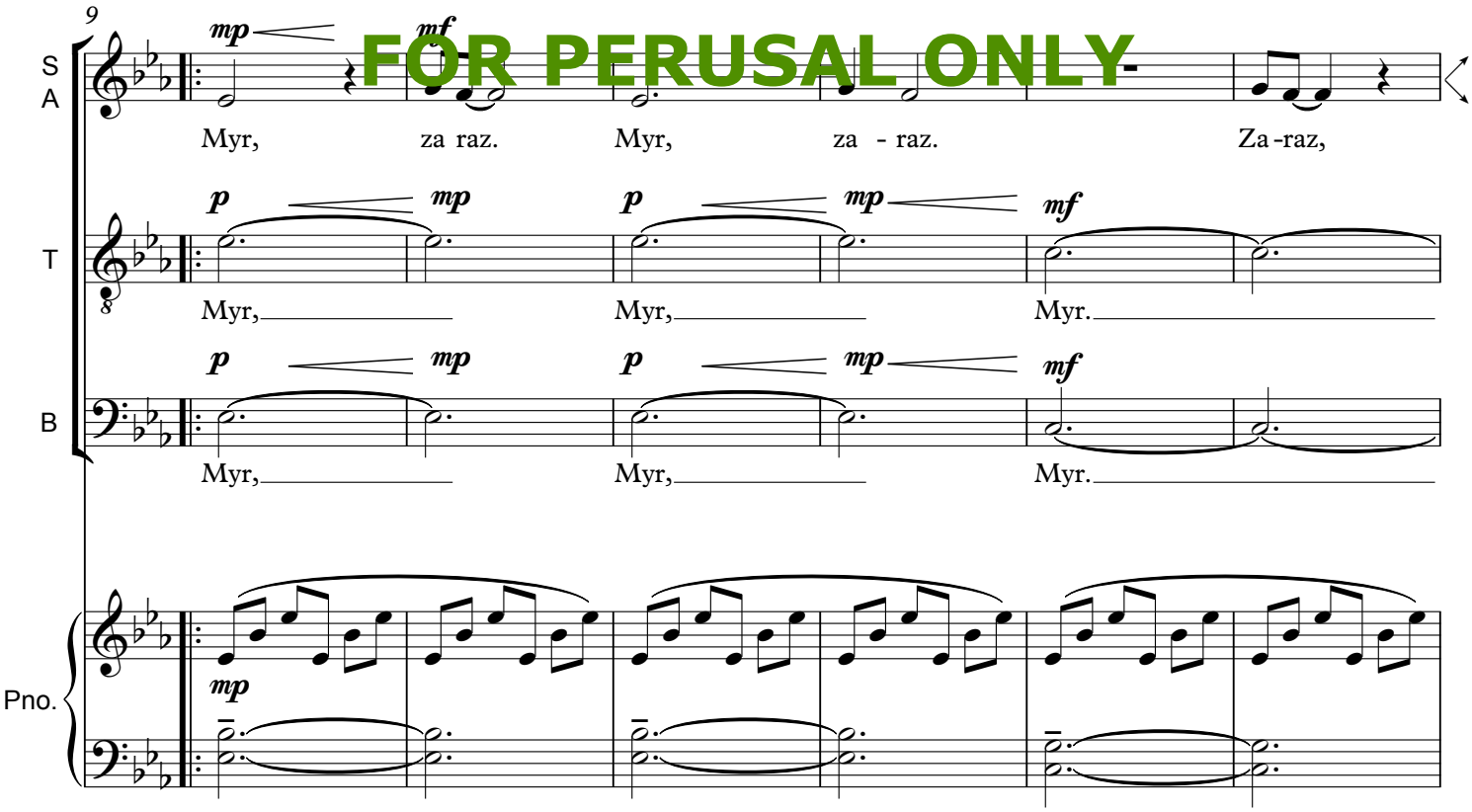
MYR, ZARAZ

Peace, Now

Ukrainian: "Peace, Now"

Joan Szymko

Andante, ♩=80

Tutti Unison, a cappella



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* pronounced: mIr zaraz

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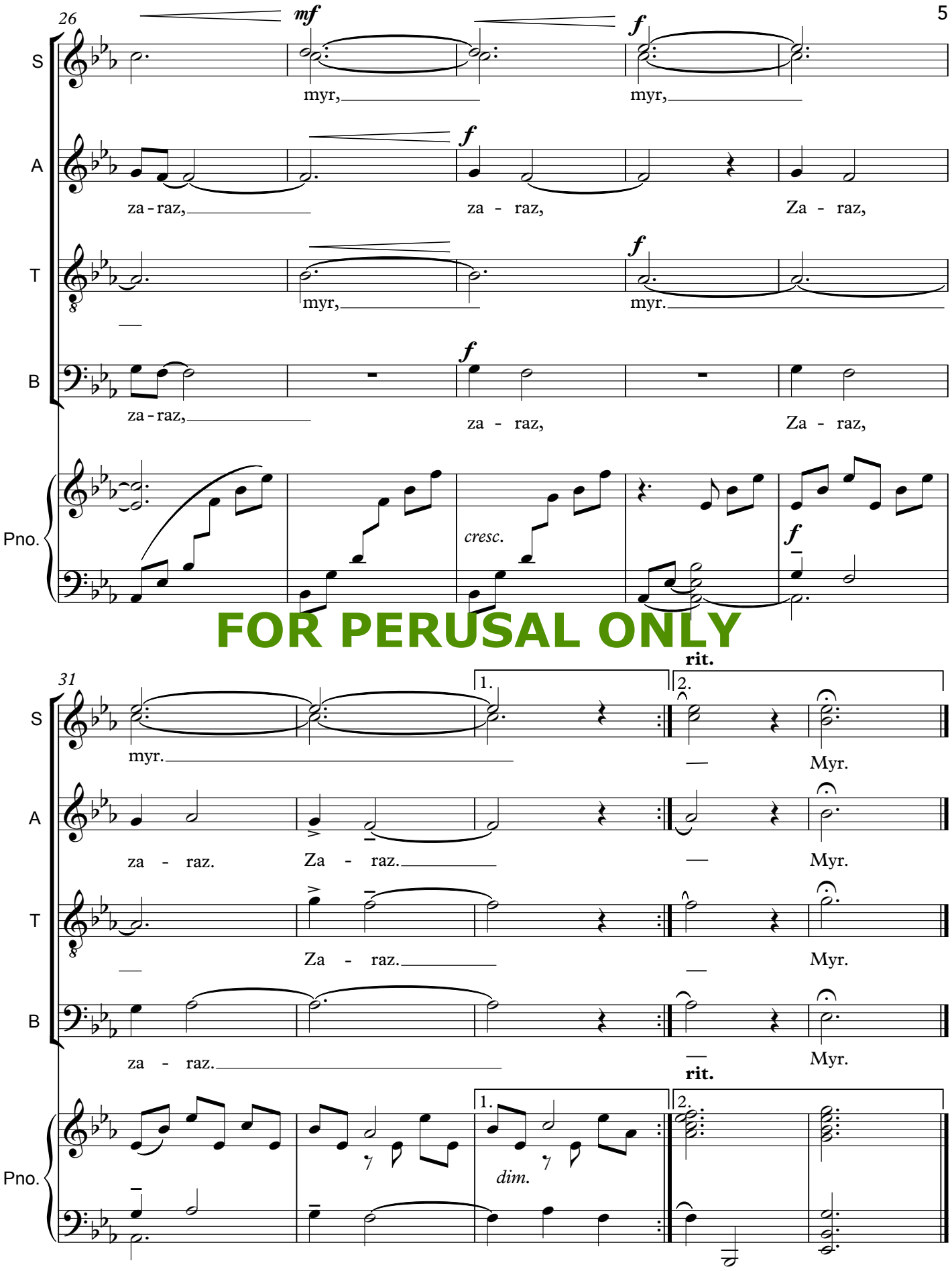
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