



Joan Szymko (b.1957)

Joan Szymko's music is sung by distinguished ensembles across North America and abroad including performances at international competitions and festivals, state and regional conferences and at eight consecutive National Conferences of the American Choral Director's Association.

(2003-2017) She is widely regarded as one of the foremost composers of choral

music for women's chorus. The ACDA recognized Szymko's lasting contribution to the choral arts by selecting her as the recipient of the prestigious Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission in 2010. In addition to her own self published choral catalog, Joan Szymko has over sixty published titles in the catalogs of Santa Barbara Music Publishing, earthsongs, Walton, Roger Dean Publishing Company, Treble Clef Press and Yelton Rhodes Music.

Composing for vocal ensembles is an extension of Szymko's creativity as a choral director; her passion for the art of singing, an embodied approach to sound, a dedication to storytelling and an insistence on quality texts all relate to her predilections as a conductor and are reflected in her choral compositions. Szymko lives and works in the Pacific Northwest. She enjoyed a fruitful collaboration with Do Jump! Movement Theater as resident composer (1995-2012), creating vocal underscoring for major touring productions across the country. She has served on the choral music faculty of Portland State University (2013-15) and has led Aurora Chorus as Artistic Director since 1993. As a visiting artist, Joan has workshopped her compositions with choirs in a variety of educational and festival settings across the country and abroad.

Notes

I led a drum circle at a Portland Unitarian Church event in the spring of 2013 where children and adults worked together to make gifts for members of FUUC's sister church program in Uganda. In preparation, I went looking for traditional Ugandan rhythms that I might introduce in the drum circle. Among the Baganda people (largest ethnic group in Uganda) the drum continues to hold a key position within the community and is a part of everyday life. Drums call the people to dance, to worship, to tribal rituals, and to come together in times of crisis. While researching I was excited to come across this Bantu adage: *ffe mwe, mwe ffe*—"they are us and we are them." It is a reminder that every member of the community is obliged to help others in time of need. The drum rhythm, *ggwanga mujje* means "come to my rescue." When heard, everyone must be ready to rise to action to help.

(notes: cont.)

I composed, "Ffe Mwe, Mwe Ffe" with the intention of taking the concept, "they are us and we are them" *beyond one's own tribe*. I believe that tribalism, while strengthening cultural pride, identity and goodwill, can be, in the wider world, a destructive force that perpetuates scapegoating and "us against them" violence. "Ffe Mwe, Mwe Ffe" begins with the drum call to action, *ggwanga mujje*. Singers respond with building, interwoven choruses of *ffe mwe, mwe ffe*. A soloist then introduces Mahatma Gandhi's powerful challenge to: "be the change you wish to see," adding, "We belong to each other," - a reference to Mother Teresa's quote: "If we have no peace it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other" Indeed, compassion and peace begin when we truly see our selves in the "other." The piece comes to a lively close as all the parts come together as a whole

— Joan Szymko

Lyrics

Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.
Ggwanga mujje
Be the change you wish to see.
You can start by looking at me
and knowing
that I am you and you are me.

Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.
Ggwanga mujje!
We are them and they are we.
I am them and they are me.
We belong to each other.
Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.
Ggwanga mujje!

Lyrics © Joan Szymko

Translation

ffe mwe, mwe ffe / they are us and we are them
ggwanga mujje / come to our rescue

Pronunciation

- Vowels are to be sung as in Latin.
- consonants as in English ("jj" as in "judge")

FEH MuEH, MEH FEH // GWAHN - gah MOO- DGEH

Ffe Mwe, Mwe Ffe

they are us and we are them

text adaptation by the composer

JOAN SZYMKO

perc.2 mid drum
perc.3 low drum

♩=84

tone (edge of drum) *f*

drums tacet to M10

S
A

(percussion score: available: JS-053.1)

mf Ffe

T
B

Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.____

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mwe, mwe ffe.____ *mp* ffe mwe mwe_ ffe, *mf*

Ffe mwe mwe_ ffe, Ffe

perc.3

tone (edge of drum)
bass (center of drum)

asterisked(*) notes are touches (ghost notes)

mf *simile* *mf*

ffe mwe mwe ffe, Ffe

mwe mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe mwe_ ffe, *f* Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.____

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text sources: traditional Ugandan phrases, quotation from Mahatma Gandhi are in the public domain.

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S
mwe, mwe mwe, ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, *mf sempre*

A
mwe, mwe ffe.____ Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, *mp* *mf* ffe

T
ffe mwe, mwe ffe, *mf*

B
ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, ffe

17

mp *mf* **A** perc.2 entr. *mp*

ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,

mwe, mwe_ ffe, mwe, mwe_ ffe, Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, mwe

ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, *mp*

mwe, mwe_ fe, ffe mwe, mwe_ fe. Ffe mwe, mwe

20

mf ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,

ffe.____ Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.____ ffe *p*

simile *mp* ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,

ffe.____ *mf* Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. *p* ffe

23

S *mp* ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, *mf* ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

A mwe, mwe_ ffe, *mf* ffe mwe, mwe_ fe,

T *mp* ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, *mf* ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, *f* ffe

B *p* Ggwa - nga mu - jje, *mp* ggwa - nga mu - jje *mf* ggwa - nga mu - jje.

26 *f* Ggwa - nga mu - jje! *mf* Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe

f Ggwa - nga mu - jje! *mf* Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe

mwe, mwe_ fe! *mf* Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

f Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

B perc.1(bell) entr.

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mwe, mwe ffe. *div.* ffe mwe, mwe ffe

mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, ffe

Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. Ffe

Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. *div.* Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

32

S
ffe mwe, mwe ffe ffe mwe, mwe ffe ffe mwe, mwe ffe

A
mwe, mwe__ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

T
mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe,

B
Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

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35

Solo
Be the change you wish to see; you can start by look - ing

S

A
mp *simile*
Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

T
div. *mp* *simile*
Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

B
mp *simile*
Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

39

Solo

S

A

T

B

at me and know - ing that I am you and you

mf

div.

cresc. poco a poco

ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

cresc. poco a poco

ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

cresc. poco a poco

ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

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Al solo resumes M49

42

are me.

you are me.

f

mp

Ffe

f

mp

ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

f

mp

ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

f

mp

ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

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51

Alto *cresc.* end solo
we be - long to each - oth - er.

Tenor *cresc.* end solo
We be - long to each - oth - er

S *div. cresc.*
ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje!

A *cresc. f*
ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, We be -

T *cresc.*
mwe, mwe__ fe, ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

B *cresc.*
Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

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54 **E** *f*

Be the change_____ you wish to see; you can start_____ by look - ing

long to each - oth - er_____ we be - long to each - oth - er_____

mf
Ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje,

div. mf
Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

57

S *div.*
at me and know-ing that I am you and you

A
Ffe mwe, mwe ffe;

T *mf*
ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje,

B
Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

60

S *div. sempre f*
are me. Ffe

A *f*
we be - long to each - oth - er. Ffe

T *f*
ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje, Ffe

B
ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

63

S1 *sempre f*
Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

S2
mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe

A
mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe

T1
mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe

T2 *sempre f*
Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

B *sempre f* *div.*
Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

66

S1 Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

S2 *ffe.* *Ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe,* *ffe*

A *ffe.* *Ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe,* *ffe* *div.*

T1 *ffe.* *Ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe,* *ffe*

T2 *Ffe* mwe, mwe *ffe.* *Ffe* mwe, mwe *ffe.*

B *Ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe.* *Ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe.*

68

Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

mwe, mwe__ *ffe,* *ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe,* *ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe!* *ff*

mwe, mwe__ *ffe,* *ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe,* *ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe,*

mwe, mwe__ *ffe,* *ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe,* *ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe,*

Ffe mwe, mwe *ffe.* *Ffe* mwe, mwe *ffe.* Ggwa - nga mu - jje! *ff*

Ffe mwe, mwe__ *ffe.* *Ffe* mwe, mwe__ *ffe.* Ggwa - nga mu - jje! *ff*