



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

for Aurora Chorus

Ffe Mwe, Mwe Ffe

they are us and we are them

text adaptation by the composer

by JOAN SZYMKO

perc.2

perc.3

♩=84

f

drum tacet to M10

percussion score available: JS-053.1

S

A

♩=84

calling out

mf

Ffe mwe, mwe

Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.____

6

mp

mf

ffe.____

mp

mf

Ffe mwe mwe_ ffe, ffe

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

10

asterisked(*) notes are touches (ghost notes)

mf

drum conts.

mf articulation, simile

mwe mwe_ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe

simile f articulation, simile

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

14

S1 *ffe* _____ *ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,* *ffe mwe, mwe ffe,*

S2 *ffe* _____ *Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,* *ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,* *ffe*

17

perc.2 entr.

A *mf* *mp* *mf*

S1 *ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,* *ffe mwe, mwe ffe,* *ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,*

S2 _____ *ffe mwe, mwe ffe, _____* *mf* *Ffe*

A1 *mf* *mf*

A2 *mf* *mf*

mwe, mwe_ fe, *ffe mwe, mwe_ fe.* *Ffe mwe,* *mwe ffe. _____* *Ffe*

for perusal only

21

S1 *mp* *ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,* *ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,*

S2 *mwe,* *mwe ffe. _____* *mp* *ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,*

A1 *mp* *mp* *mf*

A2 *mp*

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

Ggwa - nga mu - jje,

24 *mf* *f* *mf* 5

S1 ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ffe

S2 ffe mwe, mwe_ fe, ffe mwe, mwe_ fe! Ffe

A1 mwe, mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe_ fe. Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

A2 ggwa - nga mu - jje ggwa - nga mu - jje. Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ffe

27 **B** perc.3 entr.

mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

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

mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe

for perusal only

30 *div.*

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

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

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

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

33

S1
ffe mwe, mwe ffe ffe mwe, mwe ffe

S2
mwe, mwe_ fe, ffe mwe, mwe_ fe, ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

A1
Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

A2
mwe, mwe_ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

36 C *mf* **for perusal only**

Solo
Be the change you wish to see; you can start by look - ing at me _____ and

S1

S2 *mp*
Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

A1 *mp*
Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

A2 *mp*
Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

40

Solo *mf* know-ing_ that I am you and you_ are_ me._____ *f*

S1 and know-ing that I am you_____ and you are_ me._____ *f*

S2 *cresc. poco a poco* Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. *f*

A1 *cresc. poco a poco* Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. *f*

A2 *cresc. poco a poco* Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. *f*

for perusal only

44 **D** *mf*

We are them_____ and they are we;_____ I am them_____

p Ffe mwe, *mp* mwe ffe._____ *p* Ffe mwe, *mp* mwe

p Ffe mwe, *mp* mwe ffe._____ *p* Ffe mwe, *mp* mwe

mp Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, *mp* ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, *mp* ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,

p Ffe mwe, *mp* mwe ffe. *p* Ffe mwe, *mp* mwe

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54 **E** *f*

S1 Be the change you wish to see; you can start by look - ing

S2 long to each - oth - er we be - long to each - oth - er

A1 *mf*
Ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa nga mu - jje,

A2 *mf*
Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

57 N.B.

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

ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje,

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

60

are me. *div.* Ffe

f we be - long to each - oth - er Ffe

ggwa - nga mu - jje. *f* Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. *f* Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

63 **F** *sempre f*

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

mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe

S2 *sempre f*

mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe

A1 *sempre f*

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

A2 *sempre f*

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

for perusal only

65

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

mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe

mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe

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

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

67

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

mwe, mwe___ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe___ ffe, ffe

mwe, mwe___ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe___ ffe, ffe

Ffe mwe mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

Ffe mwe, mwe___ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe___ ffe.

for perusal only

69

ggwa - nga mu - jje ggwa - nga mu - jje!

mwe, mwe___ fe, ggwa - nga mu - jje!

mwe, mwe___ fe, ffe mwe mwe___ fe!

Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. ffe mwe mwe___ fe!

Ffe mwe mwe___ ffe. Ggwa - nga mu - jje!