

J O A N S Z Y M K O

At the Spring Dawn

SSAA a cappella
setting of a poem
by
Angelina Weld Grimké



JOAN SZYMKO

Joan Szymko (b.1957) is widely regarded as an outstanding choral composer in North America today. Her works consistently display a discerning, stirring marriage of words and music. The American Choral Directors Association (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 (2010). Notably, her music has been sung on stage or in sessions at every national ACDA conference since 2003. A dynamic conductor, Joan has led choirs in the Pacific Northwest for over forty years. As a visiting artist, Szymko has workshopped her compositions with choirs in academic and festival setting in the US and abroad. As a resident composer and performer with Portland's Do Jump! Movement Theater, she created underscoring for major touring productions, earning praise from the New York Times for her "ethereal vocal music." Szymko's catalog of over 150 choral works can be explored on her website: www.joanszymko.com

ANGELINA WELD GRIMKÉ

"Angelina Weld Grimké was born in Boston, Massachusetts on February 27, 1880 to Sarah Stanley Grimké and Archibald Grimké. Born into a biracial family well known for their commitment to abolitionism, Angelina went on to become a distinguished poet and a black liberationist in her own right. Known as a foremother of the Harlem

Renaissance, her earliest publications predated the movement itself by roughly thirty years, preparing the way for its emergence...In addition to her poetry, Grimké also wrote short stories, essays, and plays. Most notably, her play *Rachel* was the first play written by an African American and performed by African American actors... While her writings published in her lifetime alluded to lesbian eroticism, those published following her death confirmed her lesbian identity. As a black lesbian woman in the early twentieth century, Grimké's successful publications and many contributions to social movements are truly remarkable." — from HarvardSquareLibrary.org



At the Spring Dawn (1923)

I watched the dawn come,
 Watched the spring dawn come.
 And the red sun shouldered his way up
 Through the grey, through the blue,
 Through the lilac mists.
 The quiet of it! The goodness of it!
 And one bird awoke, sang, whirled,
 A blur of moving black against the sun,
 Sang again –afar off
 And I stretched my arms to the redness of the sun,
 Stretched to my fingertips,
 And I laughed.
 Ah! It is good to be alive, good to love,
 At the dawn,
 At the spring dawn.

At the Spring Dawn

~~Jean Szymko~~

Copyright ©2023 by Joan Szymko
poem, *At the Spring Dawn* is in the public domain

12 *rit.* *pp*

S1 way up through the grey, through the blue, Through the li-lac mists.

S2 way up through the grey, through the blue, Through the li-lac mists.

A1 way up through the grey, through the blue, Through the li-lac mists.

A2 way up through the grey, through the blue, Through the li-lac mists.

Pno. 12 *rit.* *pp*

poco accel.

16 **Tempo primo** *p* =64

S1 The qui - et of it!

S2 The qui - et of it!

A1 (hum)

A2 (hum)

Pno. 16 **Tempo primo** *poco accel.* =64

19 *mp* **rit.** *p* *mp*

S1 The good - ness of it! And

S2 The good - ness of it! And

A1 (hum) good-ness of it! And

A2 (hum) good-ness of it! And

Pno. 19 *mp* **rit.**

Tempo primo ♩ = ♩ throughout

23 *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

S1 one bird a - woke, sang, whirred a

S2 one bird du* du du du ee-u du du du du du ee-u du du du du

A1 one bird - woke, sang, whirred a

A2 one bird a - woke, sang, whirred a

Pno. 23 **Tempo primo** ♩ = ♩ throughout

* softly articulated "d"]

For copyright protection,
this page has been left blank.

33

p *mp*

S1 And I stretched my arms to the red-ness of the sun,

S2 ee-u oh And I stretched my arms to the red-ness of the sun,

A1 off. *p* *mp* And I stretched my arms to the red-ness of the sun,

A2 off. *p* *mp* And I stretched my arms to the red-ness of the sun,

Pno. *mp*

38

accel. *mf* $\text{♩} = 54$

S1 Stretched to my fin - ger tips, And I laughed

S2 Stretched to my fin - ger tips, And I laughed

A1 Stretched to my fin - ger tips, And I

A2 Stretched to my fin - ger tips, And I

Pno. *accel.* $\text{♩} = 54$

accel.

42

S1 And I laughed. And I laughed. And I

S2 And I laughed. And I laughed. And I

A1 laughed. And I laughed. And I laughed.

A2 laughed. And I laughed. And I laughed. I

Pno.

42 **accel.**

47 $\text{♩} = 60$

S1 laughed. I laughed, I laughed.

S2 laughed. I laughed, I laughed.

A1 laughed. I laughed, I laughed.

A2 laughed. I laughed and laughed.

Pno.

47 $\text{♩} = 60$

mf

mf

f

f

53

S1 It is good to be a - live,

S2 It is good to be a - live,

A1 Ah! It is good to be a - live, a - live,

A2 *mf* Ah! Ah! a live,

Pno.

53

S1 *mp* good to be a - live, *mf* good to be a - live,

S2 *mf* good to love, good to love, It is

A1 *mf* good to be a - live, *mf* good to be a - live,

A2 *mf* good to love, good to love, It is

Pno.

57

S1 good to be a - live, good to be a - live,

S2 good to love, good to love, It is

A1 good to be a - live, good to be a - live,

A2 good to love, good to love, It is

Pno.

61

S1 *f* a - live, good to love, At the dawn, _____

S2 *f* good to be a - live, good to love, At the dawn, _____

A1 *f* a - live, good to love, At the dawn, _____ *mf* at the

A2 *f* good to be a - live, good to love, At the dawn, _____ *mf* at the

Pno. 61

Tempo primo

66

S1 *mf* At the dawn, *mp* At the spring dawn. *p* At the spring dawn.

S2 *mf* At the dawn, *mp* At the spring dawn. *p* At the spring dawn.

A1 *mp* dawn, *p* At the spring dawn.

A2 *mp* dawn, *p* spring dawn.

Pno. 66 **Tempo primo**