

## 2018 Self-Published Works Reading Session

**Connor Koppin, Conductor**

**Duane Philgreen Accompanist**

Thanks for being interested in some of these works! You may or may not have heard these pieces before, but I can assure you that they are all high-quality compositions with tremendous potential to connect with you and your students. I have selected works that I believe can be approached by a majority of high school mixed ensembles (there is an SSA as well as a TTB work in the packet). I'd like for you to be aware that should you purchase these works, the respective composers will receive anywhere from 80%-100% of the profits, compared to 10% at your average publishing company.

### - **We Remember Them**

Composer: Elizabeth Alexander

Voicing: SATB (little to no divisi)

Instrumentation: Piano

Publisher: Seafarer Press

Text Themes: Memorial Day, Honor, Armed Services, Expressing Loss, Grief, Healing

Comments: The work is very elegant in its function. Vocal lines are simple and voice leading is always intuitive. The text is absolutely beautiful and its setting is equally as attractive.

Elizabeth's music is always uniquely representative of her willingness to explore the choral craft.

Harmonies are often bold and inventive and always demonstrate a keen understanding of the text and its contents.

Link for Purchase: [We Remember Them](#)

### - **I Had No Time To Hate**

Composer: Nathan Howe

Voicing: SATB

Instrumentation: unaccompanied

Publisher: Music Spoke

Text Themes: Love, Tolerance, Acceptance, Inclusion

Comments: This simple, yet satisfying, setting of Emily Dickinson's text is sure to be a hit with your singers. Nathan writes in a style that we as teachers have grown to love. Students love to sing it, teachers love to teach it. Colorful harmonic strokes are used consistently throughout the work in a way that encourages singers to engage with the text. The work uses no divisi, therefore, making it accessible for a good number of choirs (if division is concerning for you).

Link for Purchase: [I Had No Time to Hate](#)

## - **Ffe Mwe, Mwe Ffe**

Composer: Joan Szymko

Voicing: SATB, solos

Instrumentation: Percussion (multiple drum parts)

Publisher: Joan Szymko Music

Text Themes: Community, Peace, Egalitarian, Love, Friendship

Comments: Joan Szymko is one of our great creative minds in choral music. Her engagement with texts of varying sources is something that I am continued awe of. This particular work uses a paraphrasing of Ghandi and Mother Theresa to communicate the message, "Be the change you wish to see," and "we belong to each other". The opening text, sung in Bantu, serves as a rhythmic motive that supports the flourishing of themes and motives over time.

Link for Purchase: [Ffe Mwe, Mwe Ffe](#)

## - **Will the Circle Be Unbroken**

Arranger: J. David Moore

Voicing: SATB

Instrumentation: Unaccompanied

Publisher: Fresh Ayre Music

Text Themes: Bluegrass anthem, Folk Song

Comments: The arrangement makes use of two traditional vocal ensemble styles, the bluegrass trio (unapologetically inspired by Dolly Parton's rendition of "Seven Bridges Road"), and the gospel quartet. It was requested by Dr. Cathy Roma and the MUSE Women's Choir of Cincinnati for a 2001 concert celebrating the city's Appalachian cultural heritage (Graphite Publishing). Exciting rhythmic writing is paired with embellished bluegrass style to create a unique and distinct choral work. Singers will enjoy developing their understanding of the style and using a new palate of tone color.

Link for Purchase: [Will the Circle Be Unbroken](#)

## - **Ranpono**

Composer: Sydney Guillaume

Voicing: SATB

Instrumentation: Percussion (multiple drum parts)

Publisher: Sydney Guillaume

Text Themes: Community, Gathering, Co-laboring

Comments: "Ranpono is a rhythmic and energetic piece reflecting the cooperation and motivation of workers during the Haitian Ranpono" (sydneyguillaume.com). As is to be expected with Sydney's music the work is extremely rhythmic and is set to an original Haitian text by Sydney's father, Gabriel. Yes, some of this writing will be difficult for developing singers to grasp as it is rhythmically demanding, but the payoff is tremendous. The work is primarily written for SATB choir with little to no divisi.

Link for Purchase: [Ranpono](#)

## - **Kanaval**

Composer: Sydney Guillaume

Voicing: SATB

Instrumentation: Percussion (multiple drum parts)

Publisher: Sydney Guillaume

Text Themes: Carnival, Party, Joy, Excitement, Celebration

Comments: Kanaval is a one-of-a-kind work that celebrates the Haitian Kanaval festival. The work is energetic, rhythmic, and reflective of the sense of joy one feels in anticipation of a celebratory event. The language can be tricky and will certainly push your singers. Once the work is learned, it memorizes fairly easily as the learning curve requires so much from young singers. As is true of 'Ranpono' the work is written for SATB choir with little to no divisi.

Link for Purchase: [Kanaval](#)

## - **Truth**

Composer: Andrea Ramsey

Voicing: SSA

Instrumentation: Djembe

Publisher: Music Spoke

Text Themes: Identity, Empowerment,

Comments: 'Truth' is one of my favorite works by Dr. Andrea Ramsey. It sets a gorgeous text by Gardenia Bruce which speaks to the experience of a young woman and her definition of an identity. The work makes use of metaphors as they relate to nature and arbitrary societal roles. "There is no DOUBT in a pond, insecurity does not grow in a meadow." Having conducted this work, my students found it tremendously engaging and really loved singing it. Ranges are approachable and the part writing is smart as well as exciting.

Link for Purchase: [Truth](#)

## - **Esa Enai**

Composer: Kurt Knecht

Voicing: TTBB, SSAA, SATB

Instrumentation: Piano

Publisher: Music Spoke

Text Themes: Strength in God, Faith, Assurance

Comments: Kurt Knecht has written an exciting work for multiple voicings set to Psalm 121 (I will lift up mine eyes to the hills). The work is set in Hebrew and uses harmonic language that reflects the rich tradition and history of Hebrew music. The work is a constant crescendo that results in a developing sections that grow and grow and grow in size and volume. I often find that music that appeals to Jewish/Hebrew musical tradition can often be 'cheezy' or 'disingenuous'. This work is honest and, in my opinion, really successfully executes the style and feel of the music of a culture.

Link for Purchase: [Esa Enai](#)

## - **Belong**

Composer: Jocelyn Hagen

Voicing: SATB

Instrumentation: Piano

Publisher: Jocelyn Hagen, Graphite Publishing

Text Themes: Belonging, Home, Friendship, Familial Love

Comments: What a beautiful work. It was originally written for the Youth Chorale of Central Minnesota. The text is extremely poignant and speaks to our experiences in an age of social media where divisiveness seems more common than togetherness. Surely your students will sing their truth through the beautiful text by Marisha Chamberlain. Jocelyn writes only in four parts with no divisi and keeps vocal range appropriate throughout the entire work. Phrasing and beauty of tone are paramount here.

Link for Purchase: [Belong](#)

## - **1941**

Composer: Andrea Ramsey

Voicing: SATB

Instrumentation: Piano

Publisher: Music Spoke

Text Themes: War, Love, Parting, Mother's Love for Her Son

Comments: This work sets a very powerful text of a mother and her parting words to her son who is deploying for war. The juxtaposition of comments on both the perils of war and the strength of a mother's love redefined my understanding of the power of poetry and music. There are moments of great beauty in this work and moments of sadness and angst. The vocal writing is approachable and the text is something that, I believe, students will connect with and will help shape their understanding of family and love.

Link for Purchase: [1941](#)

## - **The Light of Unity**

Composer: Tom Trenney

Voicing: SATB divisi

Instrumentation: Piano

Publisher: Music Spoke

Text Themes: Oneness, Community, Understanding, Power of Unity

Comments: Tom Trenney is one of my favorite composers. His work is so closely married to text it is hard to imagine that the words did not exist without the music. Tom often writes imitative counterpoint, a rarity in our world, in a way that allows developing singers to learn what it means to sing in polyphony. The work divides, often into 6 parts, but does so briefly and at moments of emotional intensity. The divisi could be handled by a church choir with some 'ringers'.

Link for Purchase: [The Light of Unity](#)

## - **Afka Hooyo (Mother Tongue)**

Composer: Tim Takach

Voicing: SATB

Instrumentation: Percussion (Djembe & Hand Drum)

Publisher: Graphite Publishing

Text Themes: Language, History, Community, Progress

Comments: This Somali text celebrates a historic day in 1972 when the Latin alphabet was adopted for the Somali language. The ability to communicate with written language beyond what was previously possible marked a seminal moment in Somalia. Several important things about this work: it is rhythmic and driving, the part writing and accessible and not densely rhythmic, the musical elements OPEN the door for the text to speak (similarly to the poem). Not only does this piece foster a history lesson in class, but it broadens the awareness of every student in the room. When we make ourselves aware of other communities we open the door to understanding and compassion.

Link for Purchase: [Mother Tongue](#)