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Commissioned in honor of Dr H Morris Stevens Jr; Music Educator, Conductor,
Church Musician, and Founder of the St Edward's University Masterworks Singers

THE GIFT TO SING ^{5/27}

for SATB (with divisi) & piano

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON
(1871-1938)

KIM ANDRÉ ARNESEN
(b 1980)

Softly, always flexible ♩ = c72

SOPRANO or TENOR
Solo or group *ad lib*

p

Some - times, some-times the mist o - ver - hangs my path,

Softly, always flexible ♩ = c72

PIANO

p

con Ped

poco rit

5

And black-ning clouds a - bout me cling; But, oh, I have a ma - gic way.

poco rit

mp

2

a tempo

mp *mf*

To turn the gloom to cheer - ful day -

meno mosso ♩ = c54 **rit**

pp *pp*

I soft - ly sing, I soft - ly sing, I soft - ly sing.

meno mosso ♩ = c54 **rit**

Tempo I

pp *p*

Tutti

S And if the way grows dark -

A And if the way grows dark -

T

B

Tempo I

20

er still, Sha - dowed by Sor - row's

er still, Sha - dowed by Sor - row's

Sha - dowed by Sor - row's

Sha - dowed by Sor - row's

Sha - dowed by Sor - row's

er still, Sha - dowed by Sor - row's

er still, Sha - dowed by Sor - row's

er still, Sha - dowed by Sor - row's

er still, Sha - dowed by Sor - row's

22

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

som - ber wing, With glad de - fi - ance in my throat,

a tempo

25 *mp* *fp*

I pierce the dark - ness with a note,

I pierce the dark - ness with a note,

I pierce the dark - ness with a note,

I pierce the dark - ness with a note,

a tempo

mp *f*

meno mosso ♩ = c54

poco rit

29 *p* *f*

And sing, and sing, and sing.

And sing, and sing, and sing.

And sing, and sing, and sing.

And sing, and sing, and sing.

meno mosso ♩ = c54

poco rit

mf

for rehearsal only

un poco più mosso ♩ = 84

molto rit

33

No
No
I brood not o-ver the bro - ken past, Nor dread what-e - ver time may bring; No

un poco più mosso ♩ = 84

molto rit

meno mosso

37

nights are dark, no days are long, While in my heart there
nights are dark, no days are long, While in my heart there
nights are dark, no days are long, While in my heart there
nights are dark, no days are long, While in my heart there

meno mosso

41 **poco rit** **a tempo**

swells a song,
 swells a song, *p* And I can sing,
 swells a song, *p* and I can sing,
 swells a song,
poco rit **a tempo**

47 **broadly, rit** **a tempo**

mp *f* *mp* Solo ad lib
 I can sing, I can sing.
 I can sing.
 I can sing.
 I can sing.
broadly, rit **a tempo**

Tempo I

52 Solo, group or soprano 1

S
pp *ah*
gli altri
p
Some - times, some-times the mist o - ver - hangs my path,

A
pp
Some - times, oo

T
pp
Some - times, oo

Tempo I

56

S
mf
ah *ah* *ah*
And black-'ning clouds a - bout me cling; But, oh, I have a ma - gic way

A
mf
ah

T
mf
ah

poco rit

a tempo *f*

S
to cheer - ful day -

A
To turn the gloom to cheer - ful day -

T
To turn the gloom to cheer - ful day -

B
To turn the gloom to cheer - ful day -

a tempo *f*

meno mosso ♩ = c54 *p* **rit** *mf*

S
I soft - ly sing, I soft - ly sing, I soft - - ly

A
I soft - ly sing, I soft - ly sing, I soft - - ly

T
I soft - ly sing, I soft - ly sing, I soft - - ly

B
I soft - ly sing, I soft - ly sing, I soft - - ly

meno mosso ♩ = c54 *mf* **rit**

Ped 6

meno mosso

molto rit

67

Soprano Solo

p I soft-ly sing, I soft - ly sing, I soft-ly sing. *ppp*

p sing, ng I soft-ly sing. *ppp*

p sing, ng I soft-ly sing. *ppp*

p sing, ng I soft-ly sing. *ppp*

p sing, ng I soft-ly sing. *ppp*

meno mosso

molto rit

p *pp* *ppp*

improvise, softly
ossia *pp* *ppp*

Composer's note

If there is one thing anyone who has sung in a choir (or other context) knows, it is how singing can “turn the gloom to cheerful day”, as James Weldon Johnson writes in his poem. We know it from our own experience, but it is even scientifically proven. There are many reasons to sing, and one of them is to bring light into our surroundings powered by our very own voices. And if someone does not think of themselves as a singer, I feel quite confident that Johnson's poem will make them want to sing at the top of their voice!

Duration: 4½ minutes

Text

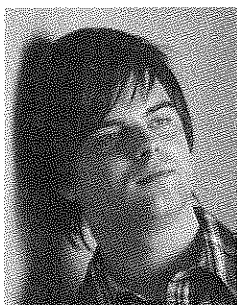
Sometimes the mist overhangs my path,
And blackening clouds about me cling;
But, oh, I have a magic way
To turn the gloom to cheerful day –
I softly sing.

And if the way grows darker still,
Shadowed by Sorrow's somber wing,
With glad defiance in my throat,
I pierce the darkness with a note,
And sing, and sing.

I brood not over the broken past,
Nor dread whatever time may bring;
No nights are dark, no days are long,
While in my heart there swells a song,
And I can sing.

James Weldon Johnson
(1871–1938)

Kim André Arnesen



Arnesen is one of the most frequently performed composers from Norway today. He grew up in Trondheim where he was a chorister in the Nidaros Cathedral Boys' Choir, later being educated at the Music Conservatory in Trondheim. With an interest in baroque music, contemporary classical music, and popular music, Kim could have taken many roads, but choral music became his greatest passion. As a composer, he had his first performance at the age of 18 with the boys' choir. Since then he has written music that has been performed and recorded by choirs all over the world. In 2015–16, Kim was Composer-in-residence for the Denver-based choral ensemble Kantorei and Artistic Director Joel Rinsema. The residency concluded with the recording of Kim's second CD album released in early 2018 on Naxos Records. He continues to enjoy a busy international schedule of commissions.