



JOAN SZYMKO

Joan Szymko is widely regarded as an outstanding composer of choral music in America today. With a catalog of over 100 choral works in print, her music is sung regularly at choral festivals and competitions across North America and abroad. Since 2003, her music has been heard

on stage or in session at every National Conference of the American Choral Director's Association. The 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 Commission in 2010. Szymko has composed for professional, church, LGBTQ, children's and all manner of academic and community choirs. Her embodied approach to sound, dedication to craft, and insistence on quality texts—all relate to her focus as a conductor and are reflected in her choral compositions. Her settings consistently display a discerning, insightful marriage of words and music with a primary intention to illuminate and magnify the words she sets. Joan lives and works in Portland, Oregon in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. A dynamic conductor, she workshops her compositions with choirs in a variety of educational and festival settings across the country and abroad.

For more about Joan, see www.joanszymko.com.

NOTES from the COMPOSER

I was invited to lead a drum circle at a local Unitarian Church event where children and adults worked together to make gifts for the congregation's sister church program in Uganda. In preparation, I sought 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 on line I was excited to come across the Bantu adage: *ffe mwe, mwe ffe*—"they are us and we are them." It is a powerful 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 sounded, everyone must be ready to rise to action to help. Inspired by this drum call, I composed *Ffe Mwe, Mwe Ffe* with the intention of taking the concept, "they are us and we are them" to the larger community, beyond one's own village, one's own tribe. Tribalism, while strengthening cultural identity, pride, and goodwill, can become in the wider world, a destructive force that perpetuates scapegoating and "us against them" hatred and 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 compelling challenge to: "Be the change you wish to see" — adding, "We belong to each other," from a Mother Teresa 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 ourselves in the "other." The music comes to a lively close as all of the calls for compassionate action come together as a whole.

Originally composed for Portland's Aurora Chorus, this TTTBBB voicing of was created in 2016 at the request of Cantus professional men's vocal ensemble.

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!

TRANSLATION

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

SSAA original composed for Aurora Chorus
TTTBBB version created for Cantus

Ffe Mwe, Mwe Ffe

they are us and we are them

text adaptation by the composer

by JOAN SZYMKO

The musical score is written for a mixed choir and percussion. It consists of the following parts:

- Perc. 2 & Perc. 3:** Percussion parts in 4/4 time. Perc. 2 starts with a snare drum pattern. Perc. 3 starts with a bass drum pattern. Both parts include dynamic markings like *f* and *mf*, and performance instructions such as "echo" and "drum tacet to M10".
- solo:** A solo line for a soloist, currently blank.
- T.1 (Tenor 1):** Tenor 1 part in 4/4 time, starting with a rest and ending with the note "Ffe".
- T.2 (Tenor 2):** Tenor 2 part, currently blank.
- Bar.1 (Baritone 1):** Baritone 1 part in 4/4 time, starting with a rest and then singing the lyrics "Ffe mwe, mwe ffe..." with dynamic markings *mf* and *f*.
- B. (Bass):** Bass part, currently blank.

The score includes tempo markings of "♩=84, steadily" and performance directions like "as if calling out".

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T.1
mwe, mwe ffe._____ *mp* ffe mwe mwe_ ffe,

T.2
ffe mwe mwe_ ff *mp*

Bar.2
mp Ffe mwe mwe_ ffe, *mf* Ffe

B.
mp Ffe mwe mwe_ ffe, *mf* Ffe

asterisked(*) notes are touches (ghost notes)

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Perc.3
tone bass *mf* drum conts. * *

T.1
mf ffe mwe mwe_ ffe, *mf* Ffe *mf*

T.2
mf ffe mwe mwe_ ffe, *mf* Ffe *mf*

Bar.1

Bar.2
f mwe mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe mwe ffe, Ffe mwe, mwe ffe._____

B.
f mwe mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe mwe ffe, Ffe mwe, mwe ffe._____

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T.1

mwe, mwemwe, ffe mwe, mwe_ffe,

T.2

mwe, mwe ffe.____ ffe

T.3

Ffe mwe, mwe ffe,

Bar.1

mwe, mwe ffe,

Bar.2

ffe

B.

ffe mwe, mwe_ffe, ffe

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T.1

ffe mwe, mwe_ffe, ffe mwe, mwe_ffe,____

A perc.2 entr.

T.2

mwe, mwe_ fe, ffe mwe, mwe_ fe, ffe mwe, mwe_ffe,

T.3

ffe mwe, mwe_ffe,____

Bar.1

ffe mwe, mwe ffe, ffe mwe, mwe_ffe,

Bar.2

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

B.

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

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

20 *simile* *mp* *mf*

T.1 ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe,

T.2 *simile* ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe,

T.3 *simile* *mp* *mf* ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe,

Bar.1 *simile* ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe

Bar.2 *mf* *mp* ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe

B. *mf* ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

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T.1 ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe,

T.2 *mp* *mf* ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

T.3 *mf* *mf* *f* ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe

Bar.1 ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ggwa - nga mu - jje ggwa - nga mu - jje

Bar.2 *mf* *mf* *f* mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe

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

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

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B perc.3 entr.

T.1

Musical staff for T.1, treble clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

T.2

Musical staff for T.2, treble clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

T.3

Musical staff for T.3, treble clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: mwe, mwe__ fe!

mwe, mwe__ fe!

mf Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

Bar.1

Musical staff for Bar.1, bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

mf Ffe mwe,

mwe ffe.

Ffe

Bar.2

Musical staff for Bar.2, bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: mwe, mwe__ fe!

mwe, mwe__ fe!

mf Ffe mwe,

mwe ffe.

Ffe

B.

Musical staff for B., bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

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T.1

Musical staff for T.1, treble clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: ffe mwe, mwe ffe

ffe mwe, mwe ffe

T.2

Musical staff for T.2, treble clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe, ffe

Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe,

ffe

T.3

Musical staff for T.3, treble clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

ffe mwe, mwe ffe

Bar.1

Musical staff for Bar.1, bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: mwe, mwe ffe.

mwe,

mwe ffe.

Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

Ffe

Bar.2

Musical staff for Bar.2, bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: mwe, mwe ffe.

mwe,

mwe ffe.

Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

B.

Musical staff for B., bass clef, 8/8 time signature. Lyrics: Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.



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T.1
8 ffe mwe, mwe ffe ffe mwe, mwe ffe ffe mwe, mwe ffe

T.2
8 mwe, mwe_ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe, Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe.

T.3
8 ffe mwe, mwe ffe ffe mwe, mwe ffe ffe mwe, mwe ffe

Bar.1
mwe, mwe_ffe, Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ffe,

Bar.2
Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe.

B.
Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

35

solo
8 Solo *mp* Be the change you wish to see;

T.3
8 mwe_ffe. *mp* Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe. *simile* ffe mwe, mwe_ffe.

Bar.1
Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe. *mp* Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe. *simile* ffe mwe, mwe_ffe.

Bar.2
Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe. *mp* Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe. *simile* ffe mwe, mwe_ffe.

B.
Ffe mwe, mwe_ffe.

38

solo 8 you can start by look - ing at me and know - ing that I am

T.1 8 *mf* and know - ing that

T.2 8 *mf* a know - ing that

T.3 8 *cresc. poco a poco* ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. mw mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

Bar.1 *cresc. poco a poco* ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

Bar.2 *cresc. poco a poco* ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

B. *cresc. poco a poco* Ffe mwe, mwe__ ffe.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

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solo

you and you are me.

T.1

I am you and you are me.

T.2

I am you and you are me.

T.3

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

Bar.1

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

Bar.2

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

B.

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

45 **D** *mf* *f*

solo We are them _____ and they are we; _____ am them _____

T.1 I am them _____

T.2 *p* *p* *p*
Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

T.3 *mp* *p* *mp*
mwe, mwe ffe Ffe mwe, mwe

Bar.1 *p*
Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,

Bar.2 *mp* *p* *mp*
mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe

B. *p* *p*
mwe, mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe, ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe,

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solo

we be - long to each-oth - er.

T.1

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

T.2

ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje! We be -

T.3

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

Bar.1

ffe mwe mwe__ ffe, ffe mwe mwe__ ffe, We be -

Bar.2

m mwe__ ffe. Ggwa nga mu - jje!

B.

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

cresc. *ff* *solo*

cresc. *cresc.* *cresc.* *cresc.* *cresc.* *cresc.*

E

54

f

T.1 Be the change_____ you wish to see; you can start_____ by look - ing

T.2 long to each - oth - er_____ we be - long to each - oth - er_____

mf

T.3 Ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje,

Bar.1 long to each - oth - er_____ we be - long to each - oth - er_____

mf

Bar.2 Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

mf

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

57

T.1 _____ at me ^{N.B.} know - ing_____ that I am you_____ and you

T.2 _____ Ffe mwe, mwe ffe;_____

mf

T.3 ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje,

Bar.1 _____ Ffe mwe, mwe ffe;_____ and you

Bar.2 Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

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



60

T.1
8 are me.

T.2
8 *f* we be- long to each - oth - er

T.3
8 ggwa - nga mu - jje, ggwa - nga mu - jje! *f* *mp* *f* Ffe

Bar.1
are me. Ffe *sempre f*

Bar.2
ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe. Ffe *sempre f*

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

63 *sempre f*

T.1
8 Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

T.2
8 *sempre f* we mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

T.3
mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe

Bar.1
mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe

Bar.2
mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe

B.
sempre f
Ffe mwe,mwe_ ffe. Ffe mwe,mwe_ ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe_ ffe.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

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T.1 Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

T.2 Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe.

T.3 ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe, Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. Ffe

Bar.1 ffe. Ffe mwe, mwe ffe, Ffe mwe, mwe ffe, Ffe

Bar.2 ffe. Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

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

69

T.1 Ggwa - nga mu - jje! wa nga mu - jje Ggwa - nga mu - jje! *ff*

T.2 Ffe mwe, mwe ffe. Ggwa - nga mu - jje! *ff*

T.3 e, mwe ffe, Ggwa - nga mu - jje! *ff*

Bar.1 mwe, mwe ffe, Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

Bar.2 Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

B. Ggwa - nga mu - jje! Ggwa - nga mu - jje!

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