

This is why we sing
GP - S003
SSAATTBB a cappella

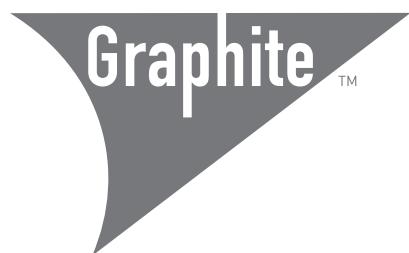
Joshua Shank

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Joshua Shank

This is why we sing

for SSAATTBB a cappella choir



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From the Composer:

In late 2014 I was commissioned to write something for the 20th anniversary of The Summer Singers, a fine choir in Minnesota made up of people who missed having an outlet for their talents during the choral “off season.” I was moved by their desire to always be singing and wondered if we might try to find a text that somehow spoke to that element of their history. I asked poet Robert Ressler to see if he could come up with an original text and, after a few months of talking about it, he sent the gorgeous poem he had come up with. It’s universal, humbling, grand, and intimate at the same time, and it was a joy to compose to.

The final “chord” is my tribute to The Summer Singers and their 20-year history. Even when the temperature in Minnesota rises and most choral ensembles take a break, there is still a group of friends and colleagues who – like any choir in the world – gather to make beautiful music together.

- Joshua Shank, 2016

Text:

There were tops, spinning,
through time and space,
like marbles
rolling
through a wooden maze.
There were particles of dust
in the cosmic winds.
A spark ignites.
The music begins.

There were notes that flew
to replace the pieces
of a broken promise
never made.
There were the great symphonies of the stars
of birds, and cicadas, and man.

These things that make us dream
also make us sing.
The glow of lights does not dim
our one connection.
This is why we sing.

We sing to manifest our dreams
in the very vibrations
of stone and air.
We sing so hope and love are not lost;
we find them in song and
this is why we sing.

The great continuity
of the human experience.
This is why we sing.

There is thunder.
There is rain.
There is silence.
There is peace.

There is shelter.
There is warmth.
There is dignity.
There is love.

There is union.
There is glory.
There is beauty.
There is light.

There is compassion.
There is trust.
There is bravery.
There is joy.

There is matter.
There is infinity.
There is spirit.
There is space.

There is loneliness.
There is war.
There is friendship.
There is creation.

There is despair.
There is hope.
This is why we sing.

To find our way,
To raise our voice,
To make it known:
There can be a tomorrow
There can be this moment.
There can be a truth that
Everyone deserves to be loved.

And this is why we sing.

- Robert Ressler (b. 1988)

Commissioned by *The Summer Singers (Minneapolis, MN)*
 for their 20th anniversary season
Russell Adrian, conductor

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This is why we sing

SSAATTBB a cappella choir

Robert Ressler

Joshua Shank

Slowly (♩ = 66) *mp* **Graphite**™ *notable. elevated.*

Soprano
 There were tops, — spin-ning, through

Alto
 There — were tops, — spin-ning, through

Tenor
 There were tops, — spin-ning, through

Bass
 There were tops, spin-ning, through

Piano (rehearsal only)

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6

S time and space, through time and space, like mar-bles

A time and space, through time and space, like mar-bles

T time and space, through time and space, like

B time and space, through time and space, like

Pno.

mf

mf

mf

mf

11

S roll-ing through a wood-en maze. There were par-ti-cles of dust,

A roll - ing through a wood-en maze.

T mar - bles roll-ing through a wood-en maze.

B mar - bles roll-ing through a wood-en maze. There were

Pno.

15 *Unfolding* ($\text{♩} = 55$)

mp

mp

mp

18

mf bring out

S dust, There were

mf bring out

A dust, There were

mp *mf*

There were par-ti-cles of dust,

mp *mf*

There were par-ti-cles of dust,

mp *mf*

T There were par - ti-cles of dust,

mp *mf*

There were par - ti-cles of dust, dust,

mf

B par - ti-cles of dust dust,

mf

par - ti-cles of dust dust, dust,

Pno.

18

mf bring out

notable. elevated.

24

S

par - ti - cles of dust, dust, dust,

A

bring out

There were par - ti - cles of dust, dust,

bring out

There were par - ti - cles of dust, dust,

T

bring out

dust, There were par - ti - cles of dust,

bring out

There were par - ti - cles of dust,

B

dust, There were par - ti - cles of dust,

bring out

dust, There were par - ti - cles of dust,

Pno.

24

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TM

30

f *poco rit.* *mf*

S dust, dust in the cos - mic winds.

f *poco rit.* *mf*

A dust, dust in the cos - mic winds.

f *poco rit.* *mf*

A dust, dust in the cos - mic winds.

f *poco rit.* *mf*

T dust, dust in the cos - mic winds.

f *poco rit.* *mf*

B dust, dust in the cos - mic winds.

f *poco rit.* *mf*

B dust, dust in the cos - mic winds.

Pno.

30

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37 *Fast* (♩ = 115) *fp* *f*

S A spark ig - nites. The mu - sic be -

A A spark ig - nites.

T A spark ig - nites.

B A spark ig - nites. The mu - sic be -

Pno.

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46 ♩. = ♩ *mf*

S gins. There were notes that

A *f* *mf* *lightly* *simile*

*duh duh duh duh duh duh...

T *f* *mf* *lightly*

*duh duh duh duh duh duh...

B gins.

Pno.

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*Lightly. Don't be too fussy with this (as long as it's precise, of course.) It's less about a certain vowel and more about making a texture for the melodies to glide over. Also, just for the sake of having a cleaner score I'm going to leave the text off as the "duh duh duh..." continues.

51

S *flew* _____ *to re - place* _____ *the*

A

T *simile*

B *mf* *There were notes that flew* _____ *to re - place* _____ *the*

Pno.

57

S *pie - ces of a bro - ken pro - mise* *ne - ver made.* _____

A

T

B *pie - ces of a bro - ken pro - mise* *ne - ver made.*

Pno.

62

mf *lightly*

S duh duh duh duh duh duh...

A *mf* There were the great

T *mf* There were the great

B *mf* *lightly* duh duhduh...

Pno.

66

S sym - pho - nies of the stars of birds, and ci -

A sym - pho - nies of the stars of birds, and ci -

T sym - pho - nies of the stars of birds, and ci -

B

Pno.

71 72

S *mf* These

A *mf* ca - das, and man. duh duh duh...

T *mf* ca - das, and man. duh duh duh...

B *mf* These

Pno.

76

S things that make us dream al - so

A things that make us dream al - so

T things that make us dream al - so

B things that make us dream al - so

Pno.

81 82

S *f* make us sing. The glow of

A

T *f* The

B *f* make us sing. duh duh duh...

Pno.

86

S lights does not dim our

A

T glow of lights does not dim our

B

Pno.

92 93

S one con - nect - ion. *mf*

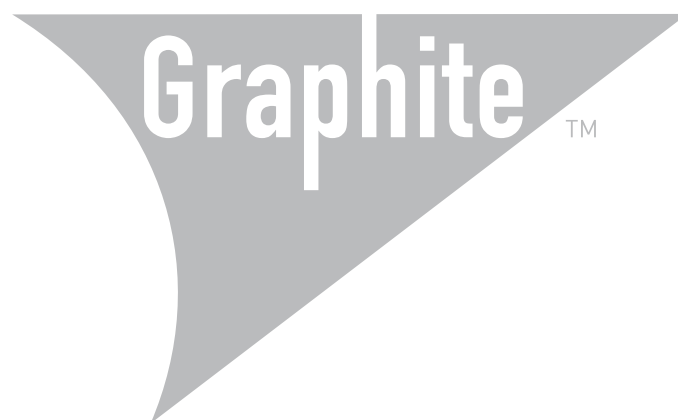
A *mf*

T 8 one con - nect - ion *mf* notable. elevated. TM duh duh duh...

B

Pno. 92 93

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notable. elevated.

97

S

A

T

B

Pno.

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GraphiteTM notable. elevated.

102

mf warmly

S This _____ 2 is why we

A

T

B *mf* warmly

This _____ 2 is why we sing. _____

Pno. 102

2

2

Graphite™

notable. elevated.

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107

S

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sing. _____ This _____ is why we sing. _____

A

GraphiteTM notable. elevated.

T

8

B

2

This _____ is why we sing. _____

Pno.

107

2

2

GraphiteTM notable. elevated.

112 *mf*

S We sing to man - i - fest our

A *mf* We sing to man - i - fest our

T *mf* We sing to man - i - fest our

B *mf* We sing to man - i - fest our

Pno. 112

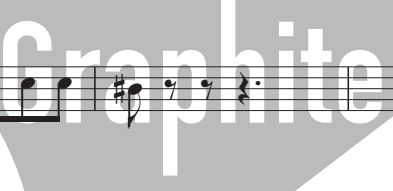
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117

S dreams _____ in the ve - ry vi -

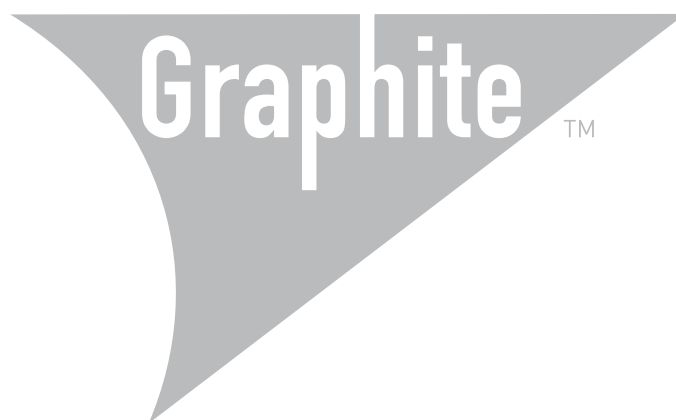
A dreams _____ in the ve - ry vi -

T 8  notable. elevated.

B dreams _____ in the ve - ry _____ vi -

Pno. 117

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notable. elevated.

122 124

S
bra - tions of stone and air. *f*

A
bra - tions of stone and air. *f*

T
8

B
bra - tions of stone and air. *f*

Pno.
122 124

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Graphite notable. elevated.



126 *mf* *notable. elevated.*

S duh duh duh...

A *mf* duh duh duh duh duh...

T *mf* We sing so hope and

B *mf* We sing so hope and

Pno. 126

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Graphite™

131

S

A

T

B

Pno.

love are not lost; we find them in song

love are not lost; we find them in song

Graphite notable. elevated.

137

S

A

T

B

Pno.

and this is why we sing. The

and this is why we sing. The

and this is why we sing. The

Graphite notable. elevated.

141 *ff* 3 3 3 G.P.

S great con - ti - nu-i - ty of the hu - man ex - per - i - ence.

A *ff* 3 3 3 G.P.

T *ff* 3 3 3 G.P.

B *ff* 3 3 3 G.P.

Pno. 141 3 3 3 G.P.

Slowly (♩ = 60)

145 *mf* *poco rit.* *p* *a tempo* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *rit.*

S This is why we sing.

A *mf* *poco rit.* *p* *a tempo* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *rit.* niente

T *poco rit.* *p* *a tempo* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *rit.*

B There is thun - der. There is rain. There is si - lence. There is peace.

Pno. 145

150 *a tempo* niente

S For perusal purposes only. Do not copy.

A *p a tempo* 3 There is shel-ter. There is warmth. There is dig-ni-ty. There is love. There is un-ion.

T *p a tempo* 8 3 There is shel-ter. There is warmth. There is dig-ni-ty. There is love. There is un-ion.

B *a tempo* *p stagger breathing* oh

Pno. 150 3

155

S For perusal purposes only. Do not copy.

A *mp* 3 There is glo-ry. There is beau-ty There is light. There is com-pas-sion. There is trust.

T *mp* 8 3 There is glo-ry. There is beau-ty There is light. There is com-pas-sion. There is trust.

B 155 3

Pno. 155 3

160 *p* stagger breathing

S oh _____

A There is bra-ve-ry. There is joy. — There is mat-ter. There is in-fi-ni-ty. There is spi-rit.

T There is bra-ve-ry. There is joy. — There is mat-ter. There is in-fi-ni-ty. There is spi-rit.

B

Pno.

165 *mf*

S _____

A There is space. — There is lone-li-ness. There is war. — There is friend-ship.

T There is space. — There is lone-li-ness. There is war. — There is friend-ship.

B _____

Pno.

169

f *rit.*

S *f* *rit.*

A *f* *rit.*

T *f* *rit.*

B *f* *rit.*

Pno.

There is de - spair. There is hope. This is why we

There is cre - a - tion. *oh This is why we

There is cre - a - tion. There is de - spair. There is hope. This is why we

There is de - spair. There is hope. This is why we

169

*Alto 1 notated as bottom voice in soprano staff until m. 174.

175

174

Slowly ($\text{♩} = 60$) *mp* *rit.* *a tempo*

S *rit.* *a tempo*

A *rit.* *mp* *a tempo*

T *rit.* *a tempo* *mp*

B *mp* *rit.* *a tempo* *mp*

Pno.

sing. This is why we sing. To find our way,

sing. This is why we sing. To find our way,

sing. This is why we sing. To find our way,

sing. This is why we sing. To find our way,

174

175

179

S

A

T

B

Pno.

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TM

This is why we sing. This is why we sing. To

To raise our voice, To make it known:

To raise our voice, To make it known:

183

185

poco rit.

Slow (♩ = 66)

mf warmly

S

A

T

B

Pno.

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TM

To make it known: There can be a to-mor-row

make it known: There can be a to-mor-row

There can be a to-mor-row

There can be a to-mor-row

There can be a to-mor-row

188

S There can be this moment. There can be a truth that

A There can be this moment. There can be a truth that

T There can be this moment. There can be a truth that

B There can be this moment. There can be a truth that

Pno.

192 *poco rit.* *mp*

S ev' - ry - one de - serves to be loved. And this is why,

A *poco rit.* *mp* ev' - ry - one de - serves to be loved. And this is why,

T *poco rit.* *mp* ev' - ry - one de - serves to be loved. this is why,

B *poco rit.* *mp* ev' - ry - one de - serves to be loved. this is why,

Pno.

197

S this is why we sing. *rit.*

A this is why we sing. *rit.*

T this is why we sing. *rit.*

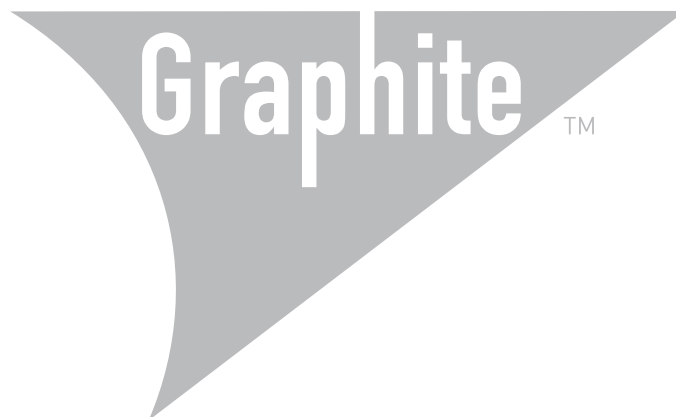
B this is why we sing. *rit.*

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Austin, March 2015

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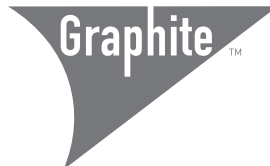
Joshua Shank (b. 1980) has been commissioned by organizations such as the Lorelei Ensemble, the Choral Project, the American Choral Directors Association, and the Association for Music in International Schools. From 2004-2014, he served as Composers-In-Residence for the Minneapolis-based professional choir, The Singers, where he collaborated annually to expand and invigorate the repertoire for professional-caliber ensembles through innovative programming as well as new works written specifically for the ensemble. In 2002, he became the youngest recipient ever of the Raymond W. Brock Composition Award from the American Choral Directors Association. A native of Minnesota, his music was recently featured in a documentary about the extensive choral tradition in the upper Midwest, *Never Stop Singing*, and his published works have sold over 150,000 copies worldwide.

Joshua received his undergraduate degree in Music Education from Luther College where he studied conducting with Weston Noble. He has also earned master's and doctoral degrees in Musicology and Composition from the University of Texas at Austin where he studied with Donald Grantham and the late opera composer Daniel Catán. A fierce advocate for students' access to music education, he served as a public-school teacher in Minneapolis/St. Paul for many years before going on to teach at

Gonzaga University, Valley City State University, and Eastern Washington University. When he's not writing music, you can probably find him biking, studying vegetarian cooking, or watching hilariously bad movies.

Other choral works for mixed voices from Graphite Publishing:

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Paul John Rudoï	GP-R014	Stillness and the Night	SATB, a cappella
Joshua Shank	GP-S001	Color Madrigals (6 movement cycle)	SATB, a cappella
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