

# JOAN SZYMKO

Commissioned by GALA Choruses for GALA Festival 2020 in Minneapolis, MN

## We Are All Bound Up Together

from *Lifting As We Climb*

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911)

Joan Szymko

♩=92

(Spoken narrative begins prior to piano intro)

5

for perusal only

9

13 Tutti Unison *mp*

We are all\_ bound up\_ to-ge-ther, we are all\_ bound up to - ge-

17 *mf*

- ther in one great bun - dle of hu - ma - ni - ty, one great bun - dle of hu-

21

S ma-ni - ty, one great bun - dle of hu - ma - ni - ty, one great bun - dle of hu-

S A ma-ni - ty, one great bun - dle of hu ma ni ty e great bun - dle of hu-

**for perusal only**

25 *poco rit.* *A tempo*

S ma-ni - ty, We are all bound up to - geth - er.

S A ma-ni - ty, We are all bound up to - geth -

*poco rit.* *A tempo*

29 *mf*

S We are all bound up to - geth - er. We are all bound

S A - er. We are all bound up to - geth - er. We are all bound

*mf*

32 *mp* rit. *p*

S up, bound up to - geth - er We are

S A up, bound up to - geth - er We are

*mp* *p*

for perusal only

35 Tutti Unison *Meno mosso* molto rit. *pp*

all bound up to - ge - ther. We are all bound up to - ge - ther.

*Meno mosso* molto rit. *p*

*p* *mf* *p*

*mp* *8<sup>va</sup>*



JOAN SZYMKO (b.1957)

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 and for nearly two decades has been heard on stage or in sessions 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 Memorial Commission in 2010. Szymko has composed for professional, church, LGBTQ, children's and all manner of academic and community choirs. Her 2016 commissioned oratorio, *Shadow and Light*, a major new addition to the repertoire for chorus and orchestra, shines a compassionate light on the suffering of those journeying through life with Alzheimer's dementia.

Szymko's 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 do not have a readily recognizable, "sound" but consistently display a discerning, insightful marriage of words and music. Her primary intention is to always 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 music with choirs in a variety of educational and festival settings across the country and abroad.

For more about Joan and her music, see [www.joanszymko.com](http://www.joanszymko.com).

## NOTES

I accepted the 2020 Dr. Catherine Roma Commission Project commemorating the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment with the understanding that my composition would not only explore the historical fight for women's suffrage, but also speak to present day attacks on voting rights. "**We Are All Bound Up Together**" is the stand alone interlude (re-voiced for mixed choir) from the resulting commission: ***Lifting As We Climb***, a 30 minute choral narrative scored for women's choir, speakers (6) piano, drum kit and alto sax. Suffragists come to life and previously hidden voices of African American women fighting for the vote are heard. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was one such black suffragist. "**We Are All Bound Up Together**" began as piano underscoring to her words spoken at a National Women's Rights convention in 1866. The context of her remarks was the post Civil War fracturing of the women's suffrage movement over the 15th Amendment which granted black men access to the elective franchise— before white women. *Lifting As We Climb* looks back in time, but it also explores the present day and anticipates a future that will require a diligent, informed public ready to fight for equality, democracy and the right to vote. Explore the entire score and libretto at [www.joanszymko.com](http://www.joanszymko.com).

*In performance, an ensemble may choose to present an alternate narrative / contemporary call for unity and healing.*

"We are all bound up together in  
one great bundle of humanity"

– Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

Speaker:

We are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity, and society cannot trample on the weakest and feeblest of its members without receiving the curse in its own soul. You white women speak here of rights, I speak of wrongs... This grand and glorious revolution (**piano begins**) which has commenced, will fail to reach its climax of success, until throughout the length and breadth of the American Republic, the nation shall be so color-blind, as to know no man by the color of his skin or the curl of his hair. It will then have no privileged class, trampling upon and outraging the unprivileged classes, but will be then one great privileged nation, whose privilege will be to produce the loftiest manhood and womanhood that humanity can attain." – **narrative ends at M13**