

JS 012
4 minutes, 40 seconds

me(n)

for TTBB and Piano

Text by
Members of the
commissioning
ensemble

Music by
Joshua Shank

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

Note from the composer

The title for this piece is a reference to the fact that the text is the result of two aspects of its creation. First, it's about how young men navigate the various pressures society throws their way. These are things like interactions with their peers, siblings, parents, and teachers, but also things like society's notions of race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, etc. How did these young men overcome the bad stuff, maneuver through the tricky stuff, and incorporate the good stuff?

In order to find a text that would express such a specific idea I decided to go straight to the source: the high school students in the choir itself. So I had them respond to a prompt and finish the sentence "I know that I am greater than..." as many times as they wanted in order to find out, and they couldn't have done a more beautiful job. So the text is actually made up of edited versions of *their words*. This is the reason for the parenthetical in the title.

me(n) was commissioned by the Flower Mound High School Men's Chamber Choir (Dr. Mark Rohwer, conductor) and received its premiere on March 8, 2017 at the national convention of the American Choral Directors Association in Minneapolis. It is dedicated with gratitude to the men of the ensemble and their conductor.

The text

I know that I am greater...

...than how others may see me
...than the challenges I may to face
...than all the ways that people can hate
...than than the person they say I should be
...than the numbers that may define me
...than the expectations of being a man

I know that I am greater when I try to understand
That I'm on my own,
But I'm not alone
If I try to lend a hand.

I know that I am greater if I never, ever lie.
To be upright
And "Win the good fight,"
Can always be my battle cry.

I know that I am greater...

...than how people see the color of my skin
...than what people think of who I love
...than the stresses in my life
...than the pressures coming from my parents
...than what my teachers may think of me
...than what I may think of myself
...than the boy you think you know

And I may not agree about you and me
But it's never too late
To be a little kinder,
A living reminder that
love will always conquer hate.

I know.

I know that I am greater...

...than my worst few moments
...than the things in life I cannot change
...than the limitations I place on myself

Commissioned by the Flower Mound High School Men's Chamber Choir
Dr. Mark Rohwer, Conductor

me(n)

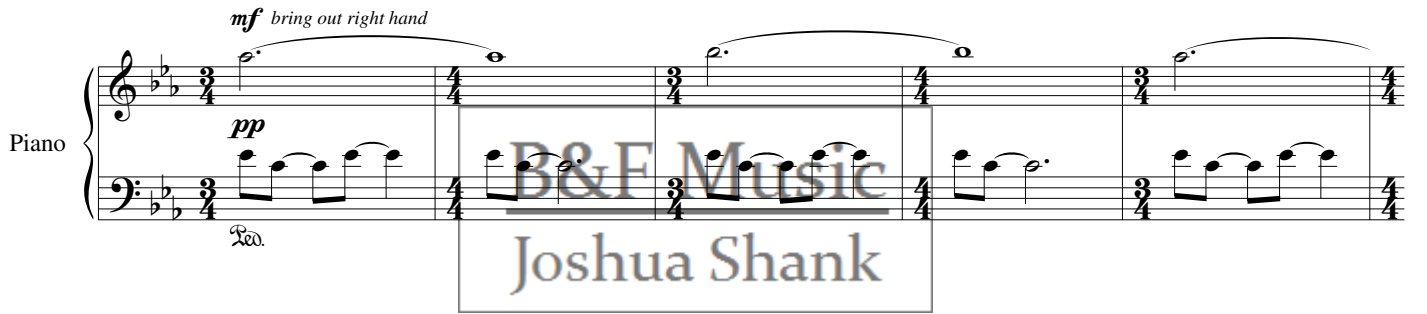
Text by the men of the
commissioning ensemble, et al.
(adapted by the composer)

Music by
Joshua Shank

quarter = 85

mf bring out right hand

Piano



The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of half notes with a melodic contour, while the left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings *mf* and *pp*, and a *ped.* marking.

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T

B

Piano



The vocal parts (Tenor and Bass) and piano accompaniment begin at measure 6. The vocal lines enter with the lyrics "I know that I am great-er than how". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern as the introduction. Dynamic markings include *pp* and *pp* with the instruction "bring out right hand". A *ped.* marking is present until measure 21.

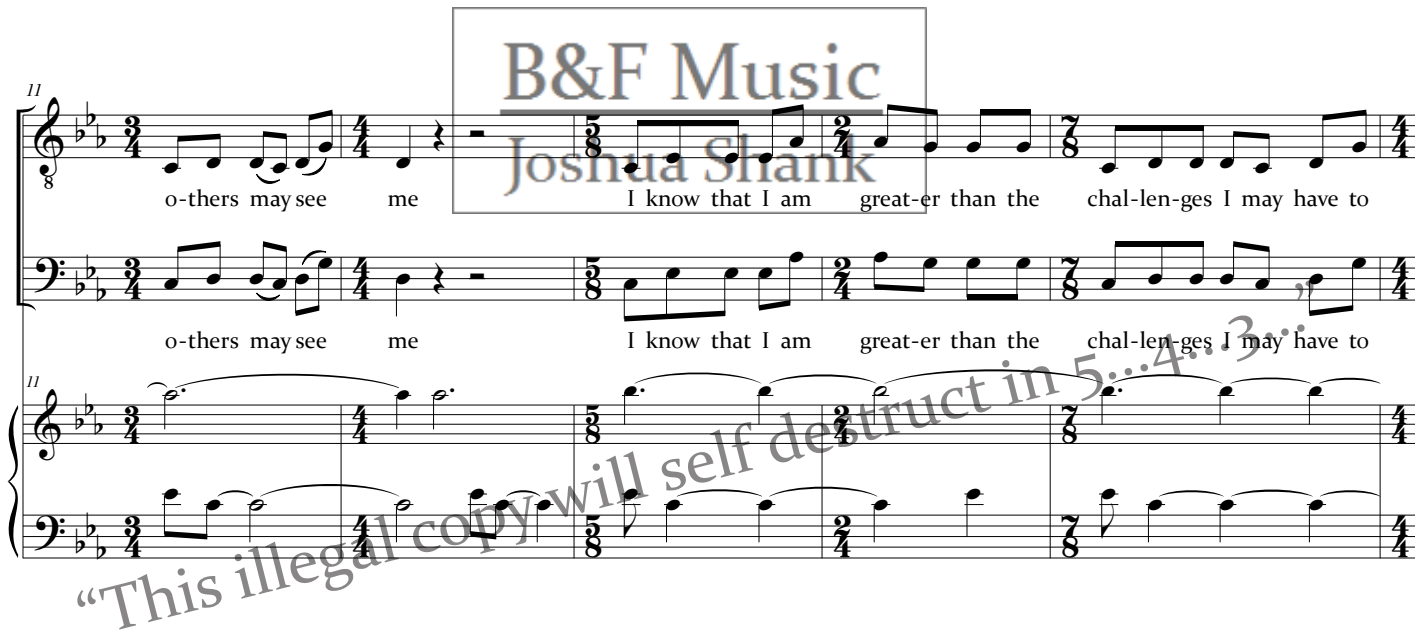
I know that I am great-er than how
I know that I am great-er than how

pp bring out right hand
ped. until m. 21

11

8

11



The vocal parts and piano accompaniment continue from measure 11. The vocal lines enter with the lyrics "o-thers may see me I know that I am great-er than the chal-len-ges I may have to". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern. Dynamic markings include *f* and *f* with the instruction "bring out right hand".

o-thers may see me I know that I am great-er than the chal-len-ges I may have to
o-thers may see me I know that I am great-er than the chal-len-ges I may have to

f bring out right hand

16
8

face I know that I am great-er than all the ways that peo-ple— can hate

face I know that I am great-er than all the ways that peo-ple— can hate

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21
8

I know that I am great-er than the per-son they say I should be I know that I am

I know that I am great-er than the per-son they say I should be I know that I am

bring out low bass notes

ped. with bass notes

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25
8

great-er than the num-bers that may de-fine me I know that I am great-er than the

great-er than the num-bers that may de-fine me I know that I am great-er than the

“This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...”

32

p

ex-pec-ta-tions of be-ing a man know _____
 ex-pec-ta-tions of be-ing a man I know that I am great-er than how

p brittle

Acc. with every iteration of the text until m. 89

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_____ that I am great-er I know _____
 peo-ple see the co-lor of my skin I know that I am great-er than what

_____ that I am great-er I know _____
 peo-ple think of who I love I know that I am great-er than the stress-es in my

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_____ that I am great-er I know _____ that I am
 peo-ple think of who I love I know that I am great-er than the stress-es in my

_____ that I am great-er I know _____ that I am
 peo-ple think of who I love I know that I am great-er than the stress-es in my

44

pattern change

43
 8 great-er I know I know that I am great-er
 life I know that I am great-er than the pres-sures com-ing from my par - ents

43
 8
 43

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48
 8 I know I know that I am great-er I know

48
 8 I know that I am great-er than what my teach-ers may think of me I know that I am

48
 8

56

pattern change

53
 8 I know that I am great-er I know the

53
 8 great-er than what I may think of my - self I know that I am great-er than the

53
 8

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"This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3..."

60 quarter = 92

58 *poco mp* *mp warmly*

boy you think you know know that I am great - er - than my

boy you think you know I know that I am great - er - than my

58 *poco mp*

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64

worst few mo - ments I know that I am great - er than the things in life that I can-not change

worst few mo - ments I know that I am great er than the things in life that I can-not change

64

69

I know that I am great er than the li mi - ta-tions I place on my - self

I know that I am great - er than the li - mi - ta-tions I place on my - self

69

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mf I know that I am great - er when I

I know that I am great - er when I

mf warmly

mf

ped. ped. simile*

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78

try to un - der - stand that I'm on my own but I'm not a - lone if I

try to un - der - stand that I'm on my own but I'm not a - lone if I

78

82

try to lend a hand I know that I am great - er if I

try to lend a hand I know that I am great - er if I

82

* Keep those bass notes held down for the second pedal as you go on with this pattern.

86
 ne - ver e - ver lie _____ To be up - right and win the good fight can al - ways be my
 ne - ver e - ver lie _____ To be up - right and win the good fight can al - ways be my

86
 (Piano accompaniment for the first system)

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91
 bat - tle cry _____ And I may not a - gree a - bout you and me but it's
 bat - tle cry _____ And I may not a - gree a - bout you and me but it's

91
 (Piano accompaniment for the second system)

96
 ne - ver too late _____ to be a lit - tle kind - er a liv - ing re - mind - er that
 ne - ver too late _____ to be a lit - tle kind - er a liv - ing re - mind - er that

96
 (Piano accompaniment for the third system)

suddenly faster
(quarter = 102)

104 quarter = 85

love will al-ways con-quer hate

love will al-ways con-quer hate

lunga

lunga

p gently *sub. ff*

106 quarter = 73

I know

I know

p *rit.*

mp *rit.*

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Austin, December 2016

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