

SAUNDER
CHOI

TO IMAGINE
CREATION

for SATB chorus and orchestra

-CHORAL SCORE-

SAUNDER CHOI *music*



PROGRAM NOTES:

From the tranquil beauty of a motet to the dramatic intensity of an oratorio, and the modern harmonies of contemporary works, choral music has a unique ability to express powerful emotions and tell captivating stories.

Written for the 60th anniversary of the Choral Arts Society of Washington, I partnered with writer Brian Sonia-Wallace to craft a work that aligns with the organization's mission and vision: to reawaken the human capacity for awe through the power of choral music in a world where profound human experiences ignite shared passion and collective action.

To Imagine Creation, for SATB chorus and orchestra, celebrates the power of collective singing in underscoring narratives of resilience, strength, and empowerment. It highlights how the choral art form has been a vessel for unity and progress—a means to give voice to the voiceless, with each generation creating new stories with every note. At its core, this work is about the courage to imagine a future beyond the present, choosing to create something new despite uncertainty. It calls us to continue striving, singing, and transforming, no matter the challenges faced.

This work was commissioned through the generous support of Anne B. Keiser, Douglas M. Lapp, and Laura S. Pruitt. Amidst all the instability, this work premiered at the Kennedy Center on June 15, 2025.

TEXT:

To Imagine Creation

Brian Sonia-Wallace

Our voices rise
to blaze horizon's honey
from one dawn to the next
we see the future, open -

behind us stretch a sea of sages,
our ancestors still among us
remind us to trust that we are rising
toward the glow

where everyone
who's faced the silence
will sing
will sing at last
demanding more:

We are the song
and generations pass our lips
with every breath
we are our song:
an endless transformation, new stories
in every step. It takes courage to imagine
oneself incomplete, but enough
to face the mystery
till each heartache turns to majesty.
Bold enough to believe
beyond what exists.
Bold enough to imagine
creation.

Our voices sing
For those who cannot be heard
The dispossessed and nameless
Their power stolen and dreams unspoken

Our melodies hum
To heal each splintered soul
Draw halos above every heartbreak
Cry a breathless now, allow

our hands to do their quiet work,
Til we can no longer be quiet
and, when we can no longer be quiet,
we'll sing – we'll choose to sing.

Piano-Choral Score

commissioned by The Choral Arts Society of Washington
in commemoration of its 60th Anniversary
through the generous support of Anne B. Keiser, Douglas M. Lapp, and Laura S. Pruitt
Dr. Marie Bucoy-Calavan, Artistic Director

To Imagine Creation

Brian Sonia-Wallace

Saunder Choi

for SATB chorus and orchestra

Joyfully ♩ = 96

The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes staves for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Rehearsal Piano. The piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes with accents. The second system includes staves for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Rehearsal Piano. The vocal parts enter with the lyrics "Our voi - ces" on a dotted quarter note, followed by a quarter rest. The piano part continues with the same accompaniment, including dynamic markings like *mp* and *sf*.

8

S. rise to blaze ho -

A. rise, rise, to blaze ho -

T. rise, rise, to blaze ho -

B. rise to blaze ho -

Reh. Pno

11

S. - ri - - zon's ho - ney from

A. - ri - - - zon's ho - ney from

T. - ri - - - zon's ho - ney from

B. - ri - - - zon's ho - ney from

Reh. Pno

A

mf

S. *mf*
one dawn to the next we see the fu - ture, o - pen

A. *mf*
one dawn to the next we see the fu - ture, o - pen

T. *mf*
one dawn to the next we see the fu - ture, o - pen

B. *mf*
one dawn to the next we see the fu - ture, o - pen

Reh. Pno *mf*

14

S. *mf*
— be - hind us stretch a sea of sa - ges, our

A. *mf*
— be - hind us stretch a sea of sa - ges, our

T. *mf*
— be - hind us stretch a sea of sa - ges, our

B. *mf*
— be - hind us stretch a sea of sa - ges, our

Reh. Pno *mf*

17

20

S. an - ces - tors still a - mong us re - mind us to trust

A. an - ces - tors still a - mong us re - mind us to trust

T. an - ces - tors still a - - mong us re - mind us to trust

B. an - ces - tors still a - - mong us re - mind us to trust

Reh. Pno

23

S. that we are ri - sing toward the

A. that we are ri - sing toward the

T. that we are ri - sing toward the

B. that we are ri - sing toward the

Reh. Pno

26 *f*

S. glow ri - sing toward the

A. glow ri - sing toward the

T. glow

B. glow

Reh. Pno

B *mp*

29 *mp*

S. glow

A. glow

T. *mf* Where ev - - 'ry - one who's faced the

B. *mf* Where ev - - 'ry - one who's faced the

Reh. Pno

32 *mp*

S. *mp* will

A. *mp* will sing,

T. *mp* si - lence will sing

B. *mp* si - lence will

Reh. Pno

35 *cresc.*

S. *cresc.* sing at last de - mand - - ing

A. *cresc.* will sing at last de - mand - - ing

T. *cresc.* will sing at last de - mand - - ing

B. *cresc.* sing at last de - mand - - ing

Reh. Pno *cresc.*

38 *mf* *f* **C**

S. *mf* *f*
 more: _____ more: _____ We are the song

A. *mf* *f*
 more: _____ We are the

T. *mf* *f*
 more: _____ more: _____ We are the song

B. *mf* *f*
 more: _____ We are the

Reh. Pno *mf* *f*

42

S. *f*
 and ge - ne - ra - tions pass our lips with ev - 'ry breath, we are our song: _____

A. *f*
 song, ge - ne - ra - tions pass our lips with ev - 'ry breath, we are our song: _____ we are our

T. *f*
 and ge - ne - ra - tions pass our lips with ev - 'ry breath, we are our song: _____ we are our

B. *f*
 song, ge - ne - ra - tions pass our lips with ev - 'ry breath, we are our song: _____ we are our

Reh. Pno *f*

46

S. — an end - less trans - for - ma - tion, new sto - ries in ev - 'ry step. It takes

A. song: an end - less trans - for - ma - tion, new sto - ries in ev - 'ry step. It takes

T. song: an end - less trans - for - ma - tion, new sto - ries in ev - 'ry step. It takes

B. song: an end - less trans - for - ma - tion, new sto - ries in ev - 'ry step. It takes

Reh. Pno

50

S. > cou - rage to i - ma - gine one - self in - com - plete, but e - *mf*

A. > cou - rage to i - ma - gine one - self in - com - plete, but e - *mf*

T. > cou - rage to i - ma - gine one - self in - com - plete,

B. > cou - rage to i - ma - gine one - self in - com - plete,

Reh. Pno

53

S. - nough to face the mys - te - ry oh ah

A. - nough to face the mys - te - ry oh ah

T. till each heart - ache turns to ma - jes - ty.

B. till each heart - ache turns to ma - jes - ty.

Reh. Pno

mf

57

S. Bold e - nough to be - lieve be - yond what e - xists. Bold e -

A. Bold e - nough to be - lieve be - yond what e - xists. Bold e -

T. Bold e - nough to be - lieve be - yond what e - xists. Bold e -

B. Bold e - nough to be - lieve be - yond what e - xists. Bold e -

Reh. Pno

poco f

67

S. *mf*
We are the song!

A. *mf*
We are the song!

T. *mf*
Our voi - ces

B. *mf*
Our voi - ces

Reh. Pno

70

S.

A.

T. rise!

B. rise!

Reh. Pno

73 **E** *p lyrically*

S. Our voi - ces sing for those who can - not be heard, the dis - pos -

A. *p lyrically* Our voi - ces sing for those who can - not be heard, the dis - pos -

T. - - - - -

B. - - - - -

Reh. Pno *p lyrically*

77

S. - sessed and name - less. Their po - wer sto - len and dreams un - spo - ken.

A. - sessed and_ name-less. Their po - wer sto - len and_ dreams un - spo - ken.

T. - - - - -

B. - - - - -

Reh. Pno

81 *mf*

S. Our me - lo - dies hum to heal each splin - tered soul. Draw

A. *mf* Our me - lo - dies hum to heal each splin - tered soul. Draw

T. *mf* Our me - lo - dies hum to heal each splin - tered soul. Draw

B. *mf* Our me - lo - dies hum to heal each splin - tered soul. Draw

Reh. Pno *mf*

85

S. ha - los a - bove ev - 'ry heart - break. Cry a breath - less now, al -

A. ha - los a - bove ev - 'ry heart - break. Cry a breath - less now, al -

T. ha - los a - bove ev - 'ry heart - break. Cry a breath - less now, al -

B. ha - los a - bove ev - 'ry heart - break. Cry a breath - less now, al -

Reh. Pno

89 *mf*

S. *mf*
 - low _____ our hands to do their qu - iet work 'till we can no lon - ger be

A. *mf*
 - low _____ our hands to do their qu - iet work 'till we can no lon - ger be

T. *mf*
 - low _____ our hands to do their qu - iet work 'till we can no lon - ger be

B. *mf*
 - low _____ our hands to do their qu - iet work 'till we can no lon - ger be

Reh. Pno *mf*

94 *poco f*

S. *poco f*
 qu - iet. And when we can no lon - ger be qui - et, _____ we'll

A. *poco f*
 qu - iet. And when we can no lon - ger be qui - et, _____ we'll

T. *poco f*
 qu - iet. And when we can no lon - ger be qui - - - et, we'll

B. *poco f*
 qu - iet. And when we can no lon - ger be qui - - - et, we'll

Reh. Pno *poco f*

F

97

S. *fp* *poco f* *f*
sing, we'll choose to sing

A. *fp* *poco f* *f*
sing, we'll choose to sing

T. *fp* *poco f* *f*
sing, we'll choose to sing

B. *fp* *poco f* *f*
sing, we'll choose to sing

Reh. Pno

100

S. [rest]

A. [rest]

T. *poco f*
Our voi - ces rise!

B. *poco f*
Our voi - ces rise!

Reh. Pno

103

S. *mf* Our voi - ces

A. *mp* Our voi - ces rise! *mp* Our voi - ces rise! *mf* Our voi - ces

T. *mp* Our voi - ces rise! *mf* Our voi - ces

B. *mf* Our voi - ces

Reh. Pno *mp*

106

S. *f* rise! *f* We are the song and ge - ne - ra - tions pass our lips with

A. *f* We are the song and ge - ne - ra - tions pass our lips with

T. *f* We are the song and ge - ne - ra - tions pass our lips with

B. *f* rise! We are the song and ge - ne - ra - tions pass our lips with

Reh. Pno *f*

G

111

S. ev - 'ry breath, we are our song: an end - less trans - for - ma - tion, new

A. ev - 'ry breath, we are our song: we are our song: an end - less trans - for - ma - tion, new

T. ev - 'ry breath, we are our song: an end - less trans - for - ma - tion, new

B. ev - 'ry breath, we are our song: we are our song: an end - less trans - for - ma - tion, new

Reh. Pno

115

S. sto - ries in ev - 'ry step. It takes cou - rage to i -

A. sto - ries in ev - 'ry step. It takes cou - rage to i -

T. sto - ries in ev - 'ry step. It takes cou - rage to i -

B. sto - ries in ev - 'ry step. It takes cou - rage to i -

Reh. Pno

118

S. *mf*
- ma - gine one - self in - com - plete, but e - nough to face the

A. *mf*
- ma - gine one - self in - com - plete, but e - nough to face the

T. *mf*
- ma - gine one - self in - com - plete, but e - nough to face the

B. *mf*
- ma - gine one - self in - com - plete, but e - nough to face the

Reh. Pno *mf*

121

S. *poco f*
mys - te - ry — till each heart - ache turns to ma - jes - ty. — Bold e - nough to be -

A. *poco f*
mys - te - ry — till each heart - ache turns to ma - jes - ty. — Bold e - nough to be -

T. *poco f*
mys - te - ry — till each heart - ache turns to ma - jes - ty. — Bold e - nough to be -

B. *poco f*
mys - te - ry — till each heart - ache turns to ma - jes - ty. — Bold e - nough to be -

Reh. Pno *poco f*

125

S. - lieve be - yond what e - xists. Bold e - nough to i -

A. - lieve be - yond what e - xists. Bold e - nough to i -

T. - lieve be - yond what e - xists. Bold e - nough to i -

B. - lieve be - yond what e - xists. Bold e - nough to i -

Reh. Pno

129

S. - ma - gine cre - a - - - -

A. - ma - gine cre - a - - - -

T. - ma - - - - gine cre - a - - - -

B. - ma - - - - gine cre - a - - - -

Reh. Pno

H

133 *mf*

S. - tion, cre - a - - - - - tion. *f*

A. - tion, cre - a - - - - - tion. *f*

T. - tion, cre - a - - - - - tion. *f*

B. - tion, cre - a - - - - - tion. *f*

Reh. Pno *mf* *f*

molto rall......

137

S. I - ma - gine cre - a - - - - - tion!

A. I - ma - gine cre - a - - - - - tion!

T. I - ma - gine cre - a - - - - - tion!

B. I - ma - gine cre - a - - - - - tion!

Reh. Pno

fp *ff* *fp* *ff* *fp* *ff* *fp* *ff*

PERUSAL SCORE