

*Commissioned by the Malverne High School Choir; Kenneth Zagare, Director;
to commemorate the opening of the Malverne Performing Arts Center; October 12, 2019*

Songs for the People

For SSA* and Piano

Duration: ca. 4:00

Words by
FRANCES E.W. HARPER

Music and additional lyrics by
ROLLO DILWORTH

Rhythmic Gospel-style Anthem ♩ = ca. 100

Score for Soprano I, Soprano II, Alto, and Piano.

The score is in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major (three flats). The tempo is marked as Rhythmic Gospel-style Anthem ♩ = ca. 100.

The vocal parts (Soprano I, Soprano II, Alto) are currently blank, indicating they are to be filled in by the performer.

The Piano part begins with a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The melody is characterized by a rhythmic, gospel-style pattern, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and frequent use of rests. The accompaniment consists of chords and single notes, providing a harmonic foundation for the vocal melody.

*Available separately:
SATB (00578079), SSA (00578080)
halleonard.com/choral
Visit sheetmusicdirect.com to purchase and download digital scores and audio mp3s.

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4

mf *mi* *do*

Let me make songs for the peo - ple,

mf *mi*

Let me make songs for the peo - ple,

mf *do* *Ab:*

Let me make songs for the peo - ple,

7

me *do*

songs for the old and young; — Songs — to stir — like a bat -

do

songs for the old and young; — Songs — to stir — like a bat -

sol

songs for the old and young; — Songs — to stir — like a bat -

SONGS FOR THE PEOPLE – SSA

10

- tle - cry ___ wher - ev - er they are sung. ___

- tle - cry ___ wher - ev - er they are sung. ___

- tle - cry ___ wher - ev - er they are sung. ___

13

Not for the clash - ing of sa - bres, for car-nage nor for strife; _

Not for the clash - ing of sa - bres, for car-nage nor for strife; _

Not for the clash - ing of sa - bres, for car-nage nor for strife; _

SONGS FOR THE PEOPLE – SSA

16

But songs to thrill the hearts of all with

But songs to thrill the hearts of all with

But songs to thrill the hearts of all with

3

19

more a-bun - dant life. Sing songs for the peo -

more a-bun - dant life. Sing songs for the peo -

more a-bun - dant life. Sing songs for the peo -

più mf

più mf

più mf

più mf

SONGS FOR THE PEOPLE – SSA

22

- ple, let the voi-ces of the peo - ple sing; — Sing — songs —

- ple, — let the voi-ces of the peo - ple sing; —

- ple, — let the voi-ces of the peo - ple sing; —

25

— for the peo - ple, let the har-mo-nies of free-dom ring! —

Sing songs for the peo - ple, — let the har-mo-nies of free-dom ring! —

Sing songs for the peo - ple, — let the har-mo-nies of free-dom ring! —

28

Sing _ songs, _

Sing _ songs, _

Let me make songs for the wea - ry, a -

mf

31

sing songs, _ till _ hearts _

sing songs, _ till _ hearts _

mid _ life's _ fe - ver and fret, _ till _ hearts _

mf

SONGS FOR THE PEOPLE – SSA

33

— shall re-lax their ten - sion, — and care-worn brows for - get. —

— shall re-lax their ten - sion, — and care-worn brows for - get. —

— shall re-lax their ten - sion, — and care-worn brows for - get. —

36

— Let me sing for lit - tle chil - dren, be -

— Let me sing for lit - tle chil - dren, be -

— Sing — songs, —

39 *cresc.*

fore their foot-steps stray, — Sweet an-thems of love and du -

cresc.

fore their foot-steps stray, — Sing songs,

— sing songs. — Sing songs,

3

42 *mf* *più mf*

- ty, — to float o'er life's high - way. — Sing — songs —

mf

sing — songs — to float o'er life's high - way. —

mf

sing — songs to float o'er - life's high - way. —

più mf

SONGS FOR THE PEOPLE – SSA

45

for the peo - ple, let the voi-ces of the peo - ple sing;—

più mf Sing songs for the peo - ple,— let the voi-ces of the peo - ple sing;—

più mf Sing songs for the peo - ple,— let the voi-ces of the peo - ple sing;—

48

— Sing songs — for the peo - ple, let the

— Sing songs for the peo - ple,— let the

— Sing songs for the peo - ple,— let the

SONGS FOR THE PEOPLE – SSA

51

har-mo-nies of free-dom ring! ____ I would sing for the poor and aged, _

har-mo-nies of free-dom ring! ____ I would sing for the poor and aged, _

har-mo-nies of free-dom ring! ____ I would sing for the poor and aged, _

mp

54

— when sha-dows dim their sight; ____ Of the

— when sha-dows dim their sight; ____ Of the

— when sha-dows dim their sight; ____ Of the

cresc.

cresc.

div. unis. cresc.

cresc.

57

bright and rest - ful man - sions, ___ where

bright and rest - ful man - sions, ___ where

bright and rest - ful man - sions, ___ where

mf

Amajor

59

there shall be no night. ___ No night.

there shall be no night. ___ No night.

there shall be no night. ___ No night.

sub. mp

(begin optional hand claps on beats 2 and 4)

62 *più **mf***

Our world, so worn and wea - ry, needs mu - sic, pure and strong, -

*più **mf***

Our world, so worn and wea - ry, needs mu - sic, pure and strong, -

*più **mf***

Our world, so worn and wea - ry, needs mu - sic, pure and strong, -

*più **mf***

65

— to hush the jan - gle and dis - cords — of

— to hush the jan - gle and dis - cords — of

— to hush the jan - gle and dis - cords — of

68 *div.* *unis.*

sor-row, pain, and wrong. ____ Mu-sic to soothe ____ all its sor -

sor-row, pain, and wrong. ____ Mu-sic to soothe ____ all its sor -

sor-row, pain, and wrong. ____ Mu-sic to soothe ____ all its sor -

71

- row, till war and crime shall cease; ____ And the

- row, till war and crime shall cease; ____ And the

- row, till war and crime shall cease; ____ And the

74

hearts of all grown ten - der gir-dle the world in peace.

hearts of all grown ten - der gir-dle the world in peace.

hearts of all grown ten - der gir-dle the world in peace.

(end optional hand claps)

77

Sing songs for the people, let the

Sing songs for the people, let the

Sing songs for the people, let the

SONGS FOR THE PEOPLE – SSA

80

voi-ces of the peo - ple sing; _____ Sing _ songs _____ for the peo -

voi-ces of the peo - ple sing; _____ Sing songs for the peo -

voi-ces of the peo - ple sing; _____ Sing songs for the peo -

83

- ple, let the har - mo - nies of free-dom ring! _____ Sing _ songs, -

- ple, _____ let the har - mo - nies of free-dom ring! _____

- ple, _____ let the har - mo - nies of free-dom ring! _____ *sub.*

86

for the peo - ple, let the voi - ces of the peo - ple sing; —

Sing songs for the peo - ple, — let the voi - ces of the peo - ple sing; —

Sing songs for the peo - ple, — let the voi - ces of the peo - ple sing; —

89

Sing — songs — for the peo - ple, let the

Sing songs for the peo - ple, — let the

Sing songs for the peo - ple, — let the

SONGS FOR THE PEOPLE – SSA

92

har - mo - nies of free - dom ring! _____ Sing _ songs, _____

har - mo - nies of free - dom ring! _____ Sing songs. Sing songs.

har - mo - nies of free - dom ring! _____ Sing songs. Sing songs.

sub. *p* cresc.

sub. *p* cresc.

sub. *p* cresc.

sub. *p* cresc.

95

_____ songs for the peo - ple!

Sing songs. Sing songs, _____ songs for the peo - ple!

Sing songs. Sing songs, _____ songs for the peo - ple!

div. *f*

f

f div.

f

8^{vb}

COMPOSER NOTES

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was born in 1825 in Baltimore, MD to free African American parents. Educated at the Watkins Academy for Negro Youth (a school founded by her uncle) until she was 13, she soon thereafter became enamored with literature while working for a family that owned a bookshop. Harper was the first African American woman to have a short story published. In addition to an active career as a poet, author, educator, and lecturer, she was an influential abolitionist and suffragist. Harper died in 1911 in Philadelphia, PA.

Songs for the People

Let me make the songs for the people,
Songs for the old and young;
Songs to stir like a battle-cry
Wherever they are sung.

Not for the clashing of sabres,
For carnage nor for strife;
But songs to thrill the hearts of men
With more abundant life.

Let me make the songs for the weary,
Amid life's fever and fret,
Till hearts shall relax their tension,
And careworn brows forget.

Let me sing for little children,
Before their footsteps stray,
Sweet anthems of love and duty,
To float o'er life's highway.

I would sing for the poor and aged,
When shadows dim their sight;
Of the bright and restful mansions,
Where there shall be no night.

Our world, so worn and weary,
Needs music, pure and strong,
To hush the jangle and discords
Of sorrow, pain, and wrong.

Music to soothe all its sorrow,
Till war and crime shall cease;
And the hearts of men grown tender
Girdle the world with peace.

*Sing songs for the people,
Let the voices of the people sing;
Sing songs for the people;
Let the harmonies of the freedom ring!*

Songs for the People is set in a jubilant gospel-style anthem that centers music as a source of joy and inspiration, and as a healing agent for all pain and strife. The poet suggests that music should be used to bring people together, not to divide them. I chose to add a stanza to the poem (above in italics) that functions as a refrain. A consistent rhythmic bounce is a key element to the successful performance of this piece. Therefore, singers are encouraged to remain musically, physically, and emotionally connected to the eighth note pulse. All eighth notes must be non-legato but not as short as staccato. All quarter notes and half notes must be sustained with the rhythmic energy of the eighth note pulse in the voice and in the body. Singers and the conductor-teacher are encouraged to discuss the life of the poet, interpretations of the poem, the relationship between the text and music, and how the composition can be connected to their lives.

For a complete bio of the composer please visit: boyer.temple.edu/Rollo