

music by:

KEVIN WILT

words by:

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

THE GIFT to SING

for SATB chorus and piano

WHISTLING VINE MUSIC

THE GIFT to SING

for SATB chorus and piano

The Gift to Sing

Sometimes the mist overhangs my path,
And blackening clouds about me cling;
But, oh, I have a magic way
To turn the gloom to cheerful day—
I softly sing.

And if the way grows darker still,
Shadowed by Sorrow's somber wing,
With glad defiance in my throat,
I pierce the darkness with a note,
And sing, and sing.

I brood not over the broken past,
Nor dread whatever time may bring;
No nights are dark, no days are long,
While in my heart there swells a song,
And I can sing.

- James Weldon Johnson, from *Fifty Years & Other Poems*

That they describe the act of singing as a tool to get through troubled times, and would be sung by a chorus of current and former students, these words seemed like the ultimate thank you note to honor a retiring music teacher, Laura Laflamme.

I treated the refrains as a representation of the joy Laura brought to generations of students, each spreading further than the last, through escalating repetition and expanding texture.

The final, unaccompanied statement is a reassuring declaration that these students are better prepared for life's challenges, thanks to this dedicated teacher.

K E V I N W I L T

This work was commissioned by the Georgetown Music Parents of Georgetown, MA.

For more information about this piece or any others written by Kevin Wilt, please visit:
www.kevinwilt.com or contact the composer at kevin@kevinwilt.com

Approximate Duration is 3:00

THE GIFT TO SING

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

KEVIN WILT

With confidence ♩ = 63

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

p

With confidence ♩ = 63

5

poco rit. A tempo

p

Sometimes the mist o-verhangs my path, And black-en-ing clouds a-bout me cling; But,

Sometimes the mist o-verhangs my path, And black-en-ing clouds a-bout me cling; But,

Sometimes the mist o-verhangs my path, And black-en-ing clouds a-bout me cling;

Sometimes the mist o-verhangs my path, And black-en-ing clouds a-bout me cling;

poco rit. A tempo

9

mp
oh, I have a mag - ic way___ To turn the gloom___ to cheer - ful day

mp
oh, I have a mag - ic way___ To turn the gloom___ to cheer - ful day

mp

9

17

p I soft-ly sing. I soft-ly sing. *mp* And. if the way grows dark - er still,

p I soft-ly sing. I soft-ly sing. *mp* And. if the way grows dark - er still,

p I soft-ly sing. I soft-ly sing. *mp* And. if the way grows dark - er still,

p I soft-ly sing. I soft-ly sing. *mp* And. if the way grows dark - er still,

p

14

21

Shad-owed by Sor-row's som-ber wing, With glad de-fi-ance in my throat, I pierce the dark - ness

Shad-owed by Sor-row's som-ber wing, With glad de-fi-ance in my throat, I pierce the dark - ness

Shad-owed by Sor-row's som-ber wing, With glad de-fi-ance in my throat, I pierce the dark - ness

Shad-owed by Sor-row's som-ber wing, With glad de-fi-ance in my throat, I pierce the dark - ness

19

with a note, And sing, and sing. And sing, and sing. I brood not

with a note, And sing, and sing. And sing, and sing. I brood not

with a note, And sing, and sing. And sing, and sing. And sing, and sing. I brood not

with a note, And sing, and sing. And sing, and sing. And sing, and sing. I brood not

24

28

o - ver the bro - ken past, Nor dread what - ev - er time may bring. No days are

o - ver the bro - ken past, Nor dread what - ev - er time may bring. No days are

o - ver the bro - ken past, Nor dread what - ev - er time may bring. No nights are dark,

o - ver the bro - ken past, Nor dread what - ev - er time may bring. No nights are dark,

28

36

long, While in my heart there swells a song, And I can sing. And I can sing. And I can

long, While in my heart there swells a song, And I can sing. And I can sing.

While in my heart there swells a song, And I can sing. And I can

While in my heart there swells a song, And I can sing.

33

40

rit. *molto dim.*
 sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can
 _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can
 sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____
 _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____ And I can sing. _____
 38

G.P.

Slower ♩ = 50

45

mp sing. _____ *p* No nights are dark, no days are long,
mp sing. _____ *p* No nights are dark, no days are long,
 _____ And I can sing. *mp* *p* No nights are dark, no days are long,
 _____ And I can sing. *mp* *p* No nights are dark, no days are long,
 G.P. Slower ♩ = 50 Rehearsal only
mp *p*

Deliberate, not weak

dim. And I can sing. And I can sing. **pp** And I can sing. div.

dim. And I can sing. And I can sing. **pp** And I can sing.

dim. And I can sing. And I can sing. **pp** And I can sing.

dim. And I can sing. And I can sing. **pp** And I can sing.

Deliberate, not weak

dim. **pp**