

This is why we sing  
GP - S003  
SSAATTBB a cappella

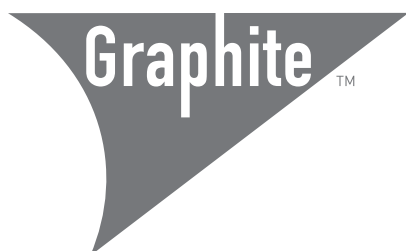
Joshua Shank

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# Joshua Shank

## **This is why we sing**

for SSAATTBB a cappella choir



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## From the Composer:

In late 2014 I was commissioned to write something for the 20th anniversary of The Summer Singers, a fine choir in Minnesota made up of people who missed having an outlet for their talents during the choral “off season.” I was moved by their desire to always be singing and wondered if we might try to find a text that somehow spoke to that element of their history. I asked poet Robert Ressler to see if he could come up with an original text and, after a few months of talking about it, he sent the gorgeous poem he had come up with. It’s universal, humbling, grand, and intimate at the same time, and it was a joy to compose to.

The final “chord” is my tribute to The Summer Singers and their 20-year history. Even when the temperature in Minnesota rises and most choral ensembles take a break, there is still a group of friends and colleagues who like any choir in the world gather to make beautiful music together.

- Joshua Shank, 2016

## Text:

There were tops, spinning,  
through time and space,  
like marbles  
rolling  
through a wooden maze.  
There were particles of dust  
in the cosmic winds.  
A spark ignites.  
The music begins.

There were notes that flew  
to replace the pieces  
of a broken promise  
never made.  
There were the great symphonies of the stars  
of birds, and cicadas, and man.

These things that make us dream  
also make us sing.  
The glow of lights does not dim  
our one connection.  
This is why we sing.

We sing to manifest our dreams  
in the very vibrations  
of stone and air.  
We sing so hope and love are not lost;  
we find them in song and  
this is why we sing.

The great continuity  
of the human experience.  
This is why we sing.

There is thunder.  
There is rain.  
There is silence.  
There is peace.

There is shelter.  
There is warmth.  
There is dignity.  
There is love.

There is union.  
There is glory.  
There is beauty.  
There is light.

There is compassion.  
There is trust.  
There is bravery.  
There is joy.

There is matter.  
There is infinity.  
There is spirit.  
There is space.

There is loneliness.  
There is war.  
There is friendship.  
There is creation.

There is despair.  
There is hope.  
This is why we sing.

To find our way,  
To raise our voice,  
To make it known:  
There can be a tomorrow  
There can be this moment.  
There can be a truth that  
Everyone deserves to be loved.

And this is why we sing.

- Robert Ressler (b. 1988)

# This is why we sing

SSAATTBB a cappella choir

Robert Ressler

Joshua Shank

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*Slowly* (♩ = 66)

*mp*

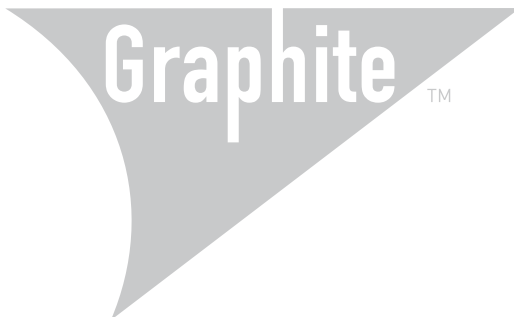
Soprano  
There were tops, spin-ning, through

Alto  
*mp*  
There were tops, spin-ning, through

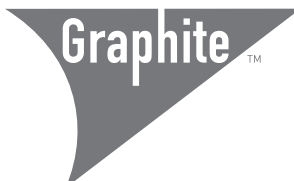
Tenor  
*mp*  
There were tops, spin-ning, through

Bass  
*mp*  
There were tops, spin-ning, through

Piano (rehearsal only)



notable. elevated.



notable. elevated.

6

S time and space, through time and space, like mar-bles

A time and space, through time and space, like mar-bles

T time and space, through time and space, like

B time and space, through time and space, like

Pno.

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

11

S roll-ing through a wood-en maze. There were par-ti-cles of dust,

A roll - ing through a wood-en maze. \_\_\_\_\_

T mar - bles roll-ing through a wood-en maze. \_\_\_\_\_

B mar - bles roll-ing through a wood-en maze. \_\_\_\_\_ There were

Pno.

15 *Unfolding* (♩ = 55)

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

18

S  
dust, \_\_\_\_\_ There were

A  
There were par-ti-cles of dust, \_\_\_\_\_

T  
There were par - ti-cles of dust, \_\_\_\_\_

B  
par - ti-cles of dust \_\_\_\_\_ dust, \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

18

*mf bring out*

*mf bring out*

*mp* *mf*

*mp* *mf*

*mp* *mf*

*mp* *mf*

*mp* *mf*

*mf*

*mf*

3 3 3

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24

S  
par - ti - cles of dust, dust, dust,

A  
par - ti - cles of dust, dust,  
*bring out*

T  
dust, There were par - ti - cles of dust,  
*bring out*

B  
dust, There were par - ti - cles of dust,  
*bring out*

Pno.

30 *f* *poco rit.* *mf*

S  
dust dust in the cos - mic winds.

A  
dust dust in the cos - mic winds.

T  
dust, dust in the cos - mic winds.

B  
dust in the cos - mic winds.

Pno.

37 *Fast* (♩ = 115) *fp* *f*

S A T B Pno.

A spark ig - nites. The mu - sic be -

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46 *f* *mf* *lightly* *mf* *simile*

S A T B Pno.

gins. There were notes that

\*duh duh duh duh duh... \*duh duh duh duh duh...

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\*Lightly. Don't be too fussy with this (as long as it's precise, of course.) It's less about a certain vowel and more about making a texture for the melodies to glide over. Also, just for the sake of having a cleaner score I'm going to leave the text off as the "duh duh duh..." continues.



51

S  
flew \_\_\_\_\_ to re - place \_\_\_\_\_ the

A

T  
*simile*

B  
*mf*  
There were notes that flew \_\_\_\_\_ to re - place \_\_\_\_\_ the

Pno.

57

S  
pie - ces of a bro - ken pro - mise ne - ver made. \_\_\_\_\_

A

T

B  
pie - ces of a bro - ken pro - mise ne - ver made.

Pno.

62 *mf* *lightly*

S  
duh duh duh duh duh...

A  
*mf*  
There were the great

T  
*mf*  
There were the great

B  
*mf* *lightly*  
duh duhduh...

Pno.

66

S  
sym - pho - nies of the stars of birds, and ci -

A  
sym - pho - nies of the stars of birds, and ci -

T  
sym - pho - nies of the stars of birds, and ci -

B

Pno.

71 72 *mf* These

S *mf* These

A ca - das, and man. duh duh duh... *mf*

T ca - das, and man. duh duh duh... *mf*

B ca - das, and man. duh duh duh... *mf* These

Pno. *mf* These

76 things that make us dream al - so

S things that make us dream al - so

A things that make us dream al - so

T things that make us dream al - so

B things that make us dream al - so

Pno. things that make us dream al - so

81 82

S — make us sing. *f* The glow of

A *f*

T *f* The

B — make us sing. *f*

Pno.

86

S lights does not dim our

A

T glow of lights does not dim our

B

Pno.

92 93 *mf*

S one \_\_\_\_\_ con - nect - ion. \_\_\_\_\_

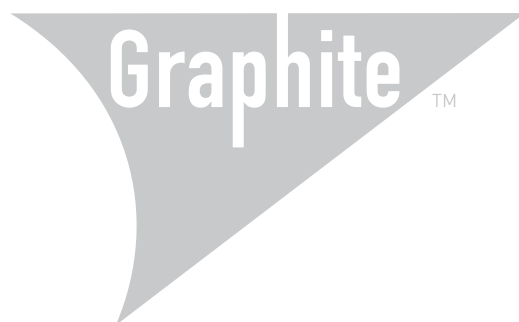
A *mf*

T 8 one con - nect - ion \_\_\_\_\_ notable. elevated. duh duh duh... *mf*

B

Pno. 92 93

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notable. elevated.

97

S

A

T

B

Pno.

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102

S *mf* warmly  
This \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup> is why we

A  
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T  
notable. elevated.

B *mf* warmly  
This \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup> is why we sing. \_\_\_\_\_

Pno. 102  
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107

S  
sing. \_\_\_\_\_ This \_\_\_\_\_ is why we sing. \_\_\_\_\_

A

T  
8

B  
2  
This \_\_\_\_\_ is why we sing. \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.  
107



112 *mf*

S We sing to man - i - fest our

A *mf* We sing to man - i - fest our

T *mf* We sing to man - i - fest our

B *mf* We sing to man - i - fest our

Pno. 112



117

S  
dreams \_\_\_\_\_ in the ve - ry vi -

A  
dreams \_\_\_\_\_ in the ve - ry vi -

T  
8 notable. elevated.

B  
dreams \_\_\_\_\_ in the ve - ry \_\_\_\_\_ vi -

Pno.  
117

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122

S  
bra - tions of stone and air. *f*

A  
bra - tions of stone and air. *f*

T  
notable. elevated.

B  
bra - tions of stone and air. *f*

124

Pno.  
122

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126 *mf* > > >  
S duh duh duh...  
A *mf* > > >  
duh duh duh duh duh duh...  
T *mf*  
We sing so hope and  
B *mf*  
We sing so hope and  
Pno. 126  
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131

S  
A  
T  
B

love are not lost; we find them in song

Pno.

137

S  
A  
T  
B

and this is why we sing. The

Pno.

141 *ff*

S  
great con - ti - nu - i - ty of the hu - man ex - per - i - ence. G.P.

A  
great con - ti - nu - i - ty of the hu - man ex - per - i - ence. G.P.

T  
great con - ti - nu - i - ty of the hu - man ex - per - i - ence. G.P.

B  
great con - ti - nu - i - ty of the hu - man ex - per - i - ence. G.P.

Pno.

*Slowly* (♩ = 60)

145 *mf* *poco rit.* *p* *a tempo* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *rit.*

S  
This is why we sing. *rit.*

A  
This is why we sing. *rit.* niente

T  
There is thun - der. There is rain. There is si - lence. There is peace. *rit.*

B  
*poco rit.* *a tempo* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *rit.*

Pno.

150 *a tempo* *niente*

S

A *p a tempo*  
There is shel-ter. There is warmth. There is dig-ni-ty. There is love. There is un-ion.

T *p a tempo*  
There is shel-ter. There is warmth. There is dig-ni-ty. There is love. There is un-ion.

B *a tempo* *p stagger breathing*  
oh

Pno.

155

S

A *mp*  
There is glo-ry. There is beau-ty. There is light. There is com-pas-sion. There is trust.

T *mp*  
There is glo-ry. There is beau-ty. There is light. There is com-pas-sion. There is trust.

B

Pno.

160 *p* stagger breathing

S oh \_\_\_\_\_

A There is bra-ve-ry. There is joy. There is mat-ter. There is in-fi-ni-ty. There is spi-rit.

T There is bra-ve-ry. There is joy. There is mat-ter. There is in-fi-ni-ty. There is spi-rit.

B

Pno.

165 *mf*

S There is space. There is lone-li-ness. There is war. There is friend-ship.

A There is space. There is lone-li-ness. There is war. There is friend-ship.

T There is space. There is lone-li-ness. There is war. There is friend-ship.

B

Pno.



169 *f* *rit.*

S  
\*There is de-spair. There is hope. — This is why we

A  
There is cre-a-tion. \*oh This is why we

T  
There is cre-a-tion. There is de-spair. There is — hope. — This is why we

B  
There is de-spair. There is hope. — This is why we

Pno.

*f* *rit.*

\*Alto 1 notated as bottom voice in soprano staff.

175

174 *Slowly* (♩ = 60) *mp* *rit.* *a tempo*

S  
sing. This is why we sing. —

A  
sing. *rit.* *mp* *a tempo* This is why we sing. —

T  
sing. *rit.* *a tempo* *mp* To find our way, —

B  
sing. *mp* *rit.* *a tempo* *mp* To find our way, —

Pno.

174

179

S  
A  
T  
B

Piano: For perusal purposes only. Do not copy.

To raise our voice, To make it known:

179

183

S  
A  
T  
B

Piano: For perusal purposes only. Do not copy.

*poco rit.* // **185** *Slow* (♩ = 66) *mf warmly*

To make it known: There can be a to-mor-row

*poco rit.* // *mf warmly*

make it known: There can be a to-mor-row

*poco rit.* // *mf warmly*

There can be a to-mor-row

*poco rit.* // *mf warmly*

There can be a to-mor-row

183

**185**

There can be a to-mor-row

24

188

S  
There can be this moment. \_\_\_\_\_ There can be a truth \_\_\_\_\_ that

A  
There can be this moment. \_\_\_\_\_ There can be a truth \_\_\_\_\_ that

T  
There can be this moment. \_\_\_\_\_ There can be a truth \_\_\_\_\_ that

B  
There can be this moment. \_\_\_\_\_ There can be a truth \_\_\_\_\_ that

Pno.

192

S  
*poco rit.* ev - ry - one de - serves to be loved. *mp* And this is why,

A  
*poco rit.* ev' - ry - one de - serves to be loved. *mp* this is why,

T  
*poco rit.* ev' - ry - one de - serves to be loved. *mp* this is why,

B  
*poco rit.* ev' - ry - one de - serves to be loved. *mp* \*optional this is why,

Pno.

197

S  
this is why we sing. *rit.*

A  
this is why we sing. *rit.*

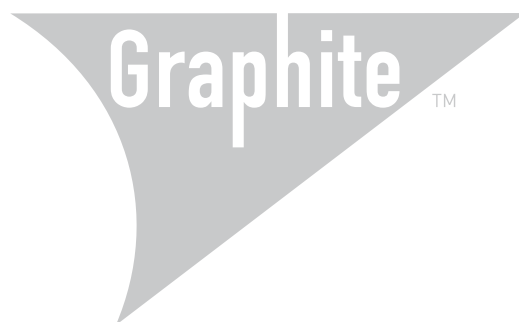
T  
this is why we sing. *rit.*

B  
this is why we sing. *rit.*

Pno.

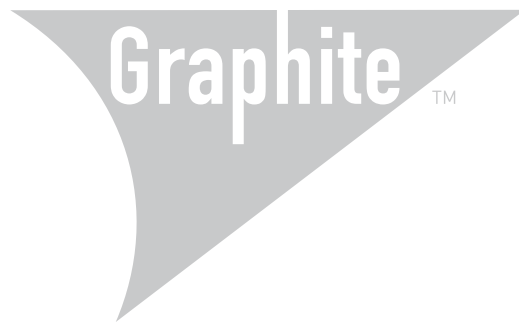
Austin, March 2015

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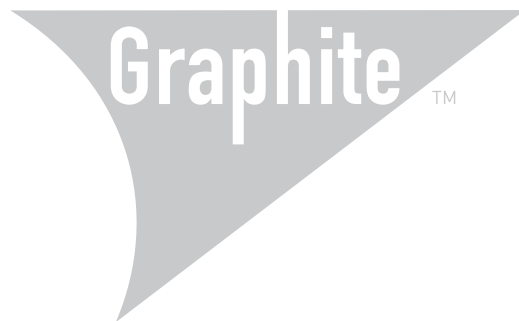
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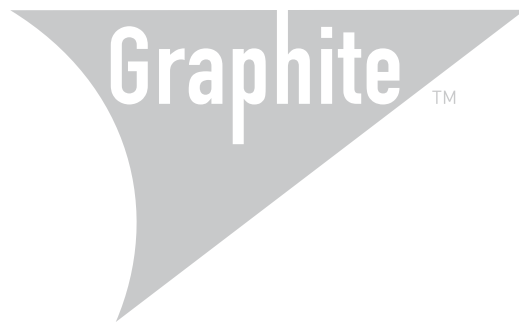
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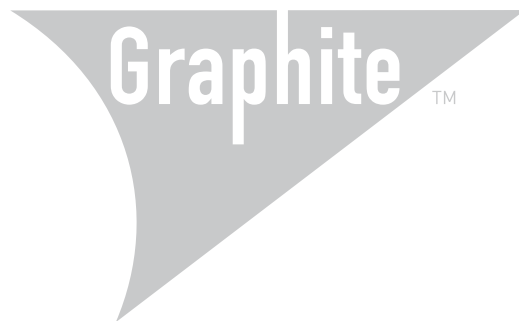
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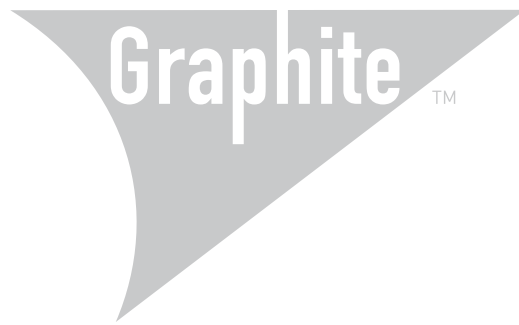
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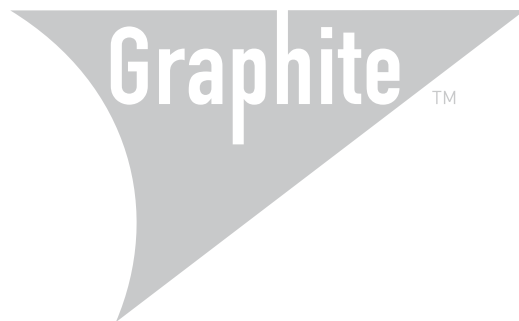
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## Joshua Shank

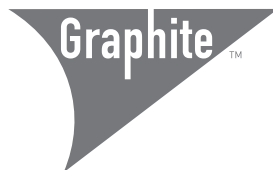


Joshua Shank's music has been called "jubilant...ethereal" (Santa Barbara News-Press) and "evocative and atmospheric... distilling a sustained mood most impressively" (Gramophone). He has been commissioned by organizations such as the Young New Yorkers' Chorus, the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, the American Choral Directors Association, The Esoterics (Seattle), the Minnesota All-State Choir, and the Lorelei Ensemble (Boston). Since 2004, he has served as Composer-In-Residence for the Minneapolis-based professional choir, The Singers: Minnesota Choral Artists. During that time, he has collaborated annually to expand and invigorate the repertoire for professional-caliber ensembles through innovative programming as well as new works written specifically for the ensemble.

In 2002, he became the youngest recipient ever of the Raymond W. Brock Composition Award by the American Choral Directors Association. The winning piece, "Musica animam tangens," was premiered in Avery Fisher Hall at the Lincoln Center and has since been performed and recorded from Los Angeles to South Africa. His music was recently featured in the PBS documentary, Never Stop Singing, about the extensive choral tradition in the upper Midwest and his published works have sold over 90,000 copies around the world.

### Other choral works for mixed voices from Graphite Publishing:

Paul Ayres	GP - A002	So Hallow'd and so Gracious is the Time	SATB, piano
Paul Ayres	GP - A005	Jubilate	SATB, organ
Eric William Barnum	GP - B008	The White Birds	SATB, a cappella
Eric William Barnum	GP - B010	Conflagration	SATB, piano
Abbie Betinis	GP - B004	Blessed Be the Lord, My Rock	SAB, piano, organ, or a cappella
Matthew Culloton	GP - C001	Two Carols	SATB, a cappella
Matthew Culloton	GP - C002	Sussex Carol	SATB, cello, harp
Dessa and Jocelyn Hagen	GP - D023	Controlled Burn	SATB, orchestra or chamber ens.
Christine Donkin	GP - D019	In Flanders Fields	SATB, a cappella
Christine Donkin	GP - D020	In Paradisum	SSAATTBB, a cappella
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H001	I Saw Three Ships	SSAATTBB, a cappella
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H003	I Lift Up My Eyes (Psalm 121)	SSATB, a cappella
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H004	O Come, O Come Emmanuel	SATB, SATB soli, a cappella
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H014	To See the Sky	SATB, piano
Luke Mayernik	GP - M004	Emblem	SATB, S solo, piano, violin, cello
Luke Mayernik	GP - M005	IKON	SSAATTBB, a cappella
Luke Mayernik	GP - M007	The Ashberry Carols - I.	SATB, a cappella
Luke Mayernik	GP - M010	Suo-Gân	SATB double choir, a cappella
Albert Pinsonneault	GP - P001	Intonation: 19 Choral Exercises	various voicings
Wayland Rogers	GP - R005	Rejoice and Be Joyful	SATB, organ
Wayland Rogers	GP - R006	Rise, Rise, My Soul	SATB, organ
Wayland Rogers	GP - R007	Whatsoever Things are True	SATB, organ
Paul John Rudoj	GP - R009	What Child is This?	SATB (div), a cappella
Paul John Rudoj	GP - R010	Amazing Grace	SATB (div), SAT soli, a cappella
Paul John Rudoj	GP - R013	Gamaya	SATB, opt. djembe
Paul John Rudoj	GP - R014	Stillness and the Night	SATB, a cappella
Joshua Shank	GP - S001	Color Madrigals (6 movement cycle)	SATB, a cappella
Joshua Shank	GP - S003	This is why we sing	SSAATTBB, a cappella
Timothy C. Takach	GP - T001	'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime	SATB, a cappella
Timothy C. Takach	GP - T002	A Sign of Day to Come	SATB, a cappella
Timothy C. Takach	GP - T010	Neither Angels, Nor Demons, Nor Powers	SSATBB, a cappella



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