

J O A N S Z Y M K O

Be It Therefore Resolved

poem by

Kim Stafford

for ssa chorus, optional ssa trio

piano,

violin and cello



Kim Stafford (b.1949)

Kim Stafford is the founding director of the Northwest Writing Institute at Lewis & Clark College, and author of a dozen books of poetry and prose. He approaches writing as a chance to set down stories we have carried into poems, essays, radio commentaries, blessings, rants, parables, and other forms of *tikkun olam*, the healing of the world. Stafford writes: "In our time is a great thing not yet done. It is the marriage of Woody Guthrie's gusto and the Internet. It is the composing and wide sharing of generous expression in the voices of many for the needs of all."

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Whereas the world is a house on fire;
Whereas the nations are filled with shouting;
Whereas hope seems small, sometimes
 a single bird on a wire
 left by migration behind.
Whereas kindness is seldom in the news
 and peace an abstraction
 while war is real;
Whereas my words are all I have;
Whereas my life is short;
Whereas I am afraid;
Whereas I am free—despite all
 fire and anger and fear;
Be it therefore resolved a song shall
 be my calling— a song
 not yet made shall be vocation
 and peaceful words the work
 of my remaining days.

Composer Notes

Kim Stafford's poem found its way to my attention by way of a singer in my community choir. She passed it on to me, knowing how I am always seeking powerful, transformative texts for my choral compositions. Stafford had disseminated his poem on the internet in 2005. "Friend: Download this Free Proclamation for Local Use," immediately piqued my interest. I deeply resonate with the theme of hopelessness met with personal resolve found in this powerful poem. As a choral composer and conductor, I have always felt a calling to use words and sounds to provide a platform for community. Community that is also a place of sanctuary where singer and listener can openly express compassion and feel her/his own emotional vulnerabilities. And so I feel a great affinity with the "vocation" expressed in the resolution of the proclamation. This feeling was confirmed, when after Kim Stafford heard "Be It Therefore Resolved" for the first time, he wrote to me: "I don't know that I have ever experienced such an intimate and generous consideration of something I have written as heard in your setting, word by word, syllable by syllable."

When I first sent the poem to David Simmons, director of the Congressional Chorus, for consideration as CC's commission text, it was without realizing that legislative resolutions are written in the same format as Stafford's poem; an auspicious coincidence! When reading an official proclamation aloud, one does not usually repeat lines of text. So with the exceptions of the opening cries of "fire" and "shouting," this setting is through composed, free flowing without repetition of lyrics within voice parts.

In performing this work, special care should be made in adhering to tempo and articulation markings, as these elements play a particularly expressive role.

- Joan Szymko

Joan Szymko (b.1957)

Joan Szymko's choral music is regularly performed at regional, national and international festivals, competitions and conferences; including at eight consecutive national conference of the American Choral Directors Association (2003-17). The ACDA recognized her contribution to the choral arts by awarding Szymko the prestigious Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission in 2010. For more information visit joanszymko.com.



Commissioned in 2011 by Bette Mohr & Rosalie Person in honor of the 25th Anniversary
of the founding of the Congressional Chorus, David Simmons, Artistic Director
SSAA version created for Aurora Chorus

Be It Therefore Resolved

Kim Stafford

Joan Szymko

CHOIR I
S
A

CHOIR II*
S
Mz
A

Piano

Violin

Cello

♩=72 with urgency

ff *f*
Fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____

ff
Fi - re _____

8va

f *ff* *mf*

with urgency *f* *ff*

mf *ff* *f*

Ped.

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CHOIR II * to be no more than one quarter of the full ensemble;
may be sung as an optional quartet positioned in front of CHOIR I.

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4 CHOIR I

S *f* *ff*
Where- as the world_ is a house on fi - re;

A *f* *ff*
Where- as the world_ is a house on fi - re;

CHOIR II *ff* *f* *mf* *f* *ff*

S
fi - re, fi - re, fi - re, fi - re, fi - re, fi - re,

Mz *mf*

for perusal only

A *ff*
fi - re, fi - re, fi - re, fi - re,

Red.

[vn tacit to M16]

dim. *mf*

7 *ff* on fi - re _____ *f* _____ *ff* are filled with shout - ing _____

f _____ *ff* *f* Where - as the na - tions are shout - ing; _____ are filled with

f *f* fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____

f *f* fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____

f *f* fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____ fi - re, _____

for perusal only

The musical score consists of several systems. The first system has two staves: a vocal staff and a piano staff. The vocal staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 7/8 time signature. The lyrics are "on fi - re" followed by a rest, and "are filled with shout - ing". Dynamic markings include *ff* and *f*. The piano staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics "Where - as the na - tions are shout - ing;" and "are filled with". It includes dynamic markings *f*, *ff*, and *f*, along with a triplet of eighth notes. The third system features a vocal line with six measures of "fi - re," each marked with a triplet. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in both hands. The fourth system continues the vocal line with six more measures of "fi - re," each marked with a triplet. The fifth system continues the vocal line with four more measures of "fi - re," each marked with a triplet. The sixth system shows the piano accompaniment with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and a fermata. The seventh system consists of empty vocal and piano staves.

10

shout - ing shout - ing shout - ing shout - ing shout - ing

shout - ing are filled with shout - ing, shout - ing shout - ing

fi - re, fi - re, shout - ing shout - ing

shout - ing shout - ing

fi - re, fi - re, fi - re, fi - re,

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

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rit.

A tempo ♩=72

12

mf Where - as _____ *p* *pp* hope seems small, *div.*

shout - ing; *mf* Where - as _____ *p* *pp* hope seems small,

END
DOUBLE
CHOIR

mf Where - as _____ *p* *pp* hope seems small, *div.*

ff shout - ing; *mf* Where - as _____ *p* *pp* hope seems small,

END
DOUBLE
CHOIR

for perusal only

mf Where - as _____ *p* *pp* hope seems small,

rit.

A tempo ♩=72

Ped.

16 *p*

S1 *mp* *mf* *mp*

some - times a sin - gle bird on a wire left by mi - gra - tion be - hind.

p

dolce *p* *mf* *p*

vn *p* *mf*

vc

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21 $\text{♩} = 62$ *Meno mosso* *dim.* *p* *poco accel.*

leggiero $\text{♩} = 62$ *Meno mosso* *p* *poco accel.* *mp*

ped. *ped. simile*

mp *pizz.* *mf*

24 $\text{♩} = 68$ *mp*

S2
Where - as kind - ness is sel - dom in the

A2
Where - as kind - ness is sel - dom in the

mp

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27 *mf* **Tempo primo**

S1
Where - as kind - ness is sel - dom in the news

S2
news. and peace an ab -

A1
Where - as kind - ness is sel - dom in the news

A2
news. and peace an ab -

Tempo primo
less delicate

mf

arco

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35 $\text{♩} = 54$ *poco rit.* $\text{♩} = 48$

S1 *p* *p* *mp* *mf* *mp*
Where - as my words are all I have; Where - as my life is

A1 *p* *mp* *mf* *mp*
Where - as my words are all I have; Where - as my life is

A2 *p* *mp* *mf* *mp*
Where - as my words are all I have; Where - as my life is

pizz. *f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

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39 *poco accel.* $\text{♩} = 58$ *rit.* *A tempo* $\text{♩} = 60$

S1 *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *mp*
short; Where-as I am a - fraid; I am free— des - pite all

S2 *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *mp*
short; Where-as I am a - fraid; Where - as I am free— des - pite all

A1 *p* *mf* *mp*
short; Where - as I am free— des - pite all

A2 *p* *mf* *mp*
short; Where - as I am free— des - pite all

poco accel. $\text{♩} = 58$ *rit.* *A tempo* $\text{♩} = 60$

arco *pizz.* *arco* *mf* *f* *mf* *dim.*

43 *mp* *f* *mf* *Maestoso* *mf*

S1 fi - re and an - ger and fear; Be it

S2 fi - re and an - ger and fear; Be it

A1 fi - re and an - ger and fear; Be it

A2 fi - re and an - ger and fear; Be it

mf *f* *mf*

Maestoso

arco *mf*

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47 *Con moto* call - ing a

S1 there - fore re - solved a song shall be my call - ing— a

S2 there - fore re - solved a song shall be my call - ing— a

A1 there - fore re - solved a song shall be my call - ing— a

A2 there - fore re - solved a song shall be my call - ing— a

Maestoso
Con moto

f

vc

51

S1
song not yet made shall be my vo - ca - tion and N.B.

S2
song not yet made shall be my vo - ca - tion and N.B.

A1
song not yet made shall be my vo - ca - tion and N.B.

A2
song not yet made shall be my vo - ca - tion and N.B.

Piano accompaniment for measures 51-54, featuring chords and melodic lines in both hands.

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55

peace - ful words, peace - ful words and peace - ful words the N.B.

peace - ful words, peace - ful words and peace - ful words the N.B.

p

p

p

mp *p*

mp *p*

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71

peace - ful words, _____ peace - ful words _____ and

peace - ful words, _____ peace - ful words _____ and

peace - ful words, _____ peace - ful _____ words _____ and

peace - ful words, _____ peace - ful words _____ and

mf *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

mf *p*

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76

mf **rall.** S1 up.div.

peace - ful words _____ the work ↘ of my re - main - ing

mf S1 low div. S2

peace - ful words _____ the work of my re - main - ing

mf *poco a poco cresc.*

peace - ful words _____ the work of my re - main - ing _____

mf *poco a poco cresc.*

peace - ful words _____ the work of my re - main - ing

rall.

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A tempo molto accel. molto rall.

81

days. *ff*

days. *ff*

days. *ff*

days. *ff*

for perusal only

A tempo molto accel. molto rall.

f *ff*

Ped. *8va* *8vb*