

Choral Works of John Muehleisen

# *Singing Together*

for SATB choir divisi

Music by John Muehleisen

Text by Jill Clymer

*Commissioned for Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble by Jill Clymer,  
in appreciation for 20+ years of connecting through music*

*Loren Pontén, Artistic Director  
September 2017*



## Singing Together

Singing together –  
Is it enough to bring hope  
when leadership fails,  
when I crumble to the floor  
unable to face the day  
or tomorrow?

The strains that rise from our lungs and throats  
and join together in air –  
Is there enough power there to connect  
and make the world feel right after all?

How dare I hope for reassurance  
through song?

Then in one moment  
Something shimmers  
Larger, brighter than you or me  
or my hopeless thoughts  
Notes colliding in air become  
not one, but a thousand mirrored crystals  
So bright I close my eyes and feel  
connection, clarity, closure  
Nothing else matters but what we are creating together  
greater than ourselves,  
spiraling upwards, lifting us  
together into shimmering hope

Is it enough to make us forget, forgive, overcome?  
If not music, then where else do we turn  
To connect and sway and rise together  
Making light out of darkness?

*- Jill Clymer (2016)*

## Program Notes for *Singing Together*

As I approached my 20th year of singing with Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble, I wanted to find a way to say thank you to the choir. Opus 7 has been an ongoing source of musical connection and a weekly refuge where I feel support and belonging. Regular rehearsals and familiar faces have provided reassurance and stability in my life from the tender age of 24 onward, through all that happens in life—marriage, kids, cancer, career. As both a singer in Opus 7 and Executive Director of Northwest Girlchoir, I know the power of singing together to help each of us grow, learn trust, and overcome emotional hurdles. It became clear that the best way to convey my gratitude to the choir was to commission a piece for them from Opus 7's Composer in Residence, John Muehleisen.

The poem "Singing Together" poured out of me at a time of depression and struggle, when I turned to choir rehearsals as a place for mending, for rising above. John's music has truly captured the feeling that singing together can be a source of joy and healing even when hope feels lost. Thank you, John, for this musical gift, and thank you, Opus 7 and Loren Ponten, for 20 years—and counting—of making music together.

- Jill Clymer, Sept. 2017

When Jill Clymer first approached me and Opus 7 Artistic Director Loren Pontén with the idea of commissioning a work to celebrate her 20+ years of singing with Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble, needless to say, I was honored that she would entrust me with the task of composing the work. I've known Jill during her entire tenure of singing with Opus 7, having started composing for the group back in 1995, shortly before Jill joined. It's probably safe to say that she has sung nearly all of the pieces I've composed for Opus 7, which number nearly 25 individual works and movements from larger works. We had been part of one another's musical lives for two decades, so the process of collaborating with Jill on this commission seemed like a natural extension of our existing musical relationship.

While the concept for the work went through a number of different iterations, it was at a meeting in late 2016, when Jill presented me with her marvelous, newly minted poem, that the real spirit of what would become *Singing Together* emerged. At the time, we settled on using several excerpts from her poem as well as two other brief poems about singing and music; however, when I eventually undertook the task of composing the work several months later, the beautiful meaning and spirit of Jill's full text leapt off the page into my musical imagination. Within less than 30 minutes, the concept for the entire piece as well as the music for the first two stanzas came pouring out of me so fast it was hard to keep up. Jill and her inspirational and uplifting poem combined to become the "muse" that spurred my creativity. I was especially struck by the vivid visual and sonic images in the poem. As a result of this rush of inspiration, I suggested at our next meeting that we use her poem exclusively, and I was delighted when she agreed to my suggestion.

After the initial flood of creativity, I was not only faced with finishing the musical setting, but also with the daunting task of doing justice to Jill's personal, yet universal poem, one that I think will resonate with all choral singers who love the choral art and who find solace and joy in the musical and spiritual act of singing in choirs. I sincerely hope that the setting paints a fitting musical picture of the wonderful images in Jill's poem and that it captures the uplifting spirit of her text and the joy that comes from singing together.

- John Muehleisen, Sept. 2017

# Singing Together

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2017

**Cantabile luminoso** ♩ = 68

**Soprano**  
Sing - ing Sing - ing Sing - ing to - geth - er

**Alto**  
Sing - ing Sing - ing Sing - ing to - geth - er

**Tenor**  
Sing - ing Sing - ing Sing - ing Sing - ing Sing - ing to - geth - er

**Bass**  
Sing - ing Sing - ing Sing - ing to - geth - er

**Piano**  
Lea. Lea. \*

**Soprano**  
Sing - ing to - geth - er Is it e - nough to bring hope when lead - er - ship

**Alto**  
Sing - ing to - geth - er Is it e - nough to bring hope when lead - er - ship

**Tenor**  
Sing - ing to - geth - er Is it e - nough to bring

**Bass**  
Sing - ing to - geth - er Is it e - nough to bring

**Pno.**  
Grazioso ♩ = 44

## Singing Together

S  
fails, \_\_\_\_\_ when I crum - ble to the floor \_\_\_\_\_ un - a - ble to face the day or to -

A  
fails, \_\_\_\_\_ when I crum - ble to the floor \_\_\_\_\_ un - a - ble to face the day or to -

T  
8 hope when I crum - ble to the floor \_\_\_\_\_ un - a - ble to face the

B  
hope \_\_\_\_\_ when I crum - ble to the floor \_\_\_\_\_ un - a - ble to face the

Pno.

S  
mor - row? \_\_\_\_\_ Sing - ing to - geth - er \_\_\_\_\_ *(mf)* The strains that

A  
mor - row? \_\_\_\_\_ Sing - ing to - geth - er \_\_\_\_\_ *(mf)* The strains that

T  
8 day or to - mor - row? Sing - ing to - geth - er \_\_\_\_\_ to - geth - er \_\_\_\_\_ to - geth - er *f*

B  
day or to - mor - row? Sing - ing to - geth - er \_\_\_\_\_ to - geth - er \_\_\_\_\_ to - geth - er *f*

Pno.

12 14 16

18 20

S  
rise from our lungs and throats and join to - geth - er in air Is there e-nough

A  
rise from our lungs and throats and join to - geth - er in air Is there e-nough

T  
8 The strains that rise from our throats join to - geth - er in air Is there e-nough

B  
The strains that rise from our throats join to - geth - er in air Is there e-nough

Pno.

22 24

S  
pow - er there to con - nect and make the world feel right af - ter

A  
pow - er there to con - nect and make the world feel right af - ter

T  
8 pow - er to con - nect and make the world feel right af - ter

B  
pow - er to con - nect and make the world feel right af - ter

Pno.

Singing Together

**Con speranza** ♩ = 76

*p* 26 *f* 28 *accel.* -----

S all? How dare I hope for re-as - sur-ance through song? *f*

A all? How dare I hope for re-as - sur-ance through song? *f*

T all? How dare I hope for re-as - sur-ance through song? *f*

B all? How dare I hope for re-as - sur-ance through song? *f*

Pno. *p* *f*

**Vivace con energico** ♩ = 98

*mf* 30 *f* 32

S Then in one mo - ment Some-thing shim-mers Some-thing shim-mers *f*

A Then in one mo - ment Some-thing shim-mers Some-thing shim-mers *f*

T Then in one mo-ment Some-thing shim-mers Some-thing shim-mers *f*

B Then in one mo-ment Some-thing shim-mers Some-thing shim-mers *f*

Pno. *mf* *f*



S  
A  
T  
B

Larg - er, bright-er than you or me or my hope-less thoughts Notes col-lid-ing in air

Larg - er, bright-er than you or me or my hope-less thoughts Notes col-lid-ing in air

Larg - er, bright-er than you or me or my hope-less thoughts Notes col-lid-ing in

Pno.

34 36

*ff* *f*

S  
A  
T  
B

Notes col-lid-ing in air Notes col-lid-ing in air Notes col-lid-ing in air

Notes col-lid-ing in air Notes col-lid-ing in air Notes col-lid-ing in air

air Notes col-lid-ing in air Notes col-lid-ing in air Notes col-lid-ing in air

air Notes col-lid-ing in air Notes col-lid-ing in air

Pno.

38 40

*ff* *ff*

*mf* *f* *ff* *molto marcato e non-legato*

S  
be - come not one, but a thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals but a

A  
be - come not one, but a thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals but a

T  
be - come not one, but a thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals but a

B  
be - come not one, but a thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals but a

Pno.

42

*mf* *f* *ff* *molto marcato e non-legato*

S  
44 thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals but a thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals but a

A  
thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals but a thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals but a

T  
8 thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals but a thou - sand but a thou - sand mir - rored

B  
thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals but a thou - sand but a thou - sand mir - rored

Pno.

44

2 2 2 2

2 2 2 2

2 2

46 *fff*

S  
thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals \_\_\_\_\_ So

A  
thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals \_\_\_\_\_ So

T  
8 crys - tals but a thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals \_\_\_\_\_ So

B  
crys - tals but a thou - sand mir - rored crys - tals \_\_\_\_\_ So

Pno.

48 *p* *legato* 50

S  
bright \_\_\_\_\_ I close my eyes and feel \_\_\_\_\_ I close my eyes and feel \_\_\_\_\_ I

A  
bright \_\_\_\_\_ I close my eyes and feel \_\_\_\_\_ I close my eyes and feel \_\_\_\_\_ I

T  
8 bright \_\_\_\_\_ I close my eyes and feel \_\_\_\_\_ I close my eyes and feel \_\_\_\_\_ I

B  
bright \_\_\_\_\_ I close my eyes and feel \_\_\_\_\_ I close my eyes and feel \_\_\_\_\_ I

Pno.

S  
close my eyes and feel *f* 52 *f* 54 *f marcato* clo - sure

A  
close my eyes and feel *f* *f marcato* clo - sure  
clar-i - ty,

T  
close my eyes and feel *f* *f marcato* con - nec - tion, clar-i - ty, clo - sure

B  
close my eyes and feel *f* *f marcato* con - nec - tion,

Pno.  
52 54

S  
*mf legato* 56 *f marcato* 58  
Noth - ing else mat - ters but what we are cre - at - ing to - geth - er cre - at - ing to - geth - er

A  
*mf legato* *f marcato*  
Noth - ing else mat - ters but what we are cre - at - ing to - geth - er cre - at - ing to - geth - er

T  
*mf legato* *f marcato*  
Noth - ing else mat - ters but what we are cre - at - ing to - geth - er cre - at - ing to - geth - er

B  
*mf legato* *f marcato*  
Noth - ing else mat - ters but what we are cre - at - ing to - geth - er cre - at - ing to - geth - er

Pno.  
56 58

60 *ff* ( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ ) 62 *f*

S great-er than our - selves, spi-ral-ing up - wards, lift-ing us — to-

A Ah spi-ral-ing up - wards, lift-ing us — to-

T great-er than our - selves, spi-ral-ing up - wards, lift-ing us — spi-ral-ing up - wards, lift-ing us — to-

B great-er than our - selves, spi-ral-ing up - wards, lift-ing us — spi-ral-ing up - wards, lift-ing us — to-

Pno. *ff* *f*

64 *fff* 66 *Maestoso*  $\text{♩} = 78$  *ff marcato* 68

S geth - er in - to hope — Sing - ing —

A geth - er in - to shim-mer - ing hope — Sing - ing —

T geth - er in - to shim-mer - ing hope — Sing - ing Sing - ing Sing - ing

B geth - er in - to shim-mer - ing hope — Sing - ing Sing - ing

Pno. *fff* *ff marcato*

## Singing Together

*rit.* ————— *mf* **Slower, introspective** ♩ = 44

S  
Sing - ing to - geth - er to - geth - er *mf* 70 72 *mp* 74  
Is it e - nough to make us for - get, for -

A  
Sing - ing to - geth - er to - geth - er *mf* *mp*  
Is it e - nough to make us for - get, for -

T  
Unison  
Sing - ing to - geth - er to - geth - er *mf* *mp*  
Is it e - nough to make us for - get, for -

B  
to - geth - er to - geth - er *mf* *mp*  
Is it e - nough to make us for - get, for -

Pno.  
*rit.* ————— *mf* **Slower, introspective** ♩ = 44 *mp* 70 72 74

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*rit.* ————— *a tempo*

S  
give, o - ver - come? If not mu - sic, then where else do we 76 2 3/4

A  
give, o - ver - come? If not mu - sic, then where else do we 76 2 3/4

T  
give, o - ver - come? If not mu - sic, where else do we 76 2 3/4

B  
give, o - ver - come? If not mu - sic, where else do we 76 2 3/4

Pno.  
*rit.* ————— *a tempo* 76 2 3/4

Singing Together

78 *Con speranza* ♩ = 80

S  
turn To con - nect and sway and rise to - geth - er To con -

A  
turn To con - nect and sway and rise to - geth - er To con -

T  
turn To con - nect and sway and rise to - geth - er To con -

B  
turn To con - nect and sway and rise to - geth - er To con -

Pno.

82 *Con speranza* ♩ = 80

S  
nect and sway and rise to geth - er Mak - ing light out of

A  
nect and sway and rise to - geth - er Mak - ing light out of

T  
nect and sway and rise to - geth - er Mak - ing light out of

B  
nect and sway and rise to - geth - er Mak - ing light

Pno.

