



Mulbarton Community Choir – Lyric Writing Competition

Information about 'Song of Liberty', AP Herbert (1940)

'Song of Liberty', by AP Herbert, is a patriotic British song which was composed in 1940 and which rose in popularity during the Second World War. The song was set to Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance March No. 4 six years after Elgar's death.

There is something of a tradition of setting patriotic words to the music of Elgar, with *Land of Hope and Glory* being set to his Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1. AP Herbert was the third person to write words to Elgar's March No. 4.

Elgar's own comments on the efforts of Alfred Noyes (who wrote *The Highwayman*) to write lyrics to March No. 4 in 1928 are as follows: 'I think the pronounced praise of England is not quite so popular as it was; the loyalty remains, but the people seem to be more shy as to singing about it.'

Mulbarton Community Choir are commissioning a fourth setting of the chorus, and hope very much that this setting will explore a modern reflection on war and remembrance, since this is the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1.

Herbert's original verses are included for your reference (although we will not be singing them), as you may wish to explore their ideas, values and vocabulary to support your students to write their own choruses. The metre (number of syllables in each line) is included, to help students ensure that their submissions will fit in with the music's requirements. There are two things to note:

- 1 The line 'God is drawing his sword' currently has six syllables, but would also work with five.
- 2 The second chorus has a slight change in the last four lines, where the chorus is extended as the song ends.

Here is a link to a performance of 'Song of Liberty' to help you:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_60nIVUG1U

Verse 1

Fight for freedom, ev`ryone.
Build the ship and man the gun.
Do as you have never done
To set the peoples free.
We, the few, the happy free,
Will fly the flags of Liberty,
Blow the horns of Liberty! Liberty!
Till the world is free.

Chorus 1

All men must be free. (5)
March for Liberty with me. (7)
Brutes and braggarts may (5)
Have their little day, (5)
We shall never bow the knee. (7)
God is drawing his sword. (6) (this could be 5)
We are marching with the Lord. (7)
Sing, then, brother, sing, (5)
Giving ev`rything, (5)
All you are and hope to be, (7)
To set the peoples free. (6)

Verse 2

Wake and watch and work and win,
Fight and farm and sew and spin,
Fall the faithful people in
To set the peoples free.
But the day the battle`s won,
Never say the fight is done.
Make the world a better one! Better one!
When the world is free.

Chorus 2

All men must be free. (5)
March for Liberty with me. (7)
Brutes and braggarts may (5)
Have their little day, (5)
We shall never bow the knee. (7)
God is drawing his sword. (6)
We are marching with the Lord. (7)
Sing, then, brother, sing, (5)
Giving ev`rything, (5)
All you are and hope to be, (7)
To take the torch across the sea (8)
And set the peoples, (6)
Keep the peoples free (6)