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SSA and piano

# Songs my Heart has Taught Me

*for upper voices*

Bob Chilcott



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*for SSA and piano*

Vocal score

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Session only

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## Composer's note

It was a privilege and an honour to be invited to write the Raymond Brock Memorial Commission for the ACDA National Conference in Dallas in 2021. I was asked to write something that embraced certain aspects of diversity: a rich, beautiful, and complex subject. I asked a brilliant young poet, Delphine Chalmers, to come on this journey with me to create this piece. As the National Conference ended up taking place virtually, this piece was first performed by the BBC Singers with pianist Anna Tilbrook, in a video recording to be broadcast to delegates. The piece was originally written for mixed voices, but some months later I re-worked it as this version for The Children's Chorus of Washington, D.C. and their Musical Director, Margaret Clark.

I have learnt so much from a life of extensive travel, through music and collaboration with many different people, but the overriding thing is that, as Maya Angelou says in her great poem 'Human Family', 'We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.' Throughout life, music has been my barometer; it has helped me to understand so many things and so many people, and I hold this deep in my heart, hence the title *Songs my Heart has Taught Me*. Delphine and I decided to use musical concepts as titles for the four songs that make up the work, exploring how these can help us to understand commonality.

The first song, 'Unison', is an anthem to unity that ends with the powerful line, 'The song of the future and the song of our souls are in unison.' 'Harmony', written in a more fluid, musical-theatre style, touches on people's need to be accepted, in a way like a note in a chord, in such a way that we can feel embraced, as Delphine writes so eloquently: 'In the song of shared acceptance lies an inner harmony.' The third song, 'Rhythm', is a spiky piece with a beat that tells of life's rhythm, of the pulse that the living all share, and it urges us to seize the day. Finally, in 'Resolution', the melody is spun by the singers over a simple, recurring chord structure. The poetic refrain is strongly influenced by the words of the 14th-century female mystic, Julian of Norwich: 'All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.' The piece ends quietly and tonally, but of course does not completely resolve. That is the story of life.

Duration: c.11 minutes

Commissioned by the American Choral Directors Association as the 2021 Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission.  
This version is dedicated to Margaret Clark and the Children's Chorus of Washington, D.C.

# Songs my Heart has Taught Me

Delphine Chalmers (b. 1998)

BOB CHILCOTT

## 1. Unison

**With certainty** ♩ = c.88

**SOPRANO 1**  
**SOPRANO 2**

*unis. p*

When the bark of our\_\_

**ALTO**

*p*

*mm*

**PIANO**

*p*

*con Ped.*

**6**

skin Be-comes soft to the\_\_ touch And the breeze leafs\_\_ through our\_\_

*mm*

*mm*

11 *mp*  
hair, The whis - pers of the trees And the sto - ries we

*mp*

*mp*

16 *p*  
write Are in u - ni - son, u - ni - son.

*p* *p*

*mm* When the

*p*

22 *p*  
rip - ple of a smile Wea - thers dim - ples in - to stone And love breaks

*p* *oo* *oo*

*p*

27 *mp*

on new— shores, The surge of the— tides And the

32 *oo*

press— of a hand Are in u - ni - son,

37 *mf* *f risoluto*

u - ni - son. When the brav - est i - deals Take wing in soar - ing

*mf* *f risoluto*

u - ni - son. When the brav - est i - deals Take wing in soar - ing

*mf* *f risoluto*

42

flocks And make a home in warm - er skies, The

flocks And make a home in warm - er skies, The

47

pat - terns of the birds And the lives we weave Are in

pat - terns of the birds And the lives we weave Are in

52

u - ni - son, u - ni - son.

u - ni - son, u - ni - son.

*mf* *p*

*mf* *p*

*mf* *p*



57 *p*  
When dreams lin - ger in wak - ing thought Like teas - ing

*p*  
*mm.* *mm.*

62  
con - stel - la - tions And hope fills e - ven hope - less hearts,

*mm.*

67 *mp*  
The song of the fu - ture And the song of our

*mp*  
*mp*

71

*p*

souls \_\_\_\_\_ Are in u - ni - son, \_\_\_\_\_ u - ni - son. \_\_\_\_\_

*p*

*mm* \_\_\_\_\_ u - ni - son. \_\_\_\_\_

*p*

76

**a little slower**

*mp*

\_\_\_\_\_ The song of the fu - ture And the song of our souls \_\_\_\_\_ Are in \_\_\_\_\_

*mp*

\_\_\_\_\_ The song of the fu - ture And the song of our souls \_\_\_\_\_ Are in \_\_\_\_\_

**a little slower**

*mp*

*p*

*p*

82

**poco rit.**

**slower**

*pp*

u - ni - son, \_\_\_\_\_ u - ni - son, \_\_\_\_\_ u - ni - son. \_\_\_\_\_

*pp*

u - ni - son, \_\_\_\_\_ u - ni - son, \_\_\_\_\_ u - ni - son. \_\_\_\_\_

**poco rit.**

**slower**

*p*

*pp*

## 2. Harmony

In the groove ♩ = c.100

SOPRANO 1  
SOPRANO 2

ALTO

PIANO

In the groove ♩ = c.100

*mf*

Am I too co-mic?

*con Ped.*

4 *unis. mf*

Or too me-lan-cho-lic? Too bold, or too old, or too vain? I

Too bold, or too old, or too vain? I

7

play the clown, brave their frowns. Is the

play the clown, brave their frowns. Is the

9

face in the mir - ror tru - ly mine?  
face in the mir - ror, in the mir - ror tru - ly

Musical score for measures 9-10. It features a vocal line with two staves and a piano accompaniment with two staves. The lyrics are: "face in the mir - ror tru - ly mine?" and "face in the mir - ror, in the mir - ror tru - ly".

11

*mf* Am I too se - ri - ous?  
*mf* mine, tru - ly mine?

Musical score for measures 11-12. It features a vocal line with two staves and a piano accompaniment with two staves. The lyrics are: "Am I too se - ri - ous?" and "mine, tru - ly mine?". The dynamic marking *mf* is present.

14

Too loud, or too proud, or too  
Or too mys - te - ri - ous? Too loud, or too proud, or too

Musical score for measures 14-15. It features a vocal line with two staves and a piano accompaniment with two staves. The lyrics are: "Too loud, or too proud, or too" and "Or too mys - te - ri - ous? Too loud, or too proud, or too". The piano accompaniment includes triplet markings.

16 *f*

free? I try on masks,

free? I try on masks,

18

act out parts... Is it really so wrong to be me?

act out parts... Is it really so wrong to be me?

21 *ff*

All these words vault like tumblers.

*ff*

All these words vault like tumblers, like tumblers

24 *f*

ah ah

*f*

Stum - bling and strug - gling to land.

26 *ff*

I can soar through it all. May - be it's

*ff* *f*

I can soar through it all. May - be it's

28

time for my last cur - tain call, my last cur - tain

time for my last cur - tain call, my last cur - tain

30 *mf*

call.

*mf*

call, my last cur - tain call, cur - tain

32

call.

34 *mp più dolce*

*mp più dolce*

*mp più dolce*

I've learned to play to a dif - f'rent crowd, — Trans -

Trans -

36 *mf*  
 - pose in - to a ma - jor key. In the  
 - pose in - to a ma - jor key. In the  
*mf*  
*mf*

38  
 song of shared ac - cept - ance,  
 song of shared ac - cept - ance, of shared ac - cept - ance  
 song of shared ac - cept - ance, of shared ac - cept - ance  
 song of shared ac - cept - ance, of shared ac - cept - ance

41 *mp* har - mo - ny,  
 Lies an in - ner *mp* har - mo - ny,  
 Lies an in - ner har - mo - ny,  
*mp*



44 har - mo - ny, *mf*

in - - - ner *mf* har - mo - ny, in - - - ner *mf*

in - - - ner har - mo - ny, in - - - ner *mf*

47 har - mo - ny, *mp*

har - mo - ny, har - - - mo - ny, lies an *mp*

har - mo - ny, har - - - mo - ny, lies an *mp*

50 *rit.* *p*

in - - - ner har - mo - ny, har - - - mo - ny. *p*

in - - - ner har - mo - ny, har - - - mo - ny. *p*

*rit.* *p*

## 3. Rhythm

Strict tempo ♩ = c.92

**TUTTI VOICES**

**PIANO**

*f*

You can

hear it in the crackle of the breaking dawn when the world is waking up a - fresh. The—

(*tutti handclap*)

blaring horns and your stifled yawn say to paint your colours on the day.

7

Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat.

9 *unis.*

S. 1  
S. 2

A.

Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat.

Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat.

12

You can sense the

You can sense it in the swag-ger of a head-phoned guy when they

14

rhy- thm, sense\_\_\_ the rhy- thm, sense\_\_\_ the  
 pause to type a - no - ther text. The\_\_\_ to and fro, and a - dre - na - line's flow de -

16

rhy- thm, rhy- thm, rhy- thm. Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it.  
 -clare love's time - less o - ver - ture. Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it.

18

Feel the pulse and\_\_\_ set life's beat. Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it.  
 Feel the pulse and\_\_\_ set life's beat. Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it.

20

Feel the pulse and set life's beat.

Feel the pulse and set life's beat.

22

You can note it in the beat-ing of your joy-ful heart when your

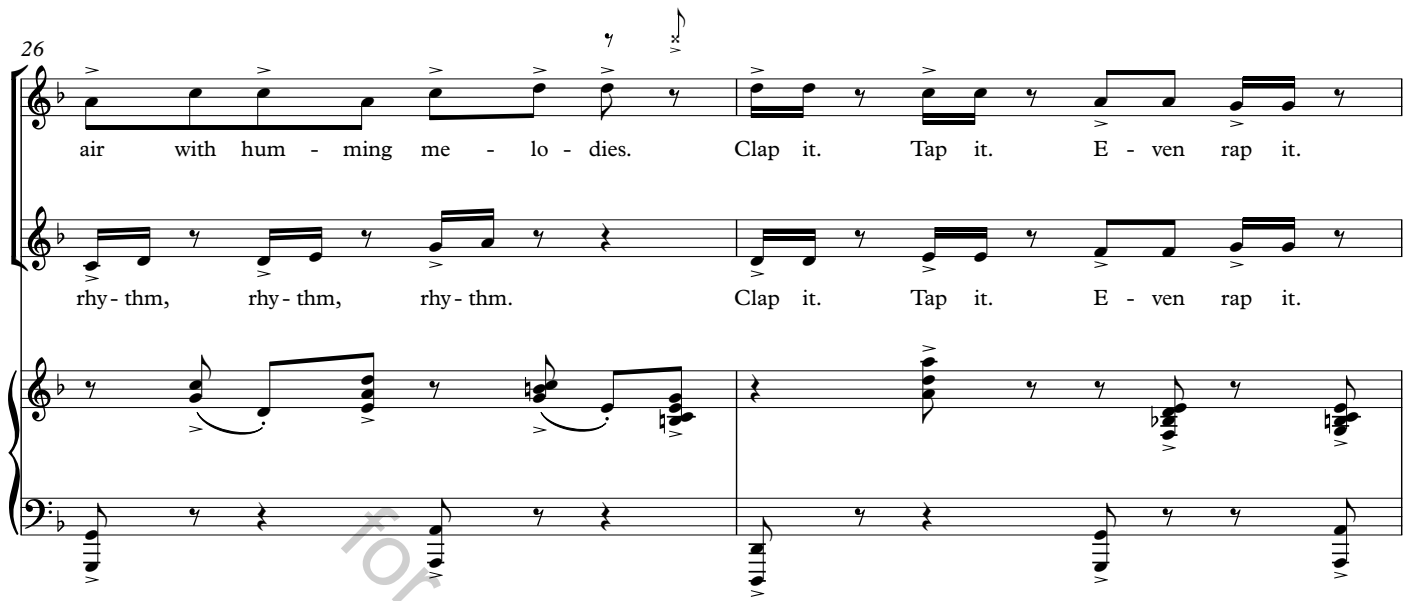
You can note the

24

steps e-cho on the street. The busk-er's riffs and his cheer-ful call fill the

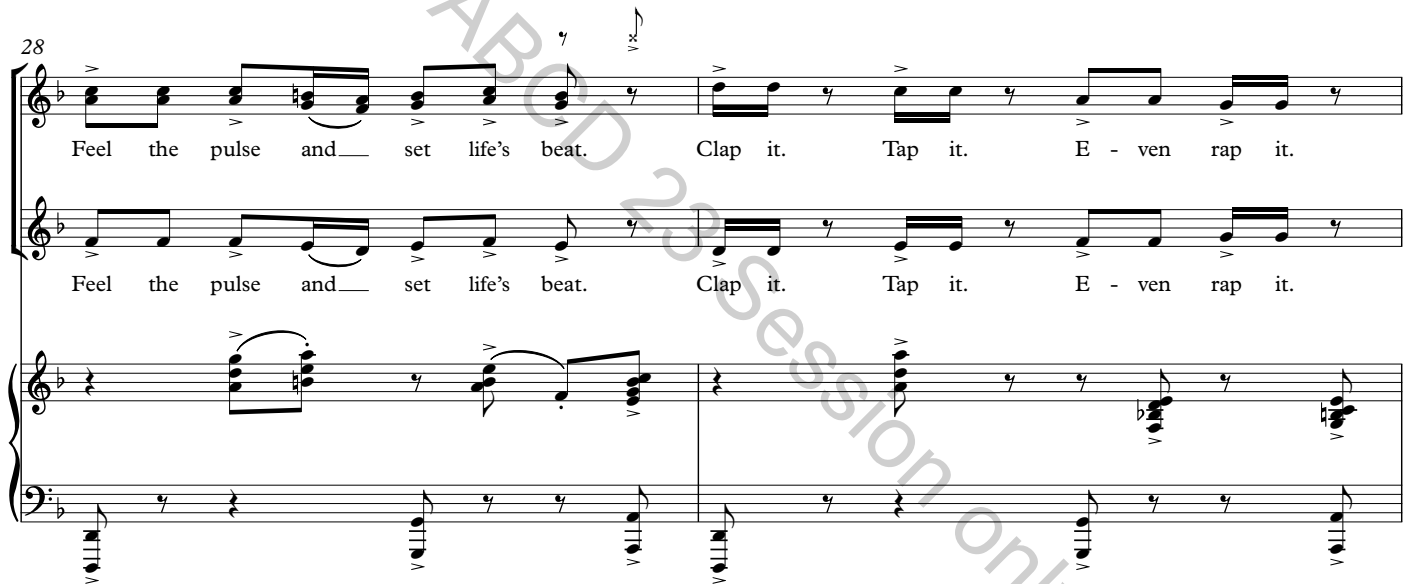
rhy-thm, note the rhy-thm, note the

26



air with hum - ming me - lo - dies. Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it.  
rhy - thm, rhy - thm, rhy - thm. Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it.

28



Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat. Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it.  
Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat. Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it.

30



Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat. You can  
Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat. You can

33

feel it in the sta - tic of the play - ful breeze when the world cries for you to dream. Your\_

feel it in the sta - tic of the play - ful breeze when the world cries for you to dream. Your\_

35

bud - ding thoughts and your soul's blank page say to seize each op - por - tu - ni - ty.

bud - ding thoughts and your soul's blank page say to seize each op - por - tu - ni - ty.

37

Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat.

Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat.

39

Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse, the pulse.

Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse, the pulse.

This system contains two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal staves have lyrics: "Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse, the pulse." The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand.

41

*ff* Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat.

*ff* Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat.

*ff*

This system contains two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal staves have lyrics: "Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat." The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand. A dynamic marking of *ff* is present at the start of the system.

43

Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat.

Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat.

*fff*

This system contains two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal staves have lyrics: "Clap it. Tap it. E - ven rap it. Feel the pulse and\_ set life's beat." The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand. A dynamic marking of *fff* is present at the end of the system.



for Fern and Rob

# 4. Resolution

Calm and with great repose ♩ = c.63

*p dolce*

TUTTI VOICES

My heart has taught me a song to sing in

PIANO

*p dolce*

con Ped.

6

ev - 'ry lone - ly hour, though each pass - ing se - cond marks a mo - ment lost in time. The

9

si - lence holds with - in it o - ther gifts. My youth hid - den in the beat - ing rain like

**poco rit.** *unis.* **a tempo**

S. 1  
S. 2  
A.

stones thrown at my win - dow pane. For all the friends you miss, all the things you can - not fix, know.

stones thrown at my win - dow pane. For all the friends you miss, all the things you can - not fix, know

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

15 *mp*

this: \_\_\_\_\_ All will be safe, all will be sound, all will be bliss,

*mp*

this: \_\_\_\_\_ All will be safe, all will be sound, all will be bliss,

*mp*

18 **poco rit.** *p*

all will be safe, all will be sound, all will be bliss.

*p*

all will be safe, all will be sound, all will be bliss.

**poco rit.** *p*

21 **a tempo** *mp*

*mp*

Life has taught me a way to find the miss-ing chord I need, though mi-nor and ma-jor blend with-in my

**a tempo** *mp*

24 *oo* *poco espress.*

me-mo-ry. The e-cho holds with-in it o-ther voi-ces. Love and

27 *oo* **poco rit.**

For all

loss en-twined in a sin-gle note like hearts and i-ni-tials carved in oak. For all

**poco rit.**

29 **a tempo**

words you can - not find and all that slips from sight and mind, know —

words you can - not find and all that slips from sight and mind, know

**a tempo**

31 *mf* this: \_\_\_\_\_ All will be clear, all will be free, — all will be bliss,

*mf* this: \_\_\_\_\_ All will be clear, all will be free, — all will be bliss,

*f*

**poco rit.**

34 all will be clear, all will be free, — all will be bliss.

all will be clear, all will be free, — all will be bliss.

**poco rit.**

*mf*

**a tempo**

36 *p dolce*  
 Love has taught me a way to find the home key locked with - in. Though our

*p dolce*  
 Love has taught me a way to find the home key locked with - in. Though our

**a tempo**

*p dolce*

39  
 me - lo - dies wind and weave down ma - ny paths. Our mu - sic holds with - in a re - so -

me - lo - dies wind and weave down ma - ny paths. Our mu - sic holds with - in a re - so -

*p dolce*

42 *mp*  
 -lu - tion. oo

*mp*  
 -lu - tion. Voi - ces sing - ing out a soft re - prieve like a

*mp*

44 **poco rit.** *p* **a tempo**

oo For all mu - sic left to soar, and all

pro - mise car - ried on the breeze. For all mu - sic left to soar, and all

**poco rit.** *p* **a tempo**

46 *mp*

our un - writ - ten scores, know this: All will be safe, all will be calm, -

our un - writ - ten scores, know this: All will be safe, all will be calm, -

*mp*

49 *mf*

all will be bliss. For all mu - sic left to soar and all

all will be bliss. For all mu - sic left to soar and all

*mf*



In this passionate four-movement work, composer Bob Chilcott and lyricist Delphine Chalmers explore themes of inclusivity, identity, and unity. The middle movements, 'Harmony' and 'Rhythm', have strong grooves and rhythmic drive, while the outer movements, 'Unison' and 'Resolution', are steadfast and uplifting. *Songs my Heart has Taught Me* brings singers and audience together in a celebration of all that unites us.

This work was originally published in a version for mixed voices, commissioned by the American Choral Directors Association as the 2021 Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission.

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**Bob Chilcott** has been involved with choral music all his life, first as a Chorister and then a Choral Scholar at King's College, Cambridge. Later, he sang and composed music for twelve years with the King's Singers. His experiences with that group, his passionate commitment to young and amateur choirs, and his profound belief that music can unite people, have inspired him both to compose full-time and, through proactive workshopping, to promote choral music worldwide.

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