## KYLE PEDERSON

## A VISION UNFOLDING <br> A Five-Movement Work for <br> SATB Chorus, Piano, and Spoken Word, with opt. Violin, BbTrumpet, and Snare Drum

## Commissioning Choirs

Sponsoring Members
Festival Singers of Florida, directed by Dr. Kevin Fenton Tennessee Tech University, directed by Dr. Craig Zamer
University of Dayton, directed by Dr. Steven Hankle

## Participating Members

VocalEssence, directed by Dr. Philip Brunelle and Dr. G. Phillip Shoultz, III University of Mississippi, directed by Dr. Donald Trott

Northwest Missouri State University, directed by Dr. Adam Zrust
Florida State University, directed by Dr. Kevin Fenton


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Reach Down, Lord by Robert Bode Copyright © 2021. Used with permission. All rights reserved.
Light Transforms the Darkness text and spoken word narrations Copyright © 2021 by Shanelle Gabriel, administered by ECS Publishing group. Used with permission.

I Dream A World by Langston Hughes Copyright © 2023 by The Estate of Langston Hughes and International Literary Properties LLC, by permission of Harold Ober Associates Incorporated.

## FROM THE COMPOSER

A Vision Unfolding...

In 2021, seven choirs around the country commissioned me to write an extended work, centered broadly around themes of social justice. I didn't want to write a big work around these themes merely from my own perspective, so I reached out to Shanelle Gabriel, an African American poet, spoken word artist, singer/songwriter from NYC. Our conversations turned to "what sort of vision do we want to cast for the audience and the singers?"

We determined that, at the core, we hoped to re-articulate and explore what our country has stood for in its best moments. In our foundational texts and speeches, we find powerful declarations of a nation rooted in equality, freedom, justice, and inclusion. Shanelle and I wanted this whole work to be invitational-to be reminded of the compelling vision that we live into in our best moments, and to be invited to say "yes" to more of that.

It is my hope that we lean into the invitation that the choir offers - that each of us might reach out beyond our comfort zone and seek to build bridges of care and connection, finding a better way of being in community. That we might stand in solidarity with those whose voices are too often dismissed, regardless of their skin color, sexual orientation, faith background, or other characteristic. That we might not dismiss, disdain, and judge those whose politics are different from ours, but that we might make the uncomfortable effort to see them as people just as worthy of respect and dignity.

I'm grateful to Shanelle Gabriel, whose beautiful and challenging text is threaded throughout this work. You can read more about Shanelle and her work at ShanelleGabriel.com.

Special thanks to Kevin Fenton, who provided the initial vision and encouragement for this project, and who coordinated the consortium of choirs who commissioned this work.

## PERFORMANCE NOTES



Piano underscore for the spoken word narrations is meant to be very rubato (with the exception of the underscore before Beat! Drums!). Optional repeats are included; aim to reach the last measure of the underscore just as the narration ends, allowing you to seamlessly transition to the next movement of the work.

Recordings of Shanelle Gabriel performing the spoken word elements are available at kylepederson.com. These can help guide and inspire your narrator(s) and provide possible approaches to cadence, rhythm, and rhyme.
You are welcome to craft your own spoken word between movements. You may find you wish to use Shanelle Gabriel's spoken word as inspiration or a jumping off point. Feel free to use existing poetry, fragments of speeches, original text created by your singers, or other means to thread the movements together and tell a compelling story that will resonate with you and your audience.

Audience participation: If you desire the audience to join their voices in singing, a good option is to invite them to join in the reprise of Reach Down, Lord, m. 13-16, page 45 (you may repeat those measures as many times as you'd like). You may also consider adding this element immediately following the conclusion of Movement IV: Light Transforms the Darkness. The pianist can play the accompaniment as written or choose to use the accompaniment found in m. 56-59 of Reach Down, Lord. The choir may sing the unison melody or the SATB harmony found in m. 56-59.

## ABOUT EACH PIECE

## Movement I: Reach Down, Lord

The poet is asking God's spirit to reach down and lift us up-lift us out of the pit, out of the darkness, and lift us to the light...lift us up to wholeness. In the spoken word that precedes this movement, Shanelle Gabriel does something important: the narrator asks not only God to reach down-but the narrator challenges the listener to reach down...to get into the mess with those who are hurting and to lift them up. So when the choir sings the refrain, Reach Down, Lord, we hear not only a cry to God, but also an invitation to all of us, to reach down - and out-to another.

## Movement II: Beat! Drums!

This iconic Walt Whitman poem was written during the Civil War. It's an in-your-face text, exploring how ordinary daily life is impossible during war; everything is disrupted. Whitman is also rallying the listener-at the time his Union countrymen-to join the righteous fight to end slavery, and to preserve the union that was the United States. In the spoken word that precedes this movement, Shanelle sets this poem up beautifully by challenging us to rally around the cause of justice...to make our quest today for justice central to our lives...inviting us to think of this text not as a battle cry to fight against one another with weapons, but to fight for each other, giving all we have to make this vision of wholeness in community a reality. Musically, the beat of the drum, the blow of the bugle, along with meter and rhythm changes, highlight the incessancy of the Whitman text.

## Movement III: All of Me

I think we all sense our communities becoming more fractured; we witness individual relationships fraying in our neighborhoods, schools, churches, places of work, and even our families. One of the root causes of this is, I believe, how quick we are to judge others - and hold others in contemptfor their politics, their religion, gender or sexual expression, skin color, class, education level, and a host of other characteristics. This piece is an invitation to lay down our judgments. It's also an invitation to see those aspects of identity that are important to people...but to see people around us as more than just a collection of isolated characteristics...to see all of them.

## Movement IV: Light Transforms the Darkness

Shanelle's text is a call to action: to live our light and love out into the world-a world that desperately needs light and love. It seemed fitting that this piece includes a section where both spoken word and singing happen simultaneously, joining the two primary artistic expressions of the greater work and allowing all choir members to give voice to the sense of immediacy present in the spoken word.

Movement V: I Dream a World
The work concludes with the iconic Langston Hughes text. The choir and narrator have been casting a vision, and it's hard to state it better than Hughes; I dream a world where none are scorned, where love will bless the earth and peace its paths adorn. At the end of the movement, the listener will hear earlier melodies reprised as all voices are gradually layered in; and for the first time, all instruments sound together, building to a thunderous conclusion that invites us all to say, "yes...that's a vision I want to help make real."

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SATB and Piano, with opt. Violin, Trumpet, and Snare Drum

## TEXTS

## 1. Reach Down, Lord

Reach down, Lord.
Reach your justice down.
When we walk on the broken road,
Reach your justice down.
If we stumble into the pit
And the dark is all we see,
Reach below and lift us up;
Reach your justice down.
Reach down, Lord.
Reach your justice down.
When we walk in the shadow of death, Reach your justice down.
—Robert Bode

## 2. Beat! Beat! Drums!

Beat! beat! drums!-blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows - through doors-burst like a ruthless force, Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation, Into the school where the scholar is studying,
Leave not the bridegroom quiet - no happiness must he have now with his bride,
Nor the peaceful farmers any peace, ploughing their field or gathering grain,
So fierce you whirr and pound you drumsso shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums!-bloŵ! bugles! blow!
Over the traffic of cities - over the rumble of wheels in the streets;
Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the hoûses? no sleepers must sleep in those beds,
No bargainers' bargains by day - no brokers or speculatorswould they continue?
Would the talkers by talking? would the singers attempt to sing?
Would the lawyers rise in the court to state their case before the judge?
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums - you bugles wilder blow.
Beat! beat! drums!-blow! bugles! blow!
Make no parley-stop for no expostulation,
Mind not the timid - mind not the weeper or prayer,
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties,
Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the hearses,
So strong you thump O terrible drums - so loud you bugles blow.

## 3. All of Me

Look at my skin.
Do you see only skin, or the soul within...
do you see what's true?
Look who I love.
Do you view me as less,
like none of the rest of me matters to you?

Turn off the talk on the air, and the voices who seem to just care about dividing and hiding us where you won't see.

Look at my faith.


Do you see my creed, and choose to believe that's all of me?

Look at my vote.
On that alone are you likely to show
contempt for me?
You don't have to see.
But if you take the time to look at me, you'll see the same fears and a good heart, and the same tears that tear you apart.
See the same love, the same hope, the same need, the same joy.

So look at my skin.
See the skin and the soul within.
See what's true.
Look who I love.
And see my faith and my vote,
but not those alone,
seek to know me, too.
Turn up the voices of truth.
Learn to let mercy through.
Love will guide us to
a world where we
see.
All of me.
Turn and see.
Will you see?
All of me.

## 4. Light Transforms the Darkness

Light transforms the darkness, so go...go and let your light out. Love is what we harness, so go...go and live your love out.
We are all unified by the way our heart beats
What you feel, I feel
Different palettes and hues and variety
The Creator's tapestry
We need to see the light
Don't let the darkness hide our humanity
This is a calling.
We've been blinded by hate we were taught to believe That's not how it should be If my brother or sister is chained There's no way I can say I'm free We are the change we need So that equality can be reality spoken word:
Calling you to set your heart ablaze
Raise the torch, pave the way
So all can say I am free
Calling for all to have the ability to dream To see ourselves in every being I want you to be free

For all to find home Wherever they may go
Step into action, words no longer hollow We will fight for you to be free

Called to stand for all races, abilities, religions, identities No matter who you loye You are worthy
You deserve to be free
I will fight for you to be free
This is our calling
We are invited into each other's life
We are called to live love
Called to be that light


## 5. I Dream a World

I dream a world where one
No other one will scorn, Where love will bless the earth And peace its paths adorn

I dream a world where all Will know sweet freedom's way, Where greed no longer saps the soul Nor avarice blights our day.

A world I dream where black or white, Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth And every one is free,

Where wretchedness will hang its head And joy, like a pearl, Attends the needs of all humankindOf such I dream, my world!

## Prologue 1: spoken word

Take my hand
Join me
As we press forward
Take
My
Hand
As we move with unrelenting speed
Towards a new world
One that WE
Breathed
And forged
Together
A place where all
Are welcomed
A true community
Take my hand
Join me as we infuse freedom
Weave compassion
Embody the brilliance
See this is what happens
When we fashion
A world centered in love
This is not a walk in the park
Nor for the faint of heart
This is a journey
All are invited to take part
Where we reach down deep
Reach down
Past comfortable
Reach down past what's superficial
Reach down where past and present pain overflows
Reach past the temporary
To bring hope and healing that will endure
We will reach back to pass the torch
Each of us a spark
But together a flame
That roars
Take my hand
And then take another's
For this is what you are called for
To walk down this broken road
To demand that every voice is heard
To forge a world where justice is assured

## A Vision Unfolding

for SATB Chorus, Piano, and Spoken Word, with opt. Violin, Bb Trumpet, and Snare Drum

Prologue 1: underscoring


Seo.

spoken word begins
Take my hand. Join me.
As we press forward take my hand.

As we move with unrelenting speed towards a new world, one that we breathed and forged together,

a place where all are welcome.
Join me as we infuse freedom, weave compassion. . .
A true community. Take my hand.
See, this is what happens when we fashion a world


This is not a walk in the park, nor for the faint of heart. This is a journey.

Where we reach down deep. . .
Reach down past comfortable. . .
Reach down past what's superficial. . .


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We will reach back to pass the torch.
Each of us a spark, but together a flame that roars.


Take my hand, and then take another's.
For this is what you are called for. . .
To demand that every voice is heard.
To forge a world where justice is assured.
molto rit.


SATB and Piano

## Robert Bode



Leo. harmonically throughout




(legato thru m. 23)



road.












## Prologue 2: spoken word

Shhhhh
We begin with a reverent silence
A stillness
Only heartbeats echo
This quiet calls us to interrupt it It is time
Let's take a collective breath Lungs swell
To tremor brass with breath
Collect the wooden extension of hands To beat snares
Each bang and clang
An alarm to awaken us to
The history of injustice
To the oppression of today
This collision of sound
Awakening the sleepers
Teachers
Bargainers
Preachers
There is no place for pillows and prayers alone
This is a battle cry
A beacon for communities
Transformation from passivity to activity
Transition from dream to reality
From unjust peace to one earned for all
This war for justice is continuous
With none of us untouched
So all of us should be drawn to the fight
All join in on this battle cry
~Shanelle Gabriel

## Prologue 2: underscoring

Piano with opt. Snare Drum


To tremor brass with breath. Collect the wooden extension of hands.
To beat snares. Each bang and clang an alarm to awaken us to the history of injustice.


There is no place for pillows and prayers alone.


This is a battle cry. . A beacon for communities. . . Transformation from passivity to activity.



So all of us should be drawn to the fight. All join in on this battle cry.


## 2. Beat! Drums!

SATB and Piano, with opt. Trumpet and Snare Drum
Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

*Implode the "T" of beat throughout the piece.







beds,
no
bro-kers
or spec-u - la - tors -






$$
61 \quad \mathrm{D}
$$

Tpt.
S. D.










$$
89 \text { Slightly slower }(d=90)
$$



Slightly slower ( $d=90$ )






## [reprise] Reach Down, Lord: spoken word

Beat...Beat...
Blow...Blow...
Through the windows
Through doors
Beat...Beat...
Blow...Blow...
There is no place for pillows and prayers alone
We have opened our eyes
And cannot return to slumber
After hearing the cries of the oppressed and marginalized We have sounded the alarm
Now we march forward
Beat...Beat...
Blow...Blow...
We walk down this broken road
Broken nations
Broken patience
We feel the need for reconstruction in our core
It is time for us to march towards mending
Bringing love and labor
So what's broken can be transformed*
Pressing forward
Looking to the sky
We say
Reach down, Lord

- Shanelle Gabriel
*The asterisk (added) in the poem above indicates the cue in the music beginning on the next page for the pianist to conclude the repeated measures $1-4$, and continue on to the music beginning in measure 5 .


## [reprise] Reach Down, Lord: underscoring

spoken word begins
Beat... Beat... Blow... Blow.
Through the window (continues. . .)

| (section concludes with) |
| :--- |
| So whats broken can be transformed |

So

(narr. cont.)
Pressing forward. . . Looking to the sky. . .


## Prologue 3: spoken word



## Prologue 3: underscore



# 3. All of Me <br> SATB and Piano, with opt. Violin 

Kyle Pederson
Ethereal (d. = 52)
opt. Violin

(

*Play in absence of violin




37 B a tempo





accel. poco a poco


66




77 not rushed (allow time for text to unfold)


Turn up the voi - ces of truth.

loco


89




## Prologue 4: spoken word

Your heart is open
Now it's your time to shine
Not for you to live in the spotlight
But so that others can thrive
This is a call
That cannot be ignored
This fight is within you
This light cannot be diffused
So illuminate through the hate
Gleam while renewed by MLK's dream
Let the marginalized be equalized
Through love and action
Go and transform this world
Be the light we need
~ Shanelle Gabriel

## Prologue 4: underscore



This is a call that cannot be ignored. The fight is within you.
So illuminate through the hate.


Gleam while renewed by MLK's dream. Let the marginalized be equalized. . . . . .through love and action.


Go and transform this world. Be the light we need. molto rit.


## 4. Light Transforms the Darkness

SATB and Piano, with opt. Trumpet and Snare Drum
Shanelle Gabriel
Shanelle Gabriel and Kyle Pederson
$d=\mathbf{1 2 5}\left(\cdot \sigma=\overparen{J}^{-3} \overparen{d}\right)$
[heavy swing on the eighths]


* key signature indicates A-flat Dorian
**implode the "T" of light throughout the piece

* consider a soft "D" instead of a hard "T" in let

14









48
S. D


$$
\left(\begin{array}{lll}
a \\
a
\end{array}\right.
$$





*always bring out the spoken word until end of piece








## Prologue 5: spoken word

While this musical work may be finished
Know that OUR work is nowhere complete
In a world where oppression remains hidden behind tradition
We refuse to allow prejudice to be justified by laws and religion
No longer will we use differences
As ammunition for division
Because we know
That passivity is the enemy of advancement
We're on the path to equity
We are part of the process
Of breaking chains,
Cycles rooted in pain,
United under one aim:
Freedom for ALL
Embracing courage over comfort
Using our privilege to be advocates
No longer silent
This spirit of activism
Actively flows within us
This is where we tap in
Everyone,
All in
Each step
Each act

## Each vote

Each time we push back
We reimagine and rebuild the world we know
To one where love overflows
We must persevere and believe
That Justice for all can be made real
You and I
We
Have the power to achieve what Langston Hughes once dreamed
~ Shanelle Gabriel

## Prologue 5: underscoring


spoken word begins
While this musical work may be finished, know that our work is nowhere near complete.

In a world where oppression remains hidden behind tradition, we refuse to allow prejudice to be justified by laws and religion.


No longer will we use difference as ammunition for division.
Because we know passivity is the enemy


Embracing courage over comfort.
Using our privilege to be advocates.
Of breaking chains, cycles rooted in pain.


To one where love overflows.
We must persevere and believe that justice for all can be made real. You and I. . . We. . . have the power to achieve what Langston Hughes once dreamed.


# 5. I Dream a World <br> SATB and Piano, with opt. Violin, Trumpet, and Snare Drum 

Langston Hughes (1902-1967)





molto rit.




$$
55 \triangle \mathbf{A} \text { Meno mosso }(\downarrow=85)
$$


$\rightarrow$ A Meno mosso $(d=85)$







79
Violin

and joy, like a pearl,__
at - tends the needs of all hu-man-kind.














