

Music, Text, and Arrangement by
Cheryl B. Engelhardt

The Listening

SSATB + soloist/rapper + optional children's choir

Text*

Violence! Silence! Silence! Violence! Time!

Time has come for us to move on.

We must move on.

There is a new spirit rising.

I turn my back when I hold my tongue

I cannot be silent.

I cannot stand by and leave these words unsung.

I cannot be silent.

Trust and praise is reason to make better choices.

But it's our duty to speak for the voiceless.

We must hear their broken cries.

It starts with listening.

This is the re-creation of the listening...

Interruption, oppression, suppression, exploitation, violence, control, hypocrisy...

Somehow, this madness must stop.

To be on the right side of the revolution

means it's time we shift our view of peace so we can alter our evolution.

War is not the way.

Can we be tranquil and somewhat tame,

rational while we stay sane?

Solve the problem with a solution thereof.

That being unconditional love?

Love.

Not as a weak condition.

But as the key for the ignition of peace.

The time is now.

There is a new spirit rising.

We must act in the face of risk.

We must choose to transform,

and we need to be brisk.

I cannot be silent. I will not be silent.

It is time to close the gap,

and stop the distancing, stop inhibiting,

stop what we are witnessing.

It's time to break the silence with the listening.

Bold = SSATB choir. Regular = soloist/rapper

Children's Choir:

If I was given one wish, I'd stop and give it to you, with love.

Notes about “The Listening”

This piece was written in December 2017 after careful study of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech titled “Beyond Vietnam- A Time To Break The Silence”. The speech was given on April 4th, 1967, a year before his assassination, at Riverside Church in New York City. It was a denunciation of America’s involvement in the Vietnam War, in addition to a cry for the American people to listen to the unheard voices. King was criticized for bringing politics to his civil rights platform.

What intrigued me most about this speech is “the silence” to which he refers. The world, certainly, was not silent. There was madness (as he states, “somehow this madness must cease”), there was war, there were atrocities being committed both abroad and at home, in the United States. The “silence” to which he referred was not that of global society and events, it was a *personal* silence, a complacency, an avoidance. In breaking the silence, King was not, in my opinion, suggesting revolutionaries and anti-war supporters to grow *louder* than their opposition. No, he was encouraging those who have not spoken up to speak. He was believed that those who *could* speak should break the silence for those who could not.

Dr. King urged listeners to embrace “unconditional love for all mankind” and made clear that love is not something weak or sentimental, but rather the access to initiating change and making history.

In my opinion, Dr. King started listening. He was listening to the oppressed, the abused, the poor, the scared, and the unloved. In “The Listening”, I set out to recreate how he listened. This is the re-creation of the listening.

Musically, I pulled rhythmic inspiration from Dr. King’s speech. Though straight-forward in nature, it was extremely poetic. With lines dripping with alliteration, such as “...rendering our priorities so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war”, there was a heartbeat pulsing through it. I wanted to translate this to the staff.

The addition of the children’s choir came after the February 14, 2018 school shooting in Parkland, Florida. The students protesting for stricter gun control had a similar narrative to Dr. King’s: we will no longer be silent. Enough is enough. The children’s choir is meant to represent the peace of childhood, interrupted by violence (fairly literally).

When the choir enters again at letter H, they are joining the adults, lifting us up, interrupting our ineffective past ways of merely *wanting* reform and turning it into action.

~Cheryl B. Engelhardt

About the Composer

Cheryl B. Engelhardt’s music career began as a young piano prodigy whose second love, after piano, was singing with choirs and theater groups. She studied orchestration at Juilliard School of Music after graduating from Cornell University. It was at Cornell where she discovered a cappella and became the musical director of the school’s oldest all-female a cappella group. Cheryl has also performed in the White House and Lincoln Center, and became a founding member of and composer for the internationally acclaimed non-profit choir Voices21C.

Cheryl is an accomplished singer-songwriter who has recorded four piano-pop albums, toured the United States and Europe with her band, and garnered over 40 TV show placements of her songs.

Along her journey, Cheryl became committed to helping other musicians find their ideal careers. She launched *In The Key Of Success*, a website of resources for musicians. She founded the musician’s lifestyle blog *Living On Gigging* and hosts the music business podcast *Key Conversations*.

Cheryl lives in the Hudson Valley with her mountain guide husband and basset hound. Her website is www.cbemusic.com.

*Enter optional children's choir

H

61 *f*

S1 will not be sil-ent! It is time to close the gap _____ and stop. Stop.

S2 will not be sil-ent! It is time to close the gap _____ and stop the dis-tanc-ing, stop in-hib-it-ing,

A will not be sil-ent! It is time to close the gap _____ and stop the dis-tanc-ing, stop in-hib-it-ing,

T will not be sil-ent! It is time to close the gap _____ and stop the dis-tanc-ing, stop in-hib-it-ing,

B will not be sil-ent! It is time to close the gap _____ and stop the dis-tanc-ing, stop in-hib-it-ing,

67 *ff* *pp*

S1 Stop what we are wit-ness-ing. It's time it's time it's time it's time to break It's

S2 stop what we are wit-ness-ing. It's time _____ to break It's

A stop what we are wit-ness-ing. It's time it's time it's time it's time to break It's

T stop what we are wit-ness-ing. It's time it's time it's time it's time to break It's

B stop what we are wit-ness-ing. It's time _____ to break It's

73 *mp* *mf*

S1 time to break the sil-ence with the lis-ten-ing. It's time to break the sil-ence with the lis-ten-ing.

S2 time to break the sil-ence with the lis-ten-ing. It's time to break the sil-ence with the lis-ten-ing.

A time to break the sil-ence with the lis-ten-ing. It's time to break the sil-ence with the lis-ten-ing.

T time to break the sil-ence with the lis-ten-ing. It's time to break the sil-ence with the lis-ten-ing. the

B time to break the sil-ence with the lis-ten-ing. It's time to break the sil-ence with the lis-ten-ing. Break

On downbeat of bar 82, choir slides to find a unison note. Once in unison, hold the "ng" sound and fade out. The pitch can be different each performance.

78 *ff* *rit. mf* *p* *pppp*

S1 sil-ence! with the lis-ten-ing ng

S2 sil-ence! with the lis-ten-ing ng

A sil-ence! with the lis-ten-ing ng

T 8 Sil-ence! with the lis-ten-ing ng

B 78 sil-ence! with the lis-ten-ing ng