1001122P FRANKLIN J. WILLIS SSA US $2.95

SSA CHOIR, WITH PIANO

FRANKLIN J. WILLIS

BE THE LIGHT

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ALSO AVAILABLE FOR 3-PART TREBLE, 3-PART MIXED, SAB, SATB AND TTB

ENDEAVOR MUSIC PUBLISHING

Be the Light

Foreword

"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty." – Queen Maya Angelou

I am still processing the brilliance of Amanda Gorman. I've read Amanda's poem The Hill We Climb several times and even watched the replay of the video. Each time I read or hear the poem, I am moved. I couldn't help but think about Maya Angelou and how she must be rejoicing in heaven to see the manifestation of her work.

Then I begin to think about all the people standing behind Amanda on that podium that we couldn't see. Amanda's mentors, teachers, coaches, community advocates, college professors, friends, and family. The village of people who saw greatness in Amanda before the world saw it.

Do you have an Amanda Gorman in your classroom?

I can truly imagine Amanda's elementary teacher giving a project to the class and informing them that they needed to write a poem on a topic of their choice. I can visualize Amanda writing that poem and possibly feeling insecure about sharing it with the class. With hesitation, Amanda turned the poem in to the teacher, and I can see Amanda's elementary teacher standing in awe of the gift, beauty, and talent of this young student. I can also picture that teacher sharing how amazing the poem was with Amanda's family and the school community.

I can also imagine the opposite of that story. How many Amandas are there in our classrooms who go unnoticed?

Thank you to Amanda's village, who "saw the beauty" and nurtured the gift so that The Hill We Climb would be shared with the world.

As music educators, our reach is far and wide. Use this song to acknowledge and praise the light within each of our students. The light of Amanda Gorman inspired me to write this song to celebrate individuality. My teaching philosophy is to tap into the unique gifts and talents of each of our students. Working together as a community, we can begin to *Be the Light*.

Introducing and Teaching

When introducing this song, consider what might be most effective for your students! Aside from teaching the music by rote, you could adapt and extend the piece to explore the following:

History and Culture → Explore Gospel music, the history of this art form, and analyze how Be the Light draws from the Gospel tradition.

Aural Skills → In the recording, there are many layers of harmonies. Can your singers audiate the harmonies that are present and perform them by ear?

Creativity → Using this song as a springboard, have students create their own songs based on poetry and literature that speaks to them.

Improvisation → Using the voice or classroom instruments, provide students with opportunities to improvise simple melodic patterns in the interlude sections.

Literacy → Analyze Amanda Gorman's poem and watch her speech. Invite students to reflect and share what her work means to them. What do music and poetry have in common? How are they different?

Student-led Activities → Ask your students for ideas! How would they take this song and do something new with it?

This song would be great as a stand-alone lesson plan or a fully realized arrangement that could be performed at a school concert. No matter how you use this, be sure to encourage your students to be the light in their communities and the world! If you do sing this piece with your kids, share your experiences and tag @fwillismusic. I'd love to hear from you!

About The Composer

For more than fourteen years, educator and leader Franklin Willis has served the students and families of Nashville. Through music, he has educated, mentored, and developed young minds to be forward-thinking contributors to society. A servant leader specializing in culturally relevant teaching, empowering student voices, and developing teachers to reach their full potential, Willis finds true joy in serving others.

A three-time CMA Foundation Music Teacher of Excellence, Willis is a trailblazer and catalyst for change in the field of music education, as well as a rising leader within the broader music industry. In his current role as Community Impact Director at the CMA Foundation, he paves the way for students to experience equitable access to opportunities in the music industry beyond the classroom.

As the former elementary music instructional coach for Metro Nashville Public Schools, Willis focused on equipping teachers with resources and professional support to strengthen their practice. He guided colleagues through the realities students face surrounding equity, inclusion, and racism, while advocating for music education as a tool to teach cultural awareness, build community, and inspire a love for learning.

Willis believes every child has musical potential and deserves a teacher who will see the best in them. He has consistently used his network to create opportunities for students, producing music videos and organizing large-scale performances such as those at CMA Fest, Nashville's four-day music festival.

An author and presenter, Willis has created and facilitated professional development sessions for teachers of all grade levels, sharing his innovative and culturally responsive teaching practices. He collaborates with colleagues, community organizations, local businesses, colleges, and universities to advocate for music education and design curriculum that engages and inspires students. His dedication to equity and innovation has earned him national recognition as a leader in the field.

Willis is also a children's book author. He graduated from the University of Memphis in 2009 with a Bachelor of Music Education (Choral Music emphasis), earned a Master of Education in Nonprofit Leadership from Belmont University in 2012, and most recently completed an Education Specialist degree in Instructional Leadership from Tennessee Technological University.

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*for SSA Choir, with piano**

Words and Music by Franklin J. Willis

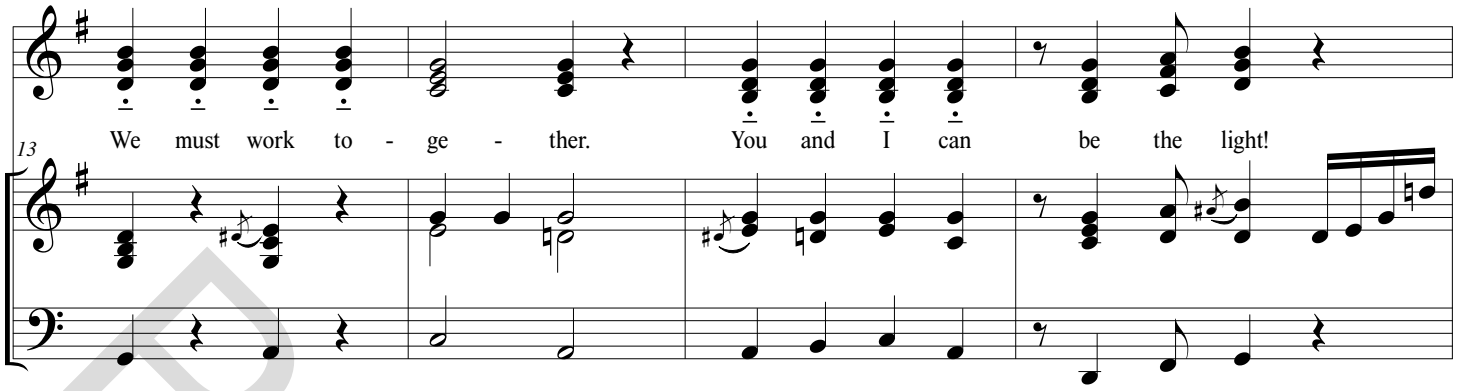


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**Also available:*
3-Part Mixed, 3-Part Treble, SAB, SATB, and TTB

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Interlude 2



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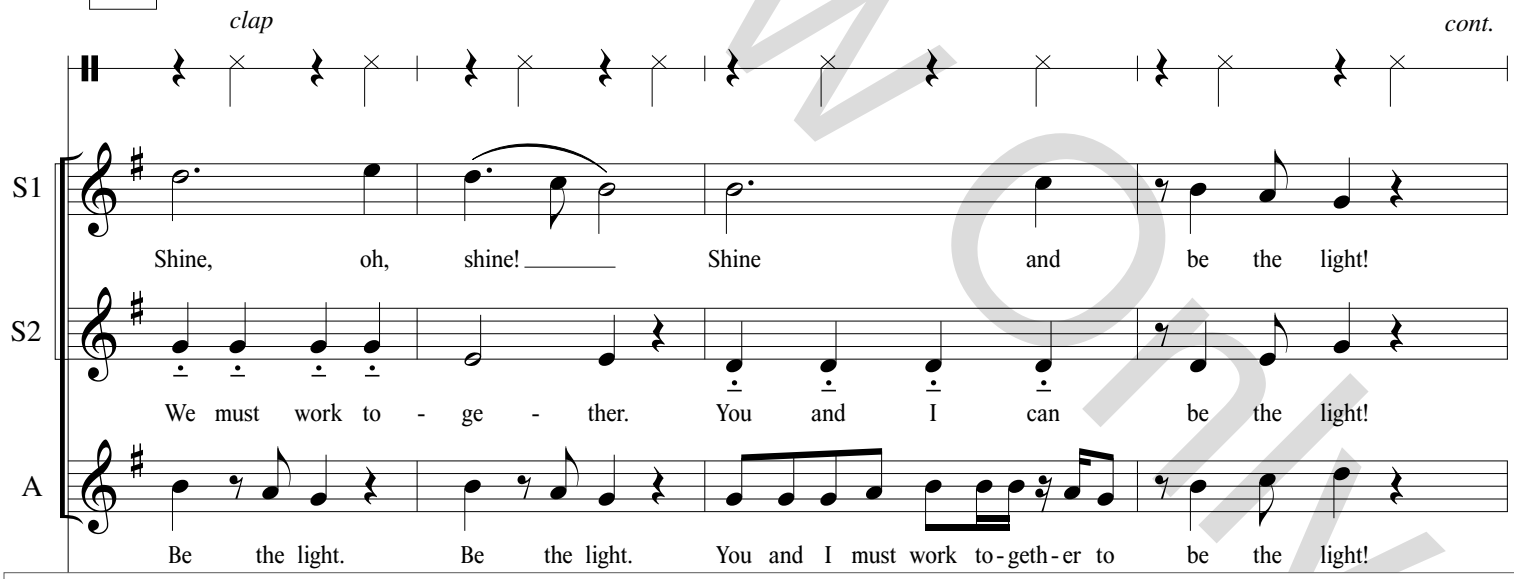


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Interlude 3

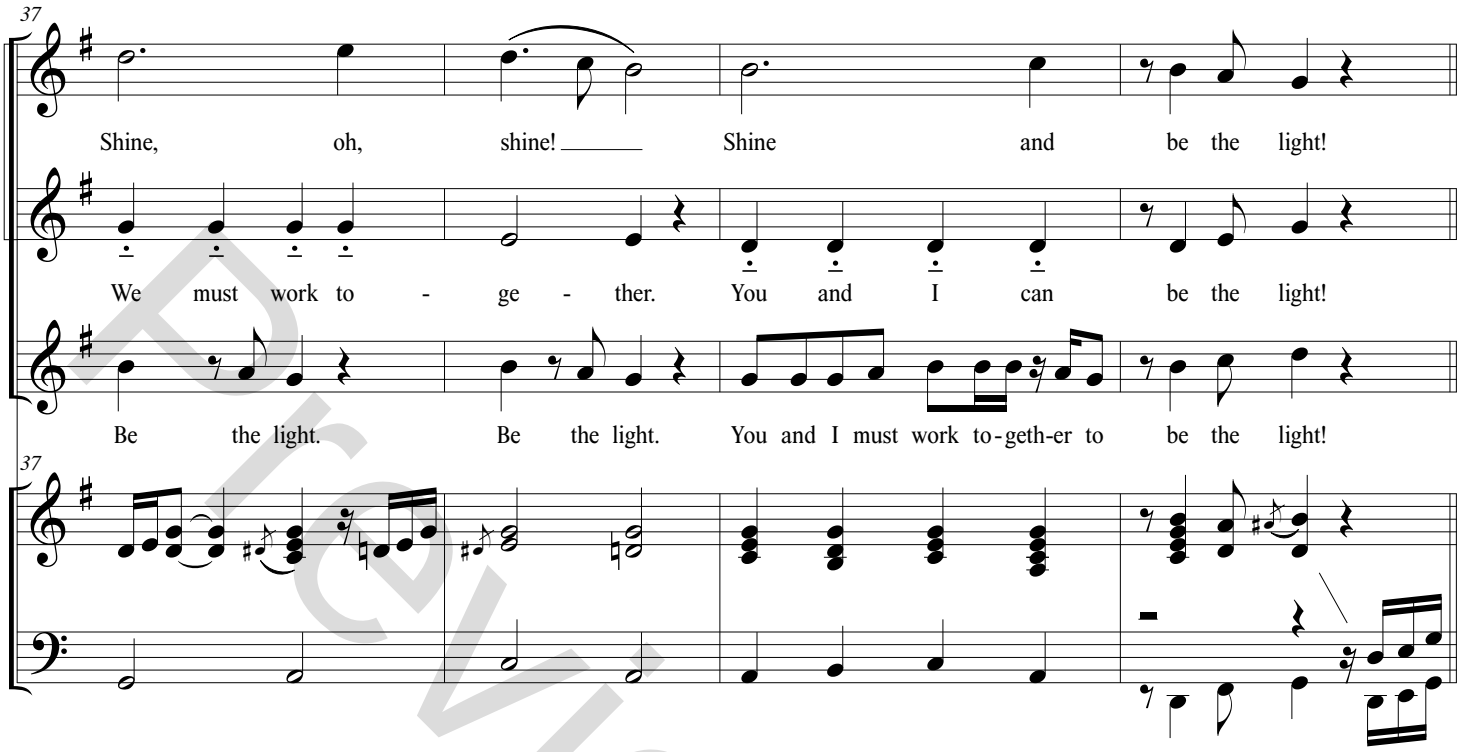


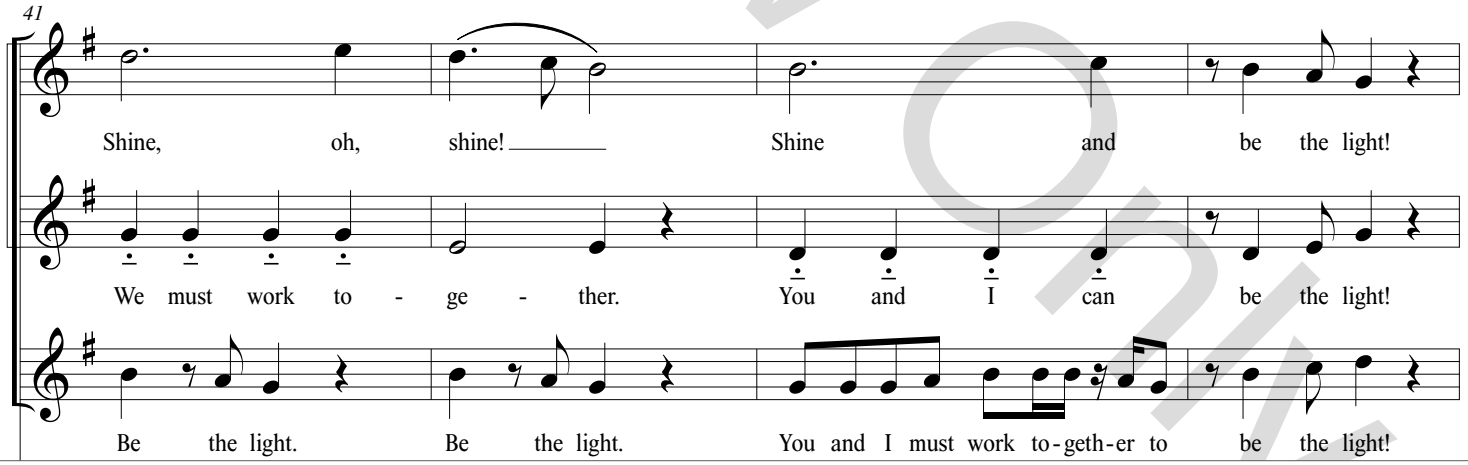
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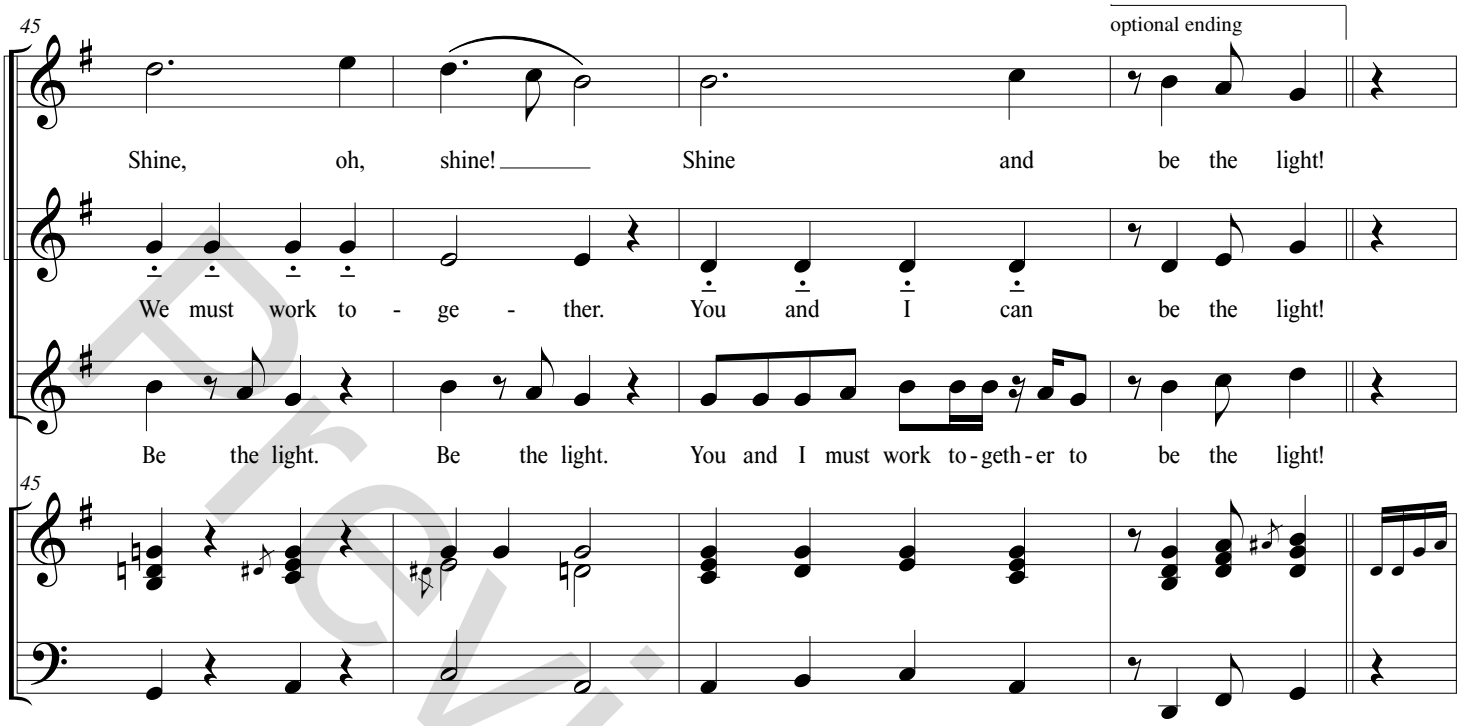
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