Brilee Music the Voice of Choral Music

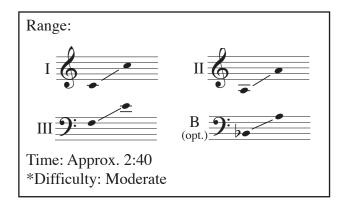
DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE

Three-Part Mixed, with optional Baritone, accompanied

Traditional Spiritual

Arranged by LON BEERY and PAMELA PEREC LEE





Performance Notes

Down by the Riverside is one of the most beloved of all African-American spirituals. Spirituals are among the most important American folk songs. Written by slaves prior to the Civil War, these songs are often full of faith and hope in the midst of some of life's most difficult circumstances. Many spirituals have more than one meaning. Behind some of the religious texts are often coded messages meant to communicate with other slaves about escaping to freedom. Because of the recurring phrase, "I ain't gonna study war no more," this spiritual has become especially popular during times of war, especially among those politically opposed to the current war.

It is not absolutely clear what is meant by going "down by the riverside." Certainly a riverside might be a place where slaves might have gathered for a baptism following a conversion. However, it may be that the author what thinking more figuratively, possibly referring to death where the believer looks forward to "crossing the river" to go to Heaven. Or, it might be referring to a time in the future where many look forward to a time of universal peace, as when the Biblical writers wrote, "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore." (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3 NIV). Whatever the exact meaning of the song, it is hopeful, joyful, and energetic. That should come across to the audience especially through each choir member's joyous facial expression. As this arrangement is in a gospel style, you may want to sway back and forth using a simple steptouch with the feet and adding some hand claps on beats two and four, perhaps beginning at the key change at measure 40. Have fun!

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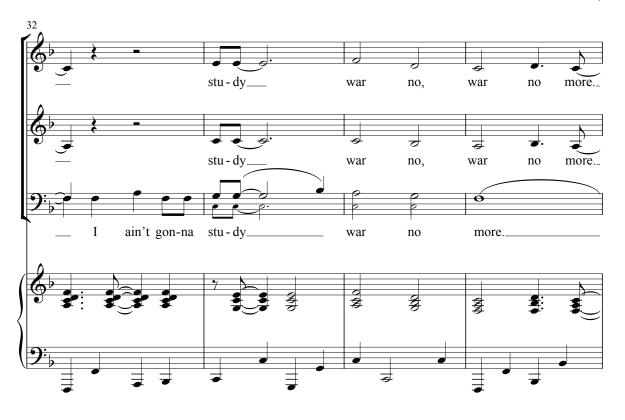










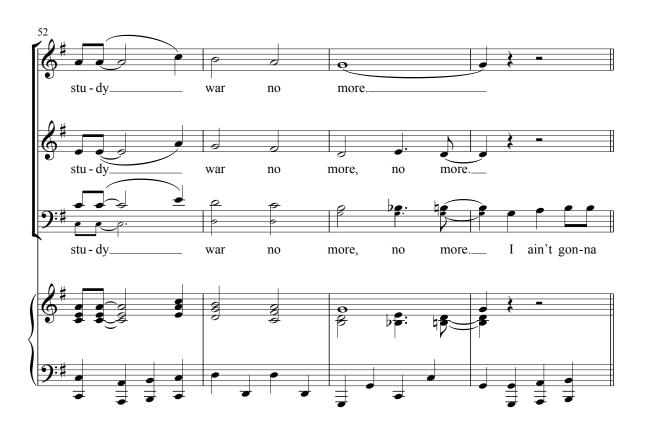
























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