

# KEEP YOUR LAMPS TRIMMED AND BURNING

Two-Part, accompanied

African-American Spiritual

Arranged by  
GLENDA E. FRANKLIN

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Range:



Time: Approx.: 2:05

\*Difficulty: Moderate

# Performance Notes

The history of African-Americans during the time of slavery is not as well documented and rich in information as it is in other cultures. While life was often difficult for slaves to endure, these hardships created an inner strength and continued faith that freedom awaited them in heaven. History has revealed that music during these times was not only a reflection of that strength and faith, but also an ingenious method of communication with one another.

As with traditional folk music, it is often difficult to determine the composer and/or origin of spirituals. The songs were passed along in many ways: one person singing to another: mother to child, and neighbor to neighbor to neighbor to neighbor. As they were passed on, the songs would sometimes change because the singer either couldn't remember it exactly as they originally heard it or thought it could be improved upon.

It is thought that *Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning* was one of the code, or communication, songs used in the under-ground railroad. The words take on a new meaning when "keep your lamp trimmed and burning" means watching out for a conductor (the person responsible for moving fugitives from place to place) of the underground railroad.

Another Biblical connection to the song comes from Matthew 25: 1-13 which tells the parable of ten bridesmaids given the honor of attending a wedding. Each, awaiting the bridegroom, is carrying a lamp. The bridesmaids expect the bridegroom (Jesus) to arrive sometime during the night. Five of the bridesmaids are wise and have brought sufficient oil for the night; five are foolish and have not.

When the bridegroom arrives late into the night, the foolish bridesmaids ask the wise ones to share their oil, but are refused. As they go in search for oil, the wise bridesmaids are there to welcome the bridegroom; the foolish ones arrive too late and are excluded.

This arrangement is an effective piece for teaching independent part-singing to younger choral students. Always work for homogenous vowel sounds in order to achieve a beautiful tone quality. Long notes should always be energized and have direction.

When the melodies merge, listen carefully for balance and blend to ensure a beautiful performance. Keep the tempo moving forward with a sense of urgency. Be sure to get a good breath so you can hold out the notes in the final phrase. I hope you enjoy this arrangement!

Glenda E. Franklin

# KEEP YOUR LAMPS TRIMMED AND BURNING

Two-Part, accompanied

*African-American Spiritual*  
*Arranged by GLENDA E. FRANKLIN*

1  $\text{♩} = 104$  *p*

Keep your lamps trimmed and burn -

4

- ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your -

The image shows a musical score for a two-part setting of the African-American spiritual 'Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning'. The score is arranged by Glenda E. Franklin. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked as 104 beats per minute. The score is divided into two systems. The first system starts with a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics 'Keep your lamps trimmed and burn -'. The piano accompaniment starts with a piano (p) dynamic and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics '- ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your -'. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Illegal to Print or Copy' is overlaid on the score.

lamps trimmed and burn - ing, for this work is al - most done...

This system contains measures 7, 8, and 9. The vocal line (treble clef) begins with a whole rest in measure 7, followed by a half note G4 in measure 8, and a half note F#4 in measure 9. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

I *mp* Keep your\_ lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your  
II *mp* Keep your\_ lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your

This system contains measures 10, 11, and 12. It features two vocal parts, I and II, both marked *mp*. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern as the previous system.

lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your\_ lamps trimmed and burn -  
lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your\_ lamps trimmed and burn -

This system contains measures 13, 14, and 15. The vocal lines continue with the same melody. The piano accompaniment concludes the phrase with sustained chords in the right hand and moving lines in the left hand.

16 *mf*  
 ing, for this work is al-most done.\_\_\_\_ Chil - dren  
*mf*  
 ing, for this work is al-most done.\_\_\_\_ Chil - dren

19  
 don't get wea - ry, chil - dren, don't get  
 don't get wea - ry, chil - dren, don't get

22  
 wea - ry, chil - dren, don't get wea - ry, for this  
 wea - ry, chil - dren, don't get wea - ry, for this

25

1. *mp* 2. *mp*

work is al-most done. Chil - dren, done. Chil-dren,

*mp* *mf*

work is al-most done. Chil - dren, done. Keep your

28

don't get wea - ry, chil-dren, don't get

lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn -

*mp*

31

wea - ry, chil - dren, don't get wea - ry for this

ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing for this

34

work is al - most done. — *f* Keep your —

work is al - most done. — *mf*

36

*mf* Keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing, Keep your lamps

lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn -

39

trimmed and burn - ing, Keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing,

- ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing for this

work is al-most done.\_\_\_\_ The work is

work is al-most done.\_\_\_\_ The work is

al - most done.\_\_\_\_

al - most done.\_\_\_\_

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