

Program Notes

Help is the first of three compositions based on Anne Lamott’s book *Help Thanks Wow: Three Essential Prayers*, her unique take on keeping prayer simple. Responding with these three words alters how we see things. Asking for help makes us feel less helpless. Giving thanks reminds us of the good in our lives. Uttering “wow” means we notice wonders around us. As C. S. Lewis wrote, “prayer changes me.”

Following the longstanding choral tradition of the sung mass, I translated some of Lamott’s writings into Latin including one word for each prayer: *adiuva* (help), *gratias* (thanks), and *mirabilia* (wonderful). I musicalized the natural rise and fall of Lamott’s words, noting that “wow” is really a series of vowels: oo-ah-oo, as is “ow” (ah-oo) in response to pain (prelude).

The recurring interval of a minor second creates aural tension, a corollary to emotional anguish. This half step, specifically between a white piano key above a black one, captures a piercing clash, a visible reminder of a white police officer kneeling on the neck of a black man pleading for his life.

The chantlike Latin phrases at the end of each movement reflect the speaker’s altered state, transformed by the act of praying. For the final movement, I incorporated Lamott’s translation of amen: “and so it is,” as if to say, “it’s out of my hands”—making peace with uncertainty through surrender, letting prayer change us.

—Philip E. Silvey

Text

Adiuva nos ambulare per hoc

(Help us walk through this.)

Hold my friends in your light.

Rerum a deo melius cum quaeritur auxilium

(Things get better when we ask for help.)

—Anne Lamott

Philip E. Silvey is Associate Professor of Music Teaching and Learning at the Eastman School of Music where he teaches the Treble Chorus, Choral Arranging, and other courses in music education. He has served as guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator in numerous states and directed state honors choruses in Maryland, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, and Georgia. He held the position of president of the Maryland-DC chapter of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and the role of Repertoire and Resources Chair for SSAA Choirs for the New York state chapter of ACDA. He has presented interest sessions at the International Society for Music Education World Conference and at national, regional, and state ACDA and NAfME (National Association for Music Education) conferences in the United States. He has contributed to two textbook series, *Experiencing Choral Music* and *Teaching Music through Performance in Choir, Volumes II and III*. His scholarly writings have been published in the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *Music Educators Journal*, the *Bulletin for the Council for Research in Music Education*, *Choral Journal*, and the *Arts and Learning Research Journal*. His choral compositions and arrangements, published by Santa Barbara Music, Carl Fischer, Boosey & Hawkes, Hal Leonard, and E. C. Schirmer Music Company have been performed by all-state and national honors choruses in the United States. Learn more at www.ecspublishing.com.

AVAILABLE EDITIONS

Complete work		Available individually	
Help, Thanks, Wow	1.3767	Help	1.3717
		Thanks	1.3736
		Wow	1.3737

Help

Adiuva

for SSA Chorus and Piano

Anne Lamott
(b. 1954)

Philip E. Silvey
(ASCAP)

Prelude

Freely ♩ = ca. 72

Piano

p

rit.

Red.

4

accel.

♩ = ca. 82

pp

Red.

6

S1

pp *f*

ah oo

S2

p *ff*

ah oo ah oo

A

p *ff*

ah oo ah oo

mf

Text: Excerpts from HELP, THANKS, WOW: THREE ESSENTIAL PRAYERS by Anne Lamott.
Copyright © 2012 by Anne Lamott, used by permission of The Wylie Agency LLC.

Copyright © 2024 Galaxy Music Corporation, Inc.,
a division of ECS Publishing Group. www.ecspublishing.com
All rights reserved.

10

Copyright Review

13

Musical score for measures 13-14. The score is written for three vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The vocal parts are currently silent.

15

Musical score for measures 15-16. The score is written for three vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The vocal parts enter in measure 15 with a whole note chord, marked *mp*. The piano part continues with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both marked *mp*.

Help

17 *pp accel. rit.*

ah oo

ah oo

ah oo

p *accel.* *rit.* *dim.*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

21 *a tempo* ♩ = ca. 85 *mp*

a di - u - va — nos am - bu -

mp

a di - u - va — nos am - bu -

mp

a di - u - va — nos am - bu -

a tempo ♩ = ca. 85 *pp* *p*

Ped.

24

la - re per hoc, a - di -

la - re per hoc, a - di -

la - re per hoc, a - di -

Ped.

This block contains the musical notation for measures 24 through 26. It features three vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The lyrics are 'la - re per hoc, a - di -'. A 'Ped.' (pedal) marking is present below the piano part at the end of measure 26.

27

u - va nos,

u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos, -

u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos, -

This block contains the musical notation for measures 27 through 30. It features three vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The lyrics are 'u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos, -'. The piano part includes a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking at the end of measure 30.

30

mf

a - di - u - va nos, a - di -

mf

a - di - u - va nos, a - di -

mf

a - di - u - va nos, a - di -

mp

Ped.

33

u - va nos, a - di - u - va

u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos,

u - va nos, a - di - u - va, a - di - u - va

36

nos, a - di - u - va nos,

a - di - u - va nos,

nos, a - di - u - va nos,

The musical score for measures 36-38 features three vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal parts enter with the lyrics 'nos, a - di - u - va nos,'. The piano accompaniment provides a harmonic foundation with chords and moving lines in both hands.

39

mp
a - di -

mf
a - di -

mf
a - di -

p
Ped. Ped. Ped.

The musical score for measures 39-42 continues with the vocal parts and piano accompaniment. Measures 39-41 show the vocalists holding the note 'a' while the piano accompaniment plays a rhythmic pattern. Measure 42 features a piano introduction (Ped.) in the piano part. The dynamics are marked as mezzo-piano (mp), mezzo-forte (mf), and piano (p).

43

p

u - va, a - di - u - va, a - di - u -

u - va _____ nos am-bu - la - re per hoc,

u - va _____ nos am-bu - la - re per hoc, per

mp

Ped.

46

va,

mp

a - di - u - va nos, a - di -

mp

hoc a - di - u - va nos, a - di -

p

49

49

p

a - di - u - va,

mf

u - va nos, a - di - u - va

mf

u - va nos, a - di - u -

mf

52

52

mf

a - di - u - va nos,

nos, a - di - u - va nos,

- va nos, a - di - u - va nos, a - di -

55 *cresc.*

a - di - u - va, a - di - u - va, a - di - u - va,

cresc.

a - di - u - va, a - di - u - va, a - di - u - va,

cresc.

u - va, a - di - u - va, a - di - u - va, a - di -

58 *(cresc.)* **f**

a - di - u - va, a - di - u - va nos, a - di -

(cresc.) **f**

a - di - u - va, a - di - u - va nos, — a - di -

(cresc.) **f**

u - va, a - di - u - va nos, a - di -

61 *rit.*

u - va nos, _____

u - va nos, _____

u - va nos, _____

rit.

p

Ped.

Ped.

8vb

65 **Tempo II** ♩ = ca. 82

mp

Hold my friends _____

mp

Hold my

Tempo II ♩ = ca. 82

p

Ped.

67

in your light,

friends in your light,

mp

in your light,

This block contains measures 67 and 68 of a musical score. It features three vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has four sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#). The vocal parts enter in measure 67 with the lyrics 'in your light,'. The piano accompaniment begins in measure 68 with a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting line in the left hand. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Copyrighted Material' is overlaid across the page.

69

mf hold my friends _____

mf hold my friends _____

mf hold my friends _____

mp

This block contains measures 69 and 70 of the musical score. The vocal parts continue with the lyrics 'hold my friends' followed by a long note in measure 69. The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting line in the left hand. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Copyrighted Material' is overlaid across the page.

71

in your light,

in your light,

in your light,

mf RH

This block contains measures 71 and 72 of a musical score. It features three vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in a soprano clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The lyrics 'in your light,' are written under each vocal staff. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand (RH) and a left hand. The right hand has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with eighth notes. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Copyrighted material' is overlaid across the page.

73

f hold my friends

f hold my friends

f hold my friends

f

This block contains measures 73 and 74 of the musical score. The vocal parts continue with the lyrics 'hold my friends' and are marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment features a more active right hand with sixteenth-note patterns, also marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The left hand continues with a steady accompaniment. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs in both hands. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Copyrighted material' is overlaid across the page.

75

in your light, *unis.* your

in your light, your

in your light, your

Red.

77

light.

light.

light.

f *p sub.*

79

Musical score for measures 79-81. Measures 79 and 80 are empty staves. Measure 81 features a piano accompaniment with the instruction *appassionato* above the staff and *f* below the staff. The piano part consists of a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The right hand melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note, and then a series of eighth notes. The left hand bass line consists of a series of eighth notes. The measure ends with a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic marking.

82

♩ = ca. 85

mp

Musical score for measures 82-84. Measures 82 and 83 feature vocal lines with the lyrics "a - di - u - va". The vocal lines are in three parts (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor) and are marked *mp*. Measure 84 features a piano accompaniment with the tempo marking *♩ = ca. 85* above the staff. The piano part consists of a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The right hand melody starts with a quarter note, followed by a half note, and then a series of quarter notes. The left hand bass line consists of a series of quarter notes. The measure ends with a *Ped.* (Pedal) marking.

85

nos, a - di - u - va nos, a - di -

nos, a - di - u - va nos, a - di -

nos, a - di - u - va nos, a - di -

88

u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos, u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos, u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos,

u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos, u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos, u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos,

u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos, u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos, u - va nos, a - di - u - va nos,

Tempo I ♩ = ca. 72

Things get better when we ask for help

91

p chant-like

Re-rum a - dep - to me - li - us cum quae - ri - tur aux -

Re-rum a - dep - to me - li - us cum quae - ri - tur aux -

Re-rum a - dep - to me - li - us cum quae - ri - tur aux -

Tempo I ♩ = ca. 72

94

rit.

i - li-um, quae - ri - tur aux - i - li-um.

i - li-um, quae - ri - tur aux - i - li-um.

i - li-um, quae - ri - tur aux - i - li-um.

Ped.