

Commissioned by the West Virginia Vocal Music Association and premiered by the West Virginia All-State Chorus
on March 5, 2022 in Charleston, West Virginia, Dr. Scott Glysson, conductor

The Gift to be Free

based on the American Shaker song "Simple Gifts"

for SATB Chorus and Piano*

Traditional
G. Walker, alt.

Gwyneth Walker

The Gift to be Free is an updated *revisiting* of the well-known Shaker song **Simple Gifts**. The original song expresses Shaker values of simplicity and humility ("to bow and to bend we will not be ashamed"). Reference is made to the Shaker love of dancing ("by turning, turning, we come 'round right"). This is a joyous song, either *a cappella* or with lively piano accompaniment.

A new verse is added, based on Shaker values: "to sing out right, with a voice of harmony, love and light." We are then reminded of our gifts – to be simple, and (very American), to be free!

With strength and energy (♩ = 120)

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It begins with a piano introduction of three measures, marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) enter at measure 4, also marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The lyrics are: "'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free, _____". The score includes a first ending bracket labeled 'A' above the vocal lines and the piano part. The piano part concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained bass note in the left hand.

*Accompaniment for brass quintet, percussion and piano is also available

26 **D**

S
turn, turn will be our de - light, _____ 'til by
unis.

A
turn, turn will be our de - light, _____ 'til by

T
turn, turn will be our de - light, be our de - light, 'til by

B
turn, _____ turn _____ will be our de - light, be our de - light, 'til by

D

And.

29

S
turn - ing, turn - ing we come 'round, come 'round, come 'round

A
turn - ing, turn - ing we come 'round, come 'round, come 'round

T
turn - ing, turn - ing we come 'round, come 'round, come 'round

B
turn - ing, turn - ing we come 'round, come 'round, come 'round
unis.

33

S right. _____

A *unis.*
right. _____

T right. _____

B right. _____

37 **E**

S *mf*
gained. . . _____

A *mf*
gained. . . _____

T *mf*
When true sim - plic - i - ty is gained, _____ to _____

B *mf*
When true sim - plic - i - ty is gained, _____ to _____

E

with slight pedal

54 **G** Slightly slower (♩ = 112)

S *p* low... to

A *p* low... to

T gift to be hum-ble, 'tis a gift to be low,*

B gift to be hum-ble, 'tis a gift to be low,*

G Slightly slower (♩ = 112)

p

And.

57 *gently, peacefully*

S walk in peace wher - ev - er you may go,

A *gently, peacefully* walk in peace wher - ev - er you may go,

T go... And

B go... And

And.

*Shaker humility = bow down low

60 **H**

S *mf* right... with a

A *mf* right... with a

T *mf* *unis.* when we find the truth* we must sing out right.

B *mf* when we find the truth* we must sing out right.

H

mf

ped.

63

S voice of har-mo - ny, love and light,

A voice of har-mo - ny, love and light,

T har - mo - ny, love and light,

B har - mo - ny, love and light,

*Shaker truth = path to righteousness

73 *unis. (f)*

S *'tis a gift to be, 'tis a gift to be, 'tis a gift to be,*

A *(f)*
'tis a gift to be, 'tis a gift to be, 'tis a gift to be,

T *sim - ple and free, sim - ple and free, sim - ple and free,*

B *sim - ple and free, sim - ple and free, sim - ple and free,*

76 **J**

S *'tis a gift to be, gift to be sim - ple, 'tis the gift to be free, —*

A *'tis a gift to be, gift to be sim - ple, 'tis the gift to be free, —*

T *sim - ple and free, 'Tis the gift to be sim - ple, 'tis the gift to be free, —*

B *sim - ple and free, 'Tis the gift to be sim - ple, 'tis the gift to be free, —*

J

85

S
A
T
B

it will be in the val - ley of love
unis.

it will be in the val - ley of love

it will be in the val - ley of love

(*Rec.*)

88

S
A
T
B

and de - light. *unis.* *ff* very celebratory
'Tis the gift to be sim - ple, -

and de - light. *ff* very celebratory
'Tis the gift to be sim - ple, -

and de - light. *ff* very celebratory
'Tis the gift to be sim - ple, -

and de - light. *unis.* *ff* very celebratory
'Tis the gift to be sim - ple, -

rit. to end

ff

(*Rec.*)

92 (rit.)

Soprano: 'tis the gift to be free!

Alto: 'tis the gift to be free!

Tenor: 'tis the gift to be free!

Bass: 'tis the gift to be free!

Piano: (rit.)

3:15
June 8, 2020
New Canaan, Connecticut