

## PROGRAM NOTES

These words of Langston Hughes have proven their immortality this year in American history, and not in the way one would hope. The 1951 poem, *Harlem*, still captures the essence of disillusionment in a deceptively simple series of vivid questions. *Dreams*, a lesser-known poem, charges the reader to “hold fast to dreams” while making plain the misery of a life without them. One poem summarizes the pain of broken promises and the other encourages faith that things will get better because the alternative is absolute despair. Both contain essential truths made evident in this turbulent 2016.

When asked to write a piece in response to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, the possibility of dialogue between these succinct literary gems was an instant inspiration to me. Today’s rampant cynicism casts Hughes’ words in a tired light—these sentiments seem to be the stuff of childhood and naïveté—but my hope is that all who experience this piece will put aside our jaded lenses of fear and choose to be vulnerable and continue to dream.

—Joel Thompson

**Joel Thompson (b. 1988)**

For biographical information visit:  
[www.ecspublishing.com/composers](http://www.ecspublishing.com/composers)

To the memory and loved ones of MarShawn McCarrel II, Alton Sterling, and Philando Castile,  
to Dr. Laura Emiko Soltis and the students of Freedom University Georgia,  
to Benito Thompson, Janae Thompson, and Cecil Walker,  
to Dr. Eric Nelson and the Atlanta Master Chorale,  
and to dreamers everywhere.

# Hold Fast to Dreams

(Recitative and Aria)

for SATB Chorus (divisi) and Piano

*Harlem and Dreams*

Langston Hughes (1902–1967)

Joel Thompson

(b. 1988)

**Jubilantly** (♩ = c. 132)

*mf*

Soprano  
Free at last, — Free at last?

Alto  
Free at last, — Free at last?

Tenor  
Free at last, — Free at last?

Bass  
Free at last, — Free at last?

Piano  
*mf*

The musical score consists of five staves. The vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are in 4/4 time and feature a melody with triplets and a 'div.' (divisi) marking. The piano part is in 4/4 time and features a bass line with triplets and a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking. The lyrics are 'Free at last, — Free at last?'. The score is marked 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and 'Jubilantly' (♩ = c. 132).

Words: *Harlem and Dreams* are © Copyright by the Estate of Langston Hughes, and are used by permission of Harold Ober Associates, Inc.

Music: © Copyright 2018 by Highgate Press, Inc.,  
a division of ECS Publishing Group. [www.ecspublishing.com](http://www.ecspublishing.com)  
All rights reserved.



11 *mp unis.*

S What hap - pens\_ to a dream de - ferred? Does it

A *mp unis.* *pp* *mp*  
What hap - pens\_ to a dream de - ferred? Does it

T *mp*  
What hap - pens\_ to a dream de - ferred? Does it

B *mp unis.* *pp* *mp*  
What hap - pens\_ to a dream de - ferred? Does it

Pno.

14 *mf* *dim.* *p*

S dry up like a rai - sin in the sun? Or

A *mf* *dim.* *p*  
dry up like a rai - sin in the sun? Or

T *mf* *dim.* *p*  
dry up? Or

B *mf* *dim.* *p*  
dry up? Or

Pno.

17

S *f* fes-ter like a sore and run? *div.*

A *div.* *f* *unis.* 5 fes-ter like a sore and run?

T *f* 8 fes-ter like a sore and run?

B *f* 3 fes-ter like a sore and run?

Pno. *f* *cresc.*

20

S *mp unis.* or

A *mp* or

T *ff* Does it stink \_\_\_ like rot-ten meat

B *ff* Does it stink \_\_\_ like rot-ten meat

Pno. *sfz*

23

S *mf* *div.* *unis.*  
crust and su - gar o - ver like a syr - up - y

A *mf* *unis.*  
crust and su - gar o - - - ver

T *mp* *mf*  
or crust o - - - ver

B *mp* *mf*  
crust and su - gar o - - - ver

Pno.

25

S *rit.*  
sweet?

A *rit.*  
sweet?

T *rit.*  
syr - up - y sweet?

B *rit.*  
syr - up - y sweet?

Pno. *rit.*

28 Slower ♩ = 60  
*mp*

S  
 May - be it just sags like a heav - y load

A  
 May - be it just sags like a heav - y load

T  
 May - be it just sags like a heav - y load

B  
 May - be it just sags like a heav - y load

Slower ♩ = 60

Pno.  
 (for rehearsal only)

31

S

A

T

B

Pno.

Ped.

*mp*

Ped.



*mp* ————— *ff*  
Ah. \_\_\_\_\_

32

S *pp* or does it, Ah. \_\_\_\_\_

A *pp* or does it ex - plode? *mf* Ah. \_\_\_\_\_ *ff*

T *pp* or does it ex - plode? *mf* Ah. \_\_\_\_\_ *ff*

B *pp* or does it ex - plode?

Pno. *ff*

35 Urgently (♩ = c. 84)

S

A

Pno. *f*

Urgently (♩ = c. 84)

*l.h.* *l.h.*

*r.h.*

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

pedal harmonically



37 *f unis.*

S  
Hold fast to dreams for when

A  
Hold fast to dreams for when

Pno.

39

S  
dreams die

A  
dreams die

Pno.

41

S  
Life is a bro - ken win - ged bird that

A  
Life is a bro - ken win - ged bird that

Pno.

43

S  
can - not fly \_\_\_\_\_

A  
can - not fly \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

45

*f*

S  
Hold fast to dreams for when

A  
Hold fast to dreams for when

Pno.

47

S  
dreams go \_\_\_\_\_

A  
dreams go \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

49

S  
Life is a bar - ren field

A  
Life is a bar - ren field

Pno.

51

S  
fro - zen with snow

A  
fro - zen with snow

T

B

Pno.

*l.h.*

53 *f* Ah, \_\_\_\_\_

S \_\_\_\_\_

A *f* Ah,, \_\_\_\_\_ dreams

Hold fast to dreams for when dreams die,

T *f unis.* Hold fast to dreams for when dreams die,

B *f* Hold fast to dreams! Ah!

Pno. *(for rehearsal only)*

56 \_\_\_\_\_

S \_\_\_\_\_ Life \_\_\_\_\_

A die, \_\_\_\_\_ (*unis.*) Life is a bro - ken

T dreams die, \_\_\_\_\_ Life is a

B \_\_\_\_\_ Life is a bro - ken

Pno.

58

S  
can - not

A  
win - ged bird that can - not fly

T  
bird that can - not fly

B  
win - ged bird that can - not

Pno.

60

S  
fly Hold fast to dreams for when *unis.*

A  
Hold fast to dreams for when

T  
Hold fast to dreams for when

B  
fly Hold fast to dreams for when

Pno.

63

S  
dreams go

A  
dreams go

T  
dreams go

B  
dreams go

Pno.

65 *unis.*

S  
Life is a bar - ren field

A

T

B

Pno.

67

S  
fro - zen with snow

A  
fro - zen with snow

T

B

Pno.

Copyrighted material

69

S  
Life is a bar - ren field, *div.*

A  
Life is a bar - ren field, *div.*

T  
Life is a bar - ren field,

B  
Life is a bar - ren field *div.*

Pno.

Copyrighted material

71

S *Hold,*  
What hap-pens\_ to a dream de-ferred? Hold fast to

A *Hold*  
*Hold* What hap-pens to a dream?

T *div. unis.*  
Hold fast to dreams! Hold fast to

B *unis.*  
fro-zen with snow. Hold fast to dreams!

Pno.

74

S *unis.*  
dreams! Hold fast to dreams!

A *unis.*  
Hold fast to dreams! Hold fast to

T  
dream de-ferred? Hold fast to dreams!  
What hap - pens\_ to a dream?

B  
Hold fast to dreams! Hold

Pno.



77

S Hold fast to

A dreams! Hold fast to

T Hold fast to

B Hold *unis.* fast to

Pno.

79 *rit.* ***ff*** *mf* As in a dream (♩ = 52)

S dreams, dreams! (m.....s)

A ***ff*** *mf* dreams, dreams! (m.....s)

T ***ff*** *mf* dreams, dreams! (m.....s)

B ***ff*** *mf* dreams, dreams! (m.....s)

Pno. *rit.* As in a dream (♩ = 52)

84

S *p* *mf*  
fast  
Hold fast to

A *p* *mf*  
Hold fast

T *p* *mf div.*  
Hold fast,

B *p* *mf*  
Hold fast,

Pno. (for rehearsal only)

87

S *p*  
dreams. Dream! \_\_\_\_\_

A *p*  
Dream! \_\_\_\_\_

T *p*  
Dream! \_\_\_\_\_

B *p div.*  
Dream! \_\_\_\_\_

Pno. *pp*

