

Craig K. Sandford

SONGS OF ADVENTURE

A song cycle for
T(B)B choir and piano

Text by Henry Rago, Walt Whitman, John Mark Green,
Langston Hughes, and Henry Van Dyke

Commissioned by the Northfield Mount Hermon Concert Choir;
Sheila Heffernon, conductor

CKSandford Music
craigksandford.com

Songs of Adventure

I. Song Before Adventure (1934) Henry Rago (1915-1969)

The air is shattered with our breath,
The startled mountains toss.
Come, there are stars for us to pluck
And skies to swing across.
This path awaits our wild young feet,
The planets gleam aflutter:
So much for us to do!
What makes the candle sputter?

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II. Song of the Open Road (1856; excerpts) Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Afoot and lighthearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.
Strong and content I travel the open road.
I think heroic deeds were all conceived in the open air
and all free poems also.
I think I could stop here myself and do miracles.
I think whatever I shall meet on the road I shall like,
and whatever beholds me shall like me.
I think whoever I see must be happy.
Camerado, I give you my hand! I give you my heart,
Will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?
Strong and content we travel the open road.

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III. Set Fire John Mark Green (21st century)

Set fire to all your maps, forget how it's always been.
We're explorers of the heart,
Learning to dream again.

ABOUT THE PIECE

"Songs of Adventure" is a through-sung cycle of five short songs, exploring themes of exploration, companionship, dreams, and aspiration. Together, these five texts create a dramatic arc that depicts a traveler moving through different seasons of life's journey. These stages are depicted with contrasting tempos, and changing musical modes and styles.

The piece opens with youthful energy and aim-for-the-stars optimism in Mixolydian mode, followed by bold and swaggering self-confidence in the Dorian-mode second movement. The third movement uses Lydian mode to explore love's guiding influence, followed by the jazz-inspired harmonies of the fourth movement to capture Langston Hughes' poem about dreams. The final movement triumphantly states the desire to live well and journey joyfully, concluding with a musical return to the first movement as the traveler recalls his boyhood aspirations.

Although designed to be sung consecutively without break, if not all five songs are to be programmed, any one of them can easily be omitted by skipping from the double bar line at the end of the previous song to the double bar line marking the beginning of the next song. -CKS

The adventure of a lifetime, with Love alone as our guide.
Exotic places beyond imagination—
ones we've longed for deep inside.

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IV. Hold Fast to Dreams (1922) Langston Hughes (1901-1967)

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

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V. Life Henry Van Dyke, Jr. (1852-1933)

Let me but live my life from year to year,
With forward face and unreluctant soul;
Not hurrying to, nor turning from the goal;
Not mourning for the things that disappear
In the dim past, nor holding back in fear
From what the future veils; but with a whole
And happy heart, that pays its toll to
Youth and Age, and travels on with cheer.

So let the way wind up the hill or down,
O'er rough or smooth, the journey will be joy:
Still seeking what I sought when but a boy,
New friendship, high adventure, and a crown,
My heart will keep the courage of the quest,
And hope the road's last turn will be the best.

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Songs of Adventure

Text by Five Authors

for T(B)B chorus

Music by Craig K. Sandford

commissioned by The Northfield Mount Hermon School
Concert Choir, Sheila Heffernon, conductor

I. Song Before Adventure -- text by Henry Rago*, 1934

With excitement! (♩. = c. 76)

The musical score is written for Tenor, Bass, and Piano. It is in the key of D major and 6/8 time. The tempo is marked 'With excitement!' with a quarter note equal to approximately 76 beats per minute. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 5. The second system covers measures 6 through 10. The lyrics are: 'The air is shat-tered with our breath, The start-led mount-ains toss. Come, there are'. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and chords in the left hand. Dynamics include *mp*, *mf*, *f*, and *cresc.*.

Tenor

Bass

Piano

breath, The start-led mount-ains toss. Come, there are

breath, The start-led mount-ains toss. Come, there are

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11

stars for us to pluck And skies to swing a - cross. This
stars for us — to pluck And skies to swing a - cross. — This

mp *f* *mp*

p *mf* *f*

8va

16

path a - waits our wild young feet, gleam! gleam a - flut - ter: —
path a - waits our wild young feet, The plan - ets gleam a - flut - ter: — So

cresc. *f*

cresc. *f*

cresc.

20

f so much for us — to do! What makes the cand - le sput-ter? _____

mp much, _____ for us — to do! What makes the cand - le sput-ter? _____

f *mp*

24

rit.

f *mp rit.*

II. *Song of the Open Road* (excerpts) -- text by Walt Whitman (1856)

28 **Jauntily** (♩ = c. 100) *mf* *lightly, separate throughout*

A - foot and light-heart - ed I take to the o - pen road,

A - foot and light-heart - ed I take to the o - pen road,

mf

32 *legato* *separate f*

the world be - fore me, The long brown path be - fore me lead - ing wher - ev - er I

Health - y, free, The long brown path be - fore me lead - ing wher - ev - er I

legato *separate f*

f

36

choose. Strong and con - tent I tra - vel the o - pen

choose. Strong and con - tent I tra - vel the o - pen

40

road. I think he - ro - ic deeds were all con - ceived in the o - pen air — and

road. and

44

I think I could stop here my - self and do mir-a-cles.

all free po-ems al - so. I think I could stop here my - self and do mir-a-cles.

p *mf* *f*

49

mf

I think what-ev-er I shall meet on the road I shall like,

mf

I think what-ev-er I shall meet on the road I shall like, and what-ev-er be - holds me shall like me,

mf

53

I think who - ev - er I see must be hap - py.

I think who - ev - er I see must be hap - py. Ca - mer - a - do, I give you my hand!

57

Ca - mer - a - do, I give you my hand! my heart, Will you come tra - vel with me?

I give you my heart, Will you come tra - vel with me? Shall we stick by each oth - er as long

61

Strong and con-tent we tra-vel the o-pen (road.)

— as we live? Strong and con-tent we tra-vel the o-pen (road.)

mp *poco rit.* *p*

III. *Set Fire* -- text by John Mark Green*, 21st century

Slow and ethereal (♩ = c. 64)

66

Set fire to all your maps, for-get how it's al-ways been. We're ex-plor-ers of the heart,

Set fire to all your maps, for-get how it's al-ways been.

p *mp* *p* *mp*

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70

p Learn-ing to dream a - gain. *mf* Ex -

mp The ad - vent - ure of a life-time, with Love a - lone as our guide. *mf* Ex -

73

mp o - tic plac-es be-yond im - ag - i - na-tion-- ones we've longed for deep in - side. *p*

mp o - tic plac-es be-yond im - ag - i - na-tion-- ones we've longed for deep in - side. *p*

IV. Hold Fast to Dreams -- text by Langston Hughes (1922)

With hope and warmth (♩ = c. 46)

77 *mp* Hold fast to dreams For if dreams die Life is a bro - ken - winged *mf* 3

81 *p* bird That can - not fly. *mf* Hold fast to dreams For when dreams

bird That can - not fly. *p* *mf* Hold fast to dreams For when dreams

87

f *mp* *poco rit.* *p*

go Life is a bar-ren field Fro-zen with snow.

f *mp* *p*

go Life is a bar-ren field Fro-zen with snow.

f *mp* *poco rit.* *p*

V. Life -- text by Henry Van Dyke, 19th century

With passionate fervor (♩ = c. 62)

92

f *mf*

Let me — but live my life from year to year, With for-ward face and

f *mf*

Let me — but live my life from year to year, With for-ward face and

f *mf*

98

mp *poco più mosso*

un-re-luc-tant soul; Not hur-ry-ing to, nor turn-ing from the goal; Not mourn-ing for the things that dis-ap-

un-re-luc-tant soul; Not hur-ry-ing to, nor turn-ing from the goal; Not mourn-ing dis-ap-

mp *poco più mosso*

103

pear in the dim past, nor hold-ing back in fear From what the fut-ure veils; but with a
dis-ap-pear in the dim past,

pear in the dim past, nor hold-ing back in fear From what the fut-ure veils; but with a

107 *cresc.* *mf* *rit.* *f*

whole And hap-py heart, that pays its toll to Youth and Age, and tra-vels on with cheer.

cresc. *mf* *f*

whole And hap-py heart, that pays its toll to Youth and Age, and tra-vels on with cheer.

cresc. *mf* *rit.*

f *8va*

112 *A tempo* *mf* *f* *mf*

So let the way wind up the hill or down, O'er rough or smooth, the jour-ney will be

117 *f* *mf* *mp* **Tempo Primo**

joy: Still seek-ing what I sought when but a boy,

122 *mf*

and a crown, My

mf New friend-ship, high ad - vent-ure, and a crown, My

127 *f*

heart will keep the cour-age of the quest, And hope the road's last turn will be the

heart will keep the cour-age of the quest, And hope the road's last turn will be the

132

best. The best! best!

best. The best!

mp *mf* *cresc.* *ff*



ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Craig Sandford is a composer, singer-songwriter, and music educator based in New England. With a compositional voice rooted deep in the classics, Craig infuses his choral works with a freshness and vibrancy that masterfully paints text with music. Against a traditional harmonic backdrop his love of subtle dissonance places his music clearly in the 21st century. With utmost attention given to the rhythm and meaning of the text, Craig crafts musical stories that capture the essence of the words with gracious musical lines and shimmering harmonies.

Craig holds a composition degree from the Hartt School, and has completed summer programs in choral conducting, choral pedagogy, and choral composition at Westminster Choir College and Oxford University. His concert works have been performed in the United States and Europe by high school, college, and adult choirs. In addition to composing, he is the accompanist and assistant conductor at the Northfield Mount Hermon School, where he teaches music theory and arts appreciation. Craig has titles in print with GIA Music and Boosey & Hawkes, but self-publishes most of his music. For more information, please visit craigksandford.com.

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