

HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING?

Unison, opt. Two-Part, accompanied

Quaker Song

Arranged by
GINGER LITTLETON



The Main Street Singers
90 Main Street
New Britain, CT 06051

Bel Canto Series

Range:	I	B - c'
	II (opt.)	B - d' (f)
Language:	English	
Source:	Quaker Song	
Characteristics:	Beautiful, strong melody; pentatonic, modulation	
Use:	General, contest/festival, sacred	
Time:	Approx. 2:36	
*Difficulty:	Moderately easy	

Brilee Music

the Voice of Choral Music

Performance Notes

The Quakers, also known as Friends, are a non-violent, peace-loving religious group. They have spawned several well-known songs, of which the most beloved is this one. This tune is based on a pentatonic scale (do, re, mi, sol, la or 1, 2, 3, 5, 6) consisting of five tones. Should you choose, you could extract this melody and accompany it with xylophones and metallophones, using only those tones found in the pentatonic scale.

The text is powerful, with a sense of internal strength and hope pervading throughout. It reflects one of the main purposes in life, to rise above the problems and sorrows of this earth and find an inner calm and peacefulness. No matter how uncertain life is, there is a constant “song” throughout, if we only seek to hear it and to “sing” it. It echoes through our soul and gives us purpose in life.

The first verse should be sung calmly, yet with a sense of hope and inner strength. Although marked *mezzo piano*, don't be weak about it. Good breath support will help keep the tone vibrant and healthy sounding. The accompaniment gives only harmonic assistance, so you have to sustain a sense of movement to the line. The second verse accompaniment consists of moving broken chords which will propel you (or pull you) through the music. *Crescendo* into each musical phrase. Be more dynamic in this verse. The third verse, a repetition of the first verse text, should be sung with confidence and conviction.

Be expressive. Pick key words throughout and give them special attention—storm, calm, echo, tempest, roars, love, etc. Throughout this song sing *legato* with a beautiful tone quality. Discuss the words. What do they mean? How do they affect you? Performance of this song can result in a very moving musical experience.

Dedicated to the memory of Jean Sinor
HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING?

Unison, opt. Two-Part, accompanied

Quaker Song
Arranged by
GINGER B. LITTLETON

I
(II)
(opt.)

Calmly (♩ = 64-72) unis. *mp*

My life flows on in

mp

Detailed description: This system contains the first two measures of the piece. The vocal line starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The piano accompaniment features a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The right hand plays a series of chords: a triad of G4, B4, and C5 in the first measure, followed by a triad of A4, B4, and C5 in the second measure. The left hand plays a simple bass line with notes G2, B1, and C2.

end - less song, a - bove earth's la - men - ta - tion. I hear the real though

7

Detailed description: This system contains measures 3 through 7. The vocal line continues with a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F5, a quarter note G5, a quarter note A5, a quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note B5. The piano accompaniment continues with chords: a triad of G4, B4, and C5 in measure 3, a triad of A4, B4, and C5 in measure 4, a triad of B4, C5, and D5 in measure 5, a triad of C5, D5, and E5 in measure 6, and a triad of B4, C5, and D5 in measure 7. A box containing the number '7' is placed above the vocal line at the start of measure 7.

far off song that hails a new cre - a - tion. No storm can shake my

(hymn)

mf 11

mf

Detailed description: This system contains measures 8 through 11. The vocal line continues with a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F5, a quarter note G5, a quarter note A5, a quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note B5. The piano accompaniment continues with chords: a triad of G4, B4, and C5 in measure 8, a triad of A4, B4, and C5 in measure 9, a triad of B4, C5, and D5 in measure 10, and a triad of C5, D5, and E5 in measure 11. A box containing the number '11' is placed above the vocal line at the start of measure 11. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the piano accompaniment in measure 11.

15

in - most calm, while to that rock I'm cling - ing; It sounds an ech - o

in my soul, how can I keep from sing - ing?

mp flowing

mf 20

What though the tem - pest round me roars, I

mf

24

know the truth, It liv - eth. What though the dark - ness

mp *mf*

round me close, songs in the night It giv - eth. No

The first system of music features a vocal line in treble clef and piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The vocal line starts with a half note 'round me close,' followed by quarter notes 'songs in the night' and 'It giv - eth.' The piano accompaniment consists of eighth-note patterns in the right hand and quarter-note patterns in the left hand.

28

mf

storm can shake my in - most calm, while to that rock I'm

The second system continues the piece. The vocal line has a half note 'storm can shake' followed by quarter notes 'my in - most calm,' and 'while to that rock I'm'. The piano accompaniment maintains the eighth-note pattern in the right hand and quarter-note pattern in the left hand.

cresc. 32

cling - ing since love is lord of heav'n and earth, how

cresc.

The third system begins with a dynamic marking of *cresc.* above the vocal line. The vocal line has a half note 'cling - ing' followed by quarter notes 'since love is lord of heav'n and earth, how'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic patterns.

mp *mp*

can I keep from sing - ing? My

The fourth system concludes the piece. The vocal line has a half note 'can I keep from sing - ing?' followed by a quarter note 'My'. The piano accompaniment features a final chord in the right hand and a quarter-note pattern in the left hand.

With conviction

I *mf* 37 life flows on in end-less song a - bove earth's la - men -

II (opt.) *mp* 37 My life flows on in end-less song a - bove earth's la - men -

41 ta - tion. I hear the real though far off song that (hymn)

41 ta - tion. I hear the real though far off song (hymn)

f 45 hails a new cre - a - tion. No storm can shake my

mf that hails a new cre - a - tion. No storm can

45 *mf*

cresc.
 in - most calm, while to that rock I'm cling - ing. It
cresc.
 shake my calm, that rock I'm cling - ing.
cresc.

[49]
 sounds an ech - o in my soul, How can I keep from
f
 Ech - o is in my soul, I keep from
 [49]
f

rit. mf
 sing - ing? How can I keep from sing - ing?
rit. mp
 sing - ing? I keep from sing - ing?
rit. mp
p