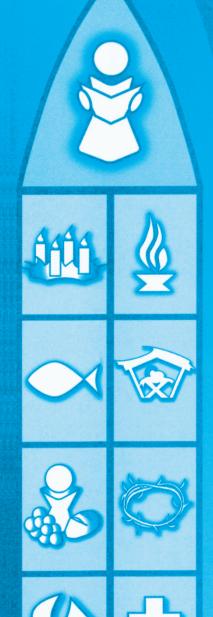
THE FIRST SONG OF ISAIAH

WHITE

SATB & Unison



THE FIRST SONG OF ISAIAH

by JACK NOBLE WHITE





THE FIRST SONG OF ISAIAH

Composed for and dedicated to the "CALABAMAHAMIANS," young musical delegates from California, Nevada, Alabama and Nassau in the Bahamas - in conference at Beckwith Lodge near Mobile, Alabama.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

"The First Song of Isaiah" is one of three canticles taken from the Book of Isaiah. It offers a text of broad usefulness, yet significant meaning. Though of obvious use in any general service, in special services it would find itself applicable from weddings to funerals, from the Easter Season to Christmas. It has, in fact, been used as a prelude to Christmas Eve, recognizing the prophecy of Isaiah and offering an Old Testament backgound to the Nativity theme.

This musical setting of "The First Song of Isaiah" has been designed to be extremely flexible and can range from the simplest presentation to an extravaganza. It can be performed in unison, all singing the top line throughout, with a simple keyboard and/or guitar accompaniment. If the congregation participates and there is a choir, the congregation may sing only on the refrains as indicated in the "people's part." The choir then sings the verses either in unison or in parts as written. If it is done in unison, a few sopranos may sing only the choir soprano parts as a descant. Ideally, it is most effectively done as written: unison congregation on refrains, SATB choir throughout except for the unison beginning which familiarizes the refrain to the congregation. A large choir may want to designate a few in each section to sing the unison part to support the congregation, or a youth choir may be used for that purpose, the senior choir singing parts.

A complete accompaniment is provided: keyboard, guitar, drums, bass guitar, and optional handbells. In one performance, full orchestra was added; in others, only a lone guitar sufficed. The keyboard part, as written, stylistically calls for piano but can be performed on organ. If done by organ alone, the sixteenth note figure in the accompaniment should be performed articulately and the basic rhythm of the bass part retained by repeating the notes rather than sustaining them. If both organ and piano are used, the organ may play sustained chords with the piano setting the rhythmic patterns. In that case, the organist may choose to duplicate the voice parts in some passages for variety.

The suggested part for movement choir is available separately (50¢). It uses candle lanterns made from styrofoam cups, adding another complete dimension to the execution of this piece, and offering an opportunity to involve others who do not normally participate in their church's music program. The candle routine is an excellent project for a youth group.

Regardless of how extravagantly or how simply done, "The First Song of Isaiah" should present a calmly joyful message. Thanks are due to: the Rev. Canon Charles Mortimer Guilbert, whose poetic hand can clearly be seen in the adapting of the canticle from the Scriptures; to Margaret More, who conceived and first executed the movement choir part; and to Dean Edgar G. Parrott and the ninety young people from California, Nevada, Alabama, and the Bahamas who made up the musical community for which the setting was written.

Jack Noble White Mobile - January 13, 1976



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THE FIRST SONG OF ISAIAH

The congregation is asked to join the choir singing this refrain after each verse is sung:



Sure-ly, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be a - fraid.___ For the



Lord is my strong-hold and my sure de-fense, and he will he my Sav - ior

VERSE

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say,
Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

REFRAIN

VERSE

Make his deeds known among the peoples; see that they remember that his Name is exalted. Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, and this is known in all the world.

REFRAIN

VERSE

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, For the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

REFRAIN (sung twice)

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