

DAVID
AVSHALOMOV

Freedom/Uhuru

from William Blake's
Songs of Innocence and of Experience

Mixed Chorus
a cappella

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A proud African affirmation, high energy, strong and rhythmic, with a chant background. Optional clapping, minor rhythmic movement. Subject: Divine soul of a slave child.

DURATION: 4' 15



Freedom (Uhuru)

Poem: William Blake (1794)

(Uhuru is Swahili for "freedom." This word is not in Blake's poem. Pronounced oo-HOO-roo, with a single flipped "R")

Setting: David Avshalomov
(2002, rev. 2010/2017)

Allegro Spiritoso

♩ = 126

Ritmico

(last eighth full length each time, but no longer.)

5

S
f U - hu - ru u - hu ru u - hu - ru u - hu ru u - hu - ru u -

A
f U - hu - ru u - hu ru u - hu - ru u - hu ru u - hu - ru u -

T
f U - hu - ru u - hu ru u - hu - ru u - hu ru u - hu - ru u -

B
f U - hu - ru u - hu ru u - hu - ru u - hu ru u - hu - ru u -

hu ru u - hu ru *mp* U -

hu ru u - hu ru *mp* U - (Tenor section and baritones, OR solo Baritone)

hu ru u - hu ru *f* My moth - er bore me in the (IF solo baritone, tenors and baritones join basses)

hu ru u - hu ru (Basses) *mp* U -

10
hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *f* O! my soul is white; *mp* U -

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *f* O! my soul is white; *mp* U -

south - ern wild, and I am black but O! my soul is white; *mp* U -

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *f* O! my soul is white;

15

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *f* But

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *f* But

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *f* But

(All basses and baritones,
OR solo Baritone, cont.; then basses/baritones join tenor part softly)

f White as an an-gel is the Eng - lish child but I am black as if be - reaved of light.

(ALL: opt. hand claps)

20

I am black as if be - reaved of light. *mf* U - hu - ru *mp* u - hu - ru *p* u -

I am black as if be - reaved of light *mf* U - hu - ru *mp* u - hu - ru *p* u -

I am black as if be - reaved of light. *mf* U - hu - ru *mp* u - hu - ru

(Bass section)

(soloist) *f* I am black as if be - reaved of light *mp* u - hu - ru *p* u -

mf U - hu - ru *mp* u - hu - ru *p* u -

unis.

25

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u -

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u -

(Bar. solo OR all tenors plus all bars.) (all men if solo)

f My moth-er taught me un-der-neath a tree and sit-ting down be-fore the heat of day, *p* U -

(Solo as before,
OR all basses/bars)

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *f* She

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru

(Solo as before, or all basses/bars)

took me on her lap and kis - sed me, and point - ing to the East be - gan to say *f*

30 *f* Look on the ris - ing sun: there God does live_ *Sostenuto*

f Look on the ris - ing sun: there God does live_ *Sostenuto*

(Tenors only) *f* Look on the ris - ing sun: Look on the ris - ing sun: there God does live_ *Sostenuto*

(Bass section) *f* Look on the ris - ing sun: there God does live_ *Sostenuto*

35 there God does live and gives his light, and gives his heat a - way.

there God does live and gives his light, and gives his heat a - way.

there God does live and gives his light, and gives his heat a - way..

there God does live and gives his light, and gives his heat a - way

40

And flow - ers and trees and beasts and men re - ceive

And flow - ers and trees and beasts and men re - ceive

And flow - ers and trees and beasts and men re - ceive, re - ceive

And flow - ers and trees and beasts and men re - ceive, re - ceive

45

ritmico

mf com - fort in morn - ing, joy in the noon day. *mp* Joy

ritmico

mf com - fort in morn - ing, joy in the noon day *mp*

mf noon, *mf* com - fort in morn - ing, joy in the noon day.

ritmico

mf day, *mp* com - fort in morn - ing, joy

50

moan

p in the noon day *p* unh (schwa sound) hunh

(ALL: opt. handclaps)

p U - hu - ru *mp* u - hu - ru *p* u -

p in the noon day, *p* U - hu - ru *mp* u - hu - ru *p* u -

mf And we are put on earth a lit - tle space, that we may learn to bear the beams of love.

mf And we are put on earth a lit - tle space, that we may learn to bear the beams of love.

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *mf* unh- (schwa sound)

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *mf* unh- (schwa sound)

and these black bod - ies and this sun - burnt face is but a cloud

and these black bod - ies and this sun - burnt face is but a cloud

mp hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *mf* is

mp hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru

and like a shad - y grove

and like a shad - y grove

but a cloud and like a shad - y grove.

mf is but a cloud, a shad - y grove.

P Rit.

A Tempo

70

sostenuto
pp For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear the cloud will van - ish, we shall

sostenuto
pp For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear the cloud will van - ish, we shall

sostenuto
pp For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear the cloud will van - ish, we shall

sostenuto
pp For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear the cloud will van - ish, we shall

75

hear his voice *p* say - ing:

hear his voice *p* say - ing:

"The Voice"
hear his voice *mf* Come out from the grove my love and care *mf* and

"The Voice"
hear his voice *mf* Come out from the grove my love and care *mf* and

80

ritmico
mf and round my gold - en tent like lambs re - joice, like

ritmico
mf and round my gold - en tent like lambs re - joice,

(MEN opt. claps) (WOMEN join)

ritmico
mf round my gold - en tent like lambs re - joice, and round my gold - en tent like

ritmico
round my gold - en tent like lambs re - joice, and

lamps re-joice, and round my tent like lambs re-joice.

and round my gold-en tent like lambs re-joice, lambs re-joice.

(ALL)

lamps re-joice, and round my gold-en tent like lambs re-joice U hu-ru u

round my gold-en tent like lambs re-joice, and round my gold-en tent, U hu-ru u

mp

85 (Sopr. 2) (All Sopr.) *crescendo poco a poco*

mp U hu-ru u hu-ru *mp* u hu-ru u hu-ru

crescendo poco a poco

(ALL) *mp* U hu-ru u hu-ru u hu-ru u hu-ru

crescendo poco a poco

hu-ru u hu-ru u hu-ru u hu-ru

crescendo poco a poco

hu-ru u hu-ru u hu-ru u hu-ru

90

u-hu-ru u-hu-ru *mf* u-hu-ru u hu-ru *f* u-hu-ru u

u-hu-ru u-hu-ru *mf* u-hu-ru u hu-ru *f* u-hu-ru u

hu-ru *mf* u hu-ru u hu-ru *f* u-hu-ru u

hu-ru *mf* u hu-ru u hu-ru *f* u-hu-ru u

(STOP)

95

- hu u - hu ru *mp* U -

- hu u - hu ru *mp* U -

- hu u - hu ru *mf* Thus did my moth-er say and

- hu u - hu ru *mf* Thus did my moth-er say and
(Opt. - soloist with Basses)

100

hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *f* Unh hunh *wail*

hu - ru u - hu - ru h - hu - ru *f* Unh hunh *wail*

kiss - ed me, *square* *f* and thus I say to lit - tle Eng - lish boy Unh hunh *wail*

kiss - ed me, *square* *f* and thus I say to lit - tle Eng - lish boy

(ALL)

mf u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *f* Roun

mf u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru u - hu - ru *f* Round

when I from black and he from white cloud free, and round the tent of God like

when I from black and he from white cloud free, and round the tent of God like

105 (Stop) 110

the tent of God we joy: I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear _____ to

the tent of God we joy: I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear _____ to

lambs we joy, we joy: I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear _____ to

lambs we joy I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear _____ to

(ALL) 115

ecstatic
ff
lean in joy up-on our fa-ther's knee, to lean in joy up-on our fa-ther's knee, and then I'll stand; and

ecstatic
ff
lean in joy up-on our fa-ther's knee, to lean in joy up-on our fa-ther's knee, and then I'll stand; and

ecstatic
ff
lean in joy up-on our fa-ther's knee to lean in joy up-on our fa-ther's knee, and then I'll stand; and

ff
lean in joy up-on our fa-ther's knee to lean in joy up-on our fa-ther's knee and then I'll stand; and

120

then I'll stand and then I'll stand and stroke his sil-ver hair and then I'll stand and stroke his sil-ver hair and

then I'll stand and then I'll stand and stroke his sil-ver hair and then I'll stand and stroke his sil-ver hair and

then I'll stand and then I'll stand and stroke his sil-ver hair and then I'll stand and stroke his sil-ver hair and

then I'll stand and then I'll stand and stroke his sil-ver hair and then I'll stand and stroke his sil-ver hair, and

125

be like him and be like him and be like him and he will then love and he will

be like him and be like him and be like him and he will then love and he will

be like him and be like him and be like him and he will then love, u - hu - ru and he will

be like him and be like him and be like him and he will then love, U - hu - ru and he will

[STOP]

Ritard. *Riten.* **A Tempo I** 130 ♩ = 126

then love and be like him and he will then love me

then love, u - hu - ru and be like him and he will then love me

then love, u - hu - ru and be like him and he will then love me **ff** U -

then love, u - hu - ru and be like him and he will then love me, **ff** U -

Fist in air*

ff u - hu ru u - hu - ru, u - hu ru!

(opt. div.) **ff** u - hu ru u - hu - ru, u - hu ru!

hu - u - hu ru u - hu u - hu - ru, u - hu ru!

hu ru u - hu ru u - hu ru, u - hu ru!

(*Full arm's length)

FREEDOM (UHURU) by David Avshalomov

“Freedom” [Uhuru] is my setting of Blake’s poem originally titled “The Little Black Boy,” which title can today typically and ironically trigger a mistaken knee-jerk PC reaction that makes it difficult for listeners to hear the astonishing and enlightened message about the spiritual beauty and unity of all races, and their equality before God, that is Blake’s actual message. I have set this text in a kind of “East African tribal chant puts on shoes and goes to Western church” style, lively, rhythmic, driving, largely pentatonic, soulful, heartfelt, and at the end, ecstatic, borrowing the feeling and harmonies (but not the specifically Jesus-based Christian message) of sincere American Gospel rhythmic choral music. If you think that in God’s eyes we are all the same color and all precious, then you can add your “amen” at the end.

Note on the meaning of the poem titled “The Little Black Boy” by Wm. Blake, from his “Songs of Innocence”

The reader and listener should be careful in interpreting this text. It contains phrases that might at first glance seem racist in today’s Western societies—beginning with the title, “The Little Black Boy,” for which I have chosen to substitute “Freedom [Uhuru].” (Knowledgeable people know that the historical racist trigger insult is for a black *adult* male to be called “boy,” as in slave time. But a male child—of any color—*is* a boy.) However, looking at the text in its historic context makes it clear that, to the contrary, it is a poem about *liberation from* racist stereotypes and racist thinking. William Blake, an incisive counter-cultural social observer in England and an outspoken opponent of slavery at the height of the brutal British Empire slave trade, here looks at the lot of a black slave child, and tries to imagine that child’s own pride in his race and his race’s spiritual connection to God. Blake makes an *astonishingly* enlightened statement—for a late-18th-century observer. Speaking through that child, he essentially says (or implies) this:

“I am black, born where the sun was my people’s connection to the Divine. My mother taught me my fundamental connection to God, and that my skin color was there to help me bear the heat of God’s love. Now [in England as a slave], my blackness is seen by whites as showing a lack of soul, a spiritual inferiority to whites, but I know that my soul is as “white” [pure] as that of a little white English boy, and that the color of my skin is means nothing else—it is just like a cloud. And I know that when it comes time for us all to leave our color—our bodies—behind (“when I from black and he from white cloud [are] free[d]”) and rejoice before God, I with my protective coloring will be able to shield that pale white child from the glorious light of God, and he will see that we are *the same* before God. And then he will be liberated from his prejudices and know that he can love me equally as one of God’s creatures (and—by implication—as I love him.) Thus we will *both* achieve true freedom of the soul.”

Note by the Composer, David Avshalomov, July 2003

Choral Works by DAVID AVSHALOMOV

MIXED CHORUS

Secular

Songs of Innocence and of Experience SATB (divisi in a few) (Wm. Blake)

Double cycle, 45 separate settings, averaging 1-4 min. ea. *See full list overleaf.*

Principles, secular cantata (Thos. Jefferson) [32'] SATB (divisi) version, solo baritone, concert band, (or piano, can add perc.) (also for TTBB, below)

There's a Wind [4'] SATB (divisi), (brief S1 solo), opt. wind whistling (lyrics by the composer)

Let the Children Play [4'] SAB (or SAA), piano, opt. flute(s), (lyrics by the composer)

Go Ahead and Rejoice [2'] SATB (divisi) (Doris Avshalomov)

Father the Tree [4'] SATB (brief S1 solo) (Doris Avshalomov)

Song For Late Summer [4] SATB (divisi) (Doris Avshalomov)

U.S. 30 in Idaho [2'] SATB (divisi) (Doris Avshalomov)

Sacred

The Mixed Blessings, [12'] SSAATTBB, (*Beatitudes*—Matthew/Luke)
handbells (6-7 players)

Praise the Lord! [4:40] SATB (divisi), organ, opt. cymbal (Psalm 150)

This Sacred Space [4:45] Consecration Anthem with congregational hymn

SATB (divisi) (brief alto solo)/organ/4 brass/timpani (text by the composer)

I Bend the Knee of My Heart [5'] SATB (divisi) (Canticle 14/Manasseh)

O Eucharisti (*Columba Virtutem Illius*)—Meditation [5] SATB (divisi) (Hildegarde von Bingen)

Kedushah, High Holy Days (Trad.) [5'] Cantor (solo ten. or sopr.), SATB, piano, flute

Chanukah tonight! [2:45] SATB (opt. divisi), piano, opt. tamb. (lyrics by the composer)

Also with string orchestra (or mandoline or balalaika orchestra)

WOMEN'S VOICES

Let the Children Play [4'] SAA, piano, opt. flute(s), (lyrics by the composer)

Where You Go, I Will Go (Ruth and Naomi) [12'] SSAA (brief S2, A2 soli)

Do You Believe in Angels? [9'] SSAA, 8 high strings (or organ reduction)
(poem by the composer)

The Angel [3'] SSA from Songs of Innocence and of Experience (Wm. Blake)

Enchanted River [2'], SA, opt. S solo (Meredith Kennedy)

MEN'S VOICES

Principles, secular cantata (Thos. Jefferson) [32] Orig. version TTBB (divisi),
solo baritone, concert band (or piano, can add perc.)

The Star Spangled Banner [1:45] arranged for barbershop quartet or ensemble, TTBB

Happy Anniversary [1'] TTBB (lyrics by the composer)

Medley - Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Lennon/McCartney) [15']
transcribed for TTBB plus soli, piano/bass/drums/guitar OR concert band

NOVELTY

The Chocolate Carol, Holiday version [4:15] (David/Randi Avshalomov)

○ SATB (brief divisi), piano, optional flute

○ SATB *a cappella* caroling version

○ SSAA, piano, optional flute

Love & Chocolate, Valentine's version [4:15]

○ SATB (brief divisi), piano, optional flute

○ SATB solo quartet, piano


Goodnight Moon (M.W. Brown), Unis. Trebles, piano/keyboard (opt. flute/string qtt.) [3']

Happy Anniversary [1'] SATB, or SSAA, or TTBB (lyrics by the composer)

The Garlic Blessing [3'] SATB (brief divisi), piano (lyrics by the composer)

Flopsy, the Christmas Pup [4:45] SATB, piano, opt. bass, drums (lyrics by the composer)

The U.S. Air Force Fugue [3'] TTBB (parody on "Off we Go, into the Wild Blue Yonder")

Performance materials, pricing:  Raven Music

davshalomov@earthlink.net - www.davidavshalomov.com - (310) 480-9525

Songs of Innocence and of Experience, A Cappella Settings

TITLE-- Alphabetical	Level *	Dur.	Brief Opt. Div., Soli	also solo Quar tet	Type	Character	Energy/ speed	Topic	Opt. Special FX, Stage Business
Ah! Sun-Flower	M	2:10		OK	Air	Wistful, poignant	slow, limp, soft	Death, time, release	
The Angel	II	3:00	SSA, women only		Melodrama	Mysterious	slow	Age, womanhood	
The Blossom	III	1:00		*	Playful Madrigal	Fun, light	fast, light, rhythmic	Nature	
The Chimney Sweeper I	I	4:00	SSAATTBB middle		Melodrama	Ironic, ecstatic	slow fast slow	Child labor	
The Chimney Sweeper II	II	2:00			Melodrama	Bitter	moderate	Child labor	
The Clod & the Pebble	III	2:00		OK	Madrigal	Ironic. Formal	moderate	Love's illusions	
A Cradle Song	III	3:15		OK	Lullaby	Sweet with a twist	slow, soft, steady	Baby innocence, mother worry	eyes shutting, end
The Divine Image I	III	2:00		OK	Prayer	Reverent	moderate	Tolerance	
A Divine Image II	II	1:30			Aphorism	Bitter, ironic	slow, solid, full	Darkness of the soul	
A Dream (the lost ant)	M	2:00	BB end		Melodrama	Play spooky	moving, rhythmic	Lost ant	
Earth's Answer	III	2:30			Plaint	Dark	slow, strong	Forbidden love	
The Echoing Green	II	2:30			Carol, glee	Exuberant	high, rhythmic	Children's play, sleep	Bell tones
The Fly	III	1:20		*	Playful Madrigal	Witty	lively, rhythmic	Fly or Man?	eye movement, end
Freedom/Uhuru	I	4:15	opt. Bar. solo		Affirmation	Proud, African	high, strong, rhythmic	Divine soul of a slave child	Chant BG. Clapping, rhythmic movement
The Garden of Love	II	2:30		OK	Moral Madrigal	bitter, poised	intense	Forbidden love	
Hear the Voice of the Bard	III	2:45			Prophecy	Hortatory	strong	Mystery, end of night	
Holy Thursday I	III	2:00			Hymn	Hopeful	steady	Exploitation of children	
Holy Thursday II	III	3:15			Sermon	Tragic	slow	Poverty	
The Human Abstract	I	3:30		OK	Moral Madrigal	Bitter, sharp	slow	Selfishness	
Infant Joy	M	2:00	light Sopr. Solo		Air/rocking song	Sweet	moderate , rhythmic	Innocence	
Infant Sorrow	III	2:15			Blues moan	Soulful	slow, heavy	Pains of birth	moan, groan
The Lamb	M	2:20		OK	Prayer	Sweetest	gentle, soft	Lamb and Christ	
Laughing Song	I	3:40			Playful Madrigal	Hilarious	lively, rhythmic, full	Laughter and youth	Laughter, Hilarity breakdown near end
The Lilly	III	1:30		*	Nature Madrigal	Esthetic	slow, soft	Lilly vs. rose	

The Little Boy Lost/Found	II	3:30			Melodrama	Worried	moving, rhythmic	Boy lost in the marsh	
A Little Boy Lost [III]	I	4:00			Sermon	Righteous	moderate	Boy burned at the stake	
A Little Girl Lost (Ona)	II	3:00		OK	Madrigal/melodrama	Light, then heavy	lively, then slow	Forbidden young love	
The Little Girl Lost/Found (Lyca)	II	4:00			Story Madrigal	Narrative, varied	moderate	Lost girl, symbolic nature	
The Little Vagabond	II	1:45			Glee	High-spirited	lively, rhythmic	Need for ale in church	
London	III	2:00			Sermon	Gloomy	slow	Degradation in the city	
Motto to the Songs of I&E	II	2:15			Conundrum	Ironic	lively, rhythmic	The turning of human nature	
Night	III	3:00			Prayer	Sweet	moderate	Angels while we sleep	
Nurse's Song I	II	2:45	SSAATT-B end		Vignette	Innocent	moderate	Children on the Green	Echo divisi ending
Nurse's song II	III	1:30			Vignette	Bitter	moderate	Mortality	
On Another's Sorrow	III	1:30		OK	Hymn	Sweet	moderate	Compassion	
Piping down the Valleys Wild	III	2:00	SSAATTBB end		Playful Madrigal	Cheery	lively, rhythmic	The Poet's inspiration	solo whistle intro
A Poison Tree	I	3:45		OK	Moral Madrigal	Bitter	slow, intense	Revenge	
My Pretty Rose Tree	II	1:45		*	Madrigal	Ironic	moderate, gentle	Spurned love	
The School Boy	II	3:30		OK	Madrigal	Ironic	lively, rhythmic	Summer school	
The Shepherd	M	1:30			Prayer	Sweet	rocking, gentle	Guarding the flock	solo whistle intro and end
The Sick Rose	II	1:45		*	Madrigal	Bittersweet	slow	Love/death	
Spring	III	1:30		*	Playful Madrigal	Charming	lively, rhythmic	Children in spring	
To Tirzah	III	2:15			Chorale	Bitter	steady	Misogyny	
Tyger Tyger Burning Bright	II	2:10			Paeon	Sharp	lively, rhythmic	Fearsome nature	Eye movement end
The Voice of the Ancient Bard	I	2:00		OK	Sermon	Hortatory	moderate	Folly	

LEVEL RANKINGS:	I. Professional, Advanced University or Collegiate (NOTE: All , naturally, are suitable for pro and advanced groups.)
	II. Upper Division High School (chamber/madrigal, all-city, all-state honor), and Advanced Community or above
	III. General High School, Community College, and general Community or above
	M. Level III but ALSO suitable for Advanced Middle School (chamber/madrigal, honor): based on suitable ranges, age-appropriate subject matter