

Guiding Light

SATB choir with divisi, a cappella

Music and Lyrics by
Matt LaBerge

ABOUT THE PIECE

Occasionally, we as human beings find ourselves in times of despair. It is during these hopefully rare but unfortunately real moments, when happiness and well-being is at an all-time low, that searching for help not only feels like a possible solution but an absolute necessity.

We all come from different backgrounds with different experiences, and thus there are countless sources that we as individuals turn to in order to lift our spirits during these times of trial. Many of us look to our family, friends, or significant others. Many of us look to the memories of loved ones who have passed away. Many of us look to our faith or spirituality. Many of us deal with stress by turning to sources such as music, art, literature, athletics, dance, or any other outlets for which we have strong passion. Sometimes, we are in such dire need that we seek out a professional opinion, and in turn that professional will help us lay out a strategic plan for getting our lives back on track. Although it is ultimately up to us to heal and strengthen ourselves, reaching out or turning our focus to someone or something that we know, trust, and that carries great significance to us will only help on our journey to finding inner peace. This assertion is very much a part of the essence of *Guiding Light*.

From a dramatic standpoint, the piece is written entirely in the first person with the singer taking on the role of an indeterminate character in a state of utter despair. As this person closes their eyes and attempts to mentally escape from their suffering, they find themselves fixating on one image: "You". (This is where individual interpretations and sources come in, as each singer must have their own version of "You" constantly in their mind toward which they are directly speaking). Having identified "You" as the only potential solution to their distress, they then beseech "You" to give them hope, strength, and light. This latter word is the concept upon which the piece is crafted. Whatever, whoever, or however one's particular source of solace may be, *Guiding Light* aims to embody that source and present it in the form of something we all need to survive: **light**.

As the piece progresses and the need for help becomes more and more urgent, it eventually reaches its musical and textual peak: "You're my hope! You're my strength! You're my light at every dawn! You fill my life, even when you're gone". In this epiphanal moment, the singer realizes that they do not necessarily need anything from the "You" upon which they have been imploring, but rather that the thought of "You" and what "You" means to them is what gives them the courage and strength to carry onward. As the piece slowly and quietly comes to a close, the true meaning becomes clear: *Guiding Light* manifests the idea that at some point or another, we all need a light to act as a beacon of hope and guide us through our darkest days. Beyond anything else, however, it asserts that if we always carry that light in our hearts, we will never be alone.

FULL TEXT

*Sitting in the darkness, alone.
I'm tired and uneasy, my face rests on my palms.
The air is cold and chills me to the bone.
I'm afraid, with just my breath to keep me calm.*

*I close my eyes and dream I'm far away.
I try to leave my troubles all behind.
And as I search for help throughout this lightless day,
You are all I seem to find.*

*Give me hope!
Give me strength!
Give me light!*

*Light!
I need a light!
Give me some light!
I need your light!
I need it!
I need you!*

*Will you be my guiding light, and shine wherever I may go?
Will you cast away the shadows with your deep and vibrant glow?
Will you be my Northern Star? Be steady and rid me of my doubt?
Will you always keep on gleaming when all other lights go out?*

*Just comfort me tonight and say I'll be alright!
Take my hand and hold on tight!
And shine throughout the night with everlasting light!
Always keep me in your sight!*

*I need you here. I need you now.
I know you're listening, so help me somehow to go on.*

*You're my hope!
You're my strength!
You're my light at every dawn!
You fill my life, even when you're gone.*

*For even when it seems we're worlds apart,
I know that you will be here in my heart.
Beaming. Shining. Gleaming and guiding my path.
Forever.*

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Matt LaBerge is a composer, singer/songwriter, actor, and educator born and raised in South Portland, Maine. He holds a B.A. in Music from the University of Southern Maine in which his primary focuses were voice, theatre, and music composition.

As a composer, Matt began his journey at the University of Southern Maine where he wrote music for the USM Chamber Singers, Composers Ensemble, and the Student Performing Artists (SPA). His two original musicals, *Here Come the Cattle!* and *Backwards*, won awards for Best Performance and Best Musical respectively at the 2014 USM 10-Minute Play Competition. His original score for USM's live staged production of the Thrilling Adventure Hour's *Beyond Belief* earned him a nomination for Outstanding Sound Design through the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF). In 2014, he was selected as one of only ten students in the country to participate in the prestigious Palomar Film Music Workshop. In this time, Matt worked on scoring various film scenes under the guidance of renown film/television composers Larry Groupé (*The Contender*, *Straw Dogs*, *Commander in Chief*), and Roger Neill (*Mozart in the Jungle*, *King of the Hill*, *CBS's Mom*). For four summers, Matt served as Resident Composer and Music Director for *The Big Maine Event*, a fundraising concert which brings local Maine performers together with theatre professionals from across the country. For this concert, he wrote and directed the opening number, "Let's Bring Broadway to Maine", a musical theatre ensemble piece which has now been performed by stars such as Tony Award winner Trent Kowalik, original cast members from the Broadway productions of *Billy Elliot The Musical*, *Fun Home*, *Mary Poppins*, NBC's *The Sound of Music Live*, and many other talented performers from around the nation.

Equally at home as a singer/actor, Matt has performed with organizations such as the Ogunquit Playhouse, Maine State Music Theatre, Portland Ovations, PORTopera/Opera Maine, Portland Symphony Orchestra, and Boston Symphony Orchestra. Just recently, Matt music directed, wrote additional music for, and played the role of Bob Cratchit in the National Tour of *A Christmas Carol* through PerSeverance Productions.

CONTACT: To browse/purchase music, inquire about composition/arranging or music directing services, request an acting resume/headshot, or have Matt come work with you and your musical ensemble, emails can be sent directly to: MattLaBergeMusic@gmail.com

SATB choir with divisi,
a cappella

Dedicated to the loving memory of Steven Onos

Guiding Light

Written for and premiered by the University of Southern Maine Chamber
Singers under the direction of Robert Russell; December 3rd, 2013.

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Matthew LaBerge

Delicate and Tender (♩ = 54-64)

somber, with crisp diction

p Unis.

Soprano



Sit-ting in the dark-ness, a - lone.

I'm tired and un-ea-sy, my

face rests on my

Alto

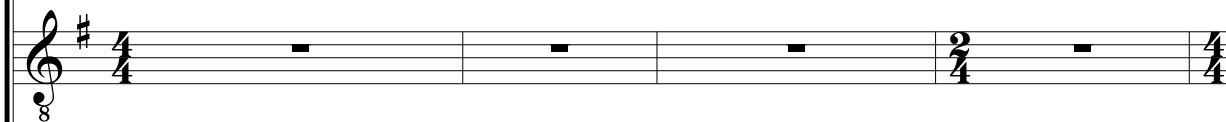


Sit-ting in the dark-ness, a - lone.

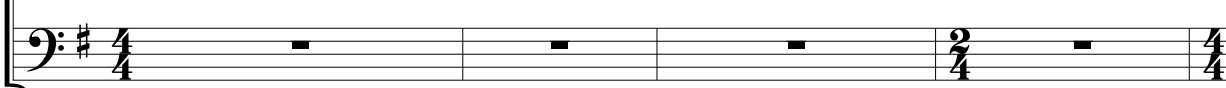
I'm tired and un-ea-sy, my

face rests on my

Tenor



Bass



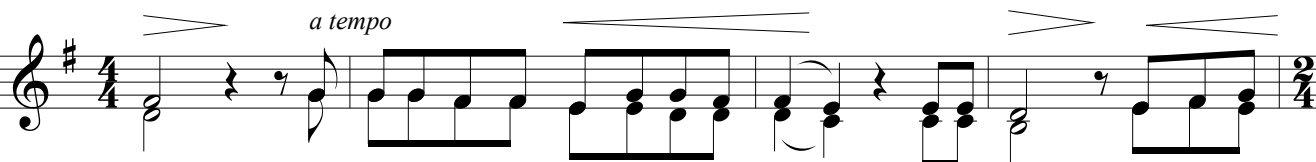
palms.

The air is cold and chills me to the bone.

I'm a - fraid,

with just my

A



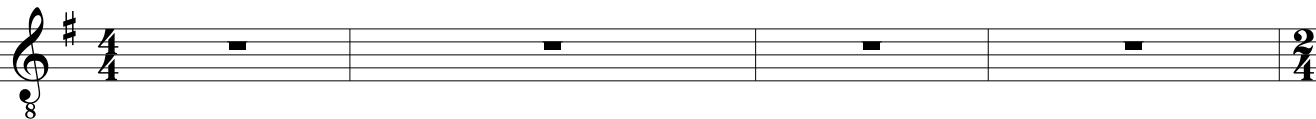
palms.

The air is cold and chills me to the bone.

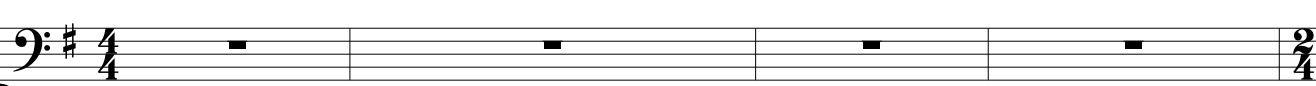
I'm a - fraid,

with just my

T



B



9 *poco rit.* *expressive and hopeful* *mp a tempo* *mp*

S breath to keep me calm. I close my eyes and dream I'm far a - way. I

A *poco rit.* *expressive and hopeful* *mp a tempo* *mp*

A breath to keep me calm. I close my eyes and dream I'm far a - way. I

T *expressive and hopeful* *mp a tempo* *mp*

T I close my eyes and dream I'm far a - way. I

B *expressive and hopeful* *mp a tempo* *mp*

B I close my eyes and dream I'm far a - way. I

13 *mp*

S try to leave my trou-bles all be - hind. And as I search for help through-out this

A *mp*

A try to leave my trou-bles all be - hind. And as I search for help through-out this

T *mp*

T try to leave my trou-bles all be - hind. And as I search for help through-out this

B *mp*

B try to leave my trou-bles all be - hind. And as I search for help through-out this

Freely
beseechingly

16

S
light-less day, ——— you are all I seem to find. Give me hope! Give me

A
light-less day, ——— you are all I seem to find. Give me hope! Give me

T
light-less day, ——— you are all I seem to find. Give me hope! Give me

B
light-less day, ——— you are all I seem to find. Give me hope! Give me

f *mf* *beseechingly*

Ethereal and Lively (♩ = 132-146, or ♩. = 44-48)
p (seamlessly connected throughout, stagger breathe)

20

S
strength! Give me light! Light! ——— Light! ———

A
strength! Give me light! ——— Light! ———

T
strength! Give me light! ———

B
strength! Give me light! ———

rit. *f* *p* *Unis.* *p*

26

cresc. poco a poco

S Light! _____ Light! _____ Light! _____ Light! _____

cresc. poco a poco

A _____ Light! _____ Light! _____ Light! _____

p cresc. poco a poco

T 8 I need a light! Give me some light!

Unis. *p cresc. poco a poco*

B I need a light! Give me some light!

33

mp cresc. poco a poco

S _____ Light! _____ Light! _____ Light! _____

mp cresc. poco a poco

A Light! _____ Light! _____ Light! _____ Light! _____

mp cresc. poco a poco

T 8 I need your light! I need it! I need a light! Give me some

mp cresc. poco a poco

B I need your light! I need it! I need a light! Give me some

Warm and Dreamlike (♩ = 70-80)

40 *rit.* *mf* with warmth and expression

S Give me some light! I need your light! Will you be my guid-ing

A — I need your light! I need you! Will you

T light! I need your light! I need you! Will you?

B light! I need your light! I need you! Will you

Div. *mp* with warmth and expression

45

S light and shine wher-ev - er I may go?

A guide me and shine where 'er I go?

T *mf* Will you be my guid - ing light? Shine where 'er I

B guide me and shine where 'er I go?

48

S Will you cast a-way the sha-dows with your deep and vi-brant glow? *subito p*

A Cast a - way the sha - dows with your deep and vi-brant glow? *subito p*

T 8 go? _____ Cast a-way the sha-dows _____ with your deep and vi-brant *mp*

B Cast a - way the sha - dows with your deep and vi-brant glow? *subito p*

52

S *mf* Will you be my North-ern Star? _____ Be stea-dy and rid me of my

A *mp* Will you guide me and rid me of my

T 8 glow? *mp* Will you be my North - ern Star? _____ *mf*

B *mp* Will you guide me and rid me of my

55

S doubt? Will you always be keep on gleam - ing — when all

A doubt? Al - ways keep on gleam - ing when all

T 8 Rid me of my doubt? — Al - ways keep on gleam - ing —

B doubt? Al - ways keep on gleam - ing when all

58

S *subito p* *f* with brilliance Div. o - ther lights go out? Just com - fort me to - night and say I'll be al -

A *subito p* *f* with brilliance o - ther lights go out? Just com - fort me to - night and say I'll be al -

T 8 *mp* *f* with brilliance when all o - ther lights go out? Com - fort me to - night!

B *subito p* *f* with brilliance o - ther lights go out? Just com - fort me to - night and say I'll be al -

63

S *mp* *f*
right! Take my hand and hold on tight! And

A *mp* *f*
right! Take my hand and hold on tight! And

T 8
Say I'll be al - right! Take my hand and hold on tight! And

B *mp* *f*
right! Take my hand and hold on tight! And

68

S *mp*
shine through-out the night with ev - er - last-ing light! Al - ways

A *mp*
shine through-out the night with ev - er - last-ing light! Al - ways

T 8
shine! Shine through-out the night! Ev - er last-ing light!

B *mp*
shine through-out the night with ev - er - last-ing light! Al - ways

Slightly Slower
lightly, yet earnestly *p*

Unis. *pp* very soft and warm, like a faint glow (stagger)

S 73 keep me in your sight! *ff* I need you here. I

A keep me in your sight! *ff* Unis. *pp* "Ooh"

T 8 Keep me in your sight! *ff* lightly, yet earnestly *p* I need you here. I

B keep me in your sight! *ff* lightly, yet earnestly *p* I need you here. I

S 79 need you now. I know you're listen-ing, so help me some-how to go

A to go

T 8 need you now. I know you're listen-ing, so help me some-how to go

B need you now. I know you're listen-ing, so help me some-how to go

Slightly Quicker

85

Div. with intensity ***f*** ***ff***

S on. _____ You're my hope! You're my strength! You're my light at ev-ery dawn!

A on. _____ You're my hope! You're my strength! You're my light at ev-ery dawn!

T on. _____ You're my hope! You're my strength! You're my light at ev-ery dawn!

B on. _____ You're my hope! You're my strength! You're my light at ev-ery dawn!

91

f ***ff*** *Slower* *Unis. p reflective*

S You fill my life, _____ e - ven when you're gone. _____

A ***f*** ***ff*** *Unis. p reflective*

A You fill my life, _____ e - ven when you're gone. _____

T ***f*** ***ff*** *Unis. p reflective*

T You fill my life, _____ e - ven when you're gone. _____

B ***f*** ***ff*** *p reflective*

B You fill my life, _____ e - ven when you're gone. _____

Delicate and Tender, as in beginning (♩ = 42-56)

95 *p* with newfound certainty

S For e - ven when it seems we're worlds a - part, I

A Div. *p* with newfound certainty

A For e - ven when it seems we're worlds a - part, I

T *p* with newfound certainty

T For e - ven when it seems we're worlds a - part, I

B *p* with newfound certainty

B For e - ven when it seems we're worlds a - part, I

98 *rit.* *p* **Freely**

S know that you will be here in my heart. Beam-ing. —

A *rit.* *pp* the faint glow, once again

A know that you will be here in my heart. — "Ooh" —

T *rit.* Div. *p*

T know that you will be here in my heart. Beam-ing. —

B *rit.* *p*

B know that you will be here in my heart. Beam-ing. —

101

S Shin - ing. — Gleam - ing and Guid - ing my path. For *p*

A — — — — — Guid - ing my path. For *p*

T 8 Shin - ing. — Gleam - ing and Guid - ing my path. For *p*

B Shin - ing. — Gleam - ing and Guid - ing my path. For *p*

104

S ev - - - er.

A ev - - - er.

T 8 ev - - - er.

B ev - - - er.

