

Favorite Hymns July 5, 2020

Sequence LEVAS #196 “Leaning on the everlasting arms”

This is one of Julia Stavenhagen’s favorite hymns.

Author: Elisha Hoffman (1839-1929) after graduating from Union Seminary in Pennsylvania was ordained in 1868. He worked with the Evangelical Association's publishing arm in Cleveland for eleven years. In his lifetime he wrote more than 2,000 gospel songs including "Leaning on the everlasting arms" (1894). The fifty song books he edited include Pentecostal Hymns No. 1 and The Evergreen, 1873.

Composer: Anthony Johnson Showalter (May 1, 1858 – September 14, 1924) was an American gospel music composer, teacher and publisher. He was born in Cherry Grove, Virginia. Showalter was trained in the Ruebush-Kieffer School of Music and was teaching in shape note singing schools by age fourteen. In 1884, he formed the Showalter Music Company of Dalton, Georgia. He was also an elder of the First Presbyterian Church in Dalton.

Showalter's best known song is "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms", which was published in 1887. He has generally been credited with writing the music and chorus. However, Showalter's nephew, Samuel Duncan, is also credited with the music for the verses. The song features prominently in the score of *Night of the Hunter* and forms about a quarter of the score of the 2010 film *True Grit*.

Words:

1 What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain:

Leaning, leaning,
safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

2 O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
O how bright the path grows from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms. *[Refrain]*

3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms. *[Refrain]*

Recessional Hymn LEVAS #1 “Lift Every Voice and Sing”

This is a favorite of Annie Dolber and Jim McWhorter

"Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" – referred to as the Black national anthem – is a song written as a poem by James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938) in 1900 and set to music by his brother J. Rosamond Johnson (1873–1954) in 1905. "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" was publicly performed first as a poem as part of a celebration of Abraham Lincoln's birthday by Johnson's brother John. In 1919, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) dubbed it "the Negro national anthem" for its power in voicing a cry for liberation and affirmation for African-American people.

The song is a prayer of thanksgiving for faithfulness and freedom, with imagery evoking the biblical Exodus from slavery to the freedom of the "promised land". "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" is featured in 39 different Christian hymnals, and is sung in churches across North America.

Author: James Weldon Johnson

James was the brother of composer John Johnson. He studied literature at Atlanta University (graduated 1894, MA 1904), and went on to become a song writer, anthologist, teacher, and lawyer. He was the first African-American to pass the bar in the state of Florida. In 1906 he became the American consul in Puerto Cabello, Venezuela, and in 1909, consul in Corinto, Nicaragua. In 1920, he was appointed Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Composer: J. Rosamond Johnson

John Rosamund Johnson (b. Jacksonville, Florida, August 11, 1873; d. New York, New York, November 11, 1954) was one of the more important figures in black

music in the first part of the 20th century, usually in partnership with Bob Cole or with his brother James Weldon Johnson. While he is chiefly remembered today as the composer of the Black National Anthem, "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing," he had a varied career as a pianist, songwriter, producer, soldier, singer, and actor. J. Rosamond Johnson began playing the piano at age four, studied at the New England Conservatory and with Samuel Coleridge-Taylor in London.

J. Rosamond Johnson began playing the piano at age four, studied at the New England Conservatory and with Samuel Coleridge-Taylor in London. By the end of the 19th century, Johnson was teaching schoolchildren in the Jacksonville region. Around 1900 Johnson wrote and taught these schoolchildren "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing." Its popularity caused it to spread until it became the unofficial, then official, Black National Anthem.

Johnson moved to New York City in 1900 and plunged into its musical life. Johnson's compositions skills were the strongpoints of his musicals and vaudeville performances.

When World War I broke out, Johnson received a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 15th Regiment. After the war, he toured with his own groups, and even sang and played the part of a lawyer in the original production of Porgy and Bess in 1935.

Words:

1 Lift ev'ry voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun
Of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

2 Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast'ning rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over away that with tears has been watered;
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered;
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

3 God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by thy might,
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee;
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee,
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.