

# Only Light, Only Love

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Joan Szymko

$\text{♩} = 58$   
*p*

Choir I  
Dark - ness, dark - ness, dark - ness,

Choir II  
*p*  
Dark - ness, dark - ness,

Solo (or a few voices) 5 *mp*  
Dark - ness, Dark -

*mf*  
ness can - not drive out dark - ness;

*mp*  
dark - ness,

*p*  
dark - ness,

*mp*  
Dark-ness can - not drive out dark - ness,

*p*  
dark - ness, Dark-ness can - not drive out dark - ness,

11 *mp*  
dark - ness, dark - ness,

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*mf*

Dark-ness can - not drive out dark - ness;

dark - ness;

Dark-ness can - not drive out dark - ness;

**Poco più mosso**  $\text{♩} = 64$

*mf* [16]

light can do that.

On - ly light can do that. On-ly light can do that.

*mp* On - ly light, On-ly light, On-ly light, On-ly light,

*mp* On - ly light, On-ly light.

On - ly light, On-ly light.

**Più mosso**

[20] *f*

Ha - tred, ha - tred,

*f* Ha - tred, ha - tred,

*f* Ha - tred, ha - tred,

*f* Ha - tred, ha - tred,

*f* Ha - tred, ha - tred,

24

Ha-tred can-not drive out ha-tred, ha-tred,

Ha-tred can-not drive out ha-tred, ha-tred,

Ha-tred can-not drive out ha-tred, ha-tred,

Ha-tred can-not drive out ha-tred, ha-tred,

ha-tred, Ha-tred can-not drive out ha-tred; ha-tred; ha-tred can't drive out ha-tred; ha-tred; ha-tred, drive out ha-tred, drive out

*rit. dim.*

*rit. dim.*

*rit. dim.*

*rit. dim.*

29 **Tempo primo**

On-ly love can do that. On-ly ha-tred; On-ly love, On-ly ha-tred; On-ly love, On-ly ha-tred; On-ly love,

*mf mp*

*mf mp*

*mf dim.*

*mf dim.*

33 **Poco più mosso** ♩ = 64

*p* love can do that. On-ly love, on - ly

*p* love can do that. On-ly love, on - ly

*mp* On-ly love, On-ly love, on - ly

*mp* On-ly love, On-ly love, on - ly

36 *mp cresc.* *f poco accel.*

love; On-ly light, on - ly light. *f poco accel.*

love; On-ly light, on - ly light. *f poco accel.*

love; On-ly light, on - ly light. *f poco accel.*

love; On-ly light, on - ly light. *f poco accel.*

40 **Poco più mosso** ♩ = 72

*ff* On-ly love, on - ly light; *f* On-ly light, on - ly

*ff* On-ly love, on - ly light; *f* On-ly light, on - ly

*ff* On-ly love, on - ly light; *f* On-ly light, on - ly

*ff* On-ly love, on - ly light; *f* On-ly light, on - ly

[48] **Meno mosso** ♩ = 58

love, On - ly love. On - ly light can drive out  
 love, On - ly love. On - ly light can drive out  
 love, On - ly love. On - ly light  
 love, On - ly love. On - ly light

dark - ness. On - ly love can drive out hate.  
 dark - ness. On - ly love can drive out hate.  
 dark - ness. On - ly love can drive out hate.  
 dark - ness. On - ly love drive out hate.

[53]

**Più mosso** ♩ = 66

A few voices

*cresc. poco a poco to m. 61 poco accel.*

[57]

**Più mosso** ♩ = 80

On - ly light, on - ly love, on - ly light.  
 On - ly light, on - ly love. On - ly love,  
 On - ly light, on - ly love. On - ly love,



72 **A tempo** ♩ = 72 *mf*

Love.

On - ly love.

Love.

On - ly love.

Love. Love.

Love. Love.

Love. Love.

Love. Love.

#### The text

“Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hatred cannot drive out hatred: only love can do that.”

- quote from a sermon by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

#### About the composer

Joan Szymko (b.1957), in addition to being an active composer, has led choirs in the Pacific Northwest for over twenty-five years. Abundant lyricism, rhythmic intensity and vigorous attention to text are hallmarks of her diverse and distinctive choral writing. With over fifty octavos in print, her music is performed frequently by distinguished choral ensembles across the country and increasingly, abroad. Szymko also writes for the stage and has been a resident composer with Do Jump! Extremely Physical Theater since 1995.

#### Notes from the composer

The historic nomination of an African American man for the Presidency of the United States was most certainly in my consciousness as I set this quote. I am struck by the sheer, beautiful logic of Dr. King's words.

The opening bars are scored for two SSA groups (Choir I and Choir II) to reinforce visually, aurally and in performance, darkness trying to drive out darkness—simple, solid triads pushing one against the other. Ideally, *Only Light, Only Love* would be performed as two SSA mixed groupings, in an antiphonal physical arrangement. If this is not possible/practical for your ensemble in performance, I recommend exploring this option in rehearsal.

Especially note that tempi changes play a very important and expressive role in this piece.