

Choral Series for Young People



for Jonathan Bitz

Holy and Strong

Refrain based on the *Trisagion*

Janèt Sullivan Whitaker

INTRO *Lively* (♩ = ca. 120)

Piano

E B A B

A B

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♩ REFRAIN (1st time all sing Voice 1)

f
Voice 1
Ho - ly God, — ho - ly and strong, — ho - ly and liv - ing God! —

Voice 2 *f*
Ho - ly God, — ho - ly and strong, —

E B A B A

Ho - ly God, —

ho - ly and liv - ing God! — Ho - ly

B E B

to Coda ⊕ 3rd time: *D.S. al Coda*

ho - ly and strong, — be our un - end - ing song. —

God, ho - ly and strong, — our un - end - ing song. —

G#7 C#m to Coda ⊕ F#m B sus4 B E 3rd time: *D.S. al Coda*

VERSES (Verse 1 unison)

mf

1. Mak-er of all things great and small, ev-ery-thing liv-ing
 2. Teach us to know and heed your call, mak-er of peace and

mf

2. Oo, heed your call,

A B E A B

mf

1. lit-tle or tall. Giv-er of light and life to us all,
 2. just-ice for all. Low-ly be lift-ed, might-y will fall.

2. just-ice for all. Oo might-y will fall.

E A E G#7 C#m

1, 2. I will sing to you, for you are

F#m G#m A NC/A# A/B B E/B B7

cresc.

D.S.

⊕ CODA

be our un-end - ing song. Oo, you are ho - ly. Oo, Be our un-end - ing song. you are strong. Oo, you are ho - ly.

Be our un-end - ing song. Oo, you are ho - ly.

Be our un-end - ing song! Oo, you are strong. Be our un-end - ing song!

Chord progressions: F#m B sus4 B C#m Bm A B7sus4 B7 E; C#m A B7sus4 B7 E Bm7 A; B7sus4 B7 E C#m A B sus4 B E

Composer Notes

The refrain for this song begins with a bright, upbeat nod to the *Trisagion*, a hymn of praise and a standard element of the Divine Liturgy known to those who worship in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. The literal translation of this hymn is “Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.” The Greek word *Trisagion* means “thrice holy.” In its most solemn form, this classic prayer is associated with Good Friday.

In creating this text for children, I wanted to joyously echo the eternal strength and holiness of God, in whom everything is possible. It is God who creates and gives life to his beloved ones, and God who instructs them in the ways of right living. From a very young age, children can learn a lifelong commitment to singing the praise of God, who is powerful, just, and good. Formed by God, they too can become holy and strong.

But this learning reaches beyond the formation of children. Texts that are voiced by the very young have the power to stir the hearts of all who hear them, regardless of the hearer’s age. Adults can be more open and receptive to witness what is borne on the lips of children. It is my prayer that this song will help strengthen the faith of communities where it is sung.

“Holy and Strong” can be effectively sung in a robust unison by children of all ages. When it was first written, it was for an after-school group of rambunctious second and third graders. While the recording features a band, the song can be just as energetically sung *a cappella* with hand clapping, or accompanied by guitar or piano. The Voice 2 part will be a fun challenge for children’s choirs who are confident with part-singing.

While the song begins with ancient imagery from the *Trisagion*, the rest of the lyrics reveal a broader message: one of gratitude, life, God’s law of love, and a world that is just. Such themes will always be relevant in the life of the church, on and beyond the solemn confines of the Friday we call Good.

—Janèt Sullivan Whitaker
Memorial of the Guardian Angels
October 2, 2023

Preview

for Jonathan Bitz

Holy and Strong

(Guitar/Vocal)

Refrain based on the *Trisagion*

Janèt Sullivan Whitaker

INTRO *Lively* (♩ = ca. 120)

Capo 2: (D) (A) (G) (A) (G) (A)
E B A B A B

REFRAIN

(D) (A) (G) (A) (G)
E B A B A

Ho - ly God, — ho - ly and strong, — ho - ly and liv - ing God! —

(A) (D) (A) (F#7) (Bm)
B E B G#7 C#m

Ho - ly God, — ho - ly and strong, —

to Coda ⊕

(Em) (Asus4) (A) (D)
F#m Bsus4 B E

be our un - end - ing song. —

3rd time: *D.S. al Coda*

VERSES

(G) (A) (D) (G) (A)
A B E A B

1. Mak - er of all — things great and small, — ev - ery - thing liv - ing
2. Teach us to know — and heed your call, — mak - er of peace — and

(D) (G) (D) (F#7) (Bm)
E A E G#7 C#m

1. lit - tle or tall. — Giv - er of light — and life to us all, —
2. just - ice for all. — Low - ly be lift - ed, might - y will fall. —

(Em) (F#m) (G) (NC/G#) (G/A) (A) (D/A) (A7)
F#m G#m A NC/A# A/B B E/B B7

1, 2. I will sing to you, for you are

D.S.

⊕ CODA

(Em) F#m (Asus4) Bsus4 (A) B (Bm) C#m (Am) Bm
 be our un - end - ing song. _____

(G) A (A7sus4) B7sus4 (A7) B7 (D) E (Bm) C#m
 Be our un - end - ing song. _____

(G) A (A7sus4) B7sus4 (A7) B7 (D) E (Am7) Bm7 (G) A
 Be our un - end - ing song. _____

(A7sus4) B7sus4 (A7) B7 (D) E (Bm) C#m
 Be our un - end - ing song. _____

(G) A (Asus4) Bsus4 (A) B (D) E
 Be our un - end - ing song! _____

Assembly Edition

HOLY AND STRONG

Janèt Sullivan Whitaker

Refrain



Ho - ly God, ho - ly and strong,
 ho - ly and liv - ing God! Ho - ly God,
 ho - ly and strong, be our un - end - ing song.

Verses



1. Mak - er of all things great and small,
 2. Teach us to know and heed your call,



1. ev - ery - thing liv - ing lit - tle or tall.
 2. mak - er of peace and just - ice for all.



1. Giv - er of light and life to us all,
 2. Low - ly be lift - ed, might - y will fall.

to Refrain



1, 2. I will sing to you, for you are

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