

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

SATB Choir, soloist, and piano

Music by
George N. Allen

Text and adaptation by
Thomas Dorsey

Arrangement by
Matthew John Olson

The Song

Thomas Dorsey was a traveling vaudeville pianist when, in August of 1932, he learned that his pregnant wife was very ill at home in Chicago. By the time Mr. Dorsey arrived from St. Louis to be by his wife's side, she and his son had both passed away during childbirth.

In his deep grief the hours after, Mr. Dorsey was drawn to the old hymn tune "Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone" by George Allen. As he played and sang, an adapted melody and original text emerged that is now known as "Precious Lord, Take My Hand."

To many of us, it may seem amazing (if not unfathomable) that someone amidst such tragedy could create a song of profound beauty, faith, hope, and healing.

The Arrangement

Remembering the tale of Mr. Dorsey's loss, I was drawn to his hymn when empathizing with a community member's own tragedy.

While living in Michigan and attending graduate school, I served part-time as a musician at a church near campus. Shortly after I arrived, a high school senior excitedly introduced himself to me because he had just accepted a scholarship to attend my alma mater in Minnesota. He was elated. It was a very sad day, then, when our community learned that this student was killed in a car accident just prior to graduating high school. I arranged "Precious Lord" that night with deepest sympathies to the family and friends of a young person who left us far too soon.

-Matthew

The Arranger

Matthew J Olson leads a diverse musical career as a conductor, composer, arranger, singer, and arts administrator.

He serves as Founding Artistic Director of Oratory Bach Ensemble, a professional period instrument orchestra and chamber choir specializing in the sacred works of J.S. Bach and composers who influenced him. He is also Assistant Director of The Singers – MN Choral Artists, Director of Choirs at Westwood Lutheran Church in the Twin Cities, and Instructor of Voice at North Hennepin Community College.

As a composer and arranger, Matthew's works are receiving growing performances by nationally acclaimed collegiate and community choirs. He was the winner of the 2013 Houghton College Choir Composition Prize for "In Paradisum" (Santa Barbara Music Publishing) – an honor that included performances by the ensemble throughout the Mid-Atlantic. His settings of poems by American poet Wendell Berry, including "The Peace of Wild Things" (Colla Voce, Jo-Michael Scheibe Series) and "The Want of Peace" (publication forthcoming) have received performances by Magnum Chorum, choirs of St. Olaf College and Michigan State University, among others. His interest in diverse musical styles extends into choral arrangements including "Creep" (Radiohead), Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald (Gordon Lightfoot), "Someone Like You" (Adele/Wilson), and many others.

He studied conducting at St. Olaf College, Michigan State University, Oregon Bach Festival, University of Minnesota, and the Canford Orchestral Conducting School, U.K.

You can learn more at www.matthewjolson.com

For the Aquinas College Chorus, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Words by
Thomas Dorsey

Music by George N. Allen
adapt. by Thomas Dorsey
arr. Matthew J Olson

Gospel rubato

Solo

Piano

Pre-cious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand. I am

5

A.

Pno.

PERUSAL SCORE

tired, I am weak, I am worn. Through the storm, through the

10

A.

Pno.

night, lead me on to the light. Take my hand pre-cious Lord, lead me

15 *60* *Atti*

PERUSAL SCORE

S. When my way grows drear, pre-cious Lord, lin-ger near, when my

A. home. When my way grows drear, pre-cious Lord, lin-ger near, when my

T. When my way grows drear, pre-cious Lord, lin-ger near, when my

B. When my way grows drear, pre-cious Lord, lin-ger near, when my

Pno.

21 *mf*

S. life is al - most gone hear my cry, hear my call, hold my

A. life is al - most gone hear my cry, hear my call, hold my

T. life is al - most gone hear my cry, hear my call, hold my

B. life is al - most gone hear my cry, hear my call, hold my

PERUSAL SCORE

Pno.

27 *mp* **PERUSAL SCORE**

S. hand lest I fall. Take my hand, pre-cious Lord, lead me home.

A. hand lest I fall. Take my hand, pre-cious Lord, lead me home.

T. 8 hand lest I fall. Take my hand, pre-cious Lord, lead me home.

B. hand lest I fall. Take my hand, pre-cious Lord, lead me home.

Pno.

32 *pp* **PERUSAL SCORE**

S. —

A. —

T. 8 —

B. —

Pno.

37

S. **PERUSAL SCORE** When the

A. When the

T. When the

B. When the

Pno.

41

S. dark - ness ap - pears and the night draws near, — and the day is

A. dark - ness ap - pears and the night draws near, — and the day is

T. **PERUSAL SCORE** dark - ness ap - pears and the night draws near, — and the day is

B. dark - ness ap - pears and the night draws near, — and the day is

Pno.

46

PERUSAL SCORE

S. past and gone, at the ri - ver I stand, guide my

A. past and gone, at the ri - ver I stand, guide my

T. 8 past and gone, at the ri - ver I stand, guide my

B. past and gone, at the ri - ver I stand, guide my

Pno.

51

S. feet, hold my hand. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me

A. feet, hold my hand. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me

T. 8 feet, hold my hand. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me

B. feet, hold my hand. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me

PERUSAL SCORE

Pno.

55

PERUSAL SCORE

S. home. at the ri - ver I stand, guide my feet, hold my

A. home. at the ri - ver I stand, guide my feet, hold my

T. 8 home. at the ri - ver I stand, guide my feet, hold my

B. home. at the ri - ver I stand, guide my feet, hold my

Pno.

60

rit.

S. hand. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

A. hand. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

T. 8 hand. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

B. hand. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

PERUSAL SCORE

Pno.