



We Have a Choice

A Choose-Your-Own-Path Adapted for Digital Video Conferencing Applications

Music by Amy Gordon

Instrumentation: SATB Choir

Duration: 2-3 Minutes

The music and lyrics of **We Have a Choice** were composed as a reaction to the COVID-19 crisis. The piece explores aleatoric and performer-based textures that can be sung remotely through video conferencing platforms, such as Zoom. The text explores our ability to choose our own paths and reactions in every situation, hopefully ultimately choosing to embrace the story with love, joy, hope, and peace.

The piece alternates between mostly-unison chant-like textures and aleatoric branching textures, in which the performers may choose their own path.

This piece is suitable for any Mixed-Voice Choir interested in exploring virtual singing and limited-aleatoric textures that give performers ownership of the material.

TEXT

We have a choice.
In the beginning of the story, there's a choice.
We can choose to [*accept, ignore*] the call.

We might not know what the story is about.
It might be about
[*lovers uniting, dragons and castles,*
searching for treasure, or just everyday life].

And the story will continue on.

We have a choice.
In the middle of the story, there's a choice.
We can choose to
[*keep on going, give up and sit it out, give in to fear*].

We have a choice.
At the end of the story, there's a choice.
We will choose [*love, hope, joy, peace*].

In every story, we have a choice.

About the composer: Amy Gordon is an active composer, arranger, songwriter, and vocalist based in Los Angeles, CA. As a choral composer, she has worked with and been commissioned by numerous choirs, including being the composer-in-residence for Nova Vocal Ensemble. She has also scored numerous films and webcasts. She has a BA in Composition from Loyola Marymount University and a MM in Music Composition from California State University, Long Beach.

Score Directions

The conductor or leader should cue all entrances and cut-offs. After being cued for an entrance, the singers should sing the chant-like unison material with the provided rhythms but in a natural pace. Due to the latency inherent in the use of video conferencing applications, it is not yet possible to sing in real-time with no lag. Because of this, the singers do not have to be perfectly rhythmically aligned. In fact, the interesting textures that arise from small rhythmic differences due to latency should be embraced.

Empty measures with a fermata over the rest should last approximately 2 seconds and serve as a chance for all singers to end their previous phrase, compensating for any latency-based lag.

After each empty measure with a fermata rest, the conductor/leader should clearly cue the start of the next phrase, which is shown via an arrow pointing to the rehearsal mark. The singers should begin their phrase as soon as they see the conductor/leader give the entrance cue.

When given a chance, singers may choose which line they would like to sing. The singers will follow the dashed lines to their preferred choice and then return to the unison chant after each aleatoric section. The choices the singers may make have been specified by ranges, so any Treble or Bass voice chooses an option best suited to their range. While it is preferred that the singers follow the specified choice, if a singer would really like to sing an option out of their range, they may sing that choice in any comfortable octave.

It may be ideal to conduct or lead this piece using the screen-share capability of many video conferencing platforms. If using screen-share to conduct, use the cursor to clearly point to the arrows for entrance cues and the empty measures for cutoffs.

We Have a Choice

Music and Text by Amy Gordon

Around ♩ = 106

CONDUCTOR
CUES DOWNBEAT

Start when conductor cues eighth note rest, Each singer sings words rhythmically at their own natural pace, like a chant.

~2"
wait until everyone has cut off

Treble Voices

Bass Voices

①

mf We have a choice. In the be gin - ning of the sto - ry, there's a choice.

Start when conductor cues eighth note rest, Each singer sings words rhythmically at their own natural pace, like a chant.

wait until everyone has cut off

~2"
wait until everyone has cut off

CHOICE #1
enter freely

ac - cept the call.

wait until everyone has cut off

CHOICE #2
enter freely

ig - nore the call.

wait until everyone has cut off

②

Treb. Voices

Bass Voices

We can choose to:

Choose #1 or #2

Choose #1 or #2

CHOICE #1
enter freely

ac - cept the call.

wait until everyone has cut off

CHOICE #2
enter freely

ig - nore the call.

wait until everyone has cut off

③

Treb. Voices

Bass Voices

We might not know what the sto - ry is a - bout.

~2"
wait until everyone has cut off

wait until everyone has cut off

CHOICE #1

romantically



lov-ers u-nit-ing,

CHOICE #4

straight-forward



or just e-'vry-day life.

4

Choose #1,
#2, or #3



It might be a-bout:

Bass Voices



Choose #2,
#3, or #4

CHOICE #3

theatrically



drag-ons and cas-tles,

CHOICE #2

Strongly



search-ing for treas-ure,



~2"

wait until everyone
has cut off

5

Treb. Voices



And the sto - ry will con - ti - nue on.

Bass Voices



wait until everyone
has cut off

~2"

wait until everyone
has cut off

wait until everyone
has cut off



6

Treb. Voices



mf We have a choice. In the mid - dle of the sto - ry, there's a choice.

Bass Voices



~2"

wait until everyone
has cut off

wait until everyone
has cut off

We Have a Choice

repeat ~4x until conductor cues cutoff

CHOICE #1
enter freely and keep repeating

Keep on go - ing.

repeat ~4x until conductor cues cutoff

CHOICE #2
enter freely after 2nd repeat and keep repeating

Give up and sit it out.

Choose #1 or #2

Treb. Voices

Bass Voices

We can choose to:

Choose #1 or #2

CHOICE #1
enter freely and keep repeating

Keep on go - ing.

repeat ~4x until conductor cues cutoff

CHOICE #2
enter freely after 2nd repeat and keep repeating

Give in to fear.

repeat ~4x until conductor cues cutoff



8

Treb. Voices

Bass Voices

mf We have a choice. At the end of the sto - ry, there's a choice.

~2" wait until everyone has cut off

wait until everyone has cut off

We Have a Choice

9

Treb. Voices

Bass Voices

mp We will choose:

Choose #1,
#2, or #3

Choose #1,
#3, or #4

CHOICE #1

love,

CHOICE #2

wait until Choice #1
singers cut off

hope, —

CHOICE #3

wait until Choice #2
singers cut off

joy,

CHOICE #4

wait until Choice #3
singers cut off

peace.



CHOICE #4

wait until Choice #3
singers cut off

peace. —

CHOICE #1

love,

~2"

wait until everyone
has cut off

10

Treb. Voices

Bass Voices

mf We will choose:

Choose #1,
#3, or #4

Choose #2,
#3, or #4

CHOICE #2

wait until Choice #1
singers cut off

hope, —

CHOICE #3

wait until Choice #2
singers cut off

joy,

20-25"

CONDUCTOR
CUES CUTOFF

CHOICE #1
Pick top or bottom note
Continue repeating freely until conductor cues cutoff

love, —

enter freely

CHOICE #3
Pick top or bottom note
Continue repeating freely until cutoff

joy,

enter freely

CHOICE #2
Pick top or bottom note
Continue repeating freely until conductor cues cutoff

hope, —

enter freely

CHOICE #4
Pick top or bottom note
Continue repeating freely until cutoff

peace.

wait until everyone has cut off ~2"

11

Choose #1, #2, or #3

f We will choose:

wait until everyone has cut off

Choose #2 or #4

wait until everyone has cut off ~2"

12

mp In e - 'vry sto - ry, we have a choice.

wait until everyone has cut off

