

Songs for the People
for choir and organ

6:00 minutes

Brooke Joyce (2024)

Commissioned by the American Guild of Organists for the 2024 AGO/ECS Publishing Award in
Choral Composition

Premiered by the Grace Cathedral Choir (San Francisco), July 2024

Let me make the songs for the people,
Songs for the old and young;
Songs to stir like a battle-cry
Wherever they are sung.

Not for the clashing of sabres,
For carnage nor for strife;
But songs to thrill the hearts of all
With more abundant life.

Let me make the songs for the weary,
Amid life's fever and fret,
Till hearts shall relax their tension,
And careworn brows forget.

Let me sing for little children,
Before their footsteps stray,
I would sing for the poor and aged,

When shadows dim their sight;
Of the bright and restful mansions,
Where there shall be no night.

Our world, so worn and weary,
Needs music, pure and strong,
To hush the jangle and discords
Of sorrow, pain, and wrong.

Music to soothe all its sorrow,
Till war and crime shall cease;
And the hearts of all grown tender
Surround the world with peace.

-- Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-
1911), with minor revisions by the
composer