

You Are My Sunshine

Words and music by
Jimmie Davis and Charles Mitchell

The musical score is written in a single system with seven staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is accompanied by chords indicated by letters above the staff: F, Bb, F, Bb, F, C7, and F. The lyrics are: "You are my sun - shine, my on - ly sun - shine; You make me hap - py when skies are gray. You'll ne - ver know, dear, how much I love you; Please don't take my sun - shine a - way." The second staff continues the melody with lyrics: "hap - py when skies are gray. You'll ne - ver know, dear,". The third staff concludes the first line with lyrics: "how much I love you; Please don't take my sun - shine a - way." The fourth staff is labeled "VERSE *" and begins with the lyrics: "The oth - er night, dear, as I lay sleep - ing,". The fifth staff continues with lyrics: "I dreamed I held you in my arms,". The sixth staff continues with lyrics: "When I a - woke, dear, I was mis - tak - en". The seventh staff concludes with lyrics: "and I hung my head and cried." and is marked "D.C. al Fine".

F

You are my sun - shine, my on - ly sun - shine; You make me

B \flat F B \flat

hap - py when skies are gray. You'll ne - ver know, dear,

F F C7 F *Fine*

how much I love you; Please don't take my sun - shine a - way.

VERSE *

The oth - er night, dear, as I lay sleep - ing,

I dreamed I held you in my arms,

When I a - woke, dear, I was mis - tak - en

D.C. al Fine

and I hung my head and cried.

* The harmony on the verse can be sung as written in sixths below the melody, or up an octave in thirds above the melody.

SINGING

Let younger students learn to sing the first part (the refrain) of this song on just the melody line. Older students will enjoy learning the verse and enriching the sound of the Refrain with a harmony part as written or in thirds above the melody.

Notice that the melody is the same for both the verse and refrain with slight variations because of the words. A performance idea for singing the harmony is to sing the refrain with the alto part as written. The verse could be sung by a soloist or small group with the rest of the class harmonizing in thirds above the melody on the syllable *oo*.

PLAYING

Accompany this three chord song on the autoharp with the F, B-flat and C7 chords as marked on the song. Older students can effectively strum two beats per measure.

Let younger children play finger cymbals on the word *sunshine*. If desired, finger cymbals could be played on all the half notes. Shake the tambourine on the whole notes on the words *gray* and *(a)way*.

CREATING

Younger children may enjoy dramatizing the words of this song.

Older students could improvise a bass vocal part by singing the pitches F, B-flat and C where they are marked for the autoharp.

LISTENING

Describe the mood of this song and encourage students to sing with a tone quality that will convey that mood. Help them reflect the happiness and sunshine of the words, but also feel the flowing qualities of the long tones where half notes and whole notes are tied over the bar lines. As a contrast, have students sing each tone in a detached, staccato sound and analyze the effect that has on the mood of the song. Sometimes musical arrangers purposely create contrasts that have an effect on the mood of the music. Do the students prefer one sound over another, or do they like both?

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

This is a song that seems to have been around forever, but it wasn't written until 1940. It hardly sounds like a political campaign song, but it was the theme song for Jimmie Davis who ran successfully for the governor of Louisiana and served two terms. It was written by Jimmie Davis and Charles Mitchell.

Ask the students to sing this song to their parents. If the parents know the song, they will feel a joyful musical bond in singing it with their children. This song is always a hit in a sing-along or around a campfire with people of all ages. Usually harmony spontaneously breaks out either in the alto part as written here or as a tenor/soprano descant a third above the melody.

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