

Arrangement I

America The Dream

Simple Lead Sheet
with Piano and Guitar Chords



"I have a dream..."

A new "America the Beautiful"
inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

“From every mountainside, let freedom ring.”

–Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

On a summer day in 1893, Katharine Lee Bates jotted down words for “America the Beautiful” while looking out from the 14,000–foot summit of Pikes Peak. She had no way of knowing her poem would one day become famous as a song. At the time, she wrote: *“Near the top we had to leave the wagon and go the rest of the way on mules. I was very tired. But when I saw the view, I felt great joy. All the wonder of America seemed displayed there, with the sea-like expanse.”*

Since then many people have loved the song. It’s even been regarded by some as our “unofficial” national anthem. Along the way, the original lyrics changed with different musical settings. A hymn melody by Samuel A. Ward eventually became the “America the Beautiful” most people know today, with “purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain.” But there still was no actual chorus. These days the later verses are rarely even sung. Language changes with time. So does awareness of inclusion and diversity.

More than a century later, mountains remain a powerful image in Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. *“From every mountain side... let freedom ring!”* This past year, for our town’s MLK Day celebration, my friend Mike Bradley and I wondered: What if we had an anthem everyone could sing together? A song for all ages, colors, religions and beliefs. What if we could weave together the vision of “America the Beautiful” with Dr. King’s dream for all America?

And so these new lyrics were born, first sung by our children’s chorus. By the last verse, there was not a dry eye in the crowd. At a time when our country feels increasingly fractured, songs like this help bring us together. They remind us of the dreams we share in common: the promise of an America that is more than any one of us alone.

Available free sheet music and music videos for this song include:

- Simple Lead Sheet (with piano and guitar chords)
- Adult Chorus and Children’s Chorus arrangements (two and three parts with piano accompaniment)
- SATB Choir (a capella intermediate and advanced versions)

If you have additional verses or a performance you’d like to share, please email a copy or link to us at the web site: AmericaTheDream.org

Keep Singing,

Steve Schuch

America the Dream

"America the Beautiful" lyrics by Katharine Lee Bates • Melody by Samuel A. Ward

New lyrics by Steve Schuch and Mike Bradley • Arr. © 2020 Steve Schuch / Night Heron Music (ASCAP)

Oh beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain
For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain

*America, America, God grant that we may see
True brotherhood and sisterhood from sea to shining sea*

Oh beautiful for freedom's hope, although at times unseen
The promise one day we will see the long awaited dream

*America, America, God grant that we may see
True brotherhood and sisterhood from sea to shining sea*

Oh beautiful when worth is found in every single face
When content of our character eclipses rank and race

*America, America, God grant that we may see
True brotherhood and sisterhood from sea to shining sea*

Oh beautiful when children sing... free from hate and fear
Now hear their laughter pure and sweet, young voices ringing clear

*America, America, God grant that we may see
True brotherhood and sisterhood from sea to shining sea
True brotherhood and sisterhood
From sea__ to__ shin__ing__ sea_____*
Shin-ing sea

*ALT. CHORUS OPTIONS America, America, Oh grant that we may/will be
United as one family, from sea to shining sea*

America the Dream

Version I: Simple Lead Sheet

use capo on guitar or transpose
if a higher key is desired

melody by Samuel A. Ward
original lyrics by Katharine Lee Bates
new lyrics by Steve Schuch & Mike Bradley
arr. by Steve Schuch

Andante

♩ = 90

C G/B Am⁷ D G D

Oh

5 G Am⁷ D C D G D

beau - ti - ful for spa - cious skies, for am - ber waves of grain. For
beau - ti - ful for free - dom's hope, al - though at times un - seen. The
beau - ti - ful when worth is found, in ev - 'ry sin - gle face. When

9 G (Em) D/F# E E/G# A⁷ D

pur - ple moun - tain ma - jes - ties a - bove the fruit - ed plain. } A -
pro - mise one day we will see the long a - wait - ed dream. }
con - tent of our char - ac - ter e - clip - ses rank and race. }

Chorus suggestion:

1st x unison; optional
harmony on later choruses

13 G G/B C D Am D G(sus4) G⁷

mer - i - ca, A - mer - i - ca, God grant that we may see true

17 C G/B Am⁷ D/F# G

bro - ther - hood and sis - ter - hood from sea to shin - ing sea.

21 C G/B Em Am Am/G 1.2. D/F#

Oh

25 3.
 D G(add9) (hold chord) D (hold chord) C D G G(sus4)
 Oh beau - ti - ful when chil - dren sing, free from hate and fear. Now

30 G(add9) (hold chord) D/F# (hold chord) E E/G# A7 D
 hear their laugh - ter pure and sweet, young voi - ces ring - ing clear. A -

(optional change in melody)

34 G G/B C D Am D G(sus4) G7
 mer - i - ca, A - mer - i - ca, God grant that we may see _____ true

(note change in harmony)

38 C G/B Am7 D Em
 bro - ther - hood and sis - ter - hood from sea to shin - ing sea. True

42 C G/B Am7 D
 bro - ther - hood and sis - ter - hood from sea to shin - ing

molto rall.

46 C G/B Am7 D/F# G
 sea. _____ Shin - ing _____ sea!



America The Dream

This project is the work of many hands.
Thank you to all of them, and for your interest, too.

AmericaTheDream.org

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