Information

This well-known American spiritual is a joyful expression of belief in oneself. During the 1950s and 60s it became known throughout the US as a Civil Rights anthem. Here, we set it in a choral gospel style. You can sing this song in unison, parts, or a mixture of both, and it is ideal for a concert performance or worship service. Your singers will pick this up quickly, so focus on creating a big open sound and a confident performance.

Starting

- Good posture is essential in creating the big sound needed for this piece, so start with some physical warm ups. Use the ‘big face, little face’ exercise (p. x) to energize the face. Open eyes wide and rub temples, cheeks, nose, and all around the eyes.
- Now tilt your head forward; imagine that the top of your head is a pencil, and on top of that rests a piece of paper. Draw figure of eights on to the paper, side to side, to loosen the neck. Finally, use other stretches (see p. x, ‘Posture’) to prepare the rest of the body for singing.
- Warm up over the range of this piece by singing the following with a bright, full, energized tone.

Starting

Establish a tempo of \( \mathcal{T}_2 = 152 \) and have the group click on beats 2 and 4. Sing this drum-kit exercise together to internalize the groove; swing the quavers!

Teaching and rehearsing

- Singing unaccompanied, use call and response to teach the song phrase by phrase, starting with the melody. Add some claps or clicks on beats 2 and 4, and smile!
- If you are singing the three-part arrangement, move on to Parts 2 and 3 and teach them in the same way.
- For a more authentic sound, keep the sound bright and full but try singing with a slightly nasal tone.

Ideas

- Ask a soloist to sing ‘This little light of mine’, or a lyric they have created, and have the group answer with ‘I’m gonna let it shine’.
- If you have a confident soloist, they could ad lib. on the long notes. e.g.:

\[
\text{I’m gon-na let it shine, (glory, hal-le-lu-jah!)}
\]

- Along with offbeat clicks or claps, try adding some movement: standing with feet together, step to the right with your right foot on beat 1, and on beat 3 step to the right with your left foot, bringing your feet together. In the next bar, step to the left with your left foot on beat 1, and on beat 3 step to the left with your right foot, bringing your feet together. Start this move in bar 2 and repeat until the tempo change in bar 42. This is known as a ‘step-touch’ or ‘step-together’ and is used quite frequently in popular choral styles.

Listen out

- Take care over the ‘s’ at the end of ‘This’: concentrate on the vowel.
- If the long notes start to lose energy and focus, try incorporating a slight crescendo.

Performing

- Perhaps start with a free-tempo unaccompanied verse before beginning the written arrangement.
- You might try the first verse in unison and add parts for the remaining verses.
- This song is all about pride in one’s self no matter what. Make sure your singers’ posture and faces convey this!
This little light of mine

Gospel shuffle \( \left( \mathfrak{I} = \frac{3}{4} \right) \) \( \mathfrak{j} = 152 \)

Piano

Vb

Bar.

1. This little light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.
2. Every where I go, I'm gon-na let it shine.

\( \text{arr. Steve Milloy} \)

Spiritual

\( \text{© Oxford University Press 2008} \)
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine,
Let it shine,

Everywhere I go,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine,
Let it shine!

Jesus gave it to me,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine.

Je - sus gave it to me, I'm gon - na let it shine.

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

10. This little light of mine

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Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

A7        G/D        E7(9)      Am7      D7      Em

straight 8ths/quavers
slow down to the end

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

D13        C/G   G