

SBMP 1338  
SISI NI MOJA, Narverud

**SATB**  
piano, opt. djembe

# SISI NI MOJA

words and music by  
Jacob Narverud

PREVIEW



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## About the composer

Jacob "Jake" Narverud (b.1986) is an American composer /arranger, conductor, and pianist of Norwegian descent. A native Kansan, Narverud is the Founding Artistic Director of the Tallgrass Chamber Choir, a professional ensemble of musicians from across the Great Plains. Dr. Narverud is a frequent guest lecturer at universities and conferences and is the Editor of Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc.



Known for his eclectic choral catalog, Jake is internationally recognized for his original compositions, arrangements of Broadway and Popular music, and performance editions of choral works from the Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical eras. As a sought-after composer, Jake has been commissioned to write new music for over fifty choral organizations nationwide as well as ensembles in Australia and Japan. Many of Narverud's pieces are Best Sellers and are performed worldwide by choirs of all levels.

Website: [jnarverud.com](http://jnarverud.com) Spotify & YouTube: [jacobnarverud](https://www.youtube.com/jacobnarverud)

## Composer Notes

The original voicing of Sisi ni moja was commissioned in 2015 for the Michigan State University Children and Youth Choirs by their director, Kyle Zech, to celebrate unity and community through cultures. This piece was written specifically for their world-music concert theme, "We are One." It was requested to be similar in style to my arrangement of the Kenyan song "Jambo," and was commissioned by the director for SA(T)B choir, piano, and djembe. The SA voicing was written two years later (2017) for the Lawrence Children's Choir in Kansas, Carolyn Welch, Director, and a TBB voicing was requested by a publisher later that same year.

I wanted to create an uplifting, hopeful song that had a modern, popular-style vibe and dealt with the choir's theme of unity and togetherness. Since the piece was intended to represent all people and all cultures, I sought to write a text that would reflect just that. I was teaching high school at the time, and a student in one of my choirs was from Kenya. I asked her to assist me with a Swahili phrase that I could combine with a new original text, which would translate specifically to "We are One." Though not a common Swahili phrase, we came up with "Sisi ni moja," pronounced "Moh-Jah" with a hard "J". "Heja" (pronounced "hey-yah") is a non-word with no literal meaning, and does not represent any specific culture. It is given a more instrumental treatment in the chorus, acting as a joyful, declamatory backdrop to the song's message of unity. The "celebratory chant" mirrors the piano and djembe's heavy rhythmic influence, energizing and driving the song forward.

When I wrote Sisi Ni Moja I specifically chose chord progressions that would be familiar to the ear of both the audience and the singers performing. These popular music chord progressions, coupled with the speech driven rhythms and repetition in the piano, allow listeners to feel an instant connection to the music and focus on the message of the text.

### Pronunciation

Heja= hey-yah  
Sisi= see-see  
Ni= nee  
Moja= moh-jah



optional djembe part, recording, rehearsal tracks  
available at [SBMP.COM](http://SBMP.COM)

Commissioned by the Michigan State University Children & Youth Choirs  
Kyle Zeuch, Director

# Sisi ni moja

(We are one)

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Moderate groove ♩ = 74

Piano

*f*

*pedal chordally throughout*

3

*mf*

5

*mf* full and vibrant

We all laugh, \_\_\_ we all cry, \_

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7

S

A

T  
B

we all feel hun - ger, we all feel pain.

9

*mf* warm and rich

We all love, *mp* hushed but intense we all

He - ja, he - ja,

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The image shows a musical score for piano and voice. It consists of several systems of staves. The first system is a piano introduction with treble and bass clefs. The second system starts at measure 13 and includes vocal lines with lyrics: "We are one world, one people - ja, he - ja." The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *f*. A large, diagonal watermark reading "PREVIEW" is overlaid across the center of the page.

15

- ple. And we all breathe the same.

- ple. And we all breathe the same.

he - ja, o he - ja. He - ja, - ja,

17

*mp* A tribe of man - y lan - gua-ges, -

*mp* A

he - ja, o he - ja. Hmm

19

*mf*

fight - ing for peace a-mong the land.

*mf*

group of man - y heart - aches, fight - ing for peace a-mong the land.

*mp*

Hmm

*mf*

21

*f*

He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo -

*f*

He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo -

*f*

He - ja, he - ja,

*f*

**PREVIEW**

23

ja. He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo-  
 ja. He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo-  
 o he - ja, he - ja, he - ja

25

ja. He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo-  
 ja. He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo-  
 He - ja, he - ja, he - ja

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27

ja. He - ja, he - ja,  
ja. He - ja, he - ja,  
o he - ja, he - ja, he - ja

29

*easy*  
we are  
*easy*  
we are one  
we are one.

*f*

31

*mf* rich and resonant

T B

We all want,

33

we all need we all seek pas-

35

*mf*

S

T B

We all

sion, we all seek joy.

37

S  
bruise, *mf* we all scar, we all

A  
We all bruise, we all scar,

T  
B  
We all bruise, we all scar,

39

S  
fail, but learn to thrive. *f* We are

A  
we all learn to thrive, *f* We are

T  
B  
we all fail, but learn to thrive.

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The image shows a musical score for piano and voice. It consists of several systems of staves. The top system is a piano introduction with a treble and bass clef. The second system is a vocal entry starting at measure 43, with lyrics: "all breath the same... In the". The third system continues the vocal line with lyrics: "all breath the same... In the". The fourth system is a piano accompaniment for the vocal line with lyrics: "He - ja, he - ja, he - ja, o he - ja.". The fifth system is another piano introduction. A large, bold, black watermark reading "PREVIEW" is oriented diagonally across the center of the page, overlapping the musical notation.

45 *hushed but intense* *mf*

dark - ness of the night and in the glo - ry of the morn - ing we  
*hushed but intense* *mf*

dark - ness of the night and in the glo - ry of the morn - ing we

*p* *>*  
Hmm

*mp*

47

walk a-long the path and find our way.

walk a-long the path and find our way.

*mp*

Hmm

*mf*

49 D *f*

He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo - ja. \_\_\_\_\_

He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo - ja. \_\_\_\_\_

He - ja, he - ja, he - ja, he - ja, -

51

He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo - ja. \_\_\_\_\_

He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo - ja. \_\_\_\_\_

he - ja. He - ja, he - ja, -

**PREVIEW**

53

He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo - ja. \_\_\_\_\_

He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo - ja. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ he - ja, \_\_\_\_\_ he - ja, he - ja, \_\_\_\_\_

55

He - ja, he - ja, *mf* Now we

He - ja, he - ja, *mf* Now we

\_\_\_\_\_ he - ja, \_\_\_\_\_ *mf* Now we

57 E

stand here to-gether and lift our hearts in song to the

stand here to-gether and lift our hearts in song to the

stand here to-gether and lift our hearts in song to the

*mf*

59

rhy - thm of \_\_\_ this mo - ment in \_\_\_ our lives: \_\_\_

rhy - thm of \_\_\_ this mo - ment in \_\_\_ our lives: \_\_\_

rhy - thm of \_\_\_ this mo - ment in \_\_\_ our lives: \_\_\_

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**F** Calm and confident

61 *mp*

He - ja, he - ja, si-si ni mo - ja. He - ja, he - ja, si-si ni mo -

*p* Mm *p* Mm

*p* Mm *p* Mm

**Calm and confident**

*mp* legato

64 *mf*

- ja. He - ja, he - ja, si-si ni mo - ja.

*mp* Mm *mp* Mm

*mf* Mm

G

**Joyful** *f* O he - ja!

67 *mp* *legato*

He-ja, he-ja, He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo -

He-ja, he-ja, He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo -

He-ja, he-ja, He - ja, he - ja,

**Joyful**

70

ja. O he - ja!

ja. He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo -

ja. He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo -

o he - ja, he - ja, he - ja.

72

O he - ja! O he - ja!

ja. He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo -

ja. He - ja, he - ja, si - si ni mo -

He - ja, he - ja, he - ja

74

He - ja, he - ja.

ja. He - ja, he - ja.

ja. He - ja, he - ja.

o he - ja, he - ja, He - ja, he - ja.

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**DRAFT**

78 *mf* *molto rall.*

we are one. \_\_\_\_\_

*mf*

we are one. \_\_\_\_\_

*mf*

we are one. \_\_\_\_\_

*mf* *f* *molto rall.*