

You Are My Sunshine

Words and music by
Jimmie Davis and Charles Mitchell

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of seven staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, with a chord symbol 'F' above the first measure. The lyrics are: 'You are my sun - shine, my on - ly sun - shine; You make me'. The second staff continues with lyrics: 'hap - py when skies are gray. You'll ne - ver know, dear,'. The third staff concludes with lyrics: '- how much I love you, Please don't take my sun - shine a - way.' and ends with a 'Fine' marking. The fourth staff is labeled 'VERSE *' and begins with 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 ends with a 'D.C. al Fine' marking.

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. *Fine*

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
- and I hung my head and cried. *D.C. al Fine*

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

Lyrics: You are my sunshine, my only sunshine;
You make me happy when skies are gray.
You'll never know, dear, how much I love you;
Please don't take my sunshine away.

The other night, dear, as I lay sleeping,
I dreamed I held you in my arms.
When I awoke, dear, I was mistaken
And I hung my head and cried.

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine;
You make me happy when skies are gray.
You'll never know, dear, how much I love you;
Please don't take my sunshine away.

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.

PLAYING – Accompany this three-chord song on the autoharp with 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 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 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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