

Shady Grove

*and Other Songs from the
Appalachian Mountains*

GWYNETH WALKER

for Piano Solo

Commissioned by the Engle Family Foundation for pianist Richard Steinbach

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Duration: 14 minutes



a division of



PROGRAM NOTES

This set of short pieces for piano solo is based on folksongs from the Appalachian Mountains. This music originated in the British Isles as unaccompanied ballads. The tunes were brought to the United States. As time passed, instruments were added—zither, banjo, and eventually, guitar. The guitar versions have become well-known standards of the American folk repertoire. Common traits of these songs are the modal/diatonic harmonies. The “refinement” of European chromaticism is absent. Root-position chords and consonant sonorities are prevalent. A special challenge in creating piano arrangements has been to inject occasional “appropriate” dissonances to enliven the harmonies. In addition, the strophic, ballad style of the songs, which relies upon storytelling to maintain the dramatic interest, must now be replaced by musical variation and development. The intent has been to create new piano repertoire within the folk spirit—rough-hewn, straightforward, energetic, and beautiful.

Shady Grove is a popular 18th-century American folksong with many versions of the lyrics. The title may refer to a beloved woman, or to a place where the speaker is traveling: “Going to Shade Grove.” However, the energetic music itself is well-defined and memorable. This new interpretation for piano includes a slowly unfolding introduction before the arrival of the theme, and a contrasting, ascending interlude section. The third verse is presented in a slow, rhapsodic manner to allow time for reflection. The lively theme then returns, ending with strumming the strings inside the piano in Appalachian zither-playing style.

Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies is a woman’s lament for her lost lover. To escape her sorrow, she sings, “I wish I were a tiny swallow, and I had wings, and I could fly.” Thus, the swallow becomes a central image in this song. The listener may hear the fluttering of wings in the accompaniment motives. Near the end, a free section features bird call patterns “calling from afar” above a rippling undercurrent. The song ends with a final bird in flight.

Three Ravens tells the story of a slain knight lying in a field. Three ravens, watching from their perch in a tree, plan to devour the knight. But he is protected by his loyal hounds. There is kindness and honor in this ballad. However, the focus of this new musical depiction is on the ravens, rather than on the knight. With the three ravens in mind, the music shifts to a triple meter (3/8). Chord clusters of three notes introduce the music and return throughout. Staccato notes represent the ravens “chattering” among themselves. A special interlude, the “Ravens’ Dance,” is inserted between verses of the song. *One might picture the ravens daintily performing a minuet on their tree limb while nodding to one another! Three knocks on the piano (pecks on the tree) end the song.*

A brief, newly-composed *Interlude* has been inserted into the suite. This music speaks in the composer’s own voice—in a language derived from the American folk idiom. The intent of this movement is to provide the listener with a peaceful break between the lively surrounding songs.

House Carpenter is a song of betrayal and tragedy. A young woman, married to a house carpenter, is lured away from her husband and baby by her former suitor, now a wealthy sailor. A life of adventure and romance is promised. The lovers run off together and drown at sea. The piano interpretation is influenced by the traditional guitar accompaniment often associated with this ballad. Grace notes approximate the “hammer-on” effect. Rapid arpeggios simulate guitar picking. The texture is fairly sparse. The rhythmic energy drives through this music to the deep (sunken) ending.

—Gwyneth Walker

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Shady Grove

and Other Songs from the Appalachian Mountains
for Solo Piano

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1. Shady Grove

Start slowly and accelerate

Musical score for piano, page 1, measures 1-2. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is treble clef, and the bottom staff is bass clef. Both staves begin with a dynamic of **p** and a crescendo. A wavy line indicates a 'repeat ad lib.' The right hand plays eighth-note chords in the treble clef staff, while the left hand provides harmonic support in the bass clef staff. Measure 2 begins with a similar pattern, followed by a dynamic of **mf**. The score includes pedal markings (Ped.) under the bass notes.

2 Start slowly and accelerate

Musical score for piano, page 1, measures 3-4. The dynamics remain the same as in measure 2. The right hand continues to play eighth-note chords in the treble clef staff, while the left hand provides harmonic support in the bass clef staff. Measure 4 concludes with a dynamic of **8vb**.

3 Start slowly and accel. throughout

Musical score for piano, page 1, measures 5-6. The dynamics change to **p** and **mf**. The right hand plays sixteenth-note patterns in the treble clef staff, while the left hand provides harmonic support in the bass clef staff. Measure 6 concludes with a dynamic of **l.v.**

Lively tempo ♩ = 126

Musical score for piano, page 1, measures 7-8. The dynamics are **p**. The right hand plays sixteenth-note patterns in the treble clef staff, while the left hand provides harmonic support in the bass clef staff. Measure 8 concludes with a dynamic of **add slight pedal**.

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4

8

11 (Theme) (f)

14

17

20

24

27 *delicately*

30 *mf* *p*

33

36 *f* *p* *f* *Reo.*

39 *p* *f* *Reo.* *6* *6*

42 *molto rit.*

6

45 **Slower ♩ = 100 relaxed tempo**

mf *espr.*

with pedal

48

51

playfully

p

accel. poco a poco (to m. 61)

54

(accel.)

57

(cresc.)

2. Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies (A Tiny Swallow)

Slowly, gently $\text{♩} = 60$, with sorrow

(Ped.)
(from previous movement)

with pedal

3

6

9

12

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

14

simile

17

poco accel.

Slightly faster ♩ = 69
with intensity

f

20

23

8

mf

Ped. *Ped.* *with pedal*

26

10
 28

"Bird Call" section
(right hand light, free rhythm, as a tiny swallow calling from afar)

30

L.H. continues, barely audible

32

descending pattern ad lib.

34

as a bird in flight

36

long descending pattern ad lib.

l.v.

Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo.

3. Three Ravens

Quickly
as three ravens chattering while perched in a tree

The musical score consists of five staves of piano music. Staff 1 (top) shows eighth-note patterns in treble and bass clefs. Staff 2 (second from top) starts with a dynamic of *mf* and includes a tempo marking of *Lively* $\text{d} = 72$. The label *(Theme)* is placed above the staff. Staff 3 (third from top) continues the theme with eighth-note patterns. Staff 4 (fourth from top) features sixteenth-note patterns. Staff 5 (bottom) concludes the piece with a dynamic of *p*.

1 **Quickly**
as three ravens chattering while perched in a tree

2 Lively $\text{d} = 72$ (Theme)

9

16

23

30

The Ravens' Dance

38

44

50

rit.

Slower, freely , a tempo (d. = 72)

56

VERSE 2

8vb gruffly

62

loco

14

69

76

84

92

rit.
[random, ascending, 3-note white-note clusters]

The Ravens' Dance

a tempo ($\text{♩} = 72$)

100

pp very daintily

106

mp

Interlude

**Slowly, freely
as an introduction**

p gently

♩ = 108
cantabile

with slight pedal

6

12

(Ped.)

17

Ped.

21

Ped.

25

cresc. poco a poco (to end of m. 38)

Musical score for piano, two staves, 29 measures.

Measure 29: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs followed by sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 30: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 31: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 32: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 33: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 34: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 35: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 36: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 37: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 38: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 39: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 40: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 41: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 42: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 43: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 44: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 45: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 46: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

Measure 47: Treble staff has sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Dynamics: (cresc.)

18

51

Faster ♩ = 120

55

59 (Ped.) (f) with ped. ad lib.

63

67 rit. to end

71 pp

4. House Carpenter

Slowly, freely
as an introduction

8va - | **f boldly* | *8vb* - | *loco* |

4 | *white-note gliss.* | *white-note gliss.* |

accel. | **Lively** $\text{♩} = 120$ | *(f)* |

white-note gliss. | *slight pedal ad lib. throughout* |

mf | *(Theme)* |

13 |

*Similar to a guitar “hammer-on” effect

Walker / 4. House Carpenter

20

17

Musical score for measures 17-20. The top staff (treble clef) has a tempo of 20. The bottom staff (bass clef) has a tempo of 17. The music features eighth and sixteenth note patterns.

20

Musical score for measure 20. The top staff (treble clef) has a tempo of 20. The bottom staff (bass clef) has a tempo of 17. The music features eighth and sixteenth note patterns.

23

VERSE 2

Musical score for measure 23. The top staff (treble clef) has a tempo of 23. The bottom staff (bass clef) has a tempo of 17. The music features eighth and sixteenth note patterns.

27

Musical score for measure 27. The top staff (treble clef) has a tempo of 27. The bottom staff (bass clef) has a tempo of 17. The music features eighth and sixteenth note patterns.

30

Musical score for measure 30. The top staff (treble clef) has a tempo of 30. The bottom staff (bass clef) has a tempo of 17. The music features eighth and sixteenth note patterns.

33

Musical score for measure 33. The top staff (treble clef) has a tempo of 33. The bottom staff (bass clef) has a tempo of 17. The music features eighth and sixteenth note patterns.

36

39

42

45

48

VERSE 3

51

22

54

57

60 rit.

*Slower, freely*R_{eo}.

63 (rit.)

(f)

(R_{eo})R_{eo}.

66 rit. ₃

Very slowly

a tempo ($\text{♩} = 120$)

p (p)

69