

8285 | Walker | Were You There? Women's Chorus (SSA) & Piano

GWYNETH WALKER

Were You There?

for Women's Chorus (SSA) and Piano

*Commissioned by Eleanor Bach, Choral Director -
Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

This arrangement for women's chorus and piano focuses on the inherent drama of this passionate spiritual song. Each verse expresses a different reaction to (question about) the crucifixion:

1. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
2. ...when they nailed him to the cross?
3. ...when the sun refused to shine?
4. ...when they laid him in the tomb?

At each new verse, the piano accompaniment varies within the mood of the lyrics—from simple chordal support at the beginning, to harsh rhythms (“nailed him to the cross”), to rapid “sunburst” patterns (“the sun refused to shine”), to sorrowful descending lines (“laid him in the tomb”). The choral expression is articulated in similar manner to the accompaniment.

Between the verses, interjections are inserted of “My Lord, My Lord, he was my Lord...” These phrases provide the personal, individual statements (“my Lord”) to balance with the group singing of the verses.

The piano accompaniment plays a featured role in this music. Often the tone of the ensuing verse is established in the piano. At the end, as the chorus descends into the lower range on the words “laid him in the tomb,” the piano line ascends, marked “the spirit rising.” These delicate patterns drift to heaven.

—Gwyneth Walker

*This adaptation for Women's Chorus was commissioned by
Eleanor Bach, Choral Director – Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

Were You There?

for Women's Chorus (SSA) and Piano

Traditional

G. Walker, alt.

Gwyneth Walker

At a slow, somber tempo ♩ = 100

Piano { *p* - - - - simile

with pedal

[VERSE 1] A

unis. *p* sorrowfully

All { 6 Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my

A

S1 { 11 Lord? _____ Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my

S2 { 11 _____

A { 11 Lord? _____ Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my

{ 11

4

15

B

(no break)

S1

Lord? _____ Oh, _____

S2

Lord? _____ (no break)

A

Lord, my Lord. Oh, _____

B

Lord. _____

19

S1

some - times it caus - es me to trem - ble, trem - ble,

S2

A

some - times it caus - es me to trem - ble, trem - ble,

23

(no break)

S1

trem - ble. _____ Were you there _____ when they -

S2

A

trem - ble. _____ Were you there _____ when they -

B

Lord. _____

26 *poco accel.*

S1
cru - ci - fied my Lord? _____

S2 A
cru - ci - fied my Lord? _____

poco accel.

Cresc.
poco rit.

29 *f with intensity and urgency*
My Lord, my Lord, my Lord...
f with intensity and urgency

S1
My Lord, my Lord, my Lord...
poco rit.

S2 A
My Lord, my Lord, my Lord...
poco rit.

f
poco rit.

32 , Slightly faster $\text{♩} = 112$, with motion

S1
,

S2 A
,

Slightly faster $\text{♩} = 112$, with motion

mf

VERSE 2

D (Same tempo $\text{♩} = 112$)*mf dramatically*

35

S1

Were you there when they

D (Same tempo $\text{♩} = 112$)

mf dramatically

Soprano 1 (S1) continues with eighth-note patterns. The lyrics 'nailed him to the cross?' are written below the staff.

38

S1

nailed him to the cross?

S2
A

They nailed him, they nailed him to the cross.

41

S1

(*mf*)

Were you there when they nailed him, and they nailed him to the

S2
A

(*f*)

They

mf

43

S1 cross? _____

S2 A nailed him, and they nailed him to the cross. _____

E *f*

Oh, _____

E

S1

S2 A

f > > > > > >

Reo. _____

46 (no break)

S1 some - times it caus - es me to

S2 A Oh, some - times it caus - es me to

(no break)

Reo. _____

49

S1 trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble. _____

S2 A trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble. _____

Reo. _____

53

S1: *mf* Were you there when they nailed him to the cross, and then they nailed him, they_

S2: A *mf* and then they nailed him, they_

f

56

S1: nailed him to the cross?

S2: A nailed him to the cross?

F

(f) with intensity and urgency

59

S1: My _____ Lord,

S2: A *(f) with intensity and urgency* My _____ Lord,

F

(f)

62

S1 my Lord, my Lord, my _____

S2 my Lord, my Lord, my _____

A my Lord, my Lord, my _____



Reo. *Reo.*

(maintain tempo)

Suddenly slower $\text{♩} = 100$
and tenderly

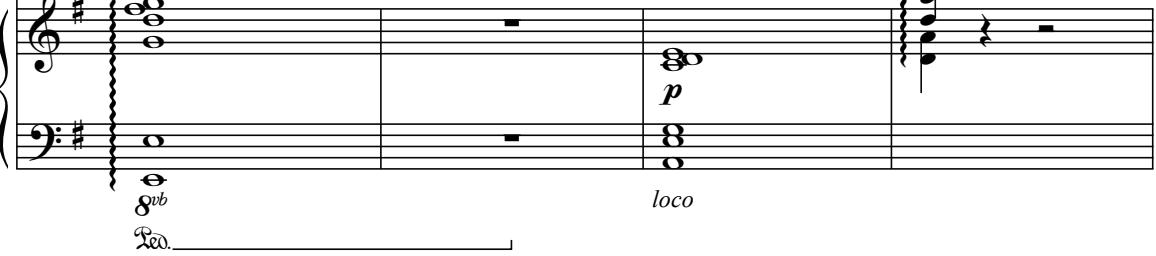
S1 _____ Lord, my Lord, my Lord, He was my _____ Lord. And then the
, **p**, (p)

S2 _____ Lord, my Lord, my Lord, Hmm _____ And then the
, **p**, (p)

A _____ Lord, my Lord, my Lord, Hmm _____ And then the
, **p**, (p)

(maintain tempo)

Suddenly slower $\text{♩} = 100$
and tenderly



8^{vb} *Reo.* *Reo.* *loco*

10

VERSE 3

69 [G] grandly *f*

S1 sun re - fused to _____
grandly *f*

S2 A [G] sun re - fused to _____

p *f*

8vb--- loco
Reo.

71 , *p*

S1 shine. And then the
S2 A shine. And then the

dim. *p*

Reo. *Reo.*

73 *f*

S1 sun re - fused to _____
S2 A sun re - fused to _____

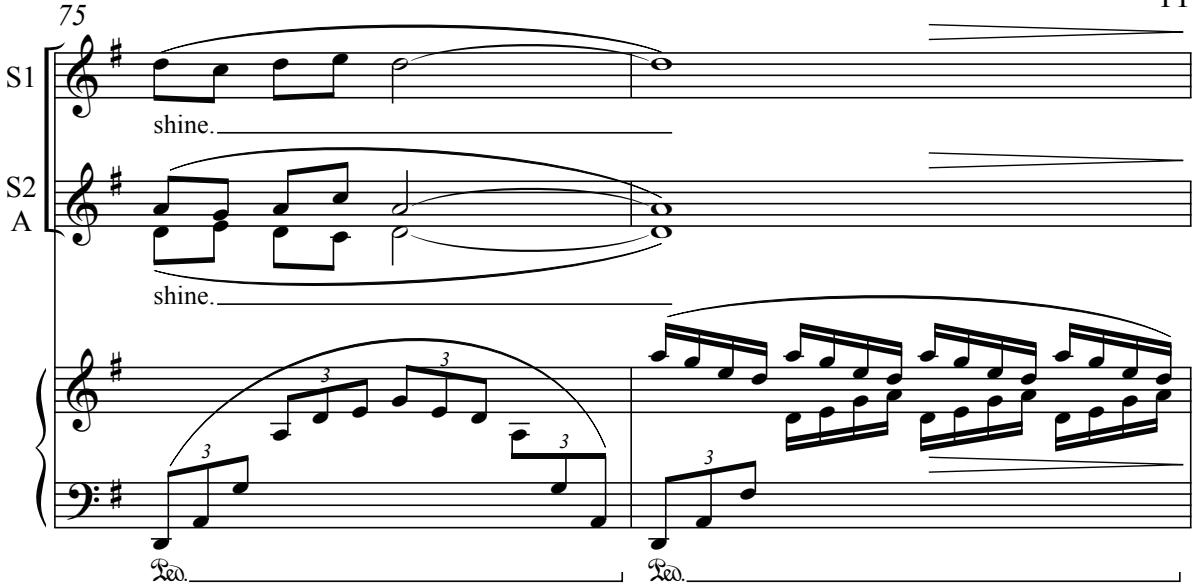
f

8vb--- loco
Reo.

75

S1
shine.

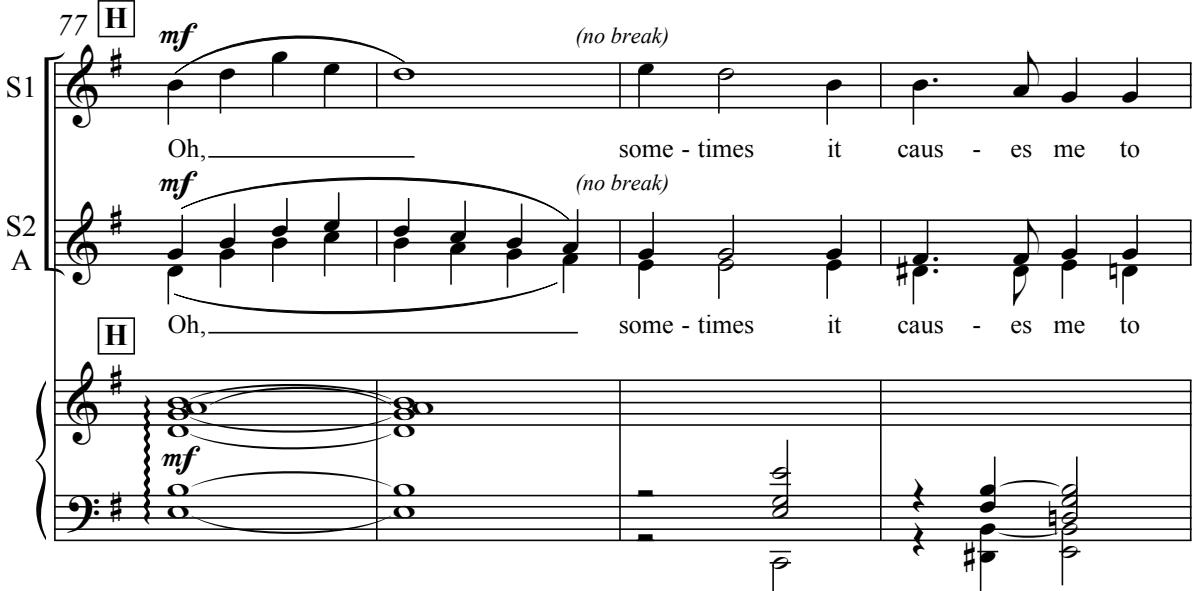
S2
A
shine.



77 **H** *mf* (no break)

S1
Oh, some - times it caus - es me to

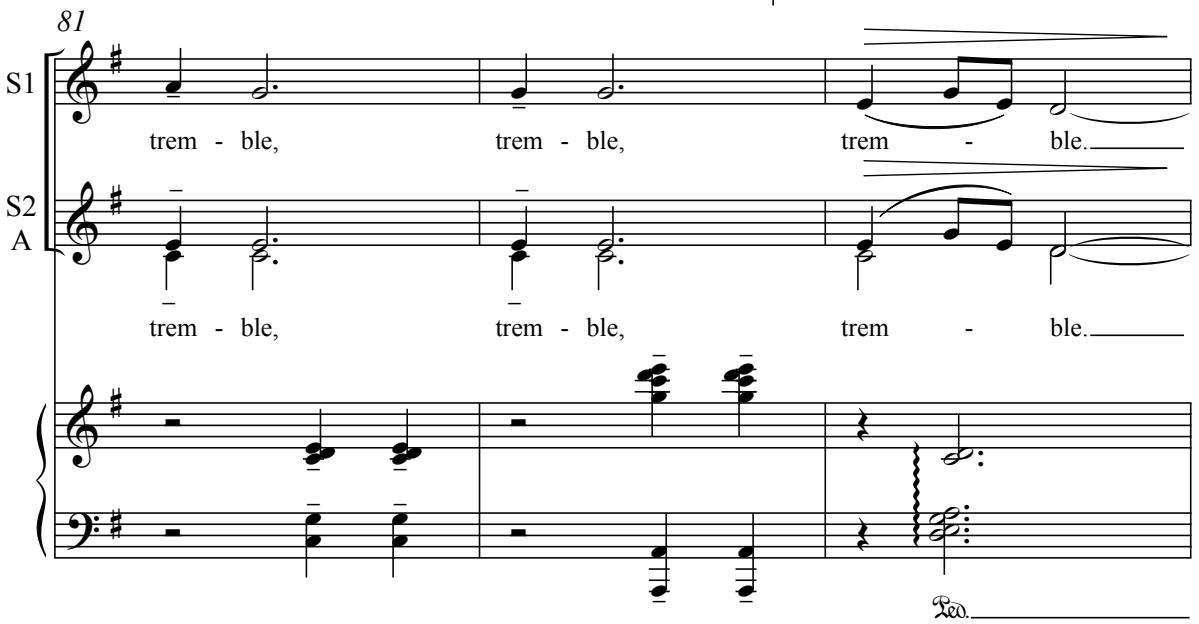
S2
A *mf* (no break)
Oh, some - times it caus - es me to



81

S1
trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble.

S2
A
trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble.



12

84

S1

S2

A

Bass

(Rwd.)

I

f

And then the sun, the

And then the sun, the

I

f

5 5 5 5

p

8vb

Rwd.

86

S1

S2

A

Bass

Rwd.

Rwd.

sun, the sun

sun, the sun

5 5 5 5

8

Rwd.

Rwd.

With motion ♩ = 112

88

S1

S2

A

Bass

(Rwd.)

p

p

re - fused to shine.

re - fused to shine.

With motion ♩ = 112

lightly, as faint touches of sunlight

p

poco ped.

VERSE 4

J (Same tempo $\text{♩} = 112$)

(p) with sorrow and heaviness

92

S1

And then they laid him in the

J (Same tempo $\text{♩} = 112$)

(p)

poco ped.

95

S1

tomb. And then they laid him in the

(p) with sorrow and heaviness

S2 A

And then they laid him in the tomb.

sim.

poco ped. poco ped.

99

S1

tomb. My Lord, my Lord,

K cresc.

S2 A

And then they laid him in the tomb. My Lord, my Lord,

K

sim.

cresc.

poco ped.

103 (cresc.)

S1

my Lord, my Lord... And then they laid him down.

(cresc.)

S2

— my Lord, my Lord... And then they laid him down.

(cresc.)

A

— my Lord, my Lord. And then they laid him down.

poco ped.

8vb

Ped.

107

S1

And then they laid him in the tomb.

S2

And then they laid him in the tomb.

A

— And then they laid him in the tomb.

L With motion

the spirit rising

dim. poco a poco to end

5

poco ped.

with pedal

Ped.

111 unis. **p**

S1
S2
A

— Hmm —
p
— Hmm —
(dim.)

115 *rit. to end*

S1
S2
A

—
—
—
—
— rit. to end —

118 (rit.) **p**

S1
S2
A

Ah, were you there?
p

—
—
—
—
— (rit.) —

(8va) —
(dim.) —

4'30"

April, 2015
New Canaan, Connecticut

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

For biographical information about the composer, please visit her Web site.
www.gwynethwalker.com

ECS PUBLISHING

