

No. 5729 | Walker | No Ordinary Woman! | Mezzo-Soprano & Piano

GWYNETH WALKER

No Ordinary Woman!

Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

ECS PUBLISHING

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Total Duration: 14 minutes

Notes

These songs might have been subtitled “Songs of Self Reflection.” For they present the poet musing about her own life, and specifically her physical appearance. One imagines the poet looking in the mirror with amusement, horror and a strong sense of her own history. Thus, the songs range from an energetic first impression (“Bones, Be Good!”) to philosophical reflection (“Turning”) to humor and pride in the body itself (“Homage to my Hips/Hair”) to a more serious summation (“The Thirty-Eighth Year”). A strong and colorful woman emerges.

No Ordinary Woman! was commissioned by soprano, Denise Walker, and pianist, Estrid Eklof, for premiere at Brown University, Providence, RI in December 1997. The songs were composed at the composer’s home in Vermont during the summer of 1997.

About the Composer and Poet

Widely performed throughout the country, the music of American composer **Gwyneth Walker** is beloved by performers and audiences alike for its energy, beauty, reverence, drama, and humor. Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. For nearly 30 years, she lived on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont. She now divides her time between her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut and the musical communities of Sarasota, Florida and Randolph, Vermont.

Gwyneth Walker has been a proud resident of Vermont for many years. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Vermont Arts Council as well as the 2008 “Athenaeum Award for Achievement in the Arts and Humanities” from the St. Johnsbury (VT) Athenaeum. In 2012, she was elected as a Fellow of the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Walker's catalog includes over 300 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus, and solo voice. A special interest has been dramatic works that combine music with readings, acting, and movement. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E. C. Schirmer (choral and vocal music) and Lauren Keiser Music (orchestral and instrumental music).

Lucille Clifton (poet) was born in 1936 in Depew, New York and educated at Howard University and the State University of New York at Fredonia. Formerly the Poet Laureate of the State of Maryland, she has taught at Goucher College and the American University in Washington, DC.

I. Bones, Be Good

Lucille Clifton

Gwyneth Walker

Mezzo-Soprano

Piano

$\text{d} = 88$
snap fingers

5

A

A

mf swing rhythm

$\text{d} = 88$

9

$\text{d} = 88$

2
13

B

mf

I beg my bones to be good but

B

p

17

they just keep click-iní mu - - - - - sic,

mf

21

p ————— *mf*

click, click. click, click, click - iní mu - - - sic.

p

mf

25

C

p ————— *mf*

Bones, be good!

C

p

mf

Bones, Be Good!

29

p — *mf*

Bones, be good! — Bones be good, be good, be good.

33 *mf*

They just keep click-iní mu - - - - - sic.

37 **D**

rit. - - - - - more freely
(*mf*)

yeah! I

D

rit. - - - - - more freely

41

spin in the cen - ter of my - self, a

4

45

fool - ish, fright - - - ful wo - - - - man.

49 E

Mov - iní my skin a - gainst the wind, _____ and

E

3

53

tap tap tap tap danc - - - iní, _____ dan - ciní for my

white-note gliss. a tempo

F

57

life, for my life.

F

p

61 *percussive sound (mostly air)*

ta ta ta ta

mf

Red.

* sim.

ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta

G

tap tap tap dan - - ciní, tap tap tap dan - - ciní,

G

tap tap tap dan - - ciní, tap tap tap dan - - - ciní,

6

77 **H**

p — *mf* *p* — *mf*

Bones, be good! — Bones, be good! —

H

p — *mf* *p* — *mf*

81 *p* — *mf*

Bones be good, be good, — be good! They just keep

p — *mf*

84

click-iní mu - - - - - sic. —

f scat singing ad lib. with Piano

ba ya ba ya ba ba ba ya — ba ba ba ba

I

f

Bones, Be Good!

91

95 **J** *mf*

mov - iní my skin a - gainst the wind, and

J

mf

3

Red.

99

tap tap

p

*

103

tap a tap a tap a tap a dan - - ciní,

optional Ah

f

Red.

8
107 **K** *a tempo*
 dan - ciní for my life,
a tempo

III *mf*
 life. Mov - - - iní my skin a - gainst the

115 *mf*
 wind, click click click-iní mu - - -

119 **L**
 sic, a fool - ish, fright - ful wo - man, just a

mf *p* *mf* *p*

II. Turning

Lucille Clifton

Gwyneth Walker

gently flowing $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 80$

Mezzo-Soprano

gently flowing $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 80$

Piano

p *delicato, una corda*

ped. stays →

start slowly and accel. into a blur

5

A musical score for piano in 2/4 time, G major (two sharps). The top staff shows a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and grace notes, connected by a long horizontal line. The bottom staff shows harmonic bass notes. The score consists of four measures. Measure 1: Treble staff has a grace note followed by two eighth notes (one with a sharp), a wavy line, and a eighth note. Bass staff has a wavy line. Measure 2: Treble staff has two eighth notes, a wavy line, and a eighth note. Bass staff has a wavy line. Measure 3: Treble staff has two eighth notes, a wavy line, and a eighth note. Bass staff has a wavy line. Measure 4: Treble staff has two eighth notes, a wavy line, and a eighth note. Bass staff has a wavy line.

9

9

Turn - - - - - ing, turn - - - - - - - - - ing,

Red.

sim.

13

in - to my own self at last.

17

Turn - - - - - ing, turn - - - - - ing,

21

in - to my own self at last..

Red. tre corde

25

(*mf*) 3 *p* *mf* 3

Turn - ing out of the white cage, turn - ing out of the

(*mf*) *p* *mf*

Turning

12 *delicato* *rit.* - - - - - *p* *a tempo* [3] *mf*
 la - dy, la - dy, la - dy cage, turn - - - - ing at last.

28 *rit.* - - - - - *a tempo* *p* *#* *8* *#* *mf*
 The white cage,

31 *p*
 The white cage,

34 *rit.* - - - - - *p* *a tempo* [3] turn - - - in^g at
 the la - dy, la - dy, la - dy cage, a tempo [3] [3]
 rit. - - - - - *p* *#* *8*: *mf*
 last.

36 *p*

Re. * sim.

Turning

40

Mm.

Turn - - - - ing, turn - - - -

Red. *

ing, in - to my own self at last.

poco rit. - -

mf

p

mf

Red. *

mf

poco rit. - -

Turn - ing on a stem like a black fruit in my own sea - son at last.

mf

p

mf

Turning

III. Homage to My Hips

Lucille Clifton

Gwyneth Walker

D = 66 at a gently swaying tempo

Mezzo-Soprano

Piano

D = 66 at a gently swaying tempo

poco &d; ad lib.

4

mf

These hips are

7

big hips. They need space

16

10

to move a - round in.

13

They don't fit

16

in - to lit - tle pet - ty pla - ces.

19

These hips are free

Homage to my Hips

22

Musical score for page 17, measures 22-24. The score consists of three staves: Treble, Bass, and a lower staff. Measure 22 starts with a fermata over the treble staff. Measures 23 and 24 show complex harmonic progression with various chords and rhythmic patterns.

25

p as an afterthought

hips.

Musical score for page 17, measures 25-27. The score continues with three staves. Measure 25 has a dynamic marking *p as an afterthought* and lyrics "hips.". Measures 26 and 27 show further harmonic development.

28

These hips

Musical score for page 17, measures 28-30. The score continues with three staves. Measure 28 includes lyrics "These hips". Measures 29 and 30 show further harmonic development.

31

These hips these hips,

Musical score for page 17, measures 31-33. The score continues with three staves. Measure 31 includes lyrics "These hips these hips,". Measures 32 and 33 show further harmonic development.

Homage to my Hips

18

34

these hips, _____ they

white-note gliss.

Ped.

*

37

go where they want to go, _____ and do what they want to

Ped.

*

41

do do do____ do do do____ do do do____ do do do____ do

play only to support voice

*

44

These hips_____ are free.

3

Homage to my Hips

47

50

53

56

ad lib., col Piano

la la

Homage to my Hips

20

59

la la

62

rit. - - - - slower, more freely

ah _____ They go where they want to go _____

rit. - - - - slower, more freely
white-note gliss.

* Reed.

66

and do what they want to do do

* Reed.

70

do do do do These hips are mighty hips. These hips are magic hips.

* Reed. 3

Homage to my Hips

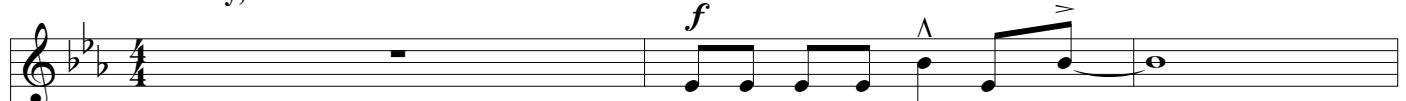
IV. Homage to My Hair

Lucille Clifton

Gwyneth Walker

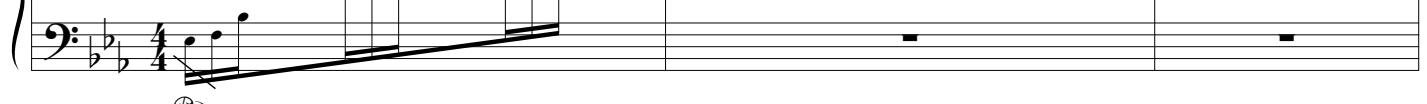
Freely, as an introduction

Mezzo-Soprano

**Freely, as an introduction**

When I feel her jump and dance,—

Piano



Ped.

*

4

When I feel her jump up and dance,

8va-----

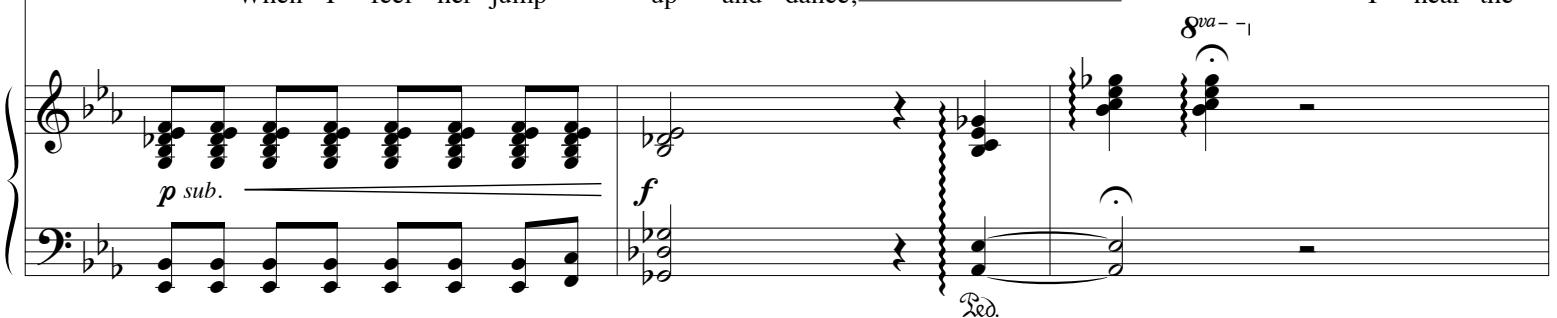


*

7

When I feel her jump up and dance,

I hear the



Ped.

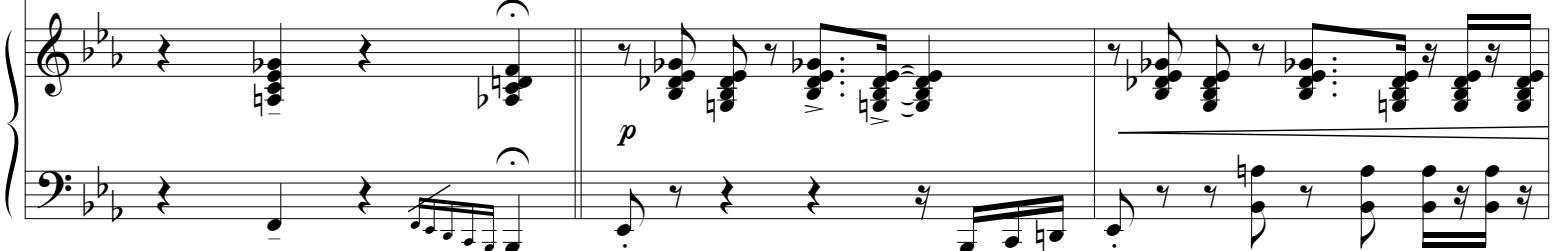
*

10

Lively $\bullet = 112$

mu - sic, my

God!

Lively $\bullet = 112$ 

13

spoken (in a lively manner)

I'm talking about my hair, my

16

nappy, nappy hair. She's a challenge to your

19

hand, my man, she's as tasty on your tongue as good, good greens.

22

† She can touch your mind with her electric fingers.

V. The Thirty-eighth Year

Lucille Clifton

Gwyneth Walker

Mezzo-Soprano

Piano

♩ = 80 at a moderate tempo

p reflectively

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* *

poco accel. - - - - - *rit.* - - - - - *a tempo*

p

poco accel. - - - - - *rit.* - - - - - *The a tempo*

mf

p

reflectively

quasi recitative - free tempo

thir - ty - eighth year of my life, plain as bread, as round as a cake an

3

3

3

26

13

ord - in - ar - y wo - man, an ord - in - ar - y wo - man

rit. - - - - -

16

a tempo*rit.* - - - - - *quasi recitative**mf*

I had ex - pect - ed to be

a tempo

rit. - - - - -

18

3

small - er than this, more beau - ti - ful, wi - - - - - ser in Af - ri - can

21

ways, more con - fi - dent, more con - fi - dent, I had ex - pect - ed

25

start slowly and accel. - - - - - $\text{♩} = 92$

more than this.

start slowly and accel. - - - - - $\text{♩} = 92$

more than this.
start slowly and accel. - - - - - $\text{♩} = 92$

28

rit. - - mf freely p reflectively

I will be for - ty soon. My moth - er once was for - ty.—

rit. - -

rit. - - I will be for - ty soon. My moth - er once was for - ty.—

31 p rit. - - - - - $\text{*} = 112$ with motion*rit.* - - - - - $\text{*} = 112$ with motion

p rit. - - - - - $\text{*} = 112$ with motion

34

mp

I have dreamed dreams for you

I have dreamed dreams for you

The Thirty-eighth Year

36

ma - ma, more than once. I have

mf

wrapped me in your skin, and made you live a - - -

mf

gain, more than once, more than once, I have

tak - en the bones you hard - ened and built daugh - - - ters.

45

And they blos - - - som and prom - - - - ise

47

fruit like Af - - - - ri - - - can trees.

50

I am a wom - an now, an ord - in - ar - y

Rit. * *Rit.*

53

wom - - - - an. In the

rit. * *rit.*

30

56

thir - ty - eighth year of my life,

sur -

mf

f

rit. - - - - -

59

round - ed by life, a per - fect pic - ture of black - ness bles - sed,

rit. - - - - -

more slowly, freely Slowly

p

I had not ex - pect - ed this lone - - - li - ness.

more slowly, freely Slowly

65

accel. - - - - - $\bullet = 112$ with motion

The Thirty-eighth Year

69

p

If in the mid - dle of my life I am

R&d. *R&d.*

72

turn - ing the fi - - nal turn in - to the shin - - ing dark,

R&d. *R&d.* *R&d.*

75

let me come to it whole and ho - - - ly. Let me

f

R&d. *R&d.* *R&d.*

78

come to it un - - a - - afraid, out of my moth - er's

f

R&d. *R&d.* *R&d.* *R&d.*

81

accel.

life,
out of my moth - - er's

accel.

83

life,
in - - - - to my

85

ff

rit.

$\text{♩} = 132$

own.

ff

rit.

$\text{♩} = 132$

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