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Were You There? - Gwyneth Walker

*SATB Chorus and Piano*

E. C.

# Were You There?

Gwyneth Walker

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*SATB Chorus and Piano*

This new arrangement for mixed chorus with 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

### **Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)**

For more information, visit her website at:  
[www.gwynethwalker.com](http://www.gwynethwalker.com)

Dedicated to Diane Chartrand, retiring Interim Minister of Music at Grace Church, Rutland, Vermont,  
as a gift from the Sanctuary Choir and Eddie Wilkin, Interim Choir Director

# Were You There?

for SATB Chorus and Piano

African American spiritual

Gwyneth Walker

Altered and with additional words by G. Walker

At a slow, somber tempo ♩ = 100

Piano

*p* *simile*

with pedal

6

VERSE 1

A

unis. *p* sorrowfully

T  
B

Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my

A

11

S  
A

*p*

Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my

T  
B

Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

15

**B**

(no break)

S Lord? \_\_\_\_\_ Oh, \_\_\_\_\_

A Lord, my Lord? Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ (no break)

T \_\_\_\_\_ (p) Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ (no break)

B \_\_\_\_\_ (p) Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ (no break)

Oh, \_\_\_\_\_

**B**

Acc.

19

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

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

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

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

23

(no break)

S trem - ble. \_\_\_\_\_ Were you there \_\_\_\_\_ when they \_

A trem - ble. \_\_\_\_\_ Were you there \_\_\_\_\_ when they \_

T trem - ble. \_\_\_\_\_ Were you there \_\_\_\_\_ when they \_

B trem - ble. \_\_\_\_\_ Were you there when they

*ped.*

26

*poco accel.*

S cru - ci - fied my Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

A cru - ci - fied my Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

T cru - ci - fied my Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

B cru - ci - fied my Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

*poco accel.*

*cresc.*

*ped.*

6 [C] **f** with intensity and urgency

29

S My Lord, my Lord, my Lord.

A My Lord, my Lord, my Lord.

T Lord, Lord, my Lord.

B Lord, Lord, my Lord.

**f** with intensity and urgency

**f** with intensity and urgency

**f** with intensity and urgency

**f** with intensity and urgency

**f**

*poco rit.*

*poco rit.*

Reo. Reo. Reo.

32

, Slightly faster ♩ = 112, with motion

S

A

T

B

Slightly faster ♩ = 112, with motion

*mf*

Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo.

VERSE 2

**D** (Same tempo ♩ = 112)

*mf* dramatically

35

T  
B

Were you there when they

**D** (Same tempo ♩ = 112)

Reo. Reo. Reo.

38

S  
A

They nailed him, they nailed him to the cross.

T  
B

nailed him to the cross?

41

S  
A

They

T  
B

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

43

E

S  
nailed him, and they nailed him to the cross. \_\_\_\_\_

A  
nailed him, and they nailed him to the cross. \_\_\_\_\_

T  
cross? \_\_\_\_\_ Oh, \_\_\_\_\_

B  
cross? \_\_\_\_\_

E

*f*

*p*

*leg.*

46

S  
Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ some - times it caus - es me to

A  
Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ some - times it caus - es me to

T  
\_\_\_\_\_ some - times it caus - es me to

B  
*f* Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ some - times it caus - es me to

(no break)

(no break)

(no break)

(no break)

*f*

(*leg.*)



49

S trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble.

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

T trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble.

B trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble.

53

S *mf* and then they nailed him, they - *f*

A *mf* and then they nailed him, they - *f*

T *mf* Were you there when they nailed him to the cross, and then they nailed him, they - *f*

B *mf* Were you there when they nailed him to the cross, and then they nailed him, they

56 *unis.*

S  
nailed him to the cross?

A  
nailed him to the cross?

T  
nailed him to the cross?

B  
nailed him to the cross?

59

S  
My Lord,

A  
My Lord,

T  
Lord,

B  
Lord,

**F** *(f) with intensity and urgency*

62

S  
my Lord, my Lord, my

A  
my Lord, my Lord, my

T  
Lord, my Lord,

B  
Lord, my Lord,

*ped.*

(maintain tempo)

**Suddenly slower** ♩ = 100  
*and tenderly*

65

S  
Lord, my Lord, my Lord, He was my Lord.

A  
Lord, my Lord, my Lord, Hmm

T  
my Lord, my Lord, my Lord, Hmm And then the

B  
my Lord, my Lord, my Lord, Hmm And then the

*unis. p*

*p*

*(p)*

*(p)*

(maintain tempo)

**Suddenly slower** ♩ = 100  
*and tenderly*

*ped.*

*loco*

## VERSE 3

69 **G** *grandly* *f*

T  
sun re - fused to \_\_\_\_\_

B  
*grandly* *f*  
sun re - fused to \_\_\_\_\_

**G**

*p* *f*

*8<sup>vb</sup> loco*

71

S  
And then the

A  
And then the

T  
shine. \_\_\_\_\_

B  
shine. \_\_\_\_\_

*p* *p* *p* *p*

*3* *3* *dim.* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3*

*8<sup>vb</sup> loco* *8<sup>vb</sup> loco*



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

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

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

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

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

**H** *mf*

81

S trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble.

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

T trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble.

B trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble.

*mf*

Ped.

84 *p* , I *f*

S And then the sun, the

A And then the sun, the

T <sub>8</sub> And then the sun, the

B And then the sun, the

*p* I *f*

8<sup>vb</sup> *loco*

86

S sun, the sun

A sun, the sun

T <sub>8</sub> sun, the sun

B sun, the sun

*loco* *loco*

88 *unis.* **With motion** ♩ = 112  
*p*

S re - fused to shine.

A re - fused to shine.

T re - fused to shine.

B re - fused to shine.

**With motion** ♩ = 112  
*lightly, as faint touches of sunlight*

*p*

*And.* *poco ped.*

VERSE 4

**J** (Same tempo) ♩ = 112

92 *(p) with sorrow and heaviness*

S And then they laid him in the

*(p) with sorrow and heaviness*

A And then they laid him in the

**J** (Same tempo) ♩ = 112

*(p)*

*And.* *poco ped.*



95

S  
tomb. \_\_\_\_\_ And then they laid him in the

A  
tomb. \_\_\_\_\_ And then they laid him in the  
*(p) with sorrow and heaviness*

T  
And then they laid him in the tomb. \_\_\_\_\_  
*(p) with sorrow and heaviness*

B  
And then they laid him in the tomb. \_\_\_\_\_

*sim.*

*Red.* \_\_\_\_\_ *poco ped.* *Red.* \_\_\_\_\_ *poco ped.*

99

S  
tomb. \_\_\_\_\_

A  
tomb. \_\_\_\_\_

T  
And then they laid him in ... My Lord, my Lord,  
*cresc.*

B  
And then they laid him in the tomb. My Lord, my Lord, \_  
*cresc.*

*sim.*

*Red.* \_\_\_\_\_ *cresc.*

**K** **K**

103

S *mf* ————— *f* (*f*)

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

A *mf* ————— *f* (*f*)

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

T *f*

my Lord, my Lord.

B *mf*

(*cresc.*) *f*

*poco ped.*

*ped.*

107

S

A

T *f*

And then they laid him in the tomb.

B *unis. f*

And then they laid him in the tomb.

**L With motion**

*the spirit rising*

*dim. poco a poco to end*

*ped.* *poco ped.* *with pedal*

118 *(rit.)*  
*(p)*

S Ah, \_\_\_\_\_ were you \_\_\_\_\_ there?

A *(p)*  
Ah, \_\_\_\_\_ were you \_\_\_\_\_ there?

T *(p)*  
Ah, \_\_\_\_\_ were you \_\_\_\_\_ there?

B *(p)*  
Ah, \_\_\_\_\_ were you \_\_\_\_\_ there?

*(rit.)*  
*(8<sup>va</sup>)*

*(dim.)* *let ring*

*(Ped.)*

4:30

*This version completed: April 5, 2017*  
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Originally for Soprano Solo and Piano and a part of the song set *Songs of the Spirit*, Catalog No. 8123.  
A version for Women's Chorus (SSA) is also available, Catalog No. 8285.