

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

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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
S2

11

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

A

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

15 B (no break)

S1 Lord? _____ Oh, _____

S2 Lord? _____ (no break)

A Lord, my Lord. Oh, _____

B

Red. _____

19

S1 some - times it caus - es me to trem - ble, trem - ble,

S2 some - times it caus - es me to trem - ble, trem - ble,

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

23 (no break)

S1 trem - ble. _____ Were you there _____ when they _

S2 trem - ble. _____ (no break) Were you there _____ when they _

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

Red. _____

26

poco accel.

S1
cru - ci - fied my Lord? _____

S2
A
cru - ci - fied my Lord? _____

poco accel.
cresc.

C

29

f with intensity and urgency

poco rit.

S1
My Lord, my Lord, my Lord... _____

S2
A
My Lord, my Lord, my Lord... _____

f
poco rit.

C

32

Slightly faster ♩ = 112, with motion

S1

S2
A

mf
Slightly faster ♩ = 112, with motion

VERSE 2

D (Same tempo ♩ = 112)

mf dramatically

35

S1

Were you there when they

D (Same tempo ♩ = 112)

38

S1

nailed him to the cross?

S2

A

f

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

43 E

S1 *f*
cross? _____ Oh, _____

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

A

f

Ad.

46 *(no break)*

S1 some - times it caus - es me to

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

A

Ad.

49

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

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

A

Ad.

53

mf *f*

S1 Were you there when they nailed him to the cross, and then they nailed him, they -

S2 *mf* *f*

A and then they nailed him, they -

56

S1 nailed him to the cross? _____

S2/A nailed him to the cross? _____

59

F *(f) with intensity and urgency*

S1 My _____ Lord,

S2/A *(f) with intensity and urgency*

A My _____ Lord,

F *(f)*

62

S1
my Lord, my Lord, my

S2
my Lord, my Lord, my

A
my Lord, my Lord, my

Ped. _____

(maintain tempo)

Suddenly slower ♩ = 100
and tenderly

65

S1
____ Lord, my Lord, my Lord, He was my ____ Lord. ____ And then the

S2
____ Lord, my Lord, my Lord, Hmm ____ And then the

A
____ Lord, my Lord, my Lord, Hmm ____ And then the

Ped. _____

(maintain tempo)

Suddenly slower ♩ = 100
and tenderly

Ped. _____

loco

VERSE 3

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

S1 sun re - fused to

grandly *f*

S2 A sun re - fused to

G sun re - fused to

p *f*

8vb *loco*

Red.

71 *p*

S1 shine. And then the

p

S2 A shine. And then the

dim. *p*

Red.

73 *f*

S1 sun re - fused to

f

S2 A sun re - fused to

sun re - fused to

f

8vb *loco*

Red.

75

S1 shine.

S2 A shine.

Leo.

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

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

S2 A *mf* (no break)

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

mf

81

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

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

Leo.

12 84 *p* , **I** *f*

S1 And then the sun, the

S2 A And then the sun, the

p *f*

8vb

86

S1 sun, the sun

S2 A sun, the sun

f

5 5 5 5

5 5 5 5

8vb

88 **With motion** ♩ = 112 *p*

S1 re - fused to shine.

S2 A re - fused to shine.

p

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

p

8vb *poco ped.*

VERSE 4

J (Same tempo ♩ = 112)

(p) with sorrow and heaviness

92

S1

And then they laid him in the

J (Same tempo ♩ = 112)

(p)

And. 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.

And. poco ped. And. 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,

cresc.

K

sim.

cresc.

And.

103 *(cresc.)* *f* *(f)*

S1 my Lord, my Lord... And then they laid him down.

S2 *(cresc.)* *f* *(f)*
 my Lord, my Lord... And then they laid him down.

A *(cresc.)* *f* *(f)*
 my Lord, my Lord. And then they laid him down.

(cresc.) *f*

poco ped.

Sub
ped.

107 **L With motion**

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

ped. *poco ped.* *with pedal*

111 *unis.* ***p***

S1
S2
A

— Hmm
— Hmm

115 *rit. to end*

S1
S2
A

—
—

5 *rit. to end* *8^{va}*

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

S1
S2
A

Ah, were you there?
Ah, were you there?

(rit.) *8^{va}* *(dim.)* *let ring*

(Leo.)

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

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

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