

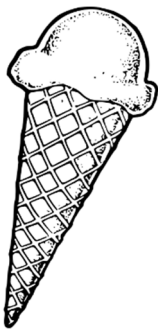


GWYNETH WALKER

Shoe Jazz

four songs on poems by Nikki Giovanni

for Youth Chorus and String Quartet (or Piano)



1. First Chair
2. No Heaven
3. Shoe Jazz Blue Jazz
4. I Know the Song the Moon Sings

Shoe Jazz

duration 12:10

The texts for *Shoe Jazz* are found in a 2009 collection entitled Bicycles by African-American poet Nikki Giovanni (b. 1943). These poems speak to all ages – young and old. There is humor, tenderness, rhythmic energy and strength, with an over-riding message of *I am who I am!*

The opening song, “First Chair,” speaks of a desire to play first chair (the premiere seat in an orchestra section), but knowing *I’m too jazzy...I am Gospel...and Rhythm and Blues. I make my own music*. This song uses a swing rhythm almost throughout. The astute listener may hear the high octave motive (elevated) for the words *First Chair*. References to the music of Vivaldi and Beethoven provide contrast between “preferred” music, and the poet’s natural music.

“No Heaven” is a *pure* song, in the key of C Major. *How can there be no heaven, when rain falls gently on the grass*. A charming image comes with: *And little finches eat upside down*. Here the chorus sings upward grace-note figures to suggest upside-down chords. The song ends very simply with *How can there be no heaven...when you smile at me*.

“Shoe Jazz Blue Jazz” makes reference to Miles Davis (iconic American jazz trumpeter). *Miles Davis – All Blues*. This is an especially, swing rhythmic, relaxed tempo song. The shoes come in many colors. Perhaps these are dancing shoes. But they also tap out any little ants scurrying across the floor! Vocal sounds enhance the rhythms: *ta-ta-ta-ta...*

“I Know the Song the Moon Sings” is an extended song, due to the expanded message of the poem. The mood ranges from ephemeral moonlight (gentle high *tremoli* in the accompaniment, chorus with upward thoughts of the moon) to a more down-to-earth soulful singing (*I, too, am a motherless child*). The music briefly quotes from the spiritual, “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child.” However, this *motherless child* is full of energy, *running wild!* Thus, a refrain from “Shoe Jazz Blue Jazz” returns to close the set.

Poems

FIRST CHAIR

They say I'm too jazzy
For First Chair

I bring something different
And maybe something nice

But the orchestra is Baroque
And I am Gospel

It is Beethoven
And I'm Rhythm and Blues

It's piano
And I'm honking sax

My problem is:
I make my own muffins
Ice cream
And music

Not always the best
But all ways my best

I look good
And I dress well

I definitely have
Stage presence

I want to play
I want to play
I want to play

NO HEAVEN

How can there be
No Heaven

When rain falls
gently on the grass
When sunshine scampers
across my toes

When corn bakes
into bread
When wheat melts
into cake

When shadows
cool
And owls
call
And little finches
eat upside
down

How can there be
No Heaven

When tears comfort
When dreams caress
When you smile
at me

SHOE JAZZ BLUE JAZZ

Green shoes
Blue shoes
Red shoes
Good news

Bad news
Suede shoes
No ties
Loose pants

Pink shoes
 Shining
White shoes
 Whining
All shoes
 Dining
On the little ants

Your shoes
Her shoes
My shoes
Good news

His shoes
Those shoes
Miles Davis
All Blues

I KNOW THE SONG

I know the song
The moon sings
Though she only sings
To moonbeams
And to all the stars
That twinkle
In the night

I know the song
Her heart hears
Since she belongs
To no one
And there is none to hear
Her sing her song

I know to sing
The moon song
That mostly the moon
Sings alone
Bravely
Through the night

I know the song
The moon sings
I understand the harmony rings
That tinkle chiming for the sun

I, too, am
A motherless child
My heart and soul
Are running wild

I, too, am a motherless child

Shoe Jazz

for Youth Chorus and Piano

Nikki Giovanni
from Bicycles 2009*

Gwyneth Walker

1. First Chair

$\text{♩} = 120$ swing eighths
with subtle energy, in a jazz style

Piano

mf

with slight pedal

4

7

10

Y
C

mf

They say I'm too

*Used with permission of the poet.

13 **A** [a subtle "blues" slur]

Y
C

jazz - y. for First Chair,*

Y
C

First Chair, I'm too

Y
C

jazz - y.

Y
C

B *delicately* *smoothly*

I bring some-thing dif-ferent And may - be some-thing

B

*The best player in an orchestra section.

26 **Freely** *f* recite on pitch, free rhythm straight eighths [strong break] *mf*

Y C nice But the orchestra is Baroque And I am

Freely straight eighths [strong break]

(a bit of Vivaldi!) *f*

29 *a tempo* (♩ = 120) swing eighths *f* **Freely** straight eighths

Y C Gos pel It is Beet - ho - ven (Beethoven's Symphony #5!) *f*

a tempo (♩ = 120) swing eighths **Freely** straight eighths

32 *mf* *a tempo* (♩ = 120) swing eighths *f*

Y C And I'm Rhy - thm and Blues It's pi -

a tempo (♩ = 120) swing eighths *f*

35 **C** **Freely** (*ossia for lower voices*) (*f*) *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

Y C a - no And I'm honk - ing sax

C **Freely** (*a nice piano arpeggio*) *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

76 *cresc. poco a poco* (to m. 83)

S I want to play I want to want to want to play I want_ to play I

A *cresc. poco a poco* (to m. 83)

I want to play I want to want to want to play I want_ to play I

cresc. poco a poco (to m. 83)

with pedal

79 *(cresc.)*

S want to want to want to play I want_ to play I

A *(cresc.)*

want to want to want to play I want_ to play I

(cresc.)

81 *(cresc.)*

S want to want to want to play I want_ to play I

A *(cresc.)*

want to want to want to play I want_ to play I

(cresc.)

83 *(cresc.)* *f* **H**

S
want to want to want to play

A
(cresc.) *f*
want to want to want to play

f

[Chorus raise hands in air and wave to get attention]

85 *shout enthusiastically*

Y
C
I WANT TO PLAY!

3:15

2. No Heaven

$\text{♩} = 100 \text{ or slower}$

Piano

p gently, reverently

with pedal

The piano introduction consists of four measures in 4/4 time. The right hand plays chords in the treble clef, while the left hand has whole rests. The tempo is marked as quarter note equals 100 or slower. The dynamics are piano (*p*), and the performance is to be 'gently, reverently' with a pedal.

5

delicately (see m. 33)

Measures 5-8 of the piano accompaniment. Measure 5 has chords in the right hand and a half note in the left. Measure 6 has chords in the right hand and a half note in the left. Measure 7 has a half note in the right hand and a half note in the left. Measure 8 has chords in the right hand and a half note in the left. The instruction 'delicately (see m. 33)' is placed above measure 7.

9

A

p gently

Y
C

How can there be No Hea - ven When rain falls gent - ly on the

A

with pedal

Measures 9-12 of the vocal and piano accompaniment. Measure 9: Vocal line starts with a whole rest, then a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Piano accompaniment has chords in the right hand and chords in the left. Measure 10: Vocal line continues with a half note D5, quarter note E5, quarter note F5, quarter note G5. Piano accompaniment has chords in the right hand and chords in the left. Measure 11: Vocal line continues with a half note A5, quarter note B5, quarter note C6, quarter note B5. Piano accompaniment has chords in the right hand and chords in the left. Measure 12: Vocal line continues with a half note A5, quarter note G5, quarter note F5, quarter note E5. Piano accompaniment has chords in the right hand and chords in the left. The instruction 'with pedal' is placed below measure 12.

13

Y
C

grass When sun - shine scam - pers a - cross my toes No

with pedal

Measures 13-16 of the vocal and piano accompaniment. Measure 13: Vocal line starts with a whole rest, then a half note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Piano accompaniment has chords in the right hand and chords in the left. Measure 14: Vocal line continues with a half note D5, quarter note E5, quarter note F5, quarter note G5. Piano accompaniment has chords in the right hand and chords in the left. Measure 15: Vocal line continues with a half note A5, quarter note B5, quarter note C6, quarter note B5. Piano accompaniment has chords in the right hand and chords in the left. Measure 16: Vocal line continues with a half note A5, quarter note G5, quarter note F5, quarter note E5. Piano accompaniment has chords in the right hand and chords in the left. The instruction 'with pedal' is placed below measure 16.

16 B *mp*

Y
C

Hea - ven No Hea - ven How can there be No Hea - ven When

20

Y
C

corn bakes in - to — bread When wheat melts in - to —

23

Y
C

cake No hea - ven No Hea - ven No Hea - ven

27 *mf*

Y
C

When

mf flowing

52 **E** *f* emphatically

Y
C

How can there be No Hea - ven When tears com - fort

[optional harmony]
f emphatically

Opt.

How can there be No Hea - ven When tears com - fort

E

56

Y
C

When dreams car - ess

Opt.

When dreams car - ess

p

p

p

59 *rit. to end* (*p*)

Y
C

When you smile at me

rit. to end

pp

(*rit.*)

3. Shoe Jazz Blue Jazz

[connector from the previous song]

♩ = 120, or slower
gently, peacefully

Piano

p

with slight pedal

Detailed description: This block shows the piano introduction for the piece. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, while the left hand provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. The tempo is marked as 120 or slower, and the mood is 'gently, peacefully'. The dynamic is piano (*p*).

Free measure *rit.*
as a Miles Davis Trumpet solo

6

mf *p*

Detailed description: This block contains a 'Free measure' section. It starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic is mezzo-forte (*mf*). A 'rit.' (ritardando) marking is present. The section concludes with a dynamic of piano (*p*) and a fermata over the final note.

Relaxed tempo (♩ = 120)
swing eighths

9

mf

Detailed description: This block shows a section in a relaxed tempo of 120. The music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic is mezzo-forte (*mf*). The tempo is described as 'swing eighths'.

13

* A

mf

Y
C

Green shoes Blue shoes

A

Red. simile

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal and piano accompaniment for the chorus. The vocal line is on a single staff with lyrics 'Green shoes Blue shoes'. The piano accompaniment is on two staves. The dynamic is mezzo-forte (*mf*). There are two 'A' section markers. The piano part includes markings for 'Red.' (ritardando) and 'simile'.

*Chorus may be divided into groups, A and B, for back-and-forth responses.

52

Y
C

ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta

55

Y
C

ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta

58

Y
C

F *p* whispered gleefully, not on pitch

ta ta ta ta Green

F *p*

61

Y
C

Blue Red

64

Y
C

cresc. poco a poco

v

67

Y
C

Chorus exclaims Clap hands

f

Good news!

f

f

f

2:15

4. I Know the Song the Moon Sings

Moderate tempo ♩ = 108
shimmering, as moonlight

Piano

with much pedal

(p)

(moonsong theme)

mf cantabile

p

19 **A** *p* *gently, as moonbeams*

Y
C

I know the song The moon_ sings_ Though she on - ly sings To

A

22

Y
C

moon - beams And to all the stars That twin-kle In the night

25

Y
C

27

Some voices
(p) smoothly

Y
C

moon - - - - - beams, ___

29

Others answer
pp smoothly

Y
C

* moon - - - - - beams ___

*Cue-sized notes are an *ossia* for lower voices

31

Y
C

mf

35 **B** *p*

I know the song Her heart hears

B *p*

5 5 5 5

3 3 3

37

Since she belongs To no one and

5 5 5 5

3 3 3

39

there is none to hear Her sing her song

3 3 3

3

72 All *poco rit.*
 Y C
 sun *poco rit.*

75 *Slightly slower* *f* *forcefully* *(straight eighths)* [more voices on the lower line]
 Y C
 I, too, am A moth - er - less child, I, too, am A
Slightly slower *straight eighths*

78 *rit.* *Slowly*, *p*
 Y C
 moth - er - less child, I, too, am A moth - er - less child My
rit. *Slowly*, *p*

81
 Y C
 heart and soul Are run - ning wild
cresc.

85 *f* *emphatically* E ♩ = 120 *swing eighths*
jazz style

Y
C

I, too, am a moth-er-less child

f

E ♩ = 120 *swing eighths*

Red

88 [non-pitched vocal sounds with the piano]

Y
C

ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta

91 *start quietly and cresc. (to m. 95)*
p *gently*

Y
C

Green shoes Blue shoes Red shoes

p *gently, cresc. (to m. 95)*

94 *(cresc.)* *f*

Y
C

Good news Your shoes Her shoes

(cresc.) *f*

97

Y
C

My shoes _____ My shoes _____

100

Y
C

_____ My shoes _____

103

Y
C

_____ Jazz shoes! ta ta ta _____

8va-----

gliss.

tap knuckles on piano ledge

8va-----