

Gwyneth Walker

Suffrage Songs

songs to celebrate the centennial of the
Women's Right to Vote: 1920-2020

for Soprano and Piano

won't you celebrate with me
Sister, Come by Here!
Never Sit Down!

Total duration: 7:35

Suffrage Songs were composed in honor of the centennial of the passage of the 19th amendment, recognizing the Women's Right to Vote: 1920-2020. The texts range from contemporary to traditional (adaptations of traditional spirituals), all with the same message of strong women.

"won't you celebrate with me" is based on a poem by Lucille Clifton (1936-2010). The poet, a *non-white* (African-American) woman was born into a life with no model for achievement. Nevertheless, she found the strength to conquer adversity, *one hand holding tight the other hand*. Life may have tried to kill her spirit. **It failed!** Her resilience echoes that of the Suffragettes.

"Sister, Come by Here!" is an adaptation of the spiritual "Jesus, Won't You Come by Here?" The early women's rights advocates were few in number. But they were able to draw in others to join them. One can almost hear them calling out to new supporters: *Sister, won't you raise your voice...you have a choice...come celebrate...come agitate (!), Sister won't you come by here?*

The spiritual, "Sit Down, Sister!" is revisited with a Suffragette theme. These strong women were far too busy to rest. They were energetic, motivated and restless, as reflected the *up-beat tempo* of this song. References are made to Women's Rights pioneers Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Lucretia Mott. They were paving the way for 20th-century activists, and for the eventual passage of the Women's Right to Vote amendment. These songs are dedicated to them, and to all those men and women who so bravely stood for women's rights.

Suffrage Songs

for Soprano Solo and Piano

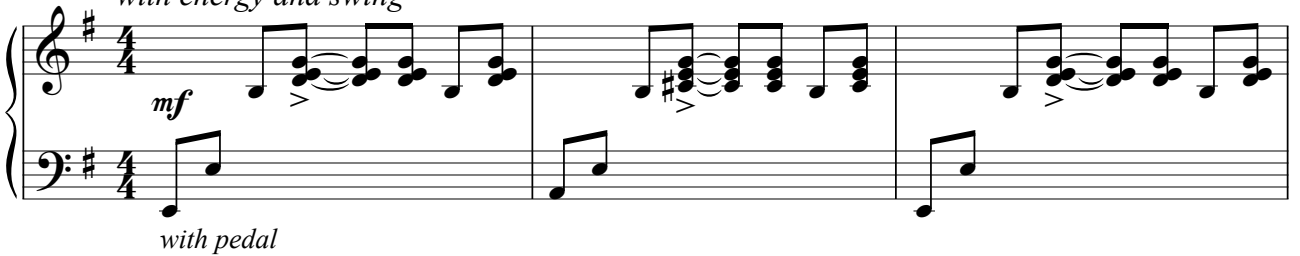
1. won't you celebrate with me

Lucille Clifton (1936–2010)

Gwyneth Walker

At a moderate tempo ♩ = 120
with energy and swing

Piano

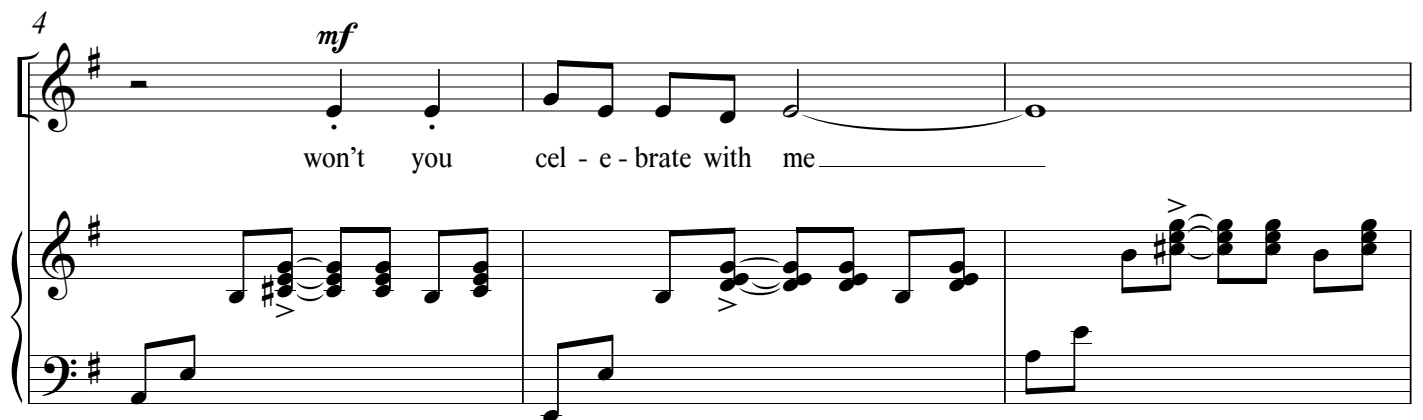


mf

with pedal

The piano introduction consists of three measures in 4/4 time. The right hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. The dynamic is marked *mf* and the instruction 'with pedal' is written below the bass line.

4



mf

won't you cel - e - brate with me _____

This system contains the first line of the song. It starts with a measure rest for the soprano line, followed by the lyrics 'won't you cel - e - brate with me' with a long line for the rest of the phrase. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern as the introduction.

7

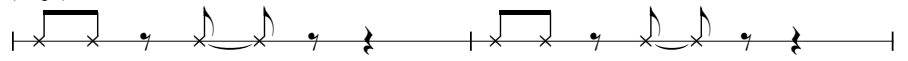
Singer claps in celebration



won't you cel - e - brate with me _____

This system contains the second line of the song. It begins with a measure rest for the soprano line, followed by the lyrics 'won't you cel - e - brate with me' with a long line for the rest of the phrase. Above the first two measures of the piano accompaniment, there are 'x' marks indicating clapping. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

(claps)



10

13

16

19

mod - el. born in bab - y - lon*

22

rit. *f* *p* (as an aside)
recited (on B or E)

both non - white and wom - an what did I see to be except myself?

26 *a tempo* (♩ = 120) *p*

mm come

*in exile, homeless

Slower, more recitative
straight eighths

cresc. poco a poco (to m. 38)

30

cel - e - brate, cel - e - brate, cel - e - brate... I made it up

Slower, more recitative
straight eighths

cresc. poco a poco (to m. 38)

here on this bridge be - tween star - shine and clay,

33 *(cresc.)*

my one hand hold - ing

35 *(cresc.)*

“starshine” motive

37 *(cresc.)* *mf* , *gaining energy and determination swing eighths*

tight my oth - er hand. come cel - e - brate with me,

gaining energy and determination swing eighths

(cresc.) *mf*

(Ceo.)

40 (claps) *f*

come cel - e - brate with me, won't you

43 *Free measure straight eighths* *emphatically*

cel - e - brate with me that ev - ery - day some - thing has tried to kill me and has failed.

Free measure straight eighths *ff*

f *gva -* *ff*

(Ceo.)

Singer cuts off piano with determination

2. Sister, Come By Here!

Based on the spiritual "Jesus, Won't You Come by Here?"
G. Walker, alt.

♩ = 120 or slightly faster
with energy, but not rushed (swing eighths)

mf as a warm welcome
with pedal

The piano introduction consists of three measures in 4/4 time. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords, while the left hand provides a simple bass line. The tempo is marked as 120 or slightly faster, with a swing feel for the eighth notes.

VERSE 1

Singer beckons other women to join the "Suffrage Cause"

4 *mf*
Sis - ter, won't you come by here?_

The first line of the verse begins at measure 4. The vocal line starts with a whole rest, followed by the lyrics "Sis - ter, won't you come by here?". The piano accompaniment continues with the established rhythmic pattern.

7
Sis - ter, won't you come by here?_ Sis - ter, won't you come by

The second line of the verse begins at measure 7. The vocal line continues with "Sis - ter, won't you come by here?" and then "Sis - ter, won't you come by". The piano accompaniment features a more active right hand with sixteenth-note chords.

11
here?_ We're work-in' for the right to vote,_ or-gan-

The third line of the verse begins at measure 11. The vocal line concludes with "here?" and "We're work-in' for the right to vote,_" followed by "or-gan-". The piano accompaniment continues with the rhythmic pattern.

15

(Optional descant)

i - zin' for our right to vote. _ Sis - ter, won't you come by

19

Singer cups hand to ear as if listening to the "Call to action"

here? _____ the "Call to action"

VERSE 2

23

(mf)

[Listen]

[Listen]

Sis - ter, won't you heed the call? _ Sis - ter, won't you heed the call? _

27

Sis - ter, won't you heed _____ the call? _____ We're

(Optional lower notes)

31

ask - ing for the right to vote. _ NO, DE - MAND - ING our right to vote! _

35

Sis - ter, won't you heed the call? _

(Optional descant)

39

INTERLUDE

p

I'm fall - ing down, down, down, on my

p

trembling in prayer

43

poco cresc.

knees _ in prayer. _ Lord, won't you help me, bring me

47 *mf p*

cour - age for the fight. I'm fall - ing down, down, down, on my

51 *cresc.*

knees in prayer, pray - in' for con - vict - ion for

55 *(cresc.) f*

VO-TING IS OUR RIGHT! Stand up, now it's vo-tin' time, stand

VERSE 3

mf f

8vb loco

59

up, now it's vo - tin' time. — Sis - ter, won't you

62

stand in line? — We're here, — and we're

resolutely

66

read - y to vote, — all here, — and we're read - y to vote. —

(opt. 8va) *or: (you can count our votes!)

*alternate lyric

69 *accel. poco a poco* (to m. 85)
p cresc. poco a poco

Sis - ter, won't you join the throng? Sis - ter, won't you sing a - long?_

accel. poco a poco (to m. 85)
p cresc. poco a poco

73 **Slightly faster** (*accel.*)
mp (*cresc.*)

Sis - ter, won't you raise your voice?_ Sis - ter, now you have a choice!_

Slightly faster (*accel.*)
mp (*cresc.*)

77 **Faster yet** (*accel.*)
mf (*cresc.*)

Sis - ter won't you heed the call?_ Sis - ter, won't you stand up tall?_

Faster yet (*accel.*)
mf (*cresc.*)

Quickly (accel.)

81

(cresc.)

Sis - ter, won't you cel - e - brate? Sis - ter, won't you ag - i - tate?

Quickly (accel.)
(cresc.)

Very quickly (♩ = 184)

85

f

Sis - ter, won't you come by, — come by, — come by

Very quickly (♩ = 184)
f

[On beat 4, singer holds up 2 fingers in "V for victory" symbol.]

89

here?

15^{ma-}

8^{vb}

3. Never Sit Down!

[a tribute to the Suffragettes]

Based on the spiritual "Sit Down, Sister!"

G. Walker, alt.

♩ = 132 (*swing eighths*)

mf
with slight pedal

The piano introduction consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The right hand features a series of chords and eighth-note patterns, while the left hand plays a steady bass line. The tempo is marked as 132 beats per minute with a swing feel for eighth notes.

REFRAIN

4 *mf* with restless energy and determination

Oh, won't you sit down? No! I can't sit down. Oh, won't you

The first system of the refrain shows the vocal melody starting on a whole note, followed by eighth notes. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and eighth-note patterns. The lyrics are: "Oh, won't you sit down? No! I can't sit down. Oh, won't you".

7 sit down? No! I can't sit down. Oh, won't you sit down? No! — I

The second system of the refrain continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "sit down? No! I can't sit down. Oh, won't you sit down? No! — I".

10 can't sit down, cause I'm work-in' for the vote, keep a-mov-in' a-round. —

The third system of the refrain continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "can't sit down, cause I'm work-in' for the vote, keep a-mov-in' a-round. —".

13

VERSE 1

(Optional lower notes if preferred)

17

p (a quiet question)

f (enthusiastic response)

20

p

f

REFRAIN

23

bra - vest wom - en I've ev - er seen! They'd nev - er sit down! —

26

They'd nev - er sit down! — They'd nev - er

29

sit down! No! They'd nev - er sit down, — 'cause they were work - in' for the vote,

32

keep a - mov - in' a - round. —

VERSE 2

35 *p*

Who's that yon - der dressed in white?

f

39 *f* *p*

Must be the wom - en fight - in' for their rights!

Who's that yon - der

f

42 *f*

dressed in black!

Must be the hyp - o - crite a - turn - ing back!

f

45 *p* *f*

Who's that yon - der wav - ing at me? — I think I see Su - san B. —

48 *p* *f*

An - thon - y!* — Who's that yon - der dressed in blue? E - liz - a - beth Ca - dy

loco

52 **REFRAIN**

Stan - ton* too! — She'd nev - er sit down! — She'd nev - er

*19th century Women's Rights Activist

55

sit down! — She'd nev - er sit down! —

58

'cause she was work-in' for the vote, work-in' for the vote,

61

work-in' for the vote, — keep a - mov - in' a - round. —

INTERLUDE

[Singer may move around the stage, or sort and organize papers (on the piano) – i.e. being useful!]

64

70 *poco rit.* **Slower** ♩ = 120
p

I'm gon-na

poco rit. **Slower** ♩ = 120

73 *cresc.*

make this world what I want it to be. — Gon-na stand up for my e -

p *cresc.*

76 *mf*

qual - i - ty! — Gon-na raise my voice LOUD AND CLEAR, for Lu -

mf

79

cre - tia Mott* has been vis - i - ting here, - vis - i - ting here, -

82 *exclaimed with reverence and delight*

LU - CRE - TIA MOTT! She'd nev - er

REFRAIN

a tempo (♩ = 132)

86

sit down! She'd nev - er sit down!

a tempo (♩ = 132)

*19th century Women's Rights Activist – the visit by Lucretia and James Mott to Seneca Falls, New York in 1848 prompted the first Women's Rights Convention.

89

She'd nev - er sit down! — 'cause she was

92

work-in' for the vote, — it's tak - ing years to get the vote, —

95

rit.
(straight eighths)

Slowly, emphatically

— DE - TER - MIN - A - TION for the vote. —

rit.
(straight eighths)

Slowly, emphatically

accel.

98 (straight eighths) *p*

Keep a-mov-in', keep a - mov-in', keep a-mov-in', keep a - mov-in', keep a-mov-in' a - round._

(straight eighths) *accel.*

p

And.

101 *f* *a tempo* (♩ = 132)

And I'll

a tempo (♩ = 132)

f

And.

104 *non rit.*

NEV - ER SIT DOWN!

non rit.

8va

f

And.