

GWYNETH WALKER

I, Too, Sing America

for Boy's Chorus and Piano

Commissioned by the Newark (NJ) Boys Chorus, Donald C. Morris, Music Director

Program Notes

The Langston Hughes poem *I, Too* is a powerful statement by an African-American writer. Although too often denied equal opportunity or respectful treatment in this country, the author claims his right as an American. "I, too, sing America."

The musical setting interprets this phrase literally. Not only does the author sing praises of his country, he also sings the words to the patriotic song, *America* ("My Country, 'Tis of Thee," lyrics by Samuel Francis Smith: 1808–1895).

The text of this song has been adapted to include references to African-American experiences:

"Land where my fathers died, in bondage, in battle" (slavery, military service);

"Land of my mothers' pride, with dignity and daring" (Rosa Parks).

No longer relegated to eating in the kitchen (as a servant), the proud African-American states, "I, too, sing America. I am America."

This is my country!

—Gwyneth Walker

I, too, sing America
I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America

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for the Newark (NJ) Boys Chorus, Donald C. Morris, Music Director

I, Too, Sing America

for Boy's Chorus and Piano

Langston Hughes (1902–1967)

Gwyneth Walker

With stately energy ♩ = 120

Piano

5 *unis. ftriumphantly*

S
My coun - try! _____ My coun - try! _____ This is

**unis. ftriumphantly*

A
My coun - try! _____ My coun - try! _____ This is

*Alto 1 may sing up an octave if that is more comfortable.

Note setting and format by Gwyneth Walker Music Productions.

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9

S my coun - try— mine!

A my coun - try— mine!

rit. p *div.* *ff*

rit. p *div.* *ff*

rit. *p* *rapidly, blurred* *ff*

ped.

13 **A** **Faster** ♩ = 132 *as excitement growing (in the background)* *unis. p* *poco*

A **Faster** ♩ = 132

la la la la la la la la

mf *with energy and excitement* *3*

slight pedal *ped. 3*

16 *mf*

S1 I, too, sing— A - mer - i - ca, A -

S2 *mf* I, too sing— A - mer - i - ca,

A la la la la la la la la

ped. *ped.* *simile*

B (Same tempo)

(mf)

19

S1
mer - i - ca, A - mer - i - ca. I am the dark - er

S2
A - mer - i - ca, A - mer - i - a.

A
p la la la la la la la la la la la la la la *p* A -

B (Same tempo)

with pedal

22

S1
broth - er. They send me to eat in the kit - chen when

S2
(mf) They send me to eat in the kit - chen when

A
(in the background) mer - i - ca, A - mer - i - ca.

(in the background)

C Free tempo

but I laugh, and eat well,

25 *rit.*

S1
S2

com - pan - y comes, and grow

mf

A

comes,

rit.

C Free tempo

p

29 *accel.* *a tempo* (♩ = 132)

S1
S2

strong.

A

and grow strong.

accel. *a tempo* (♩ = 132)

mf

leg.

32 **D** *f*

S1
S2

A - mer - i - ca, I, too,

A

A - mer - i - ca, I, to,

D *f*

36

S1
S2

sing A - mer - i - ca.

A

sing A - mer - i - ca. *p* la la la la la la la la

sub loco
ped.

E (Same tempo)
very rhythmic, with determination

40

S2

mf when

A

la la la la la la To - mor - row, I'll be at the ta - ble

E (Same tempo)
very rhythmic, with determination

mf

(*ped.*) *slight pedal*

43

S1 *mf*

comes... No - bod - y will dare

S2

com - pan - y comes.

F Proudly, with conviction

46

f harshly , (*f*)

S1 say to me "Eat in the kit - chen," _____ then. A - mer - i - ca, A -

S2 "Eat in the kit - chen," _____ then. A - mer - i - ca, A -

A1 "Eat in the kit - chen," _____ then. A - mer - i - ca, A -

A2 "Eat in the kit - chen," _____ then.

F Proudly, with conviction

f , (*f*)

with pedal

50

S1 mer - i - ca, A - mer - i - ca, I, too, sing A - mer - i - ca, _____

S2 mer - i - ca, A - mer - i - ca, I, too, sing A - mer - i - ca, _____

A1 mer - i - ca, A - mer - i - ca, I, too, sing A - mer - i - ca, _____

A2 (*f*) A - mer - i - ca, I, too, sing A - mer - i - ca, _____

Ped. _____

54 *rit.*

S1
A - mer - i - ca.

S2
I sing A - mer - i - ca.

A1
I sing A - mer - i - ca.

A2
A - mer - i - ca.

rit.

Reo. Reo.

G *Slower, free tempo*

57 *Solo f*

Sop. Solo
Be - sides they'll see how beau - ti - ful I am,

S1
S2
mf
how beau - ti - ful

G *Slower, free tempo*

f

(57) *rit.* *p* **H** Start slowly and accel. *pp*

Sop. Solo and be a - shamed-

S1 *p* *pp* I am and be a - shamed-

S2 *p* *pp* and be a - shamed-

A1 *p* *pp* and be a - shamed-

A2 *p* *pp* *p* and be a - shamed- I, too,

rit. **H** Start slowly and accel. *p*

pp *p*

Red.

59 (*accel.*) *p*

S1 I, too, am A

S2 *p* I, too, am A -

A1 *p* I, too, I, too, am A -

A2 *p* I, too, am A -

(*accel.*) *pp* *p*

Red. *simile*

a tempo (♩ = 132)

f triumphantly

62

S1
mer - i - ca, I am A - mer - i - ca.

S2
mer - i - ca, I am A - mer - i - ca.

A1
mer - i - ca, I am A - mer - i - ca.

A2
mer - i - ca, I am A - mer - i - ca.

a tempo (♩ = 132)

f

I (Same tempo)

66

S1
My coun - try, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of lib - er - ty,

S2
My coun - try, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of lib - er - ty,

A1
My coun - try, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of lib - er - ty,

A2
My coun - try 'tis of thee, sweet land of lib - er - ty, of

I (Same tempo)

f

70

S1
of thee I sing.

S2
of _ thee, of _ thee, of _ thee, I sing.

A1
of _ thee, of _ thee, I sing, of thee, I sing.

A2
thee, of thee, I sing, of thee, I sing.

74

J

S1
Land where my fath - ers died, Land

S2
Land where my fath - ers died, Land

A1
Land where my fath - ers died, Land

A2
in bond - age, in bat - tle,

J

p

78

S1 — of my moth - ers' pride, from —

S2 — of my moth - ers' pride, from —

A1 — of my moth - ers' pride,

A2 — with dig - ni - ty and dar - ing,

f *p*

82

S1 ev - 'ry, — ev - 'ry — moun - tain side, let — free, let — free, let —

S2 ev - 'ry, — ev - 'ry — moun - tain side, let — free, let — free, let —

A1 *mf* hmm, — moun - tain side, — let — free, — let —

A2 moun - tain side, — let — free, — let —

f **K** *f* **K**

86

S1
free - dom, free - dom ring.

S2
free - dom, free - dom ring.

A1
free - dom, free - dom ring.

A2
free - dom, free - dom ring. Let free - dom

L

90

(f) in celebration, with pride
S1
My coun - try! My coun - try!

(f) in celebration, with pride
S2
My coun - try! My coun - try!

(f) in celebration, with pride
A1
My coun - try!

(f) in celebration, with pride
A2
ring! My coun - try!

L *(as bells ringing)*

94

S1 This is my coun - try!_____

S2 This is my coun - try!_____

A1 My coun - try!_____ This is my coun - try!

A2 My coun - try!_____ This is my coun - try!

rit. to end

97

S1 *ff* I, too, sing A - mer - i - ca!_____ *

S2 *ff* I, too, sing A - mer - i - ca!_____

A1 *ff* I sing A - mer - i - ca!_____

A2 *ff* I sing A - mer - i - ca!_____

rit. to end

p ————— *ff*

8va ————

8vb ————

Red. ————

*On beat 4, all singers place hand (or fist) over heart, as a pledge of allegiance.

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

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

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