

Gwyneth Walker

Selections from

No Ordinary Woman!

for Soprano, Clarinet and Piano

based on the poetry of Lucille Clifton

Bones, Be Good!

Interlude/Soliloquy

The Thirty-eighth Year

Selections from **No Ordinary Woman!**

commissioned by the *Sorores Duo*
Amy Rosine, Soprano (Kansas State University)
and Sandra Mosteller, Clarinet (Wayland Baptist University)

duration: 9 minutes

These selections are taken from the five-song cycle, **No Ordinary Woman!**, on the poetry of African-American poet Lucille Clifton (1936-2010). These songs are expressions of self-reflection. The poet muses on her irrepensible need for motion, for dance. She begs her *bones to be good*. But they *just keep clickin' music*. She sees herself as a *foolish, frightful woman, tap-dancin' for her life*. And thus, this first song bounces along in swing rhythm, with passages of scat singing.

The "Thirty-eighth Year" is a far more somber, introspective song. As the poet reflects upon her 38 years of life, she laments that her life has been ordinary. She had expected more for herself. And as she approaches the age of 40, she remembers her mother at 40. The poet is in the middle of her life. Will she be eclipsed by the memory of her mother? Or will she turn into her own self, at last? These are the profound questions which she asks of herself. And in this song, the approach is one of growing power and self-awareness. There is loneliness and acceptance of an ordinary life. But it is her life!

The musical adaptation of these songs (originally scored for Soprano and Piano, now adding Clarinet) is part of a larger project commissioned by the *Sorores Duo*. The title is: **Voices of Our Land – Songs on Texts of American Women Poets**. This includes the **Emily!** songs (poetry of Emily Dickinson), and now these Lucille Clifton songs. In reworking **No Ordinary Woman!** with Clarinet, the composer is using the variety of character possible with the Clarinet swing-style as well as the lyrical and rich tone sonority. The Clarinet offers commentary, and ultimately, harmony and support.

Commissioned by *Sorores Duo*
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Selections from

No Ordinary Woman!

for Soprano, Clarinet, and Piano

Lucille Clifton (1936 - 2010)

Gwyneth Walker

I. Bones, Be Good!

Leisurely tempo $\text{♩} = 88$ (straight eighths)

B♭ Clarinet *mf espr.*

Piano *mf*

5 *swing eighths*

11 *swing eighths*

16 percussive sound [mostly air] B

Cl. *ta ta ta*

S *swing eighths mf*
I beg my bones to—

B

p

20 *Play*
mf

S — be good but they just keep click-in' mu - - - -

24

Cl. *p mf*

S *p mf*
sic, ——— click, click, click, click, click - in' — mu - sic. ———

(p) mf

28 C

Cl. *p*

S *p* ————— *mf*
Bones, ——— be good!

p

32

Cl. *mf* ————— *p* ————— *mf* ————— *p*

S *p* ————— *mf* ————— *p* —————
Bones, ——— be good! ——— Bones be

mf *p* *mf* *p* *p*

36

Cl. —————

S *mf*
good, be good, be good. They just keep click-in' mu - - - -

mf

40

Cl. 

S  sic. _____ yeah!



44 *rit.* **more freely**

Cl. 

S  (mf) I spin in the cen - ter of my - self, _____

rit. **more freely**



48

Cl. 

S  a fool - ish, fright - ful wo - - - man. _____



64

Cl. *mf*

S percussive sound [mostly air]
ta ta ta

68

Cl.

S ta ta ta ta ta ta — ta ta ta ta

72

Cl. **G** percussive sound [mostly air]
(to emulate voice in mm. 69-70)
ta ta

S sing *mf*
ta ta — ta ta tap tap tap dan - cin', tap tap

G

76 Play

Cl. *mf*

S tap dan - cin', tap tap tap dan - cin', tap tap tap

80 H

Cl. *(mf)*

S *p* — *mf* *p* — *mf*
tap dan - cin', Bones, — be good! — Bones, — be good!


H

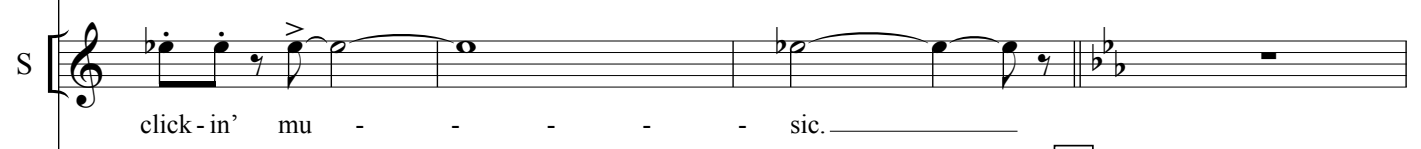
84

Cl.

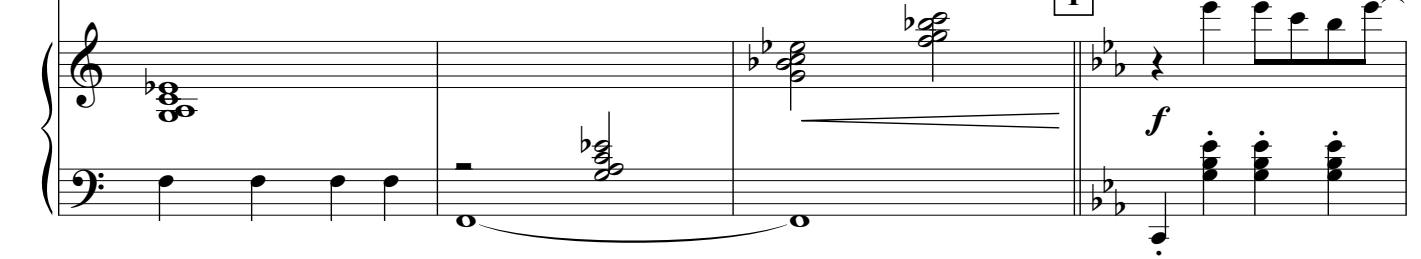
S *p* — *mf*
— Bones be good, be good, begood! They just keep

88


Cl. 

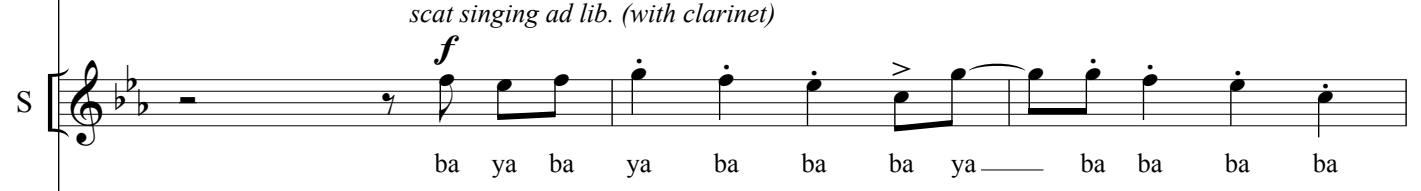
S 

click-in' mu - - - - - sic.



92


Cl. 

S 

ba ya ba ya ba ba ba ya ba ba ba ba

scat singing ad lib. (with clarinet)

f




95

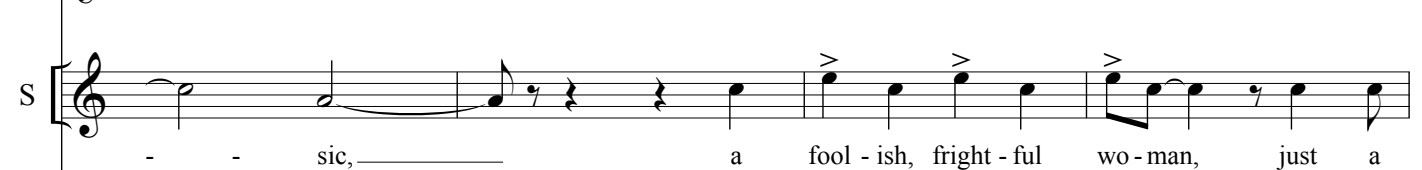
Cl. 

S 

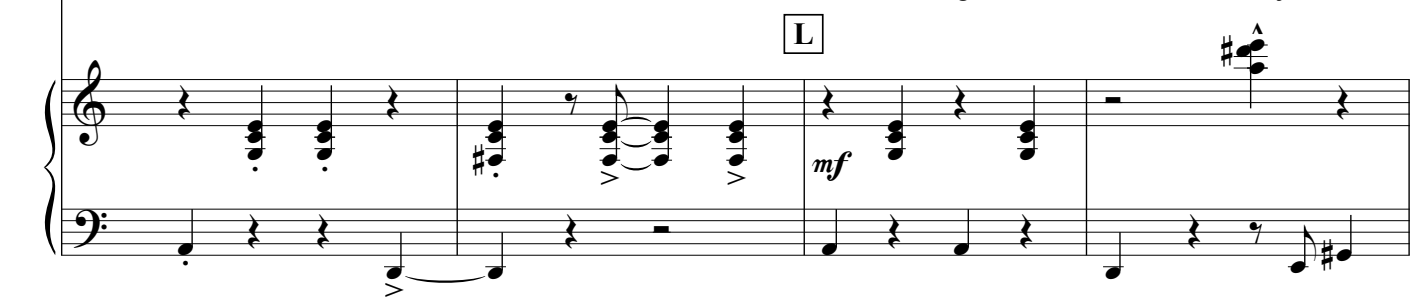


123


Cl. 


S 

 - - sic, _____ a fool - ish, fright - ful wo - man, just a




127

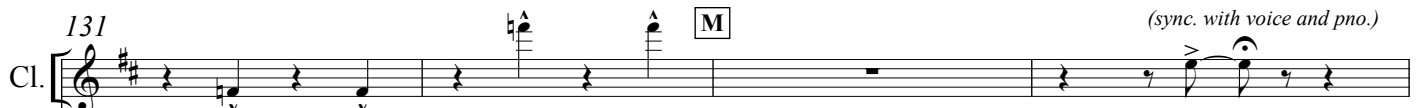
Cl. 

S 


 fool - ish, fright - ful wo - man, just a fool - ish, fright - ful wo - man, just a



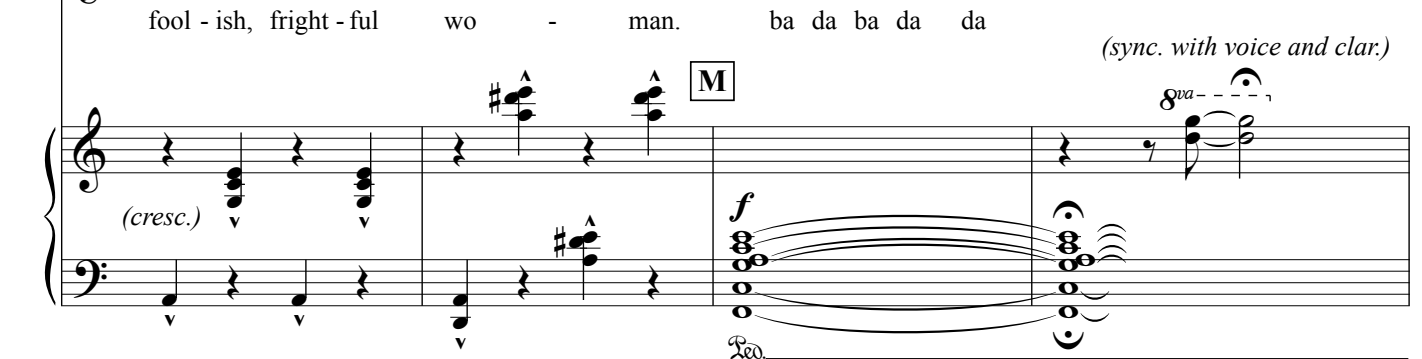
131

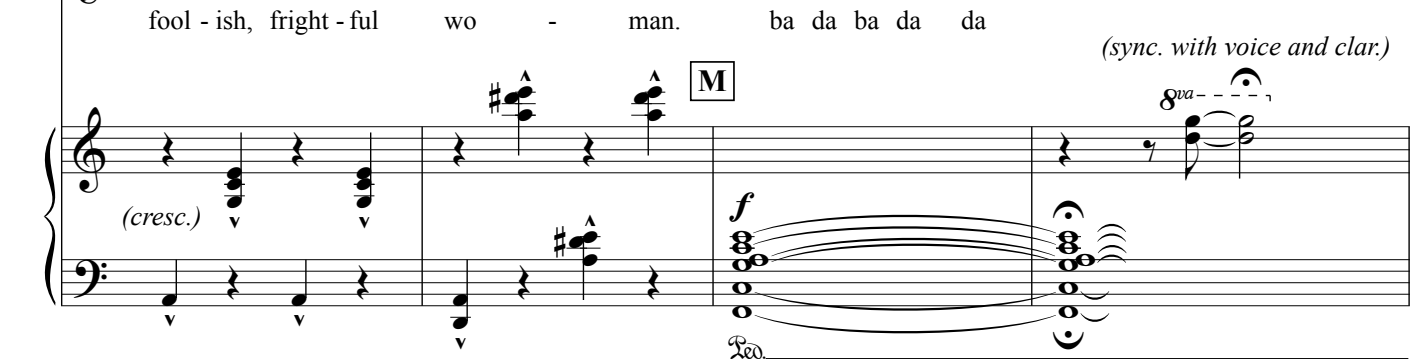
Cl. 

 (sync. with voice and pno.)

S 

 fool - ish, fright - ful wo - man. ba da ba da da



 (cresc.) 

 (sync. with voice and clar.)

135

Cl.

S

(*Rec.*)

139

Cl.

S

8^{va}

ya ba ba—

snap fingers

Interlude – Soliloquy

inspired by the phrase from “The Thirty-eighth Year”
“I had not expected this loneliness. . .”

Moderate tempo ♩ = 80

with pedal

p

Musical notation for measures 1-4, featuring a piano (*p*) dynamic and a 'with pedal' instruction. The music is in 4/4 time and B-flat major.

5

Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo.

Musical notation for measures 5-9, featuring a 'Reo.' (pedal) instruction under the bass line.

9

cresc.

Musical notation for measures 9-12, featuring a *cresc.* (crescendo) instruction.

13

with intensity

mf

Musical notation for measures 13-15, featuring a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic and a 'with intensity' instruction.

16

p

Reo.

Musical notation for measures 16-19, featuring a piano (*p*) dynamic and a 'Reo.' (pedal) instruction.

[pedal stays through first measure of “The Thirty-eighth year”]

V. The Thirty-eighth Year

At a moderate tempo ♩ = 80

Cl. *p reflectively*

At a moderate tempo ♩ = 80

(Seq.)

Cl. *mf*

mf

8 Cl. *p* **A**

S *p reflectively*

The thir - ty - eighth year of my life, **A**

11

Cl.

S *quasi recitative, free tempo*
 plain as bread, as round as a cake an ord - in - ar - y wo - man, an
quasi recitative, free tempo

Rec.

14

Cl. *rit.* **B** *a tempo*
p *mf*

S ord - in - ar - y wo - man. *rit.* **B** *a tempo*

(Rec.)

17

Cl.

S *mf quasi recitative*
 I had ex - pect - ed to be small - er than this, more

38

Cl. *mf*

S *mf*

wrapped me in your skin, and made you live a -

mf

40

Cl.

S

gain, more than once, more than once I have

42 **E**

Cl.

S **E**

tak - en the bones you hard - ened and built daugh - ters.

E

simile

51

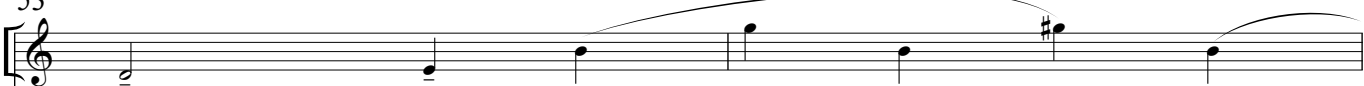
Cl. 

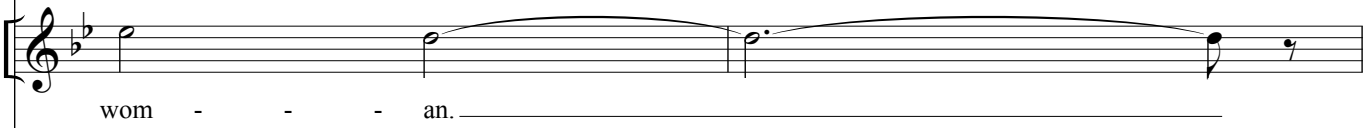
S  wom - an now, _____ an ord - in - ar - y

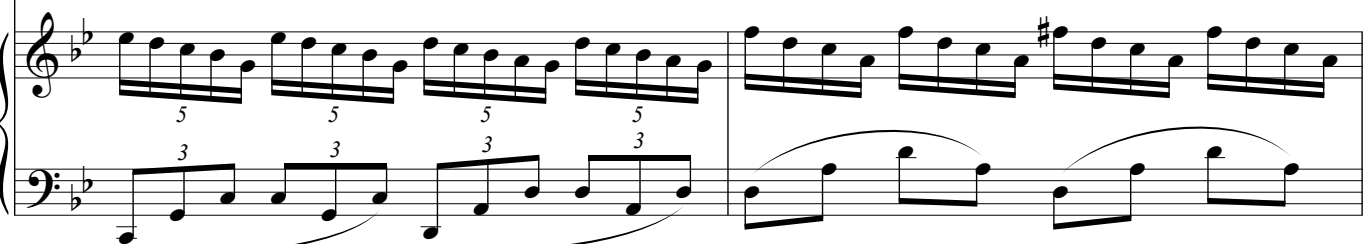


And.

53

Cl. 

S  wom - - - an. _____



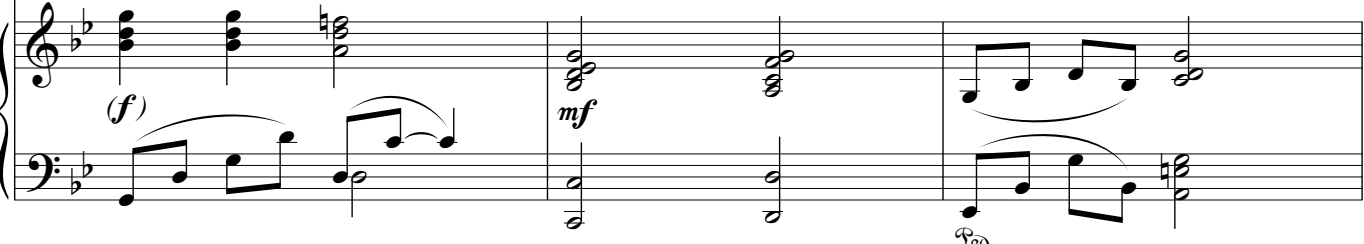
rit.

55 F ♩ = 92

Cl. 

S  In the thir - ty - eighth year of my life, _____

F ♩ = 92



f *mf*

And.

58

Cl. *f*

S *f*

sur - round-ed by life, a per-fect pic - ture of black - ness

mf

(Ceo.)

61 *rit.* **More slowly, freely** *rit.*

Cl. *p*

S *p*

bles - sed, I had not ex - spect - ed this lone - li - ness.

rit. **More slowly, freely** *rit.*

p

(Ceo.)

64 **G** *Slowly* *accel.*

Cl. *p*

S

G *Slowly* *accel.*

p

(Ceo.)

68 **With motion** ♩ = 112

Cl.

S *p*
If in the mid-dle of my

With motion ♩ = 112

71

Cl.

S *cresc.* 3
life I am turn - ing the fi - nal turn in - to the

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.*

74

Cl. *mf*

S *(cresc.)*
shin - ing dark, let me

Ped.

82 *accel.* *lightly tongued*

Cl.

S

accel.

84 *(accel.)* **I** ♩ = 132

Cl.

S

(accel.)

I ♩ = 132

86 *rit.*

Cl.

S

rit.

89

Cl.

S *f* *forcefully*
 I had ex - spect - ed more than this.

90

Cl.

S *p* *more slowly*
 I had not ex - spect - ed to be an ord - in - ar - y

Leo.

91

Cl. *Tempo primo* ♩ = 80 *rit.*
(p)

S *Tempo primo* ♩ = 80 *rit.*
 wom - an.

Leo.