

Gwyneth Walker

*Songs In Motion*

*Songs for Mezzo-soprano and Piano*

based on the choral set *An Hour to Dance*

musical settings of the poetry of Virginia Hamilton Adair

- I. Key Ring
- II. Summary by the Pawns
- III. The April Lovers
- IV. An Hour to Dance
- V. Take My Hand

# *Songs In Motion*

*duration: 16 minutes*

## Program Notes

These songs share a common element of *motion*. Each of the poems focuses on a central image which suggests movement, either subtle or overt. And therefore, the singer and pianist are instructed (and permitted) to bring the poetry to life through gestures and specialized performance techniques.

The opening song, *Key Ring*, speaks of a child's wonderment at her grandfather's key ring, which was swung to and fro. Perhaps, in a child's imagination, the keys unlocked "mysteries!" The song closes with the jingling of the key chain, as simulated in the piano accompaniment.

*Summary by the Pawns* is a game of chess, with the pianist exploring the black and white keys, as the opposing players with their dichotomy of colors. Meanwhile, the singer moves in "pawn-like" steps during piano interludes. With a final gesture, the pianist knocks the pawn (singer) off of the chess board!

As in Spring, buds open for *The April Lovers*. The piano introduction spreads notes apart on the keyboard, as flowers in bloom. Appropriately, the lyrics are "Green is happening." Flowing/flowering arpeggiated accompaniment surrounds the climactic phrase of "Early lovers never question much." At the end of the song, "green-green-green-green" buds pop open around the stage, to the singer's delight!

The fourth song, *An Hour to Dance*, truly is dance music. "We whirl over the meadows of music" in a light, quick waltz. We whirl past our sadness, beyond time. And, on the topic of time, Alice (in Wonderland) and the Rabbit make a brief appearance, causing us to slow down our waltz. But then the dance resumes. The singer whirls through this song, and leaps for love!

A most unusual and powerful poem forms the basis for the final song, *Take My Hand*. The motion in this song is that of a passing train, which might be considered a symbol of life moving by. The poet remembers her childhood, when she felt alone and alienated (the train passes by), she accepts that her only home is in her poems, and now she is going blind (the train passes by), the fullness of her life ends beneath the "wheels of Time" (the train passes again, crying in the night).

Train-in-motion activity is present throughout this song. The opening measures involve the pianist tapping across the piano edge as a train passing. Later, as the singer sings "coming to a crossing..." the sideways movement of the train is followed. A train whistle ("oo") is heard. The final vocal sound is the steam coming from the engine. "Here end my tracks of passion, reason, rhyme."

# The Poems

## I. Key Ring

When my grandfather was very old  
to one small room confined  
he gave me his big bunch of keys to hold.

I asked, "Do they unlock every door there is?  
And what would I find inside?"

He answered, "Mysteries and more mysteries.  
You can't tell till you've tried."

Then as I swung the heavy ring around  
the keys made a chuckling sound.

## II. Summary by the Pawns

First the black square, then a white,  
Moved by something out of sight,

We are started with a bound,  
Knights and castles all around,  
Kings and queens and bishops holy!

After that we go more slowly,  
While around us with free gaits  
Move the taller potentates.

Still we pawns look straight ahead.

To encourage us it's said  
That pawns who reach the utmost square  
Are as good as monarchs there.

Meanwhile pawns, if need be, can  
By slanted ways remove a man;

But frequently, before we know  
What has got us, off we go!

## III. The April Lovers

Green is happening.  
Through the sweet expectant chill  
Of a northern spring  
We have gone without will,

Without fear, without reason,  
Trusting to the power  
Of a fickle season,  
Of a passionate hour,

To mature, to sustain  
Till the plan uncovers  
In the sun and rain.  
Early lovers

Never question much  
What is quietly beating  
Through the music and the touch  
And the mouths meeting.

## IV. An Hour to Dance

For a while we whirled  
over the meadows of music  
our sadness put away in purses  
stuffed into old shoes or shawls

the children we never were  
from cellars and closets  
attics and faded snapshots  
came out to leap for love  
on the edge of an ocean of tears.

like a royal flotilla  
Alice's menagerie swam by  
no tale is endless  
the rabbit opened his watch  
muttering late, late  
time to grow  
old

## V. Take My Hand, Anna K,

My mother wept in church, Episcopalian;  
Over her far-off town the sun shone bright.  
Her New York City child, I felt an alien.  
Coming to a crossing the train cried in the night.

My only home is in the poems I write  
Who now am exiled by my failing sight.  
Words vanish like a flock of birds in flight.  
Coming to a crossing the train cries in the night.

Here end my tracks of passion, reason, rhyme  
Before the terminal rush and road of light,  
All go together under the wheels of Time.  
Coming to a crossing the train cries in the night.

## The Poet

**Virginia Hamilton Adair** was born in 1913 in New York City and grew up for the most part in New Jersey. Until her death in 2004, she lived in Claremont, California, and taught for many years at California Polytechnic University at Pomona. Although her early poems were published in magazines such as “The Atlantic Monthly “ and “The New Republic,” *Ants on the Melon* is Virginia Hamilton Adair’s first published collection of poetry.

## The Composer

Widely performed throughout the country, the music of American composer **Gwyneth Walker** is beloved by performers and audiences alike for its energy, beauty, reverence, drama, and humor. Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. For nearly 30 years, she lived on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont. She now divides her time between her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut and the musical communities of Sarasota, Florida and Randolph, Vermont.

Further information concerning Gwyneth Walker and her works is available at:

**[www.gwynethwalker.com](http://www.gwynethwalker.com)**

# Songs In Motion

Songs for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

Virginia Adair (1913 - 2004)

Gwyneth Walker

## I. Key Ring

*Start slowly, accel. into blur* ♩ = ca. 72

Piano *p* gently, as a key ring jingling *8<sup>va</sup>*

*una corda*

(♩ = ca. 72)

2 **A** *p* recited on pitch

When my grandfather was very old, \_\_\_\_\_ to one small room con - fined,

**A**

(*Rec.*)

(*Rec.*)

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All rights reserved. Made in U.S.A.

5 **B** *mp* *poco* *mp* *p* *rit.*

he gave me his big bunch of keys to hold, his keys to

**B** *rit.*

9 **C** *a tempo* ♩ = 72 *p*

hold. "Do they un-lock ev-ery

**C** *a tempo* ♩ = 72 *(p)*

11 *mp*

door there is? And what will I find in-side?"

*mp*

13 **D** *p* *accel.* *mp*

“Mys - ter - ies, and more mys - ter - ies, and more

**D** *accel.*

*p*

*tr.*  
*tre corde*

15 (*accel.*) *mf* **Faster**

mys - ter - ies, and more mys - ter - ies.

(*accel.*) **Faster**

*mp* *mf*

*tr.*

17 *rit.* *mf* **E** *a tempo* ♩ = 72 *p, mp*

You can't tell \*un-til you've tried." Then as I swung the heav - y

*rit.* **E** *a tempo* ♩ = 72 *p*

(*mf*) *p*

*tr.*

\*The word is "till" in the poem.

20 *mf*

ring a - round — the keys made a chuck - ling sound. —

22 *p* **F** (*p*)

“Mys - ter - ies, and more

*(mf)* white-note gliss. *p* (*p*)

24 *accel. poco a poco* *mp* *mf*

mys - ter - ies, and more mys - ter - ies, and more

*accel. poco a poco*

26 (*accel.*) *f* *f*

mys - ter - ies, and more mys - ter - ies, and more

(*accel.*) *mf* *f*



28 **Faster** G *rit.* *f*

mys - ter - ies. You can't tell un - til you've

**Faster** G *rit.* *f*

30 *p*

tried.

*Start slowly, accel. into blur*

*8va*

*p*

*una corda*

32 **Slowly** *p*

You can't tell un - til you've tried."

**Slowly** *8va*

*loco* \* *let vibrate*

*8va* \* *let vibrate*

*(una corda)*

2'30"

\*to resemble keys jingling on a key ring

## II. Summary by the Pawns

$\text{♩} = 120$ , *swing eighths* ( $\text{♩} = \overset{\frown}{\text{♩}} \overset{\frown}{\text{♩}}$ )

5 **A** *p*

First the black square, then a white, moved by some-thing out of sight.

**A** *p sub.*

9 **B**

We are start-ed with a-bound,

**B**

13 *mf legato*

knights and cas-tles all a-round, kings and queens and bish-ops ho-ly!

*mf*

17 *bouncy* *p* **C** *p spoken (not on pitch)*

Af - ter that we go more slow - ly. **C** black white

22 *mf*

moved by some - thing out of sight.

26 **D** *p* *mf*

While a - round us with free gaits move - the tall - er

**D** *p playfully* *mf*

29 *white-note gliss.*

po - ten - tates. - Still we pawns - move straight a - head.

33 **E** *p*

with free gaits

36 *mf* *f*

po - ten - tates\_ Still we pawns\_ move straight a -

40

head.

**F**

43

**F** During this 8 measure section (from F to G), the singer should move around the stage in time with the music, backward and forward, side to side, and even diagonally – to simulate a chess game. The singer should stand rigid, facing forward, as a wooden chess pawn.

46

49

**G** *mf legato*

Still we pawns look straight a - head. to — en - cour - age

**G** *mf legato*

53

us it is said that pawns who reach the ut - most square are as good as

57

**H** *p*

mon - archs there! Mean - while pawns - if

**H** *p*

61 *f* *mf*

need be, can — by slant - ed ways — re - move a man. — But

(on the beat) *8va* *f*

64 **I**

fre - quent - ly, be - fore we know what has got us, off we

*mf* **I** *white-note gliss. (two beats)*

68 *f*

go! — But

*8va* *non dim.*

72 **J** Free tempo *p* *f*

fre - quent - ly, be - fore we know what has got us, off! off! off! off! off! off! off!

**J** Free tempo *loco* *short, quick gliss.* (play only if needed)

74 *a tempo* ♩ = 120 **(f)** **K**

off we go!

*a tempo* ♩ = 120 **(f)** **K** **(f)** **mf**

77 **mf**

First the black square, then a white First a black,

80 **f** **p** *whispered* **pp**

then a white, moved by some - thing out of sight.

*(as if knocking a pawn off of a chess board)*  
*(on the beat)*  
 15<sup>ma</sup> - 5 - - - -

### III. The April Lovers

Gently ♩ = 80, as flower buds opening

Introduction for piano. The music is in 3/4 time and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with quarter notes and eighth-note chords.

*ped.*  
una corda

Measures 5-8 of the piano accompaniment. The right hand continues with a steady eighth-note pattern, and the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with quarter notes and eighth-note chords.

*ped.*

(u.c.)

Measures 9-12. The vocal line begins at measure 9 with the lyrics "Green is hap - pen - ing." The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. Dynamics range from piano (*p*) to mezzo-piano (*mp*).

*ped.*

(u.c.)

Measures 13-16. The vocal line features a series of "la" syllables in measures 13-15, followed by the lyrics "Green is" in measure 16. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. Dynamics range from piano (*p*) to mezzo-piano (*p*).

*ped.*

(u.c.)



17 *mf* *p*

hap - pen - ing. la la la la la la la la la la

(Ped.)  
(u.c.)

21 **C** *p* *poco accel.* *mf* *rit.*

Green is hap - pen - ing, is hap - pen - ing, is hap - pen - ing.

(Ped.)  
(u.c.)

26 **D** ♩ = 80 *freely* *p*

Through the sweet ex - pect - ant chill of a north - ern spring we have gone with-out

(Ped.)  
*una corda*

30 *mf* **E**

will, with-out fear, with-out rea - son, trust - ing to the power of a fick - le sea - son,

*tre corde*

35 *f* *p*

of a pas - sion - ate, pas - sion - ate hour, to ma - ture, to sus - tain till the

39 *rit.* **F** *a tempo* ♩ = 80 *f*

plan un - cov - ers in the sun and rain. Ear - - - ly lov - ers, —

*rit.* **F** *a tempo* ♩ = 80

42

ear - ly lov - ers nev - er

44 *p* (*p*)

ques - tion nev - er ques - tion nev - er ques - tion much — what is

46 **G**

qui - et - ly beat - ing through the mu - sic and the

**G**

(Ped.)

48

touch and the mouths meet - ing.

*rit.*

*rit.*

*cresc.*

(Ped.) (Ped.) (Ped.)

51 *mf* **H** *a tempo* ♩ = 80

Ear - ly lov - ers,

*mf* **H** *a tempo* ♩ = 80

*f*

*cresc.*

*f*

(Ped.) (Ped.) (Ped.)

54

ear - ly lov - ers nev - er ques - tion,

(Ped.) (Ped.) (Ped.)

57

ear - ly lov - ers nev - er ques - tion nev - er ques - tion nev - er ques - tion

*ped.*

59

much

*p*

*ped.*

61

*rit.*

*ped.*

63

*a tempo* ♩ = 80

*(p)*

**I** Unmeasured

*continue, ad lib*

*ped.*

*una corda al fine*

Singer looks around the stage, perhaps pointing, with delight, to imaginary "buds" as they pop open.

*Freely enter (quickly as flower buds opening)*

(64) *p*

green, green, green, green, green, green, green, green, green, green, green, green,

*pp* barely audible

(Ped.)

(64)

green, green, green, green, green, green, green, green, Ah Ah

*pp*

*p*

(Ped.)

(64)

Ah

*pp*

(Ped.)

3'00"

## IV. An Hour to Dance

Lightly waltzing ♩. = 72

*p*

*poco Rit. ad lib.*

8

*mf*

*Rit.*

15

*mf* A

For a while we whirled \_\_\_\_\_

A

*p*

(*Rit.*)

21

o - ver the mead - ows of mu - - -

(*Rit.*)

27

(mf)

**B**

- - sic, our sad - ness — put a -

35

way in pur - ses, — stuffed in - to

43

old shoes — and shawls.

52

*p*

**C**

— We whirled o - ver the mead - ows, — we

57 *cresc.*

whirled o - ver the mead - ows, of

*cresc.* 10 10 10 10

Reo.

61 *f* *rit.* *mf*

mu - sic. The

*f* *rit.* *mf*

Reo.

69 **D** Slower, more freely *p* *mf*

chil - dren we nev - er were, from cel - lars and clos - ets, at - tics and fa - ded snap - shots,

**D** Slower, more freely *mf* *p*

Reo.

77 **E** *p* *mf* *p*

came out to leap for la la la la la la

**E** *mf* (*mf*) *p*

Reo.



84 F *f*

love, \_\_\_\_\_ on the edge of \_\_\_\_\_ an o - cean \_\_\_\_\_ of

90 *rit.* G *p* *accel. poco a poco [to H]*  
*cresc. poco a poco*

tears. \_\_\_\_\_ We whirled o - ver the mead - ows, \_\_\_\_\_ we

*rit.* G *accel. poco a poco [to H]*

98 *(accel.)*  
*(cresc.)*

whirled o - ver the mead - ows, \_\_\_\_\_ we

*(accel.)* 10 10 10 10  
*(p) cresc. poco a poco*

*rit.* *simile*

102 *(accel.)*  
*(cresc.)*

whirled o - ver the mead - ows \_\_\_\_\_ of

*(accel.)* 10 10 10 10  
*(cresc.)*

**H** *a tempo* (♩. = 72)

106

*f*

mu - - - - - sic.

*f*

*non dim.*

*Leg.*

114

**I** Singer dances and whirls in time with the music

*p* ————— *f*

Ah

**I**

*Leg.* *simile*

122

more whirling

*p* ————— *f*

Ah

130

**J**

*p* ————— *p*

Ah

**J**

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

*Leg.* *Leg.*

137

*rit.*

(*Leg.*)

144

*(rit.)*

**K** Slower, more freely

*p* *sustained*

Like a royal- flo - til - a Al - i - ce's men - a - ger - ie swam

*(rit.)*

**K** Slower, more freely

*p* (*p*)

(*Leg.*)

150

**L**

*(p) cresc. poco a poco*

by. No tale is end - less. The rab-bit o-pened his watch mut - ter - ing

**L**

(*Leg.*)

155

*rit.*  
*(cresc.)*

*mf*

Slowly

late, late, time to grow old, time to grow old.

*rit.*

Slowly

(*p*)

164 **M**

(opt. cut to m. 176)  
*accel. poco a poco*

**M** *accel. poco a poco*

*p*

*And.*

(end cut)

173 (*accel.*)

(♩ = ♩.) *a tempo* (♩. = 72)

**N**

(*p*) *cresc. poco a poco*

(*accel.*) (♩ = ♩.) *a tempo* (♩. = 72)

We whirled

**N** (*p*) *cresc. poco a poco*

(*And.*)

181 (*cresc.*)

*mp* (*cresc.*)

o - ver the mead - ows, — we whirled o - ver the mead - ows, —

(*cresc.*) *mp* (*cresc.*)

(*And.*)

187 (*cresc.*)

*mf* (*cresc.*)

— we whirled o - ver the mead - ows — of

(*cresc.*) *mf* (*cresc.*)

(*And.*)

**O**  
192 *f*

mu - - - - - sic.

*f*

*non dim.*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

**P**  
200 *(f)*

We came out to leap, We came out to leap,

*(f)*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

**Q**  
208

We came out to leap, came out to leap for

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

216

la la la la la love!

\* ( )

*continue, "blurred"*

10 10

Ped.

\*Cue-size note is an *ossia*.

# V. Take My Hand

tap on piano ledge, descending (from right to left), to simulate a train passing by

Moderate tempo ♩ = 100

The piano introduction consists of three measures. The right hand plays a descending eighth-note pattern with 'x' marks above the notes, indicating tapping on the piano ledge. The left hand plays a similar descending eighth-note pattern. The dynamics alternate between *f* and *p* in a sequence: *f* (right), *p* (left), *f* (right), *p* (left), *f* (right), *p* (left).

roll taps at lower (left) end of the ledge

Measures 4-8 of the piano accompaniment. The right hand has a melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes. The left hand features a diamond-shaped tapping pattern (represented by three parallel lines) in the first two measures, followed by rests. A *p* dynamic is indicated in measure 5.

**A** quasi recitative

Vocal line for measures 9-12. The tempo and mood are marked *mp espr.* (moderato piano, esprimo). The melody includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 10. The lyrics are: "My moth - er wept in church, E - pis - co - pa - lian;"

**A** quasi recitative

Piano accompaniment for measures 9-12. The right hand has sustained chords, and the left hand has sustained chords. A *(p)* dynamic is indicated in measure 12. The piano part ends with a fermata.

Vocal line for measures 13-16. The melody includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 13. The lyrics are: "o - ver her far - off town the sun shone bright. Her New York Cit - y"

Piano accompaniment for measures 13-16. The right hand has sustained chords, and the left hand has sustained chords. The piano part ends with a fermata.

17

child, I felt an al - ien. Com - ing to a cross - ing the

*ped.*

20

**With energy, faster** ♩ = 112

train cried in the night.

**With energy, faster** ♩ = 112

*p*

*with pedal*

*(Ped.)*

23

**B** (as though watching a train passing in the night)  
*p* almost whispering

com - ing to a cross - ing com - ing to a cross - ing

**B**

25

com - ing to a cross - ing com - ing to a cross - ing

28

27

*accel.*  
*cresc.*

com - ing to a cross - ing, cross - ing, cross - ing, com - ing to a cross - ing, cross - ing, cross - ing,

29

**Faster** ♩ = 120

*mf*

com - ing to a cross - ing the train cried in the night.

**Faster** ♩ = 120

*mf*

(*mf*)

*ped.*

with pedal

32

*rit.*

*mf espr.*

**C** **Slower** ♩ = 100 as before

My on - ly home is the po - ems I write

*rit.*

**C** **Slower** ♩ = 100 as before

*non dim.*

(*mf*)

35

*p sub.*

*mf*

*rit.*

who now am ex - iled by my fail - ing sight.. Words van - ish like a flock of birds in

*p sub.*

*mf*

*rit.*

*ped.*



39 *p* flight. Com-ing to a cross-ing the train cries— in the *mf*

*mf* *p* *8va* *accel.*

42 ♩ = 112 **D** (as though watching a train passing in the night) *p* almost whispering

night. com-ing to a cross-ing

♩ = 112 **D**

*mf* *dim.* *p*

45 com-ing to a cross-ing com-ing to a cross-ing

47 *accel.* *cresc.* com-ing to a cross-ing com-ing to a cross-ing, cross-ing, cross-ing, *accel.*

*cresc.* 5 5

49 *(accel.)* *(cresc.)* **Faster** ♩ = 120 *mf*

com - ing to a cross - ing, cross - ing, cross - ing, com - ing to a cross - ing the

*(accel.)* *(cresc.)* **Faster** ♩ = 120 *mf*

*ped.*

51 *rit.*

train cries in the night.

*rit.* *cresc.*

*ped.* with pedal

**E** Slower, emphatically

54 *f* *p*

Here end my tracks of pas - sion, rea - son, rhyme, be - fore the ter - min - al

**E** Slower, emphatically

*f* *p*

*ped.* *ped.*

59 *f*

rush and roar of light. All go to - geth - er un - der the

*mf* *f*

*ped.* *ped.*

62 *a tempo* ♩ = 112 *p*

wheels of — Time. Com - ing to a cross - ing the train cries — in the

65 *mf* *rit.* **F** Slower, emphatically *f*

night. Here — end my tracks of

*mf* *cresc.* *f*

with pedal

68 *mf*

pas - sion, rea - son, rhyme, be - fore the ter - min - al

72 *p* *mf*

rush and roar of light. All go to - geth - er un - der the

75 *rit.* **G** Free measure *freely*

wheels of Time. Com - ing to a cross - ing the train cry, -

*rit.* **G** Free measure

*dim.* *rit.* *p*

cry, — cry, — cry, — cries, — in the

*rit.*

77 **H** *a tempo* ♩ = 120 *snap fingers*

night. taps descending on piano ledge

**H** *a tempo* ♩ = 120 *f* (*f*)

81 **I** (*as though watching a train passing in the night*) *p* almost whispering

com - ing to a cross - ing

**I** *dim.* *p*

83

com - ing to a cross - ing com - ing to a cross - ing

85

com - ing to a cross - ing *cresc.* com - ing to a cross - ing, cross - ing, cross - ing,

87

com - ing to a cross - ing, cross - ing, cross - ing, *breathe ad lib.* com - ing to a cross - ing, cross - ing, cross - ing,

89

com - ing to a cross - ing, cross - ing, cross - ing, **J** com - ing to a cross - ing, oo \_\_\_\_\_ *as a train whistle*

91

com - ing to a cross - ing, oo\_\_\_\_\_ com - ing to a cross - ing, oo\_\_\_\_\_

93

com - ing to a cross - ing, oo\_\_\_\_\_ *accel.* com - ing to a cross - ing, oo,\_\_\_\_\_ oo,\_\_\_\_\_

*accel.*

95 (*accel.*)

**K** Quickly ♩ = 132

com - ing to a cross - ing, oo,\_\_\_\_\_ oo,\_\_\_\_\_ *f* com - ing to a cross - ing the train cries \_\_\_\_\_

(*accel.*) **K** Quickly ♩ = 132 *f* *8va*

98

**L** (Same tempo)

*p* in the night, \_\_\_\_\_

**L** (Same tempo) *p*

102

*cresc. poco a poco to end*

night, \_\_\_\_\_

*cresc. poco a poco to end*

105 (*cresc.*)

night. \_\_\_\_\_

*(cresc.)*

*And.*

108 (*cresc.*)

*ff*

air sound (no pitch), to resemble a train engine letting off steam as it passes by

*chh*

tap ledge energetically with both hands

*ff*

*(cresc.)*

*And.*

4'20"

Total: 16 minutes  
This version completed: April 15, 2015  
New Canaan, Connecticut