

Gwyneth Walker

# Songs of the Spirit

Contemporary adaptations of American Spirituals  
*for Soprano and Piano*

Standin' in the Need of Prayer  
Were You There?  
Come and Go with Me to that Land  
Steal Away  
Sit Down, Sister!

# Songs of the Spirit

duration: 17 minutes 30 seconds

Premiered by Eleanor Bach (Mezzo), Jennifer Ellis (Soprano),  
and Dana Todd Lux (Soprano), with Evan Roider, Pianist  
March 22, 2014 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

SONGS OF THE SPIRIT are contemporary adaptations of familiar American spirituals. The original songs date back to the era of African-American slavery in the southern United States. With their power and genuine message, these songs have now become well-known and beloved throughout the world.

The repertoire of American spirituals is varied and extensive. Topics range from self-directed humor – *It's me, O Lord, standin' in the need of prayer* or *I can't sit down, 'cause I just got to Heaven, gonna look around* – to the anguish of *Were you there when they crucified my Lord?* There is exuberance and celebration in *Come and go with me to that land where I'm bound*. Comfort is mixed with sorrow in *Steal away to Jesus. I ain't got long to stay here*.

A common element in all of these songs is personal expression. These are sacred folk songs intended to speak directly of one's faith. They convey one's dialogue with God. And thus, the songs are inherently dramatic.

The focus in creating these new arrangements has been to emphasize the character of each song. Swing rhythm piano accompaniments propel the lively music forward. Vocal cadenzas allow for time to dwell on specific phrases. Additional words are inserted to heighten the personal expression. *Were you there when they crucified my Lord* extends into phrases of *My Lord, my Lord, He was my Lord*.

This has been a process of melding folk repertoire with concert repertoire.

Standin' in the Need of Prayer	1
Were You There?	9
Come and Go with Me to that Land	17
Steal Away	25
Sit Down, Sister!	30

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)

*Dedicated to Evan Roider, and the Baton Rouge, Louisiana, musical community*

# Songs of the Spirit

*for Soprano and Piano*

Traditional

Gwyneth Walker

## Standin' in the Need of Prayer

**Free tempo**

*with bravura, as if introducing someone very important!*

Piano

The piano introduction consists of two systems of music. The first system features a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a series of ascending eighth notes, followed by a trill (*tr*) and a quarter note. The bass clef part starts with a low octave (*8vb*) and a *loco* section. The second system continues with more ascending eighth notes in the treble and a *rit.* (ritardando) section in the bass. The piece concludes with a final chord in the treble.

**With youthful energy** ♩ = 144 (♩ = 72)

*swing rhythm* (♩ = ♪♩)

*mf*

It's

**With youthful energy** ♩ = 144 (♩ = 72)

*swing rhythm* (♩ = ♪♩)

*mf*

The vocal part begins at measure 9 with a rest, followed by the lyrics "It's". The piano accompaniment starts at measure 9 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a swing rhythm. The piano part features a series of eighth notes in the treble and a steady bass line in the bass. The piece concludes with a final chord in the piano part.

Note setting and format by Gwyneth Walker Music Productions.

REFRAIN

13

me, it's\_\_\_ me, O, Lord,\_\_\_ stand - in' in the need of\_\_\_

(mf)

(+8vb) (loco)  
on repeat

16

prayer. It's me, it's\_\_\_ me\_\_\_ O, Lord,\_\_\_

(+8vb) (loco)  
on repeat

19

stand - in' in the need of\_\_\_ prayer.\_\_\_\_\_

VERSE 1

23

1. Not my fath - er, or my moth - er, but it's me, O, Lord,\_\_\_  
2. Not the

p

26

stand - in' in the need of \_\_\_ prayer. Not my sis - ter, or my broth - er, but it's

29

me, \_\_\_ O, Lord, \_\_\_ stand - in' in the need of \_\_\_ prayer. It's

VERSE 2

32

preach - er, or the teach - er, but it's me, O, Lord, \_\_\_ stand - in' in the need of \_\_\_

35

prayer. Not the schol - ar with the col - lar,\* but it's me \_\_\_ O, Lord, \_\_\_

\*a Theologian

6

38

REFRAIN

*f*

stand - in' in the need of \_\_\_ prayer. It's me, it's

41

me, O, Lord, \_ stand - in' in the need of \_\_\_ prayer. It's

44

me, it's me, \_ O, Lord, \_ stand - in' in the need of \_\_\_

Singer steps toward the audience...

47

*p* playfully

prayer. Not

INTERLUDE

...and points to various individuals in the audience.

51

you, not you, not you, not you. It's

*mf*

Taps chest to accept "blame"

55

me, it's me, stand - in', stand - in',

*mf* *rit.*

*rit.*

Ped.

VERSE 3

58

stand - in' in the need. Not the strang - er, not my neigh - bor, but it's

*f* *Slower, freely straight eighths* *p with angst*

*gliss.* *f*

Ped.

61

me, O, Lord, I'm stand - in, stand - in, stand - in, Not the sin - ner, — she's just a be-

*f port.*

*p*

*f*

*rit.*

*gradual accel., gathering energy*

64

gin - - - ner, Lord! Stand - in', stand - in', stand - in' in the need!

*p*

*(p)*

*swing rhythm resumes*

*rit.*

*gradual accel., gathering energy*

*swing rhythm resumes*

*p*

*(p)*

67

*(accel.)*

*(p)*

*a tempo* (♩ = 144)

*cresc. poco a poco*

Not my fath - er, or my moth - er, or my

*(accel.)*

*a tempo* (♩ = 144)

*f*

*p sub.*

*cresc. poco a poco*



70 *(cresc.)*

sis-ter, or my broth-er, or the preach-er, or the teach-er, or the schol-ar with the col-lar, or the

73 *(cresc.)* *f*

strang-er, or the neigh-bor, or the sin-ner, a be-gin-ner. I'm stand-in', Lord, —

76 *rit.* **Slightly slower**  
*straight eighths*

I'm stand-in', Lord, I

*rit.* **Slightly slower**  
*straight eighths*

*f*

(Leo.) *f* Leo.

*Were You There?* is dedicated to the memory of my dear family friend, Tanya Anne Bickley (1941-2013).  
This music was created at the time of her passing. Her spirit dwells within.

## Were You There?

At a slow, somber tempo ♩ = 100

The piano introduction is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the instruction "with pedal" under the first two measures. The music consists of a series of chords in the left hand and a single note in the right hand. The word "simile" is written above the third measure, indicating that the dynamics and articulation should be similar to the previous measures.

6 VERSE 1 *p* sorrowfully

Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my

This system contains the first line of the verse, starting at measure 6. The vocal line is in the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in the grand staff. The lyrics are "Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my".

11

Lord? \_\_\_\_\_ Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

This system contains the second line of the verse, starting at measure 11. The vocal line continues with "Lord? \_\_\_\_\_ Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? \_\_\_\_\_".

16

Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ some - times it caus - es me to

This system contains the third line of the verse, starting at measure 16. The vocal line continues with "Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ some - times it caus - es me to".

12

21

trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble. Were you

Ped.

25

*poco accel.*

there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?

*poco accel.*

Ped. Ped.

29

*f* with intensity and urgency

*poco rit.*

My Lord, my Lord, my Lord...

*f* *poco rit.*

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

Slightly faster ♩ = 112, with motion

33

*mf*

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

VERSE 2

(Same tempo ♩ = 112)

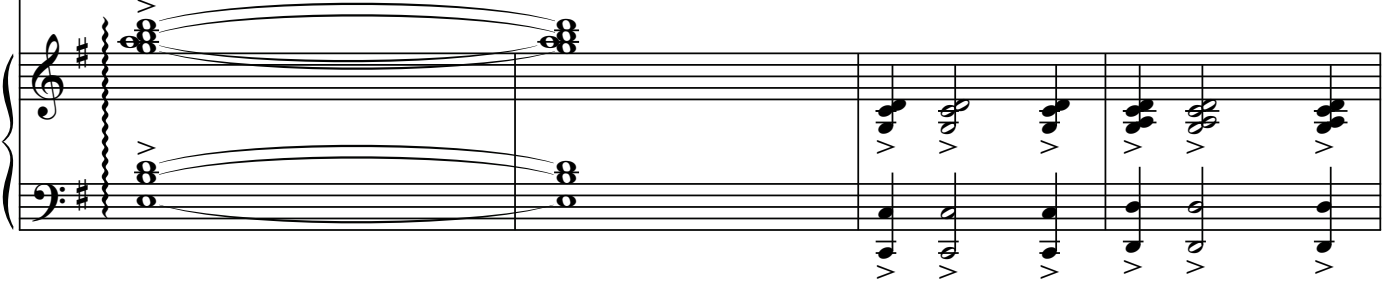
*mf* in a recitative style

37



Were you there when they nailed him to the cross? \_\_\_\_\_

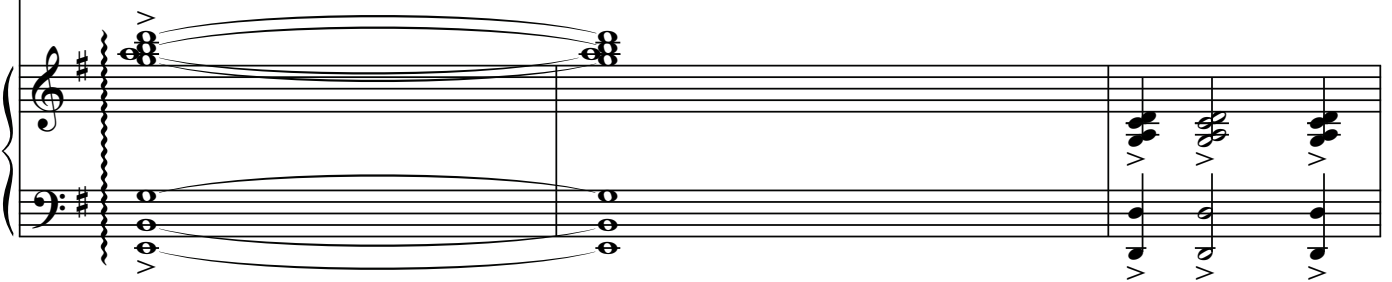
(Same tempo ♩ = 112)



41



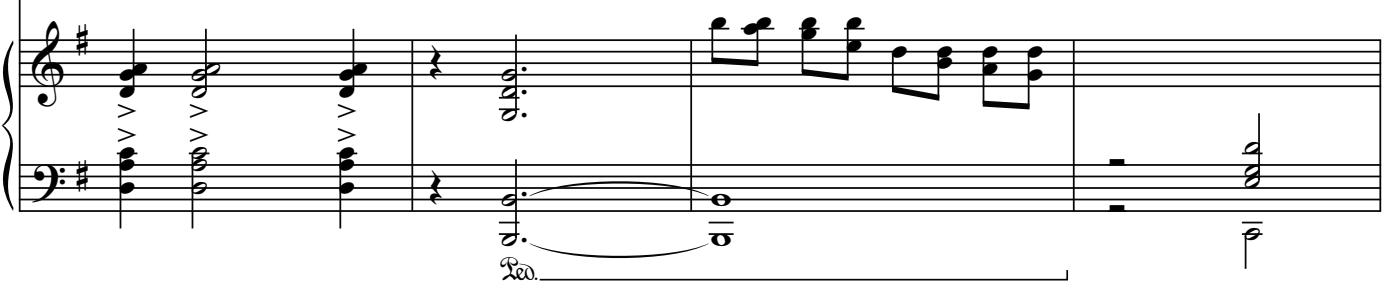
Were you there when they nailed him, and they nailed him to the cross? \_\_\_\_\_



44



Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ some-times it



48



caus - es me to trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble. \_\_\_\_\_



14

52

Were you there when they nailed him to the cross, they nailed him, they \_

(Ped.)

56

nailed him to the cross? \_

(Ped.)

60

*f with intensity and urgency*

My Lord, my Lord, my Lord, \_

(Ped.)

64

*rit.*  
*p tenderly*

my Lord, my Lord, my Lord, He was my Lord. \_

(Ped.)

*rit.*  
*p*  
*loco*

VERSE 3

68 **Slower** ♩ = 100 *grandly* *(p)* *f*

And then the sun re - fused to

*p* *f*

*8vb* *loco*

*Lo.*

71 shine. And then the sun re -

*Lo.* *Lo.* *Lo.*

*8vb* *loco*

*Lo.*

74 fused to shine.

*(Lo.)* *Lo.* *Lo.*

77 Oh, some - times it caus - es me to trem - ble,

82

trem - ble, trem - ble. And then the sun, the

*p* , *f*

*p* *f*

8<sup>vb</sup>

ped. ped.

86

sun, the sun re - fused to

ped. ped.

VERSE 4

(Same tempo ♩ = 112)

*mf* with sorrow and heaviness

89

With motion ♩ = 112

shine. And then they

(Same tempo ♩ = 112)

With motion ♩ = 112

*lightly, as faint touches of sunlight*

*mf*

*poco ped.* ped.

94

laid him in the tomb. \_\_\_\_\_ And then they laid him in the \_\_\_\_\_

*poco ped.* *Leg.* \_\_\_\_\_ *poco ped.* *Leg.* \_\_\_\_\_ *poco ped.*

99

tomb. \_\_\_\_\_ My Lord, my Lord, my Lord,

*Leg.* \_\_\_\_\_

104

my \_\_\_\_\_ Lord... And then they laid him down. And then they laid him in the \_\_\_\_\_

*8<sup>vb</sup>* *Leg.* \_\_\_\_\_ *poco ped.* *Leg.* \_\_\_\_\_ *poco ped.*



# Come and Go with Me to that Land

At a strolling tempo ♩ = 120

swing rhythm (♩ = ♪<sup>3</sup>)

*p*

5

*cresc.*

8

**REFRAIN**

*f* enthusiastically . \*

Come and go with me to that land, — come and go with me to that land, —

*f*

12

— come and go with me to that land — where I'm bound. —

\*Staccato dot denotes a lightness to the walking step.

20

16

Come and go with me to that land, come and go

19

with me to that land, with me to that land where I'm

23

bound. I've got a

*mf*

27

VERSE 1

broth-er in that land, I've got a sis-ter in that land,

*p*

soft pedal

30

I've got all my lov - in' friends where I'm bound.

*mf*

*(soft)*

34

I see my fath - er in that land, he's got my moth - er by the

38

hand, they're wait - ing in that land where I'm

REFRAIN 2

41

bound. Come and go with me,

*accel.* **Faster, with energy** ♩ = 144 *f*

*accel.* **Faster, with energy** ♩ = 144 *f*

*with pedal*

22

45

come and go with me,

This system contains measures 22 through 45. It features a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature. The lyrics are "come and go with me,". The piano accompaniment consists of a right-hand part with chords and moving lines, and a left-hand part with a steady bass line.

48

with me to that land. \_\_\_\_\_ Come and go,

This system contains measures 48 through 51. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "with me to that land." followed by a long horizontal line, and then "Come and go,". The piano accompaniment continues with similar harmonic and rhythmic patterns.

52

come and go with me, \_\_\_\_\_ come and go, come and go with me, \_\_\_\_\_

This system contains measures 52 through 54. The vocal line has the lyrics "come and go with me," followed by a horizontal line, then "come and go, come and go with me,". The piano accompaniment features more complex chordal textures in the right hand.

55

with me where I'm \_\_\_\_\_ bound. \_\_\_\_\_

This system contains measures 55 through 58. The vocal line has the lyrics "with me where I'm" followed by a horizontal line, and then "bound." followed by another horizontal line. The piano accompaniment concludes with sustained chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand.

INTERLUDE

59

joyfully walking to heaven with me where I'm —

62

bound.....

65

with me where I'm bound..

68

scat, ad lib. da ba da da... snap fingers or clap hands x

scat, ad lib.

rit.

Musical score for measures 71-73. The vocal line includes a scat section with notes marked with accents (>) and a ritardando (rit.) marking. The piano accompaniment features a glissando effect in the right hand, indicated by a diagonal line labeled "gliss".

VERSE 2

Slower ♩ = 80, even eighths

mf (blues style) freely

(rit.)

Musical score for measures 74-76. The vocal line includes lyrics: "They'll be no sla-v'ry in that land. They'll be no". The piano accompaniment includes a double bar line and a forte marking (mf).

They'll be no sla-v'ry in that land. They'll be no

(rit.)

Slower ♩ = 80, even eighths

(blues style)

Musical score for measures 74-76. The piano accompaniment includes a double bar line and a forte marking (mf).

, f emphatically

Musical score for measures 77-79. The vocal line includes lyrics: "sla-v'ry in that land. I'll throw my shack-les to the ground, and lay my". The piano accompaniment includes a forte marking (f).

sla-v'ry in that land. I'll throw my shack-les to the ground, and lay my

rit.

Musical score for measures 80-82. The vocal line includes lyrics: "bur-dens all a-round, all a-round, all a-round,". The piano accompaniment includes a ritardando (rit.) marking and a fermata.

bur-dens all a-round, all a-round, all a-round,

rit.

Musical score for measures 80-82. The piano accompaniment includes a ritardando (rit.) marking and a fermata.

82 **Slower** *p* *accel.* **Quickly** ♩ = 184 *f*

wait - ing for my Lord, — wait - ing for my Lord to set me free. — — — — — And they'll be

**Slower** *accel.* **Quickly** ♩ = 184

*f* as if breaking the chains of slavery

(*See*)

**VERSE 3**

85 **Very quickly, up tempo** ♩ = 184 (♩ = 92) *very joyfully*

sing - ing — in that land, voi - ces ring - ing — in that land. They'll be

**Very quickly, up tempo** ♩ = 184 (♩ = 92)

89

sing - ing — in that land where I'm bound. — — — — — They'll be

# Steal Away

Peacefully ♩ = 80

*Ad.* \_\_\_\_\_ *simile*

8va - - - - -

## REFRAIN

9 *(a tempo)*  
*p* mournfully

Steal a - way, steal a - way, steal a - way to\_\_

*(a tempo)*  
as falling tears, or "stealing away"

*Ad.* \_\_\_\_\_ *simile*

12

Je - sus. Steal a - way, steal a - way home.

*Ad.* \_\_\_\_\_ *Ad.* \_\_\_\_\_



I ain't got long to stay here.

VERSE 1

18 *accel.* **Faster ♩ = 108, more animated**  
*f* My Lord a - calls me, calls

*accel.* **Faster ♩ = 108, more animated**  
*cresc.* *f*

22 *rit.*  
 me by the thun - der. The trum - pet sounds with - in - a my soul.  
*rit.*

26 **Slower** *a tempo* (♩ = 108)  
 I ain't got long to stay here.

**Slower** *a tempo* (♩ = 108)  
*f*

VERSE 2

*with anxiety*

29

Green trees a - bend - ing, poor

*diminuendo*

*p*

*with anxiety*

Ped.

33

*cresc. poco a poco*

*rit.*

*a tempo*

*f*

sin - ner \_\_\_ stands a - trem - bling, trem - bling, trem - bling, trem - bling, trem - bling. The

*loco*

*rit.*

*a tempo*

Ped.

36

*rit.*

**Slower**

trum - pet \_\_\_ sounds \_\_\_ with - in - a my soul. I ain't got long to \_\_\_ stay \_\_\_

*rit.*

**Slower**

Ped.

39

*a tempo* (♩ = 108)

here. \_\_\_\_\_

*a tempo* (♩ = 108)

*(f)*

*dim.*

*simile*

Ped.

30

INTERLUDE / REFRAIN

43

*p espr., rubato*

Reo. \_\_\_\_\_ Reo. \_\_\_\_\_

47

*cresc.*

Reo. \_\_\_\_\_ simile

51

*mf*

Reo. \_\_\_\_\_ Reo. \_\_\_\_\_

54

*p*

Steal, \_\_\_ steal, \_\_\_ steal \_\_\_ a - way home. \_\_\_\_\_

*p sub.*

Reo. \_\_\_\_\_ Reo. \_\_\_\_\_

VERSE 3

58

*f animated*

I see the light - ning, the thun - der and the

*f forcefully*

(Reo.) \_\_\_\_\_

# Sit Down, Sister!

During this introduction, the Singer may walk around the stage, as if joyfully exploring the "landscape" of Heaven.

At a jaunty tempo ♩ = 120

swing rhythm (♩ =  $\overset{\frown}{\underset{\frown}{\text{♩}}}$ )

*p* with growing excitement and energy

Musical score for the introduction, measures 1-3. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'At a jaunty tempo ♩ = 120' and the rhythm is 'swing rhythm'. The instruction is '*p* with growing excitement and energy'. The score shows a piano introduction with chords and a simple melody line.

*cresc. poco a poco*

Musical score for the introduction, measures 4-7. The instruction is '*cresc. poco a poco*'. The score continues the piano introduction with chords and a simple melody line.

8 **REFRAIN** *f*

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

*f*

*slight pedal*

Musical score for the first line of the song, measures 8-10. The section is marked 'REFRAIN' and begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The lyrics are 'Oh, won't you sit down? NO! I can't sit down! Oh, won't you'. The piano accompaniment is marked '*f*' and includes the instruction '*slight pedal*'. The score shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment.

11

sit down! NO! Well, I can't\_ sit down! Oh, won't you sit down? NO!\_ I

Musical score for the second line of the song, measures 11-13. The lyrics are 'sit down! NO! Well, I can't\_ sit down! Oh, won't you sit down? NO!\_ I'. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a simple melody line.

14

can't sit down, 'cause I just got to Hea - ven, gon - na look a - round.

\*Tap ↓

17

Tap low x

VERSE 1

21

*mf* playfully

Who's that yon - der dressed in red? — Must be the chil - dren that —

*mf* gliss. (short, high gliss. ad lib.)

24

VERSE 2

Mo - ses led. — Who's that yon - der dressed in white?

*8va* gliss. *8vb* loco

\*Tap piano ledge, high and low, as a joyous rhythmic expression.

34

27

VERSE 3

Must be the chil - dren of the Is - rael - ite. Who's that yon - der

30

dressed in blue? Must be the chil - dren that are com - in' through.

33

VERSE 4

Who's that yon - der dressed in black? Must be the hyp - o - crites,

36

must by the hyp - o - crites, I think I see those hyp - o - crites, they're turn - ing, turn - ing back.

*Slower, freely straight eighths* **f** abrupt break (singer may give cut-off gesture to pianist, as if dismissing "those hypocrites")

*Slower, freely* **f**

39 *accel.*

*resume swing*

*a tempo* (♩ = 120)

*f*

NO! I can't sit down!

*accel.* *resume swing* *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

*p* *f*

*ped.*

43

NO! Well, I can't sit down! NO! I

46

can't sit down, 'cause I just got to Hea-ven, gon - na look a - round.

Tap ↓

Tap ×

**INTERLUDE**

During the interlude, the singer "explores" the stage, as if "looking around Heaven." The singer might stop to tap the piano, joining with the pianist as notated.

49

*f*

Tap high ×

*slight pedal ad lib.*

Tap low ×

36

53

Tap high

Tap low

Tap high (alt. hands)

Tap middle (alt. hands)

57

L R L

L R L

60

Tap low (alt. hands)

Tap low (alt. hands)

**REFRAIN**

(Same tempo ♩ = 120)

63

*f* NO! NO! NO! NO! I'll nev - er sit down? NO! I

66

can't sit down! I'll nev - er sit down? NO! Well, I can't sit down! I'll nev - er