

Gwyneth Walker

When the Spirit Sings

for String Trio

1. My Lord, What a Morning!
2. Were You There?
3. This Train (is bound for glory)

When the Spirit Sings

duration 9'15"

Commissioned by Musica Harmonia:

Joan Griffing, violin, Diane Phoenix-Neal, viola, Beth Vanderborgh, cello;
with the generous support of Mrs. Geraldine Sherwood of Fairfax, Virginia

Premiered by Musica Harmonia – September 16, 2011 – Flagstaff, Arizona

When the Spirit Sings is a set of three American spirituals arranged for string trio. The intent was to select songs with a variety of character – soulful, energetic, mournful and rhythmic – and present them in new ways through idiomatic string writing. The “voices” of the strings are well-suited to the language of spiritual songs.

In all three movements, the original tunes are shared between the strings, with the other players providing accompaniment. And then, “excursions” away from the basic melody occur. In *“My Lord, What a Morning,”* a middle section moves into the minor mode, with the violin playing a variation of the theme marked “soulfully.” The viola follows with a further “offshoot” of the melody. This leads to a closing section which crosses back and forth between the major and minor modes (in blues style). One might hear an expression of the lyrics “My Lord, what a morning, when the stars begin to fall!” in the cascades of descending scales.

The second movement is an arrangement of the very poignant spiritual, *“Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?”* The strings are muted, with sorrow. A background pattern introduced by the viola and cello may be heard as sobbing rhythms. Motives similar to these are heard throughout this movement. Patterns which express sobbing or falling tears form the essence of the music. At the end, the viola and violin ascend, as the soul rising to heaven.

“This Train (is bound for glory)” is an energetic, rhythmic movement. Although the energy is controlled at the start, activity increases by the second verse (viola theme), as the “outer” instruments scurry up and down the track. Later, chords build up in pyramid fashion with a crescendo and accelerando leading to a raucous finale. The train then slides (in glissando) to a halt at the end.

“This Train (is bound for glory)” was created while the composer was riding her local train, the “Vermont,” to a concert in New Haven, CT. The “Vermont” derailed upon the return trip. But the music is expected to stay “on track!”

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 has now returned to her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut.

Gwyneth Walker has been a proud resident of Vermont. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Vermont Arts Council as well as the 2008 “Athenaeum Award for Achievement in the Arts and Humanities” from the St. Johnsbury (VT) Athenaeum.

Walker's catalog includes over 200 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus and solo voice. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E. C. Schirmer (choral and vocal music) and Lauren Keiser Music (orchestral and instrumental music).

Further information concerning Gwyneth Walker and her works is available at www.gwynethwalker.com

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When the Spirit Sings

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1. My Lord, What a Morning!

Leisurely ♩ = 88

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

mf espr.

6

Vla.

Vlc.

poco accel.

A With motion ♩ = 100

mf espr.

11

Vla.

Vlc.

16

Vla.

Vlc.

poco rit.

B *a tempo*

rolled pizz.

arco

p

20

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

accel.

C Slightly faster ♩ = 112

f

cresc.

f

cresc.

f

*Grace notes precede the beat

24

Vln. *p cresc.* *f* *p cresc.*

Vla. *p cresc.* *f* *p cresc.*

Vlc. *p cresc.* *f* *p cresc.*

28

Vln. *(cresc.)* *f*

Vla. *(cresc.)* *f*

Vlc. *(cresc.)* *f*

31

Vln. *rit.*

Vla.

Vlc.

35 **D** Quickly ♩ = 120
with rhythmic energy

Vln.

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

39 **E**

Vln. *mf soulful*

Vla. *(p)*

Vlc. *(p)*

43

Vln. *p*

Vla. *(p)*

Vlc. *mf soulful*

47 **F**

Vln. *(p)* *f*

Vla. *(p)* *f*

Vlc. *p*

51

Vln. *p* *f* *poco rit.*

Vla. *f espr.*

Vlc. *(p)* *f*

G Less quickly ♩ = 112
rolled pizz.

55

Vln. *rolled pizz.*

Vla. *rolled pizz.*

Vlc. *rolled pizz.*

59 **H**

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Introduction [Omit if playing only the second movement.]

Moderate tempo (♩ = ca. 112)
freely

Vln. *mf espr.*

5 *rit.* *p*
Connect to next movement

The introduction consists of two staves of music. The first staff is for Violin (Vln.) in treble clef, starting with a dynamic marking of *mf espr.* The second staff is also for Violin (Vln.) in treble clef, starting at measure 5 with a dynamic marking of *p* and a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the instruction 'Connect to next movement'.

2. Were You There?

With gentle motion ♩ = 112
sorrowfully

Vln. *con sord.* *mf*

Vla. *con sord.* *p*

Vlc. *con sord.* *p*

5 **A**

9

The main body of the piece is divided into three systems of staves. The first system (measures 1-4) features Violin (Vln.) with *con sord.* and *mf*, Viola (Vla.) with *con sord.* and *p*, and Violoncello (Vlc.) with *con sord.* and *p*. The second system (measures 5-8) begins with a boxed '5' and a section marker 'A'. The third system (measures 9-12) begins with a boxed '9'. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

13 **B**

Vln.
Vla.
Vlc.

17 **C**

Vln.
Vla.
Vlc.

cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco

22

Vln.
Vla.
Vlc.

(cresc.)
(cresc.)
mf
mf

26 **D**

Vln.
Vla.
Vlc.

(mf)
p
p
mf

30

Vln.
Vla.
Vlc.

35 E

Vln. *p* *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vlc. *mf* *p* *mf*

40 *poco rit.* **Slightly slower** *rit.* *a tempo* (♩ = 112)

Vln. *f* *p*

Vla. *p* *f* *p*

Vlc. *p* *f* *p*

44 F **Slightly faster**

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc. *p*

48

Vln. *p* *mp*

Vla. *p* *mf*

Vlc. *mp* *p*

51 *8va*

Vln. *pp* (*in the background*)

Vla. *p* *mf*

Vlc. *mf* *p* *mf*

54 *8va* **G**

Vln. *pp* *mf* *f*

Vla. *p* *f* *mf*

Vlc. *p* *f* *mf*

57 *8va*

Vln. *mf* *f* *(f)*

Vla. *f* *mf* *f*

Vlc. *f* *mf* *f*

60 *8va*

Vln. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

63 **H** *loco*

Vln. *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

66 *poco rit.*

Vln. *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vlc. *mf*

71 **I** *a tempo* (♩ = 112) *rit.*

Vln. *p* *mf*

Vla. *mf* *p*

Vlc. *p* *mf* *p*

75 **Slower**

Vln. *mf* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Vla. *mf* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Vlc. *mf* *pizz.* *arco*

78 *rit.* **J** *a tempo* (♩ = 112)

Vln. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 *p*

Vla. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 *p*

Vlc. 3 *p*

82

Vln. *cresc. poco a poco* *mf*

Vla. *cresc. poco a poco* *mf*

Vlc. *cresc. poco a poco*

87 **K**

Vln. *(mf)*

Vla. *(mf)*

Vlc. *at the tip* *mf*

9

Vln. Vla. Vlc.

Violin I, Violin II, and Violoncello staves for measures 9-11. Measure 9 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has one flat. Measure 11 ends with a double bar line.

12

snap pizz.

Vln. Vla. Vlc.

Violin I, Violin II, and Violoncello staves for measures 12-14. Measure 12 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. Measure 14 ends with a double bar line. The instruction *snap pizz.* is written above the violin staves.

15

arco

Vln. Vla. Vlc.

Violin I, Violin II, and Violoncello staves for measures 15-17. Measure 15 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. Measure 17 ends with a double bar line. The instruction *arco* is written above the violin staves. Dynamics *p* are indicated in measures 16 and 17.

18

B

Vln. Vla. Vlc.

Violin I, Violin II, and Violoncello staves for measures 18-20. Measure 18 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. Measure 20 ends with a double bar line. A box labeled **B** is above measure 18. Dynamics *f* and *p* are indicated.

21

Vln. Vla. Vlc.

Violin I, Violin II, and Violoncello staves for measures 21-23. Measure 21 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. Measure 23 ends with a double bar line. Dynamics *f* and *p* are indicated.

24

Vln. *f*

Vla. *p* *f*

Vlc. *f*

27

Vln. *pizz.* *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *snap pizz.* *pizz.* *p*

31 [C]

Vla. *pizz.* *p*

Vlc. *p*

35

Vln. *p* *rit.*

Vla. *cresc.*

Vlc. *rolled* *simile (rolled)* *cresc.*

[D] Slower, lazily ♩ = 72

38 (rit.)

Vln. *arco* *f*

Vla. *arco* *f*

Vlc. *arco* *f*

41

Vln. 3 3 3

Vla. 3 3 3

Vlc. 3 3

44

rit. **Slowly** *a tempo* (♩ = 116)

Vln. 3 3 3 6

Vla. *p* *p*

Vlc. *pizz.* *p*

47

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

50 **E**

sul pont.

Vln. *(p)*

Vla. *sul pont.* *(p)*

Vlc. *arco, sul pont.* *(p)*

53

accel. poco a poco

Vln. *cresc. poco a poco*

Vla. *cresc. poco a poco*

Vlc. *cresc. poco a poco*

16

F Faster, energetically ♩ = 120

56 (accel.)

(cresc.)

(cresc.)

(cresc.)

ord.

ord.

ord.

f

f

f

59

62

65 **G** rit. to end

p sub.

p sub.

p sub.

69 (rit.)

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

f

*cue-sized notes are an *ossia*
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