UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

THE CHORAL MUSIC OF GWYNETH WALKER: AN OVERVIEW

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Arts

Vicki Lynne Burrichter

College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Music

December 2003

THIS DISSERTATION WAS SPONSORED

BY

_____

Galen P. Darrough, D.M.A.
Research Advisor

and

_____

Howard M. Skinner, D. Mus.
Research Advisor

Vicki Lynne Burrichter

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Advisory Professor_____

Charlotte Mills, D.A.

Faculty Representative_____

Charles Poston, Ph.D.

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

_____

Allen Huang, Ed.D.

Examination Date of Dissertation_____

ABSTRACT

Burrichter, Vicki Lynne. *The Choral Music of Gwyneth Walker: An Overview.* Published Doctor of Arts dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 2003.

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is one of the most performed choral composers of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century. Her choral works, as of 2003, number nearly one hundred. Despite this abundance, no dissertations have yet been published about her work.

This paper is a study of eight representative choral works: *White Horses; For Ever and Ever; Women Should Be Pedestals*, *Mornings Innocent* and *Love is a Rain of Diamonds* from the six-song set *Songs for Women's Voices; I Thank You God;* and *Summary by the Pawns* and *An Hour to Dance* from the seven-song set *An Hour to Dance*.

The first chapter deals with the background information, including purpose of the study, need for the study, organization of the study, methodology and source materials. The second chapter presents a brief biography of the composer and a review of related literature. The third chapter is analytical, investigating the compositional style of the seven works, and includes a study of form, texture, melody, harmony, rhythm and text-music relationship. Each of the compositions is briefly considered. The fourth chapter offers a summary and suggestions for further study.

Appendices include an interview with Dr. Gwyneth Walker, a complete list of Walker's choral works, a discography of current recordings, a list of current score publishers and Dr. Walker's web site, and the scores of the choral works discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my co-research advisors, Dr. Galen Darrough and Dr. Howard Skinner for their guidance and encouragement throughout my graduate education and in the writing of this document. Dr. Galen Darrough has shepherded me through every aspect of my Masters and Doctoral work and provided great humor and support each step of the way. He is truly a teacher who cares about his students; I admire and respect him. Dr. Howard Skinner has been a constant source of inspiration to achieve excellence and never settle for less, and he has reminded me when I have fallen short and encouraged me to greater achievements. My graduate education would have been far less without either of them.

In addition, the help of the research committee of Dr. Charlotte Mills and Dr. Charles Poston is much appreciated.

It is with gratitude that the author acknowledges the permission of Dr. Gwyneth Walker and her primary choral composition publisher, E. C. Schirmer, to reprint all of the choral works discussed in this document:

The support of friends, family and colleagues cannot be overestimated. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Tricia Waters for her emotional support and understanding, Tessa Cheek for being a source of great joy, Dr. Genevieve Love for her editing of this document and for her prodding, Dr. Kevin Ford for his scanning of the musical examples, Beth Brown, Susan Russell, Joe Everett, Carol Foster, Ruthanne Ramsey, Nona Lloyd, Bill Westergard, Dr. Lauren Fowler, Kristin Jurksheit, Dr. Nina Sokol, Stephanie Shaw, Dr. Mary Louise Burke, Dr. Margi Duncombe, Connaitre Miller, Baron Wolfe, Dr. Allen Carter, Dr. Eileen Bresnahan, Cate Sharp, Lyn Sullivan, Dennis Boatright and Jerry Albrent for their friendship and for holding up the big picture for me

to see, and to Peggy Dalious for her support and generosity in the early stages of the process. To the members of my various choirs, especially *Canto Spiritus*, the Mile Hi Church Choir and the Littleton Chorale (and particularly Boards of Directors and section leaders), who put up with my absences or distractedness while finishing this document, I can only acknowledge that I can never repay your devotion.

A special thanks to my friend, teacher and mentor Marin Alsop, who believed in me, expanded my vision of what it was possible for me to achieve, and continues to provide the best example I know of the consummate artist. Without my work with her to inspire me, I may not have had the motivation to complete this degree.

The greatest appreciation to Gwyneth Walker for her extreme generosity, intelligence, commitment to excellence and her timeliness, which made this dissertation achievable. She is not only a fine composer, but an even finer human being, and I am humbled by knowing her and her work.

Final appreciation and dedication of this dissertation must go to my parents, Dr. Arthur Burrichter and Dr. Verna Burrichter, who supported, listened, encouraged and never gave up on me through a lifetime of education. And to my grandmothers, Frieda Burrichter and Elva Meyer, who were not able to go to college: this is for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

It is the purpose of this study to introduce and discuss select choral works by Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947). The thorough examination of the selected choral music will contribute to the understanding of American choral music of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, particularly as it pertains to the emerging role of women composers, and will aid conductors looking for high quality American repertoire.

It is the author's belief that through detailed analysis, selected writings, and interviews with the composer about her works, this paper will be of benefit not only to choral directors but also to musicologists, music students and amateurs in introducing and performing the choral music of this prolific and recognized American composer. This paper will attempt to demonstrate the exceptional quality of the selected works, particularly in the area of music for women's choirs.

It is also the purpose of this paper to encourage further research in the choral music of the composer.

Need for the Study

Choral music influenced and shaped by American forms such as African-American spirituals, protest songs, jazz and folk songs has become increasingly common in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Choral music set to texts of American poets has also become more widespread, and although choral music for women's voices has been a standard part of the repertoire since the nineteenth century, the form has evolved considerably in the twentieth century. Bringing together these developments in form,

technique, and genre, Gwyneth Walker melds them into a unique voice in American music.

In Walker's music, her Quaker family history and her musically eclectic upbringing merge with her academic compositional training and a sense of her own individual compositional voice. The combination of these qualities places her among the ranks of American composers who, like Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein and Samuel Barber, create music that grows out of a sense of history and place, music that both honors Western musical traditions and unites them with indigenous American forms like jazz, spirituals and folk music. Her choral and orchestral work is often placed in the tradition of the finest American composers of the twentieth century, such as Copland, Barber, Bernstein and Harris:

> Walker, a Vermont-based composer who is pleased to write music that accommodates a wide range of sophistication from both performers and listeners, was on hand to introduce her quartet. She spoke of her background in American music(s): folk, rock, jazz and classical. Though she is self-deprecating about her classical training, the truth is out. *Short Set*, is a survey in six well-crafted vignettes of a variety of different American music styles. One hears the open fifths of Copland, the arching, large-interval lyrical lines of Barber, as well as a soft-shoe number and a rhythm-and-blues pastiche... The quartet assimilated Walker's music as thoroughly as Walker has assimilated her stylistic antecedents. [1]

Jules Langert, critic for the *San Francisco Classical Voice,* confirms this comparison in his review of Walker's *Symphony of Grace*:

> The final composition was the world premiere of a work just completed by Vermont's prolific Gwyneth Walker, *Symphony of Grace*. Though in a folk-inspired style reminiscent of Harris and Copland, the ideas in its four movements are strong, the invention fresh, the orchestral writing sometimes dazzlingly unexpected, always extremely effective.[2]

---

[1] Philip Kennicott, "Young Quartet Gives Fresh Perfomance" *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* 18 August 1996, *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/r-short3.html> 27 November 2002.

[2] Jules Langert, "Review of *Symphony of Grace*," *San Francisco Classical Voice*, 16 October 1999 *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/r-symph.html> 27 November 2002.

The comparison of Walker to such composers is explored more fully and generally by Carson P. Cooman in *Gwyneth Walker: An American Original: An Introduction To Her Work:*

> Walker's output is large, consisting of numerous works in nearly every form. What is perhaps most notable about her catalogue is the incredible diversity it contains—her works range from concertos for professional soloists and orchestras to folk song settings for school choruses. Her work is characterized by a tremendous energy and a strong sense of humor. Even in her most calm and serene pieces, there is a constant undercurrent of energy—a life blood that ties the music together. Many personal stylistic traits appear throughout her work including elements that have often been classified as characteristic of "American music" (including the strong rhythmic sense, open sonorities, and influences of rock, jazz, blues, and American folk music). She is strongly in the American tradition of composers such as Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein—but is a slave to no compositional school or prescribed style. Her music is recognizably her own and thoroughly original.[3]

Writing in *NewMusica*, Cooman moves beyond the assertion of Walker's participation in the tradition of Copland, Bernstein, et al., to elaborate on the strength of the particular blending achieved by her music:

> There are few composers with the ability to bring together a total synthesis of traditional material and their own musical ideas. This 1996 work [*River Songs*] by American Gwyneth Walker displays that she very well may be the greatest living exponent of this art. Perhaps not since Aaron Copland has there been a composer who is able to combine traditional American songs and spirituals so integrally with his/her own material so as to make them be totally fresh and original—without losing any of the power and flavor of the originals. Walker provides subtle modifications, amplifications, and repetitions of the words—combined with her own distinctive and lush harmonizations, new melodies and countermelodies, and skillful orchestral accompaniment.[4]

The composer herself has repeatedly said that although she studied the standard Western musical canon in college, she was composing in her own voice nearly from the

---

[3] Carson P. Cooman, "Gwyneth Walker: An American Original: An Introduction to Her Work," *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer*, June 2000, < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/walkinfa.html> 27 November 2002.

[4] Carson P. Cooman, "Review of *River Songs*," *NewMusica* (Autumn 2000) *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/walkinfb.html> 27 November 2002.

time she could reach the piano. Therefore, while her music may have elements of what we think of as these composers' styles, Walker, like the composers mentioned, also developed her musical voice through pure contact with the idioms of jazz, spirituals, protest songs, hymns and folk music. In other words, Walker's voice grew from the same seeds as did theirs – listening to and being surrounded by - the American idioms. Thus, even though composers like Copland, Barber, and Bernstein preceded her, Walker's relationship to them may best be thought of not as imitative but as analogous. Walker herself explains this relationship:

> People often say [about her music], "Well, that's sort of like Charles Ives." And they mean in the concept, they don't mean in the sound, because Charles Ives was not a particularly warm, melodious kind of composer. But he did have a quirky sense of humor, and he was a New England person, and he borrowed from the American tradition. So, in those regards, I'm like Charles Ives; however, I was doing all the things I was doing before I ever even heard the name Charles Ives. So, he certainly wasn't an influence; it's just - he's like a neighbor to me. And Copland also happened to live not far away – he lived in Cortlandt, New York. And I love *Appalachian Spring*, and some of my music which is very American sounding sounds like Aaron Copland, but I wrote things that sound like that before I ever heard *Appalachian Spring*, so, you know… I don't know, I played a lot of folk music, that's mostly it: American folk songs, all of those.[5]

Dr. Walker's choice of texts, particularly in the area of music for women's voices, emphasizes the strength of women. This emphasis on gender equity also derives from Walker's Quaker background, which stresses equality among all people. The author observed her in rehearsal with the National Women's Honor Choir at the American Choral Directors' Convention. The piece being rehearsed was her Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission, *I Thank You God.* She remarked to the choir:

> When I started writing music for women's choirs, I wanted to be sure that the texts and the music conveyed a sense of strength. So many standard choral pieces for women talk about butterflies and nightingales and other insipid topics. I wanted to bring the repertoire into the modern era, both in

[5] Gwyneth Walker, interview by author, tape recording, Chicago, IL, 14 April 1999.

the choice of text and in the way the text was depicted in the musical form. So, please – sing with strength and power![6]

Dr. Walker has received several important awards, including the American Choral Directors' Association Raymond W. Brock Endowment Choral Commission (1999), and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Vermont Arts Council (2000). She is one of the most widely performed composers in the late twentieth-century choral field, and is one of the most performed composers in the E. C. Schirmer choral catalogue. There has been very little analytical work on Walker's music; the negligible volume of scholarship about her work does not reflect her music's popularity in performance. It is one of the goals of this study to address this disparity.

Scope of the Study

This study will discuss selected significant works in the choral forms for which Dr. Walker has written: mixed choir and women's/treble choir; and within these voicings, settings of both accompanied and unaccompanied music. It is this author's belief that these pieces illustrate Walker's compositional principles, influences, and the evolving musical style that would be applicable to most of her choral works.

The pieces chosen, and the criteria for selection, are as follows:

1. *White Horses (1979):* The first work of Walker's in print, this piece is still one of her most widely performed. It illustrates her unusual way of taking fragments of a poet's work and expanding and enhancing those segments in order to bring out the maximum meaning and beauty in the text.

2. *For Ever and Ever (1986):* According to Dr. Walker, these pieces are "among my earliest and my best work."[7]

3. *Songs for Women's Voices (1993):* One of Walker's most popular settings, the text is by a much-honored American poet, May Swenson. The discussed pieces from this six-song set are: *Women Should Be Pedestals, Mornings Innocent* and *Love is a Rain of Diamonds.*

---

[6] Gwyneth Walker, assisting in rehearsal, *I Thank You God*, National Women's Honor Choir Rehearsal, American Choral Directors' Association National Convention, Chicago, IL, 13 April 1999.

[7] Gwyneth Walker to Vicki Burrichter, August 18, 2002, "Dissertation Works," personal e-mail.

4. *I Thank You God (1998):* This was Walker's ACDA Raymond W. Brock Memorial Composition, and was performed by the National Women's Honor Choir at the National Convention of the ACDA, and is widely performed.

5. *An Hour to Dance (1998):* The poet Virginia Adair, who went blind in her old age, provides Walker with some of her better texts. These settings are among her best-reviewed choral works. The discussed pieces from this seven-song set are: *Summary By the Pawns* and *An Hour to Dance.*

Organization of the Study

Chapter One: Introduction

- Purpose of the Study
- Need for the Study
- Scope of the Study
- Organization of the Study
- Methodology
- Source Materials

Chapter Two: Biographical Sketch of the Composer and Review of Literature

- Biography and Background Information
- Review of Related Literature

Chapter Three: Overview and Analyses of the Choral Works

- *White Horses*
- *For Ever and Ever*
- *Songs for Women's Voices*
  - *Women Should Be Pedestals*
  - *Mornings Innocent*
  - *Love is a Rain of Diamonds*
- *I Thank You God*
- *An Hour to Dance*
  - *Summary By the Pawns*
  - *An Hour to Dance*

Chapter Four: Summary and Conclusions / Ideas for Further Study

Appendix A: An Interview with Dr. Gwyneth Walker
Appendix B: A Complete List of Walker's Choral Works
Appendix C: Discography of Current Recordings
Appendix D: Current Score Publishers and Websites

Methodology

The pieces to be studied were obtained from various publishers, and from the composer. Dr. Walker's choral works are published by E. C. Schirmer, MMB Music, Treble Clef Music, and the composer herself. All publishers, except MMB Music, are represented here, and written permission was obtained from both publishers and from the composer to reproduce portions of the scores in this study.

Comprehensive analyses of the choral scores have been conducted and include the following: structure, texture, melody, harmony, rhythm, text and music relationship. The structural analysis considers voice setting, length, accompaniment and thematic organization. The textural analysis focuses on the use of extended vocal techniques, balance between vocal parts, the role and use of instrumental accompaniments, and dynamics. The study of harmony concentrates on the use of specific chords and harmonic changes typical of the composer. The study of melody includes range and tessitura, and types and lengths of melodic phrases. The study of rhythm focuses on the use and development of rhythmic cells, tempo and meter. The study of the text and music examines the correlation between the two, and the composer's choice of poets for lyric content, with an emphasis on women poets.

Methodical analyses are based upon terminology and definitions set in the following books: *Harmony: Baroque to Contemporary – Part 2,* by Dr. Evan Copley, and *Guidelines for Style Analyses,* by Jan La Rue. The purpose of the detailed analyses is to examine the compositional style of Dr. Gwyneth Walker, find similarities and differences in her music, and trace the development of style in the selected choral works.

Source Materials

The following choral pieces by Dr. Walker will serve as primary source materials: *White Horses, For Ever and Ever*, *Songs for Women's Voices, I Thank You God,* and *An Hour to Dance*.

The secondary source materials are found in related articles, essays and interviews about and with the composer. A thorough review of the secondary source materials related to the topic of this paper revealed that: (1) no books have been published about the composer; (2) no dissertations have been written about the composer; (3) approximately sixty newspaper articles and reviews have been written concerning her music, about half of which include a reference to the composer's choral music, indicating interest in her music by critics and journalists around the country; (4) four essays have been written by the composer herself, two of which deal directly or indirectly with her choral music; (5) two major interviews have been conducted with the composer, including one by this author; (6) there are four letters from Gwyneth Walker to correspondents on her web site.

In summary, although there are numerous reviews and short newspaper articles about Gwyneth's Walker's music, and although the author writes brief explanations of the genesis or performance requirements of her choral music in the front of each published work, there are no books, journal articles, nor dissertations written about her works, and few journal articles or critical studies written about the composer's choral music. There is no work summarizing the choral output of the composer thus far, or dealing with her musical style in any cohesive or detailed way.

CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE COMPOSER AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Biography and Background Information

> Everything about me comes out in my music – what's sad about me comes out in my music, what is sensuous about me comes out in my music, what is spiritual about me, what is funny, what is energetic – whatever – it's all there! That's probably because I started writing before somebody told me that I couldn't express myself. Nobody told me not to put myself into my music until it was too late.
>
> --Gwyneth Walker[1]

Dr. Gwyneth Van Anden Walker (b. 1947) was born in New York City to a father who was a physicist and a mother who was a housewife and social researcher. When the composer was one year old, the family moved to New Canaan, Connecticut, where they lived throughout her childhood. She has two older sisters, neither of whom is working in the field of music.

On Dr. Walker's mother's side of the family were the Frosts, the Van Andens and the Franks. The Frosts were Quaker from approximately seven generations back, having arrived in the United States in 1630 and having remained on Long Island. The Van Andens, of Dutch heritage, started the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* newspaper and helped to fund the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge. The Franks were a German/Italian strain that the composer has stated is probably "where my music comes from."[2] The composer's paternal grandmother's side, the Hoffmans, founded the General Theological

---

[1] Gwyneth Walker, interview by author, tape recording, Chicago, IL, 14 April 1999. All biographical information and quotations in this section of Chapter 2, unless otherwise noted, are taken from this interview, the full text of which appears as Appendix A.

[2] Gwyneth Walker to Vicki Burrichter, May 13, 2003, "Family history," personal e-mail.

Seminary in New York. They were Episcopalians. Her paternal grandfather's side were the Baldwins, and her father's name was John Baldwin Walker, Jr. John Baldwin, her great-great grandfather, was a renegade socialist and inventor who founded a town in Louisiana for freed slaves in the early part of the twentieth century and was later run out of town by the locals; however, the town of Baldwin remains. John Baldwin also founded Baldwin Wallace College in Ohio, after walking from Connecticut. His daughter, Rosanna Baldwin, was one of the first women to graduate from any United States college, in this case, Oberlin College, around 1853. She married a minister named Avery Walker whose eldest son was the composer's grandfather, John Baldwin.[3]

The influence of the Quaker heritage on Dr. Walker's music is profound, and may be seen in her attempt to make her music understandable and clear to anyone who hears it, and in her egalitarian career approach of accepting commissions from groups of all types, sizes and musical status, from professional orchestras to elementary school choirs. However, she was not always a Quaker.

> I never knew anything about Quakers, and I was very active in the United Church of Christ. And then I went to a tennis camp in Pennsylvania, and they had a Quaker meeting on the grounds of the school – the West Town School – and I set one foot inside the meeting house, and knew it was for me. I told my mother at the end of the summer how much I'd liked the Quaker meeting. She said, "Oh! That's interesting, dear. Did you know you come from seven generations of Quakers on Long Island?" And I said, "No." It's the most important thing in my life, and I'm sure that they just claimed me! My ancestors were lying around saying, "Whom can we get to speak our values out there – to go out into the world and say Quaker things? Oh! This one – this one here ought to do!" And so they got me. [4]

The other childhood influence that contributed to her sense of musical and personal equality was living in the affluent town of New Canaan where her family had once been so prominent and finding herself being treated with disrespect.

> We belonged to the country club, because my grandfather had founded it, but we didn't have the money for the lessons for the tennis pro to teach me, so my father taught me! And here I was, the granddaughter of the founder of the club, you know – isn't this ridiculous? I would earn enough money for a lesson by picking up all the balls left on the court after the other kids' lessons. Sometimes when I would be picking up balls,

---

[3] Ibid.
[4] Gwyneth Walker, interview by author, tape recording, Chicago, IL, 14 April 1999.

> members of the club who didn't know who I was would come in and order me around, "Hey, hey, girl, sell us some tennis balls!" They never called me by my name, and I thought, "Oo – that feels awful to be treated like that!" [5]

Gwyneth Walker began playing the piano by ear from the time she was quite small, around age four, and composed little songs. She also taught herself to read music by the age of six. Throughout her childhood, she continued to compose her own music, often using the toy orchestral instruments her parents bought her to approximate orchestral sounds, and to make her friends and neighbors play, sing or act out what she had written.

Prior to high school, Walker was educated at the public schools in New Canaan. But when she reached high school age, her parents sent her to Abbot Academy, the sister school of Andover Academy, which was not co-ed at the time. This private school had better sports and music, the two major interests of young Walker. During these years, she sang in four choruses and began arranging for the women's octet, as well as taking basic music theory. By the age of thirteen, she had also taught herself to play ukulele and guitar, and was an avid student of folk music.

The composer received her undergraduate education at Brown University, where she was able to test out of most music theory and where she studied private composition with Paul Nelson. During her entire time at Brown, she arranged and sang in a women's folk music group at Pembroke, the women's college of Brown. Before graduating with a B. A. in Music Composition, she had a reading of her first symphony by the Rhode Island Philharmonic.

Going to Hartt School of Music on the recommendation of a cousin, Dr. Walker received both her Master's and Doctoral degrees in Composition from that institution. She was the first doctoral student in composition at Hartt. Her main composition teacher, Arnold Franchetti, a student of Richard Strauss's, praised her ability to be prolific and expressive in her writing. While a doctoral student there, she was a Teaching Fellow and taught Ear Training, Keyboard Harmony and undergraduate Music Theory. She continued to write and arrange for groups of all types at the college.

---

[5] Ibid.

Dr. Walker taught at Oberlin Conservatory of Music from 1977-80, and at the Hartford Conservatory for one year (1981-2). She taught mostly advanced students, since she was trained in Schenkerian analysis and other more modern theoretical foundations and other professors were not. Besides Music Theory and Analysis, she taught Ear Training and Composition, the latter most often to students who were interested in folk music or other non-traditional forms.

In 1982, Dr. Walker realized that, were she to remain in academia, she would not have the time she needed to devote herself to composition, and so she left to pursue a full-time career as a composer. She moved to a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont, where she still lives today. The composer has become well respected in the state, and in 2000, she received the "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Vermont Arts Council. She has come full circle in her Quaker vision:

> Where I live in Vermont now, it's lower middle class at best; there's real poverty there. And boy, am I relaxed around people like that: they're not judgmental. They're much more interested in coming to hear a new piece of music, and if they like it, they like it. They're not affected by the snobbery of wealth. Wealth is a very snobby thing: people judge you more on the money you have or the credentials you have, or the credentials of the composer, and not on the worth of the music. [6]

Review of Related Literature

As stated in the previous chapter, there are no books or dissertations published on Gwyneth Walker's music. Astonishingly, there is no reference to her work in the newly updated *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, but there is a one page entry in *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers.*

The largest source of information about the composer's music is to be found in the articles, reviews, essays, program notes and correspondence published on her web site, www.gywnethwalker.com, but even these sources of information are not of the theoretical or musicological profundity desired by the scholarly reader. This information falls into three categories: biographical data about the composer, general statements from the composer, critics, conductors or fellow composers about Walker's work, and reviews of her music, none of which are of any substantive length or depth.

---

[6] Ibid.

The biographical and musical material is most thoroughly covered in the two interviews that have been conducted with Dr. Walker. The first is by the Executive Officer of the American Choral Directors Association, Gene Brooks, which originally appeared in Choral Journal, but which can now also be found on Walker's web site; and the other by this author that appears as Appendix A of this document. The most significant sections of both of these interviews are quoted throughout this dissertation.

Composer and scholar Carson P. Cooman has written brief introductions to the composer's music and available recordings, also found on the composer's web site.

The composer has written briefly about her own music in the program notes to her pieces, but these contain only a basic introduction to each work for the general public to understand the mood of the piece and occasionally, the composer's connection to the poet's work. When important, these program notes are quoted in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Dr. Walker has also written several letters and essays pertaining to her approach to setting texts and how they relate to the overall musical form. Those salient writings are quoted elsewhere in this paper.

There are many articles in local newspapers about the composer's visits to various cities for premieres or performances of her works. Some of these are relevant to the works discussed here. For example, when Walker visited Los Angeles for a performance of *An Hour to Dance*, settings of poems by Virginia Adair, the *Los Angeles Times* published a piece on the visit. This piece focuses mostly on Adair and her life, with some references to the composer and the poet discussing their mutual admiration for each other. This is a typical exchange:

> Adair recalled, 'I find her music fascinating. I can't detect my part in it at all.' 'She was a lovely person, full of spirit,' Walker said. 'I can only hope to be as gracious as she.'[7]

The reviews of Walker's work are mostly brief laudatory pieces in local newspapers commenting on the accessibility and American "feel" of her music. There are two notable, if short, reviews of *An Hour to Dance* and *I Thank You God* in *Choral Journal.* The first is from a 1998 review of *An Hour to Dance* by conductor Richard

---

[7] Rene Luna, "Composer Weaves Verse Into Music," *Los Angeles Times*, 25 February 2000, *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer*, < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/a-adair.html> 13 May 2003.

Coffey, and the second from a 1998 review of *I Thank You God* by Roger MacNeill, of Chadron State College.

The lack of any substantial scholarly analysis of Gwyneth Walker's work makes it clear that this document is needed at this time.

CHAPTER 3

OVERVIEW AND ANALYSES OF THE CHORAL WORKS

> I decided…if I could only write one kind of music, it would be choral, because people have always sung and always will sing. That is universal. . . . I am a formalist. Anyone who knows my music would say, "the piece did not go on too long." People want a well-formed piece of music. They want poetry that is thoughtful, they want a setting that is sensitive, and they want the thing to end when it should end. Bravo!
>
> --Gwyneth Walker[1]

Gwyneth Walker's choral output is large. As of the writing of this document, Walker is in her mid-fifties and has published nearly one hundred choral compositions. This author has chosen pieces for analysis that are representative of Walker's *oeuvre* both for their originality and beauty of expression and for their historical importance in the composer's career (first published work, change of stylistic direction, important commissions and works well-reviewed). The number of pieces analyzed is eight.

The compositions will be analyzed from an overall perspective (when written and for whom, publisher, performance time and voicing), and from a detailed perspective (structure, texture, melody and harmony, meter and rhythm, text and music relationship).

The composer herself has spoken to the author about her compositional process:

> My first step with any composition is to create an overall shape, hopefully, a shape which engenders growth and unifying form. The harmonic structure is the main organizational force. My creative and structural planning uses terms like tonal center, growth, excursion, bipolarity (i.e., first and second pole, in the language of Bartók), tone clusters, tertian and quartal harmonies. Recurring phrases of the text are often used to form the musical setting. And, because the text of the choral work is almost always an adaptation of the original text (my reordering of the words), the manner of reordering displays the formal thinking.[2]

---

[1]Gene Brooks, "An Interview with Gwyneth Walker," *Choral Journal* (February 1999), *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer*, <http://www.gwynethwalker.com/walkinf5.html> 13 May 2003.

[2]Gwyneth Walker to Vicki Burrichter, May 15, 2003, "Musical discourse," personal e-mail.

White Horses

White Horses was Gwyneth Walker's first choral work in print, written in 1979, first published by Boosey and Hawkes in 1986, and subsequently published in 1989 by E. C. Schirmer. It has a duration of three and one-half minutes. It is scored for piano and mixed choir and the text is by e. e. cummings.

After All White Horses Are in Bed

after all white horses are in bed
will you walking beside me, my very lady,
if scarcely the somewhat city
wiggles in considerable twilight

touch (now) with a suddenly unsaid
gesture lightly my eyes?
and send life out of me and the night
absolutely into me…a wise
and puerile moving of your arm will
do suddenly that

will do
more than heroes beautifully in shrill
armor colliding on huge blue horses
and the poets looked at them, and made verses,

through the sharp light cryingly as the knights flew.

This work cannot be discussed musically without first addressing the text. Gwyneth Walker takes a poem of fifteen lines and extracts the following words for her setting: "after all white horses are in bed / will you walking beside me, my very lady, . . touch…lightly my eyes? / and send life out of me… and the night / absolutely into me." Dr. Walker sets all of the chosen lines, then follows with fragments of the text (and an "ah" interlude). The opening line, "after all white horses are in bed," becomes the textual anchor of the piece, returning between other fragments, and finally ending the piece. Perhaps Walker chooses to emphasize this line because she sees it as the key to her understanding of the poem: after "knights" on their "white horses" (and "heroes" on their "blue horses") have faded into fantasy, the speaker will remain with his "lady." Using so

few lines also allows the composer to expand on certain words ("touch, touch, touch lightly my eyes," for example) in order to create an atmosphere of intimacy.

This selective citation is a controversial choice; some composers believe that the order of text in a poem should not be altered. For example, Augusta Read Thomas, Composer-In-Residence for the Chicago Symphony, has said, "The poet wrote 'Beauty is truth and truth beauty,' not 'Beauty, beauty is truth, beauty is truth, aaahhhh, and truth beauty.' The original form and order of the text should be honored by the composer."[3] Though Thomas was not speaking specifically about Gwyneth Walker, her comment could be applied to Walker's work. Walker, however, has another view:

> To some people, [e. e. cummings's poems] don't make sense – I mean, my mother would be an example. She would not be able to make any sense out of an e. e. cummings poem, and I know other people, too – because they read a poem very literally. In the song " White Horses" that people know fairly well, I took just five lines from a poem that is much longer. And because I focused on them, most people get some meaning from that song. It may not be the same meaning, but they get some meaning. But if you look at the entire poem, it would be an impossible one to sing, because it goes off in different tangents. You wouldn't know what the person was talking about. And in e. e. cummings's case, either I delete, or I bring back words again and again with perhaps just the subject and the verb, and leaving out the qualifying string of adjectives. Subject and verb, then subject with one or two adjectives and verb, then subject with three or four or five – they're the same ones again, so maybe you'll get this, then the whole, so it's now comprehensible.[4]

Whether or not one agrees with Walker's way of setting poetry, it is a major hallmark of her style. In nearly every piece that she sets, she alters of the order of the poetic text. When she does not alter the order of the text, or does so only minimally, it is usually because the text has a narrative drive to it that would be lost if the word order were changed (see, for example, *Women Should Be Pedestals*). Her textual alteration is certainly one of the reasons her work is so accessible to choirs of different age groups and sophistication levels, and is representative of her Quaker belief in egalitarianism: everyone should be able to understand the text, not just the most highly educated. On the other hand, it could be argued that she is simply being practical.

---

[3] Augusta Read Thomas, conversation with the author, Colorado Springs, CO, November 7, 2002.
[4] Gwyneth Walker, interview by author, tape recording, Chicago, IL, 14 April 1999.

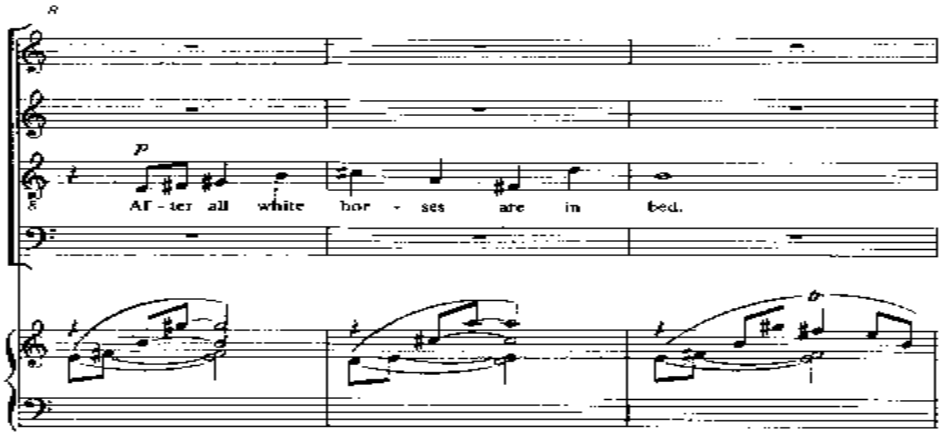
In the case of *White* Horses, however, it is interesting to question whether Walker's choices in her deletion of text truly make cummings's intention clearer or whether, by making such dramatic editorial cuts, the text becomes circumscribed in a way not intended by the poet. That is, do Walker's textual choices make the poem more understandable to a general audience, or would setting the poem in its entirety make it just as clear and also honor the poet's intentions? This question arises in relation to nearly all of the composer's work, but perhaps nowhere as much as in this particular setting, from which such a large amount of the poem has been excised.

The following outline illustrates the overall structure of the work. The X motive will also be considered the "refrain."

Tonality	**Motivic Development**	**Comment**
E Mixolydian		
m. 1	Introduction	
m. 8	X motive	heard in tenor line, solo
m. 12	Y motive	heard in tenor line
F major/d minor		
m. 14	Z motive (m. 15)	heard in bass line ambiguous tonality imitative section in the voices
m. 21	Refrain (X) expanded	
Eb Mixolydian		
m. 23	[continuation of Refrain (X) expanded]	use of X in the piano in mm. 23-27
m. 27	Transition	"Ah" in voices
E Mixolydian		
m. 29	Refrain (X)	X in the piano m. 29
m. 33	Y	
m. 38	Z expanded Transition (Y repeated)	
F Major/d minor		
m. 42	(Completion of Y repetition)	
m. 45	Z	

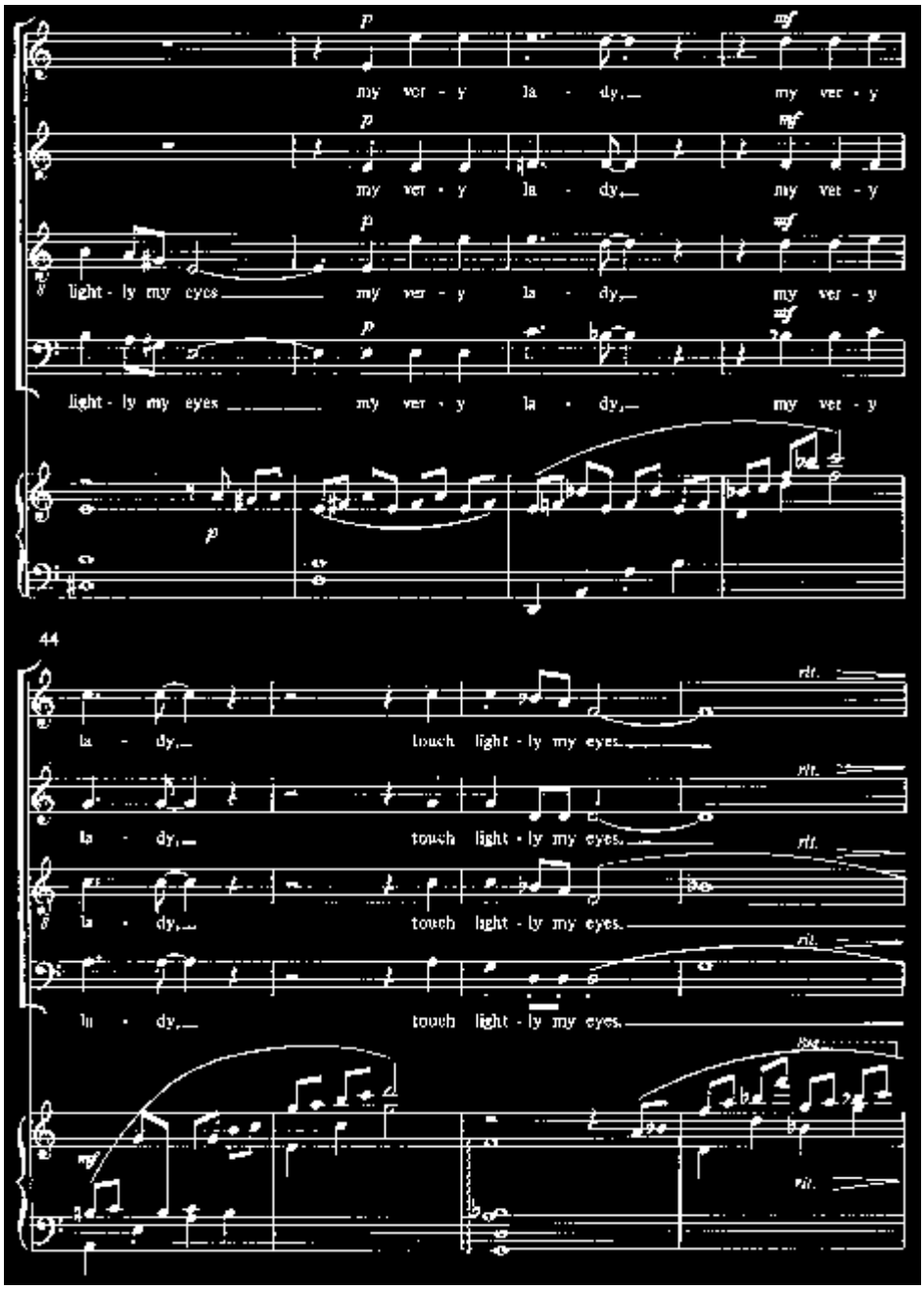
F Mixolydian		
m. 48	Transition	X in piano mm. 48-49
m. 50	Contrasting material	"Ah" interlude in voices; imitative setting
F Major		
m. 54	(Continuation of contrasting "Ah" material)	
Eb Mixolydian		
m. 60	Refrain (X) expanded	X in piano mm. 61-65
m. 65	Y	
m. 67	Y expanded	
f#minor		
m. 68	(Continuation of Y expanded)	
m. 69	Z	"Ah" material in alto/tenor/bass parts under soprano Z; Z rhythmically augmented at mm. 73-75 (all parts on text)
A Mixolydian		
m. 76	Refrain	X in piano

The three melodic motives included in the above outline – X, Y, and Z -- are shown in musical examples below. The X motive, also referred to as the "refrain," is set to the words "after all white horses are in bed." It is seen here in the first occurrence, in the tenor voice.



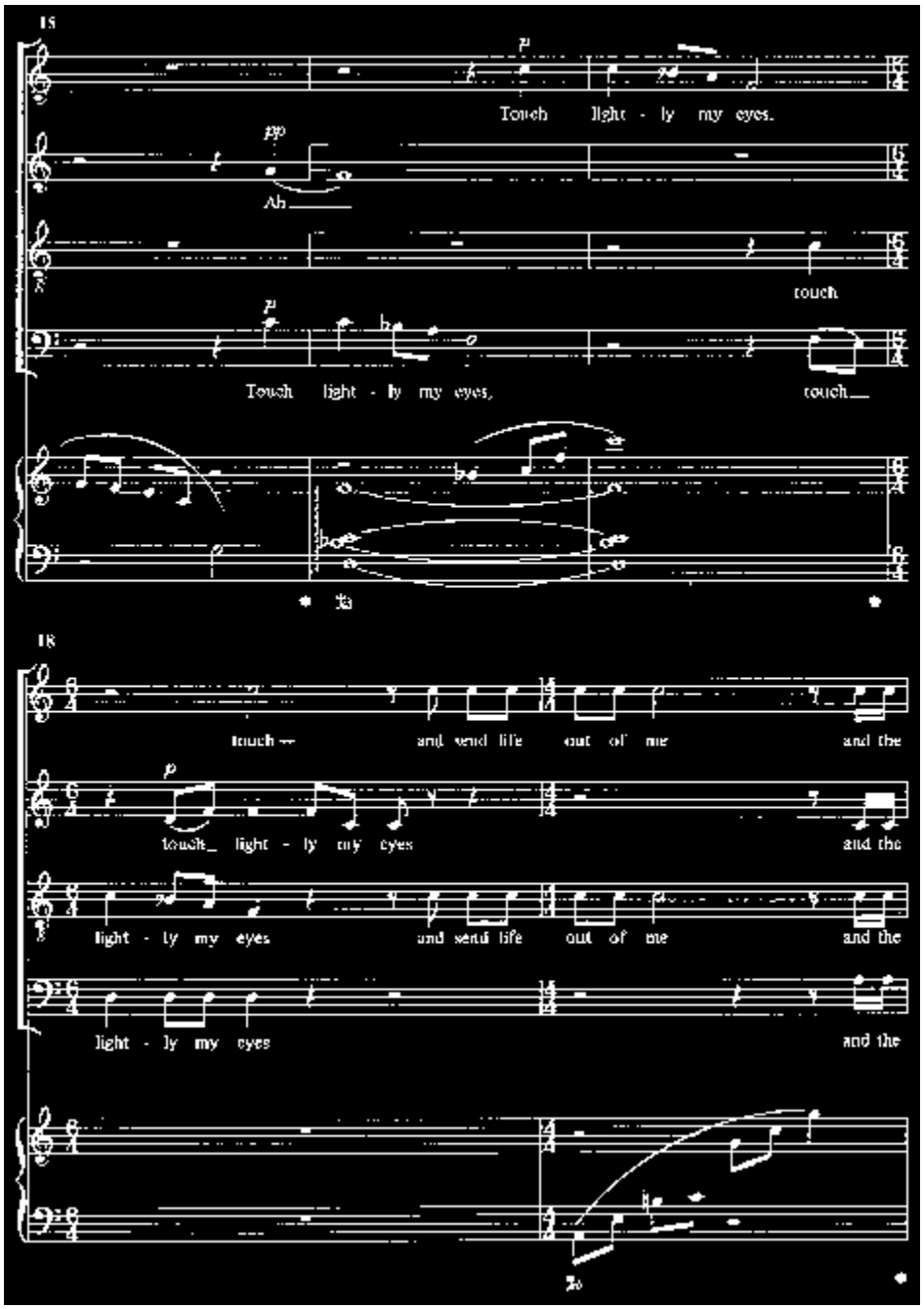
Example 1. Gwyneth Walker, *White Horses*, mm. 8-10.

The Y motive is set to the "my very lady" text. This motive is sometimes preceded by the text "Will you walking beside me…" It is seen here in various later manifestations:



Example 2. Gwyneth Walker, *White Horses*, mm. 40-47.

The third motive, Z, is set to the text "touch lightly my eyes." It may be seen in the previous example (2), and also in the following excerpt:



Example 3. Gwyneth Walker, *White Horses*, mm. 15-19.

The vocal texture is a weaving in and out of homophonic and polyphonic sections. The inner voices (alto/tenor) are in duet near the beginning and at the end of the piece, as in measures 76-79. There are also sections in which the men and the women sing in alternation. In the "ah" interludes, and in the "touch lightly my eyes" and "my very lady"

sections, Walker often makes use of imitative entrances in the voices, as seen in example 3. When all four voice parts are moving homorhythmically, the composer will sometimes put two of the vocal lines in unison, and the other two lines in harmony with the first two, thus making three note chords. This is a common feature of her writing (see example 2).

Walker has said that "this choral work may be interpreted as a love song hearkening back to the days of the Troubadours. Thus, the piano introduction (in high range) might function to transport the listener away from present day reality and into night and the past."[5] (It is interesting to note, however, that Dr. Walker has excised most of the medieval allusions from the poetry.) As with all of Walker's pieces for choir and piano, the piano accompaniment is carefully crafted to provide a complementary texture to the vocal writing. Portions of the X motive are heard several times in the piano accompaniment as the same motive is being sung by the voices. The full X motive is heard in the piano before the introduction of the "ah" material in the voices, in measures 25 and 48. Using a rocking eighth note accompaniment throughout much of the piece with well-placed measures of silence and rolled chords, the piano texture in this first published choral work of Walker's is a blueprint for her future accompaniments, which will become more complex.

The X melodic motive has more or less conjunct upward motion in the first two-thirds of the melody, and then a disjunct leap up of a minor sixth in the second half. The Y motive, first seen in the tenor voice in measures 13-14, uses the same minor sixth leap seen in the X motive, followed by a whole step up and a major third down. The melodic curve for the Z motive is more restricted, consisting of mostly conjunct motion downward. Dr. Walker alters the melodic lines of all the motives at various times. For example, at measures 24-25 in the soprano and alto lines, the curve of the motive X ends in a mostly descending rather than ascending line. In the Y motive, the composer changes the opening leap to an octave (measure 41, soprano and tenor voices) and later to a perfect fifth (measure 67, alto and tenor voices).

There is no key signature, and the song is largely modal. From the opening structural outline, it is observable that transitions between unrelated keys (E Mixolydian-

[5] Gwyneth Walker, "*White Horses*: Notes by the Composer," *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer*, <http://www.gwynethwalker.com/whitehor.html > 13 May 2003.

F Major and F Major-Eb Mixolydian) appear in the middle of the work. It is a characteristic element of Walker's style to make excursions to more distant keys. In this piece, when Walker writes in the Mixolydian modes, the chord progressions I-VII, or tonic – sub-tonic, are frequently observed.

The piece is in a 4/4 meter, with only one measure of 6/4, serving to prolong the imitative entrances on "touch lightly my eyes" (see example 3). The Z motive is rhythmically augmented from measures 73-76, leading into the final X motive. The variety within this piece is not achieved through complex rhythmic manipulations, but through variations on the textual and melodic motives, and through the shaping of the text in alternations of polyphony and homophony.

The text painting is quite effective. "Will you walking beside me, my very lady," is set in a duet or *tutti*, but never alone. The imitative settings of "touch lightly my eyes" suggest the feathery touch of the lover and the fluttering eyelids of sleep.

This is Dr. Walker's first published choral piece and, in this author's opinion, remains one of her best-constructed, most stirring works.

For Ever and Ever

Written in 1986, *For Ever and Ever* (The Lord's Prayer) is considered by the composer to be "one of my better, early a capella works."[6] It is set for unaccompanied mixed (SATB) choir and soprano soloist. The work was published in 1994 by E. C. Schirmer and does not list a commissioner. It runs about three minutes in length.

The composer's program notes read:

> The interpretation is dramatic and personal, featuring a solo voice offering the prayer. At the beginning and end, the choir frames the soloist with gentle patterns repeated freely beneath the melody. The expression of the individual is apart from the group (choir). In the middle portion of this anthem, however, the full choir gathers into a crescendo on the word "glory." As the music fades at the end, the melody rises on the words "Our Father...Amen." The solo voice is suspended above the choir.[7]

---

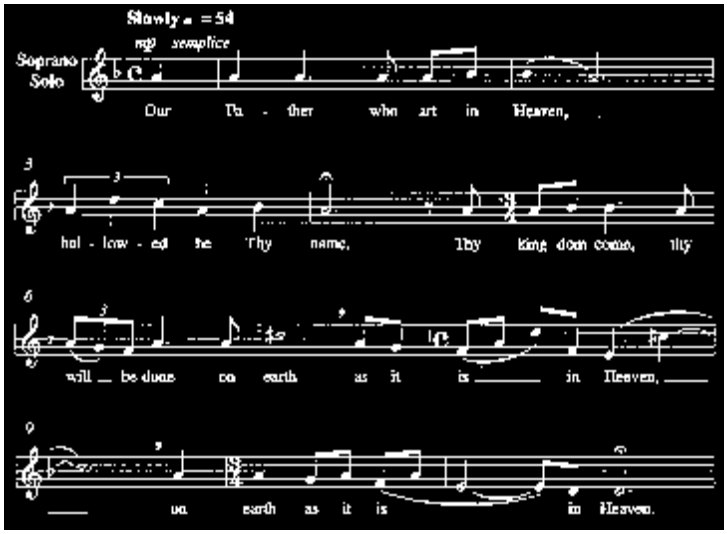
[6] Gwyneth Walker to Vicki Burrichter, September 3, 2002, "For Ever and Ever," personal e-mail.

[7] Gwyneth Walker, "*For Ever and Ever*: Notes by the Composer," *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer*, < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/forevera.html> 13 May 2003.

The structure of this work is sectional, with six clearly divided parts. The following outline shows the overall structure:

Tonality	**Large Sections**	**Motivic Development/Comment**
d minor		
mm. 1-12	A	soprano solo
mm. 13	B1	quintal declamation
mm. 14-25	B2	soprano *tutti*, later *divisi* quintal declamation X motive mm. 24-25 (triplets in soprano)
mm. 26-30	C	rising line on "Glory" (highest note) leading to soprano quartal declamation X in bass and tenor m. 26; in alto m. 27; in soprano mm. 29-30
mm. 31-46	B1 variation A variation	X in soprano quartal declamation
mm. 47-56	D	imitative line on X choral soprano ascending line solo ascending line

Further discussion and clarification of the above outline follows. The first section, measures 1-12, begins with a soprano solo in d minor, as shown in the following example:

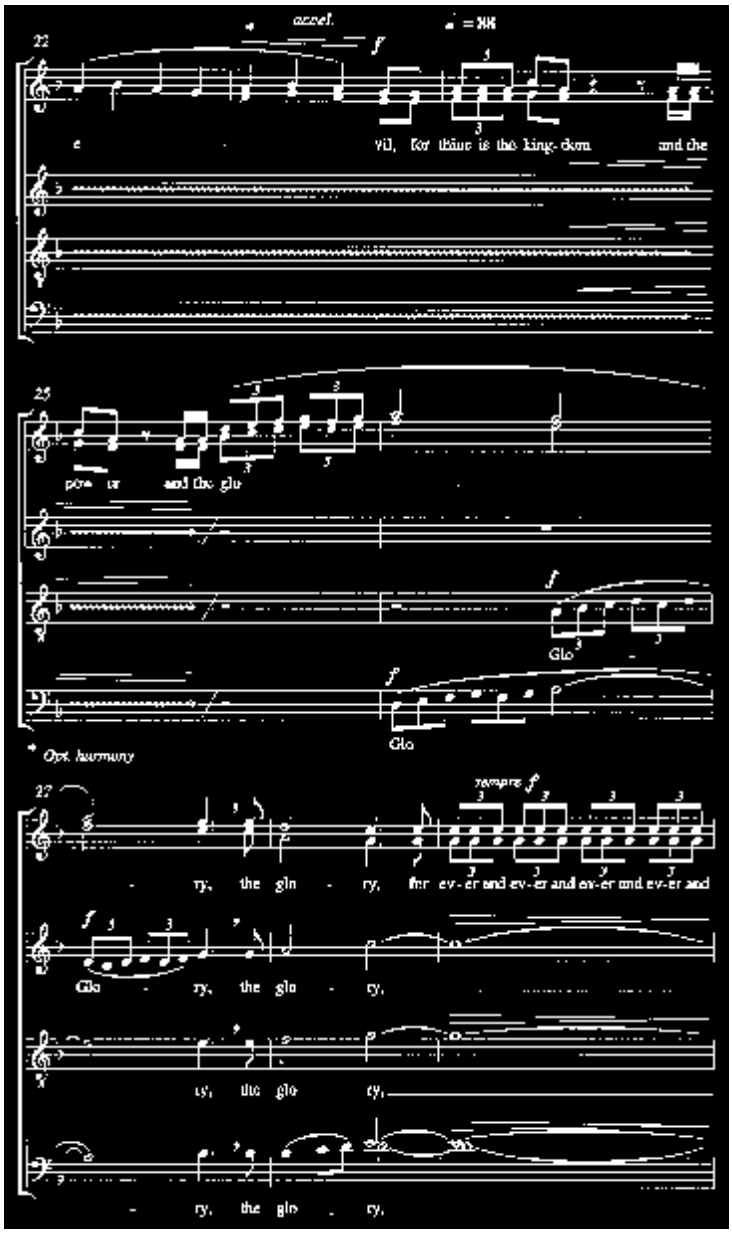


Example 4. Gwyneth Walker, *For Ever and Ever*, mm. 1-12.

The second section, measure 13 (characterized by its aleatoric style), sees the first appearance of the D-A-E quintal relationships. The basses enter on a D, followed by the tenors on an A and finally the altos on an E, all singing in an aleatoric fashion on the passage "Our Father who art in Heaven."

In the third section, measures 14-25, the soprano voices hold the melody, with the quintal, aleatoric passage continuing underneath. Near the end of this section, the sopranos enter into *divisi* on the text "…evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory…"

In the fourth section, measures 26-30, the melodic high point of the work is reached, as the melody in the sopranos, still in *divisi,* goes to a high F and A on the word "glory." At measure 28, a rhythmic augmentation on "glory" appears, composed of quartal and quintal stacked harmonies. At measures 29 and 30, the sopranos are set in a continuous, repeated quartal fragment on the text "forever and ever," as the three lower sections hold on "glory." The X motive may be seen in the following example, in the triplet rhythms of the soprano voice in measures 24, 25 and 29, in the bass and tenor lines in measure 26, and in the alto line in measure 27. Portions of the third and fourth sections may be observed in the follow excerpt:

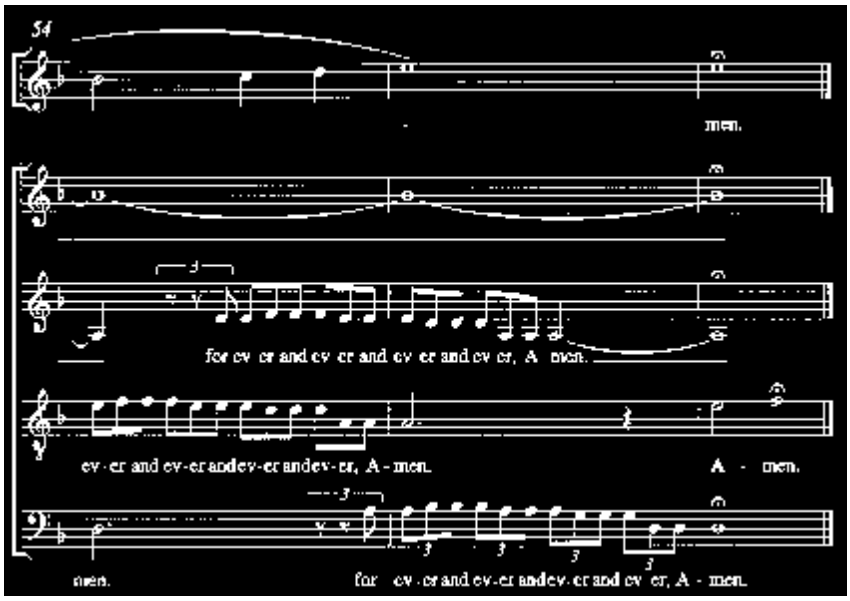


Example 5. Gwyneth Walker, *For Ever and Ever*, mm. 22-29.

Section five, measures 31-46, contains the most complicated texture. The choral parts call for humming (or "Ah's"), as the three lower parts enter in the quintal relationships of D-A-E. The soprano section continues with its quartal repetition of "forever and ever," and the soprano soloist again picks up her solo.

The sixth section, measures 47-56, introduces imitative lines in the lower three voices on "forever and ever." The soprano choral section takes over the melody, as the pattern of alternating the solo soprano and soprano section is repeated. The quintal relationship is again seen in the entrances, which begin on a D in the soprano section's

line, and an A in the soprano soloist's line. The piece finishes with the soprano soloist singing her final line over the held soprano section, while there is a gradual cessation of the "For ever and ever" line:



Example 6. Gwyneth Walker, *For Ever and Ever*, mm. 54-56.

The texture begins simply with a soprano solo, followed by the aleatoric (an uncommon technique for her) chant-like section in which the altos, tenors and basses repeat "Our Father who art in Heaven" on the D-A-E motive, while the soprano section sings the melody over it, providing a contrast between the solitary melody of the soloist and the inchoate sound of the accompanimental voices. In measure 23, on "For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory," the soprano section divides to provide a lead-in into the thickest texture of the piece: a repeated passage in the soprano *divisi* and soprano solo, under which is simple humming from the accompanimental voices. Dr. Walker uses the contrast between the held whole notes of the humming sounds, the shorter repeated patterns of the "for ever and ever," and the slowly moving soloist's line to build this complicated vertical texture. At the final section beginning at measure 47, while the soprano soloist and the soprano section duet in slowly moving lines on "Our Father" and "Amen," the accompanying voices return on repeated triplet eighth note patterns on the text "for ever and ever and ever and ever, Amen," almost as if they are a prayerful crowd of believers. This text is sung in imitation by the lower three voice parts. The texture in this last section is varied and rhythmically active.

There is an extended vocal technique in the choral instructions to "gradually fade into a whisper," as the sopranos leave their *divisi* on "for ever and ever" at measure 42.

The opening melody sung by the soprano has a melodic line that stays within a fourth, until the speaker invokes "heaven" in measure 9, at which point there is an upward leap of a major sixth. The melodies in the final section (seventh section) of the piece ascend diatonically and in sequence, to the final held chord.

Dr. Walker favors the use of quintal (particularly the relationship of D-A-E) and quartal figures and non-harmonic tones. In the composer's use of open fourths and fifths, the piece is reminiscent of Anglican chant.

Triplets and their rhythmic augmentations are often seen in Walker's work, and this early piece is an example of her use of triplets, if not of augmentation. As the piece moves to the climax in the middle section, beginning at measure 23, on "for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory," the soprano part moves into imitative patterns of triplets and duplets. At measure 26, the remainder of the voice parts follow for one measure. The repeated triplets are picked up again by the soprano section at measure 29 on the text "forever and ever and ever and ever," and then imitatively by the other voice parts at measure 48, and continue until the last measure of the piece.

The relationship between text and music in this work takes a relatively uncomplicated, but notable approach. The opening soprano solo resembles the invocation by a religious leader, cantor or solitary believer of God's presence through prayer. When the choir enters in measure 13, in the blurred and chaotic intoning on "Our Father who art in Heaven," the composer suggests a community of prayerful believers worshiping with the soloist. The long passages of hummed notes like those at measure 31 and the simplicity of the passages of repeated notes, like the quartal and quintal harmonies mentioned above, are possibly reminiscent of Anglican chant. Dr. Walker emphasizes the "glory" and "forever and ever" texts through repetition and melodic climaxes, indicating the importance of those passages in the prayer. The preponderance of triplet patterns may indicate, in the opinion of the writer, both the trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and the "forever and ever" of which the prayer speaks, as the triplet pattern is consistently repeated as if it would go on "forever." The piece ends simply

with the tenors singing a solo "Amen" -- a mirror of the opening soprano solo. The entire effect is of the mysteries of holy invocations.

Songs for Women's Voices

Songs for Women's Voices was commissioned by St. Joseph College in West Hartford, Connecticut, in celebration of their 60th anniversary year. The six songs that constitute the work were composed in 1993 and published in 1995 by E. C. Schirmer. The combined pieces run approximately 14:20 minutes.

The texts are by the American poet May Swenson (1913-1989). Swenson was a Chancellor of the Academy of American poets, a recipient of both the Guggenheim Fellowship and MacArthur Genius Award, and the author of over 450 poems. She was also a novelist and memoirist, feminist and lesbian. Gwyneth Walker's program notes state:

> The poems address a variety of topics – from feminism to God to romance to death – yet they speak with one voice, one style, and one life-affirming philosophy. The musical settings are intended to present these poems in a simple and straightforward manner which seeks to portray the beauty, humor, and passion of the words. It is suggested that each poem be read aloud (by a member of the chorus or reader) before the performance of each song.[8]

The first song, *Women Should Be Pedestals*, is set to this text:

> Women should be pedestals
> moving pedestals
> moving to the motions of men
>
> Or they should be little horses
> those wooden sweet oldfashioned painted rocking horses
> the gladdest things in the toyroom
> The pegs of their ears
> so familiar and dear
> to the trusting fists
>
> To be chafed feelingly
> and then unfeelingly

[8] Gwyneth Walker, "*Songs for Women's Voices*: Notes by the Composer," *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer*, < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/songsfor.html> 13 May 2003.

To be joyfully ridden
rockingly ridden
until the restored egos dismount
and the legs stride away

Immobile
sweetlipped
sturdy and smiling
women should always be waiting
willing to set into motion

Women should be pedestals
to men

The outline below depicts the structure of this piece. It is worth noting that in *Songs for Women's Voices,* the major structures are indicated by the composer through her use of double bars.

Tonality	**Large Sections**	**Motivic Development/Comments**
No tonality		
m. 1	Introduction	spoken
D-a minor (or D Mixolydian)		
m. 2	A1	tango motive in piano
m. 6	(A1 continued)	voices enter
a minor		
m. 12	A2	identical figures in piano left hand
m. 17	A3	slower tempo, white-note diads in piano
D Lydian (with "wrong note" harmony) or f# minor (ambiguous tonality)		
m. 20	B1	3/4 waltz feel, *tempo primo*
m. 31	B2	
c# Aeolian mode		
m. 39	B3	
tonality suspended		
m. 49	C1	*quasi recitative*, tone clusters
m. 50	C2	percussive black-note keyboard clusters

C Major (elements of F Major and c minor)		
m. 52	D1	tempo "Grandly, slowly"
m. 67	D2 and A1	tango motive for four measures
c minor		
m. 71-75	Coda	repetition of the opening rhythmic speech, set in chordal fashion; summary of the poetic idea in stentorian declamation

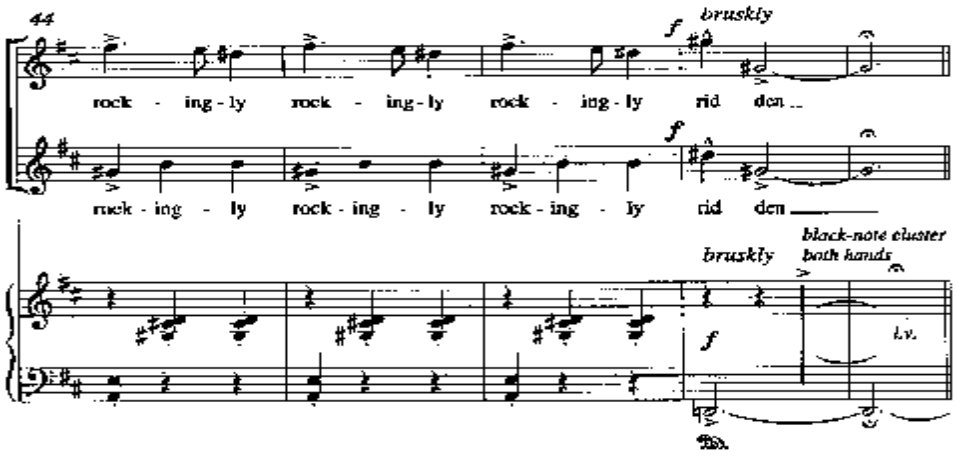
From this outline, several of the composer's compositional techniques may be observed: the tonal relationships are a mixture of modality and diatonic keys; she moves to distant keys and does not use functional, common practice period tonal relationships; the endings of the major sections have *ritardando* which lead into new *tempi* in the next sections (these changes in tempo help to delineate the structure of the sections); the final D section and Coda bring back elements of the A, B and C sections and provide a cohesiveness to the piece.

This composition is unlike *White Horses*, in which five lines out of a fifteen-line poem are set, or *I Thank You God,* in which the entire poem is set but several salient lines come back again and again. In fact, the structure of the work appears to be strongly text-driven, with the composer following the text's narrative nature. The only texts that are repeated are the "rockingly" of "rockingly ridden" in measures forty-one through forty-six, and in the final seven measures, "pedestals (Pe-pe-pe-pe-pedestals)" and "Women should be pedestals."

Similarly, the major identifying structure of the part writing is the voicing, which is almost always two-part (the only exception being the *divisi* at measures 54-57 and measures 71-73), and both parts are nearly always syllabically set in a strict homorhythmic manner. The only melisma to be found is on the word "motion," at measure 63. Dr. Walker delivers the text in a straightforward way.

Also unlike her settings of *White Horses* and *I Thank You God,* motivic development in the manner of extensive rhythmic and melodic variation and growth is not a major part of this work. Again, this is tied to the narrative structure of the poem and the corresponding decision of the composer to set the text all the way through. However, there are intervals that occur frequently and provide a structural underpinning, so it is important to note them. The minor third is heard throughout the piece within the

individual lines. From the opening measures, beginning at measure six in the soprano voice, here are some examples (minor third underlined): "Women should be pedestals, moving pedestals, moving to the motions of men. Or they should be little horses. Those wooden sweet old fashioned painting rocking horses. The gladdest things in the toy room." (The final words in the piece, "to men" are set to a minor third, as well.) In the middle section, beginning at measure 20, there is also a motive consisting of three notes, either ascending or descending, with the following three variations: whole step-half step; half step-whole step; whole step – whole step. Both of these motives -- the minor third and the three note variations -- may be observed in the following example, the latter in the soprano voice and the former in the alto:



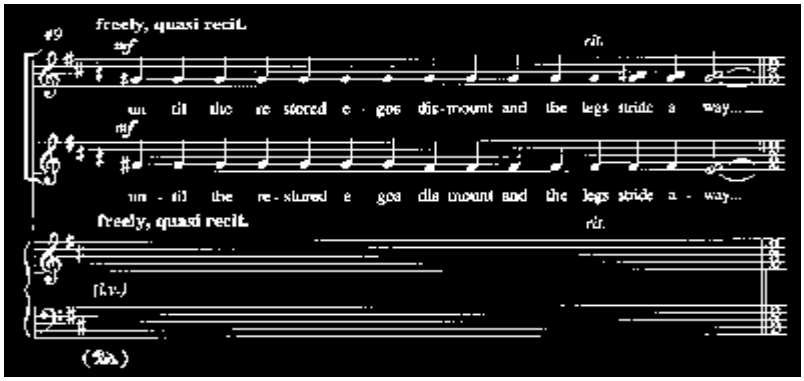
Example 7. Gwyneth Walker, *Women Should Be Pedestals*, mm. 44-48.

The vocal parts, almost always in simple two-part singing or unison, are mostly homorhythmic, with the exception of the "to be joyfully ridden, rockingly ridden," in measures 39-48, where the dotted quarter and eighth note rhythm in the soprano part is set against straight quarter notes in the alto part, indicating the movement of a rocking horse (see above, e.g. "rockingly"). The texture also includes extended vocal techniques (spoken sections and sighs) and acting directions to the chorus throughout, including "spoken boldly, tongue-in-cheek (standing very straight and still)" and "hand cupped behind ear as if listening" – the latter after "women should always be waiting" has been sung and "as a dinner bell" in the accompaniment has been played.

The piano provides the only accompaniment, and is evocative and complementary to the text. In the A section the composer indicates a "gently swaying…tango." In the B

section, a dance-like passage in the piano's upper register becomes more dense and clustered as the section unfolds into *marcato* thick chords under the text "chafed feelingly and then unfeelingly." The C section contains measures of silence, held chords, and an eventual return of the tango motive.

The melody moves in and out of unison singing at the beginning of the piece, and does so again for an emotionally detached effect in the unaccompanied *quasi recitative* section "until the restored egos dismount and the legs stride away."



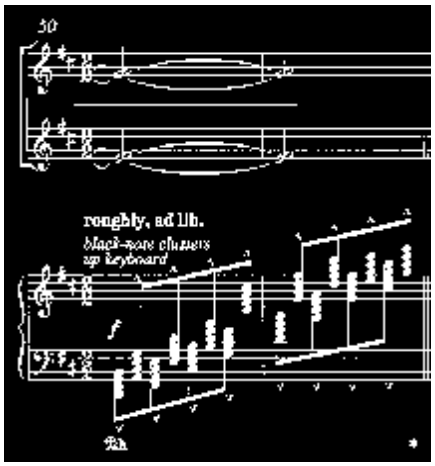
Example 8. Gwyneth Walker, *Women Should Be Pedestals*, m. 49.

Use of repeated eighth notes on the same note (as will be observed in *I Thank You God,* musical example number 17) can be seen throughout the piece, particularly throughout the entire A section, where there are multiple occurrences of this melodic and rhythmic technique. Dr. Walker also uses this method with quarter notes in example 8, above. Correspondingly, soaring melodies are not as prominent in this piece as they may be in other settings. This is not a sensual love song, but a song of suffocation, sarcasm and cynicism, and calls for a different type of setting.

Women Should Be Pedestals has the composer's common use of modality, tonal ambiguity, tone clusters, quartal and quintal harmony and "wrong note" harmony, to use a term coined by Nicolas Slonimsky to refer to a note or notes in a chord that do not appear to fit in any traditional or extended chord.[9] (It is important to note, however, that an argument could also be made on some occasions, that these "wrong notes" are indeed jazz harmony-type extensions. Dr. Walker has said that she has been influenced by popular music, including jazz, and so this is a valid viewpoint.) For example, in measure 31, there is a chord composed of the notes F#, C# and G#. The G# could be considered a

[9] Nicolas Slonimsky, *Lecture.*Circa 1961, Ft. Worth, TX.

"wrong note" harmony, in that it does not fit into either an f# minor or an F# major chord, and it makes for a dissonance which gives the effect of a waltz gone awry. At measure 17, Dr. Walker writes an F major chord in the piano's left hand, and a tone cluster (A-B-C-D-E) in the right. At measure 18, she uses the notes B-G-A-D-E, which, when unraveled, make for intervals of a fifth. She uses both of these rolled, clustered, held chords (mm. 17-18) to highlight the text – "The gladdest things in the toy room" – as the speaker in the poem moves into a new emotional state (though she does not use this technique as frequently as in a piece like *I Thank You God*, where it is used whenever the title line appears). Her use of tone clusters may be observed in the following example, as the tone cluster on the black notes indicate the man in the poem "striding away" after the sexual encounter.



Example 9. Gwyneth Walker, *Women Should Be Pedestals*, mm. 50-51.

The *tempi* and meter vary according to how the composer chooses to accentuate plot points in the narrative. For example, the recitative passage (see above example "until the restored egos…) serves to highlight an important narrative point in the text: the poetic speaker has just had a harsh sexual encounter and she waits for the man to leave. This section also illustrates the composer's common way of moving into and framing the next section through a slowing down or speeding up of the *tempi.* The previously discussed section beginning at measure 17 essentially halts the rhythm in the piano while the voices sing in quarter note triplets that telegraph the new 3/4 meter at measure 20. As is common in this composer's works, alternations between duple and triplet rhythms is a defining factor of the piece.

The interplay of text and accompaniment is interesting and well thought-out. The composer's choice to write in mostly unison and two-part voicings is indicative of the suffocation of which text speaks. From the opening tango underlying "moving to the motions of men" and the harsh dissonance of "feelingly and then unfeelingly" to the stillness under "women should be waiting," Walker is sensitive to the poem and its feminist sentiments.

The next poem, *Mornings Innocent*, reads:

> I wear your smile upon my lips
> Arising on mornings innocent
> Your laughter overflows my throat
> Your skin is a fleece about me
> With your princely walk I salute the sun
> People say I am handsome
>
> Arising on mornings innocent
> birds make the sound of kisses
> Leaves flicker dark and light like eyes
>
> I melt beneath the magnet of your gaze
> Your husky breath embraces my ear

Following is an outline of the structure of this piece:

Tonality	**Large Sections**	**Motivic Development/Comments**
D Major		
m. 1	Introduction	extended piano introduction; D-A-D note patterns: X motive
m. 2	A1	soprano solo
mm.15-16	A2	Y motive in solo voice, m. 15
m. 17	(A2)	choir enters, two-part voicing; soloist transitions out; doubling of choral voices in piano; Y motive varied; parallel third and fourth motion in choral voices
ambiguous tonality (within elements of D Major)		
m. 27	B1	cadence
m. 29	(B1)	soprano and alto solos alternate; quasi-pentatonic scale in piano

(d dorian)		
m. 36	B2	entrance of three part choral voices: (SSA)
	[The composer marks measure 36 as a new section, but an argument could be made for either structure.]	
m. 40	(B2)	parallel chords in piano right hand
ambiguous tonality (within elements of D Major)		
m. 42	B3 (variation on A2)	Y motive varied
m. 44	(B3)	(full) pentatonic scale piano right hand; choral voices alternate with each other
transition to D Major		
m. 46	(B3)	*divisi* in voices
D Major		
m. 49	Coda	X motive (D-A-D) in the piano right hand, alternating with 5 note scalar runs; return to homo-rhythmic choral parts; parallel thirds and fourths in choral voices; previously used textual material
m. 51		previously used textual material; fourths and fifths in harmony

From this outline, it may be observed that Dr. Walker is using what are common tonal relationships for her (particularly in pieces where there are rhetorical gestures in her setting of text, as opposed to pieces where she sets the text all the way through): a well-defined A section, a tonally ambiguous B section which makes tonal excursions, and a final Coda which returns to a well-defined tonality and which brings in elements of the previous sections to tie the work together.

Dr. Walker chooses three lines from the poem, "I wear your smile upon my lips," "people say I am handsome," and "arising on mornings innocent," and through restatement, makes these the centerpiece of the composition, although the text to the entire poem is set. As in *White Horses*, she chooses the lines that she believes will make the poem most understandable and repeats them in various incarnations, giving the text a

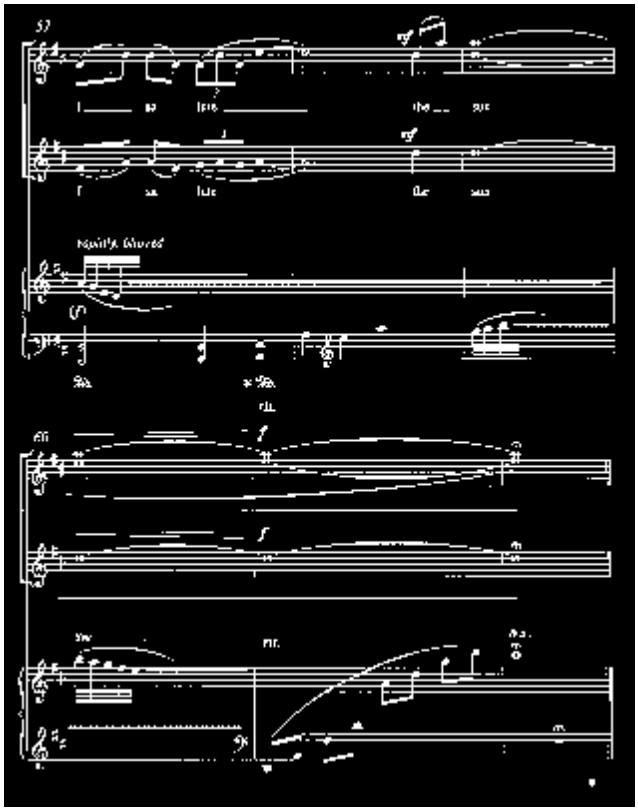
layering that uncovers new depths in the language. She also chooses to end the piece on a phrase from the first stanza of the poem, "I salute the sun."

The vocal texture is an interchange between the solo/duet lines and the chorus. Beginning with a soprano solo, the chorus enters in a two-part voicing at measure 17 as the soloist moves out of the texture. At measure 29, there is an alternating duet between the soprano and a newly introduced alto soloist. The choral texture thickens at measure 36 (as the soloists finish and are silent for the rest of the piece) as a three-part choral voicing (SSA) enters for five measures, then returns to two parts at measure 42. As in *Women Should Be Pedestals,* the piece contains mostly homorhythmic singing by the chorus, the only exception in this work being measures 44-50, where the altos, in *divisi*, sing "Your skin is a fleece about me" and the sopranos answer in a *divisi* "ah." The texture returns to two part choral writing at measure 51. As the final chords are held, beginning at measure 59, the sopranos split into two parts to end the work. Besides frequent homorhythmic singing, there is considerable unison singing between the choral voices, which alternates with parallel motion in thirds and fourths.

The overall accompanimental texture displays Walker's usual sensitivity to the text, opening with a pattern in the piano's high range of D Major chord sixteenth notes marked "gently, freely, quickly – as sunlight." When the soloist begins at measure 2, the accompanimental texture becomes more sustained, as there are extended, rolled chords on the downbeat of most measures, giving the soloist freedom and the line an open, joyful quality. Beginning at measure 15, there is generally a homorhythmic texture between the piano and the voices, with the piano mirroring the triplets in the choral parts. In the B section, beginning at measure 29, the piano's left hand has a thick texture of held and rolled chords, while the right hand has a blurred texture of sextuplets. Throughout the B section, Dr. Walker alternates between homorhythmic (with the voices) textures and blurring effects achieved by rapidly moving notes in the piano's right hand. In the Coda, beginning at measure 49, the texture becomes expansive as the piano plays rolled, held chords of open fourths and fifths, along with the blurring effect of rapidly moving notes (sextuplets against quintuplets) in the instrument's upper ranges. As the piece moves toward its conclusion, the composer marks her first literal "rapidly, blurred" (measure 57) which intensifies that effect. Even the piano's left hand joins in the blurring

effect, alternating with simpler and more open textures of fourths and fifths moving up the keyboard.

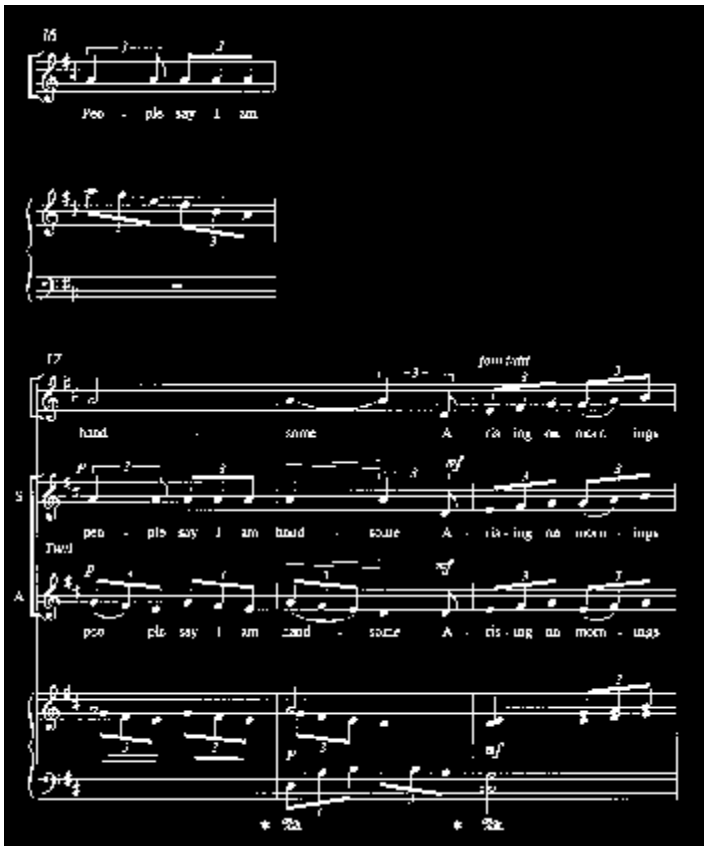
Dynamically, the piece remains in the *piano* to *mezzo forte* range for most of the piece, only rising to a *forte* on the last two measures, as the voices sing, "I salute the sun." The dynamic scheme is, therefore, one of restraint until the ending phrase. The following example illustrates these dynamics, and as well as the final vocal and pianistic textures.



Example 10. Gwyneth Walker, *Mornings Innocent*, mm. 57-62.

This setting begins with a soprano soloist at measure 2, who later on in the B section at measure 29, joins an alto soloist in an erotic exchange: "Leaves flicker dark and light like eyes; I melt beneath the magnet of your gaze; Your husky breath embraces my ear." The melodies for each singer cover the range of an octave and have flowing triplet patterns in ascending fourths and fifths or conjunct ascending and descending scales. The choral melodies imitate the soloists' lines (there are many variations on the conjunct, scalar Y motive seen in its first incarnation at measures 15-16), and vary between unison singing and parallel thirds and fourths. As seen in the previous musical

example, the high point of the piece's melodic lines is in the Coda. The following example illustrates the use of the Y motive in the soloist's and the choir's parts.



Example 11. Gwyneth Walker, *Mornings Innocent*, mm. 16-20.

This piece uses a great deal of quartal and quintal harmony, as well as parallel third (and fourth) intervallic motion, which is complemented by traditional triadic chords. Combining these two harmonic styles is typical of the composer's technique. For example, in the previous musical example 10, the piano's left hand is moving in parallel fifths in measure 57, and in single fourths and fifths in measure 61. The soprano choral voices move, more or less, in fourths and fifths in measures 57-59. Beginning at measure 49, the piano's left hand rolls chords of open fourths and fifths, although the voices are built on a traditional triad. At measure 13, the composer writes quintal harmony in the piano's left hand and a quasi-tone cluster in the piano's right hand. One example of parallel third and fourth harmonies in the choral voices may be found in measures 20-22. Quasi-pentatonic (beginning at measure 29) and full pentatonic scales (beginning at measure 44) are sometimes found in the piano's right hand.

The meter is in 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4, usually set to the syllabic stress of the text. Unlike many of Walker's other pieces, there are no asymmetrical meters. However, there are her usual tempo changes that indicate passage into new textual or harmonic sections. Of particular note is the *quasi recitative* of the B section, beginning at measure 29, which provides a counterpoint to the increasing tonal ambiguity of this section. Also typical of Dr. Walker's compositional technique is the "with gathering energy" marking at measure 36, paralleling the upward rise of the melodic and accompanimental lines (and the text "rise on mornings innocent"). Her prose-like comments add greater instruction of the kind that might normally be found in Italian tempo comments.

Concerning rhythmic choices, this piece shows Dr. Walker's common use of patterns of compound rhythms set against, or in alternation with, duplet rhythms. For example, in measure 57 of the previous musical example 10, the voices move in duplets and triplets. The previously discussed Y motive has both duplets and triplets in it and is seen throughout the piece in variation. One of the most complex accompanimental rhythmic passages in the works discussed in this document is in the Coda beginning at measure 49: the piano has a measure of patterns of rapidly moving sextuplets against quintuplets in the upper register of the piano (on the X motive), followed by a measure of descending quintuplet patterns, while the lower register of the piano is moving in quarter notes.

As noted previously, Dr. Walker chooses to end the piece on a phrase from the first stanza of the poem, "I salute the sun." Here the melodic line reaches its apex, in imitation of looking toward the sun. Further text painting can be seen in her setting of "kisses of kisses," where a *staccato* marking is indicated over the triplets at measure 22, perhaps imitating, in onomatopoeic fashion, the lover being engulfed in brief kisses. As previously discussed, when the composer sets the text "rising on mornings innocent," she often uses a rising melodic line. In this writer's opinion, the eroticism and ecstasy of love is beautifully portrayed in this setting.

Poem No. 4, *Love is a Rain of Diamonds*, reads:

> Love is a rain of diamonds in the mind
> the fruit of the soul sliced in two
> a dark spring loosed at the lips of light

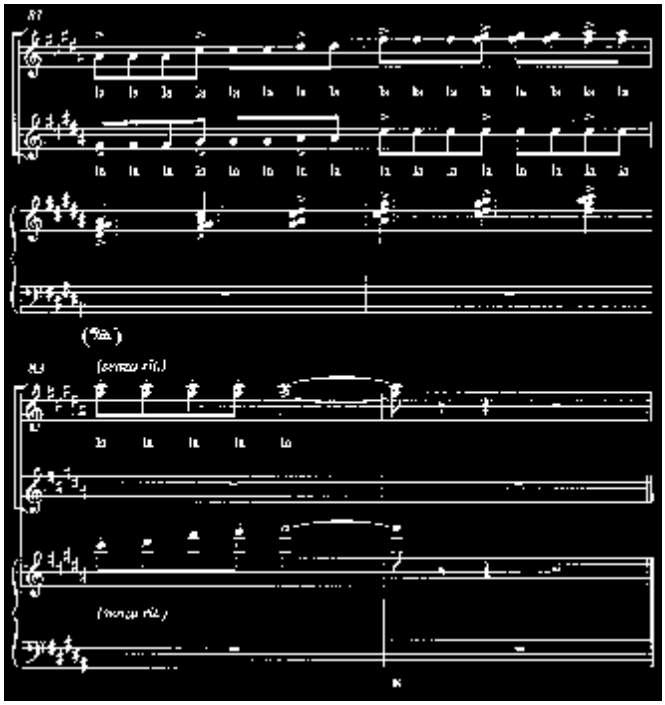
under-earth waters unlocked from their lurking
to sparkle in a crevice parted by the sun
a temple not of stone but cloud
beyond the roar of the heart and all violence
blue permanence

Though an argument may be made for smaller sectional divisions in this piece, the author will here follow the composer's major structural markings (indicated by double bars), and place smaller divisions within the larger architecture. Following is an outline of the structure of this piece:

Tonality	**Large Sections**	**Motivic Development/Comments**
F# Mixolydian/Pentatonic (B Major suggested) (no key signature)		
m. 1	Introduction	rhapsodic piano introduction; X motive in piano's right hand
m. 2	A1	Y motive in soprano voice mm. 4-6
mm. 8, 12-13, 16-17	(A1)	X expanded and varied in piano; mm. 7-13 textual extension;
m. 18	A2	rolled, held chords in piano; quarter note triplets in voices; tone cluster m. 22
m. 25	B1	Z in choral voices; imitated in piano
m. 29	B2	Z extended
m. 31-33	Transition	X in piano
m. 34	C1	soprano, alto solo or "few" voices in imitation on X
m. 37	C2	Y (variation) in voices; repetition of text phoneme; pentatonic scale in piano
m. 39		X shortened in voices
m. 41	C2 varied, extended	X (contracted intervals) in voices plus Y in voices
m. 45	A1 excerpt	(second line of poem heard); repetition of material mm. 7-13
m. 48		development of X contracted material from measure 42
m. 49	A3	completion of text setting; "blurred" effect in piano (m. 51)
Ambiguous Tonality		
m. 55	(A3)	sequencing and doubling in alto and piano right hand; suggested Bb

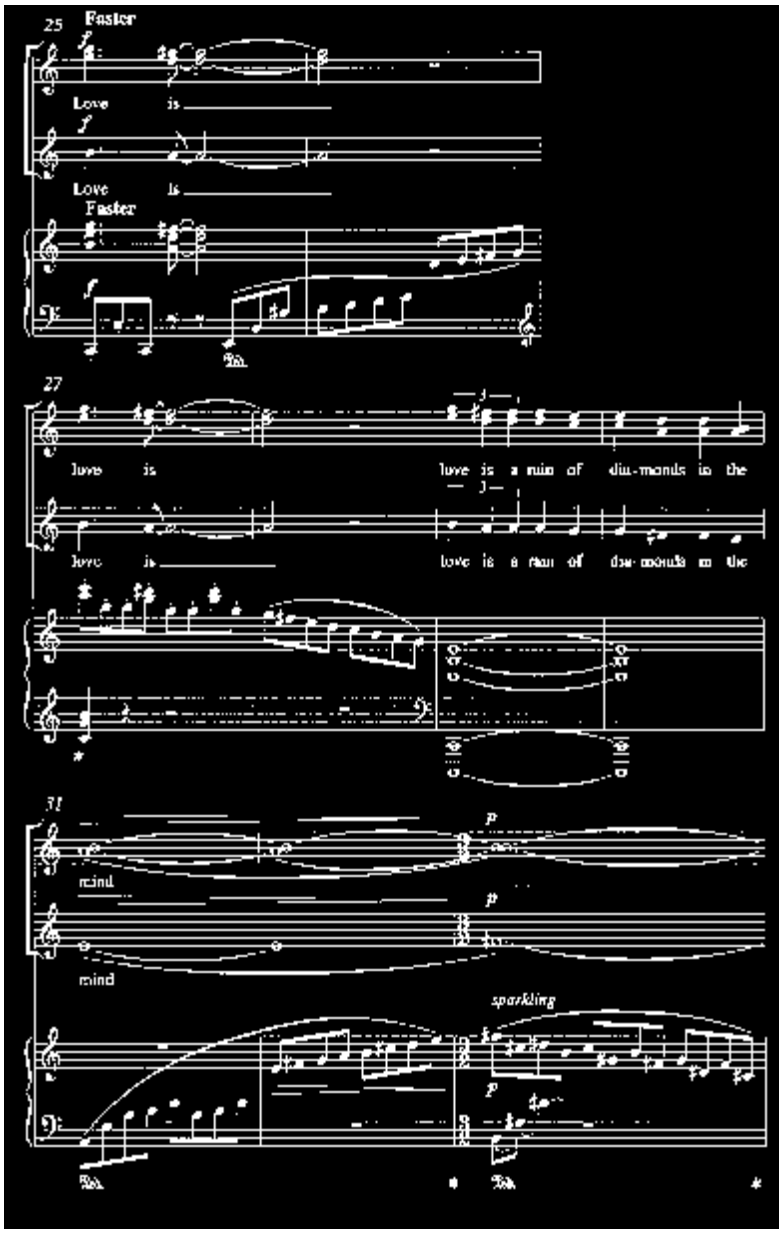
m. 58	Transition	Z in piano m. 58, voices and piano mm. 60-62
m. 64	B2 extended	Z extended as basis for full Refrain
<u>B Major (first key signature)/Pentatonic</u>		
m. 68	Transition	X in piano
m. 69	C1	soprano, alto solo or "few" voices in imitation on X (see mm. 34-36); X in piano
m. 72	C2 varied	Y in choral parts, simplified and repeated (in addition to imitative voices); piano "blurred" m. 74; X in piano
m. 80	C2 varied	Y varied in voices, alliteration of text (see mm. 37-38)
m. 81	Coda	pentatonic clusters and scales in piano; intervals of thirds and fourths and triads in voices

Dr. Walker chooses to set the entire text from this poem, using "Love is a rain of diamonds" as the textual refrain she sets in her customary rhetorical fashion. She sets the first five lines all the way through, then the refrain several times, then line two, then she jumps to the last three measures of the poem and sets them, and finally she sets the refrain repeatedly to end the piece (though she ends on the repetition of the phoneme "la la la," instead of "…rain of diamonds"). In the following example one finds the final measures of the piece:



Example 12. Gwyneth Walker, *Love is a Rain of Diamonds*, mm. 81-84.

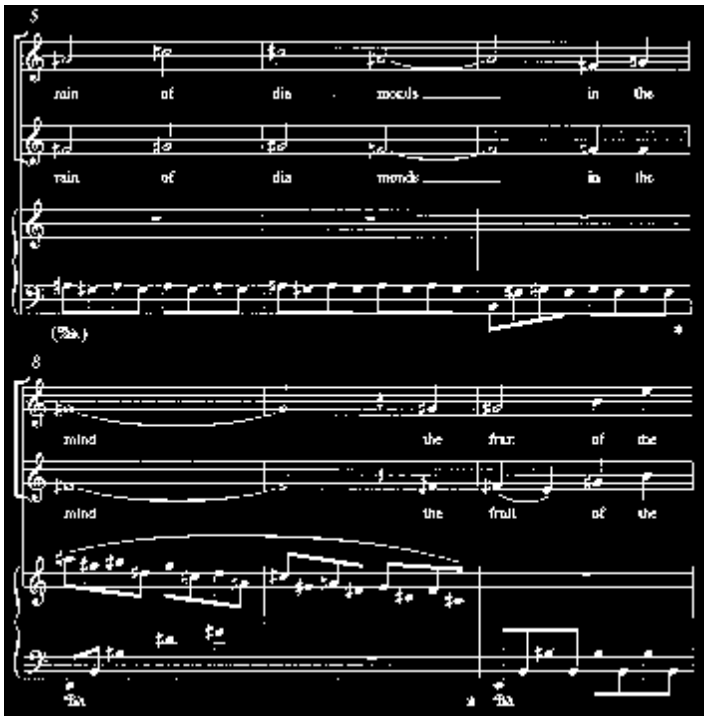
With the exception of occasional duets between an alto and a soprano (or "a few voices") at measures 34-36, 55-57 and 69-80 and reminiscent of *Mornings Innocent*, the choral voices move homorhythmically throughout, as they did in most of *Women Should Be Pedestals*. Largely voiced in simple soprano/alto sections, the soprano section is occasionally placed in *divisi* (as in measures 21-32 and 60-67). The following shows the Z motive; the sopranos are in *divisi.*



Example 13. Gwyneth Walker, *Love is a Rain of Diamonds*, mm. 27-33.

The main melody, or Y motive, first heard in the piano and voices from measures 4-6, is in the F# Mixolydian mode and remains within the interval of a third. Dr. Walker also uses repetition on a single note on the alliterative texts "la la la" or "da da da," as in musical example 12. As will be noted in the later analysis of *I Thank You God,* it is a common technique of hers to remain on one note in short phrases. The Z motive when extended becomes the setting for the textual refrain (as seen in example 13, above). This incarnation consists of repeated notes and a descending scale. At various times, for example, in measures 34-36, the voices sing a variation on the X motive, which consists

of a sequence of intervals of thirds and – mostly – fourths. The following example shows a portion of the Y motive in the voices, and the X motive (measures 8-9) in the piano, which the voices later sing as well.



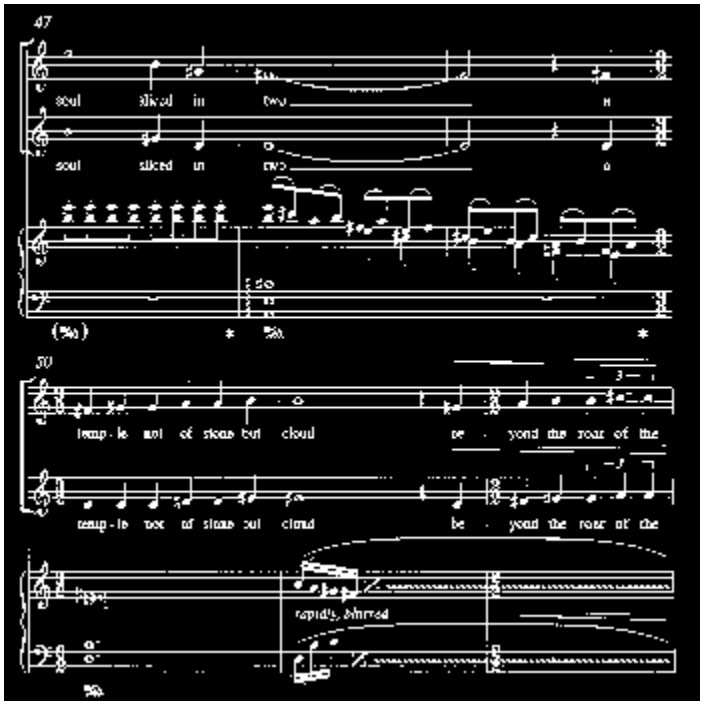
Example 14. Gwyneth Walker, *Love is a Rain of Diamonds*, mm. 5-10.

Harmonically, there is no key signature until about two-thirds of the way through the piece at measure 68, when B major is indicated. Throughout the earlier sections, which appear to be in F# Mixolydian with a frequent use of pentatonic scale passages, the "tonic" of B major and the sub-dominant, or an E major chord, are consistently heard. An impressionistic feeling is generated through the opening piano motive (X) on a pentatonic scale (c#, d#, f#, g#, a#), which the composer then uses as the main generating theme of the piece, expanding on it in every aspect of the work. (It may be observed in measure 33 of the previous example 13.) In measures 18-22, some of the composer's recurrent techniques can be seen. In measure 18, there are open, arpeggiated fifths in both hands of the piano. In measure 21, an F major chord is played in the piano's left hand (spread out over more than an octave, with the third in the top voice), and fifths voiced a second apart (D-E-A-B) are played in the right hand. Measure 22 holds over the F major chord of measure 21, while a seven-note tone cluster is played in the upper register. She mostly sets chords in measures 18-22 as rolled and extended ones, and the

choral voices above sing in quarter note triplets, which together serve to provide a sense of rhythmic augmentation. This technique may also be observed in *Women Should Be Pedestals,* measures 17-19.

There are no asymmetrical meters in this piece (the opening piano introduction is unmeasured), moving entirely between 2/2 and the 3/2 meters. Dr. Walker alternates triplets and duplets in her usual style, as in the refrain seen in measures 29-30, in example 13, above. As discussed in the previous paragraph, she occasionally uses quarter note triplets to slow the pace of the piece. Also to be observed are her recurrent use of *tempi* changes to provide transitions into and out of sections. For example, beginning at measure 21, there are an *accelerando* and a *crescendo* which lead into the "Faster" marking of the refrain at measure 25. There is a *fermata* at measure 57, the measure before the transition section, and there are a *ritardando* and a *decrescendo* before the beginning of the final section, from measures 66-67.

The text painting is notable in this work. The sparkling and cascading effect of the use of the pentatonic patterns in the X motive throughout the piece are descriptive of a "rain" of diamonds. The accompaniment at measures 47-54 has an interval of a fourth played in duple rhythm as the text says, "soul sliced in two," while the "rapidly, blurred" instruction to the pianist under the text "beyond the roar of the heart and all violence" is illustrative of that text. The following example shows a portion of these measures:



Example 15. Gwyneth Walker, *Love is a Rain of Diamonds*, mm. 47-52.

As previously noted, Dr. Walker uses repetitive phoneme passages of *staccato* eighth notes, emphasizing "la la la la Love is a rain of diamonds," or, "love is a rain of da da da da…diamonds in the mind," as seen in the previous example 12. This technique allows the composer to use repetitive syllables to accentuate the textual line.

Walker is sensitive to the exuberance and sensuality of the poem, and her reworking of the text brings this to the fore.

I Thank You God

> [Gene Brooks: We asked you to write the Raymond Brock Commission, and you graciously accepted.] [Walker:] I am a Quaker. It's a strong faith, but Quakers do not have service music. When you said sacred in nature, then I said, "Oh, all right, then we can do something" . . . . I researched several different texts, but the e. e. cummings spoke the most to me. It has been set before, but I do not think in this manner. It is lyrical poetry. When the text is decided you should ask yourself: What do I want to do with this wonderful opportunity? What do I want to do with this? This is almost a sacred question. God gave me this wonderful opportunity. I

> would want to go for a walk. I want to write something that celebrates life. I want to do something big.[10]

This excerpt from an interview that Gwyneth Walker did with the Executive Officer of the American Choral Directors Association, Gene Brooks, captures the spirit of this work, which conveys a sense of the grandeur and ecstasy of life as experienced through nature. The Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission is the highest honor bestowed upon a choral composer by the American Choral Directors Association. Each Brock Commission is given a performance at the ACDA National Convention. Walker was given this commission in 1998, and the work was performed on the closing evening of the 1999 national convention in Chicago, Illinois, by the ACDA National Women's Honor Choir, conducted by Diane Loomis. The piece is published by E. C. Schirmer. It was originally voiced for SSA, with piano accompaniment, but Walker added a mixed voice arrangement to the E. C. Schirmer catalog several years later. The work is about four minutes in length.

The text of *I Thank You God*, which is by e. e. cummings, follows:

> i thank You God for most this amazing day:
> for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
> and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
> which is natural which is infinite which is yes
> (i who have died am alive again today,
> and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
> day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
> great happening illimitably earth)
> how should tasting touching hearing seeing
> breathing any—lifted from the no
> of all nothing—human merely being
> doubt unimaginable You?
>
> (now the ears of my ears awake and
> now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

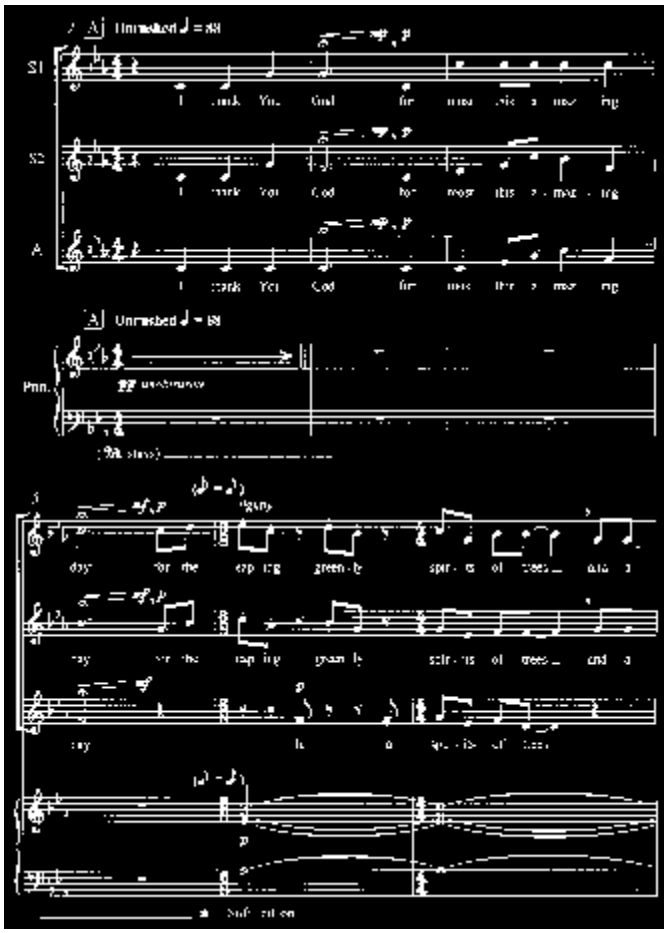
The overall structure of this work is illustrated in the following outline:

[10] Brooks, "Interview."

Tonality	**Large Sections**	**Motivic Development/Comments**
c minor		
m. 1	Introduction	
mm. 2-13	A	X1 motive in soprano 2 voice mm. 2-3; X2 motive in alto voice mm. 3-5
mm. 14-17	Refrain	
mm. 17-20	Transition	X1 varied in piano
c minor (piano right hand) - Eb major (piano left hand)		
mm. 21-30	B	piano quintuplets; Y1 motive in alto 2 voice mm. 23-25; Y varied mm.26-30, soprano 2
mm. 31-32	Extension	
mm. 33-35	(B)	Y1 varied
mm. 35-40	Transition	X1motive varied in the piano and in mm. 37-38 in soprano 1 voice
d minor-D Dorian (Bb *musica ficta*)		
mm. 41-56	B varied and extended	(based on three chord progressions) Y2 mm. 43-46 soprano 2 voice
mm. 47-54		Y2 varied and extended
mm. 57-63	C	
mm. 64-65	Refrain	
c minor		
mm. 66-69	Transition	
mm. 70-71	Refrain	
mm. 72-79	D	Y1 set imitatively and with sixteenths in accompaniment, rather than quintuplets
mm. 80-81	Extension	(Y extended)
mm. 82-87	Refrain extended	
mm. 88-end	Coda	based on X1 and X2

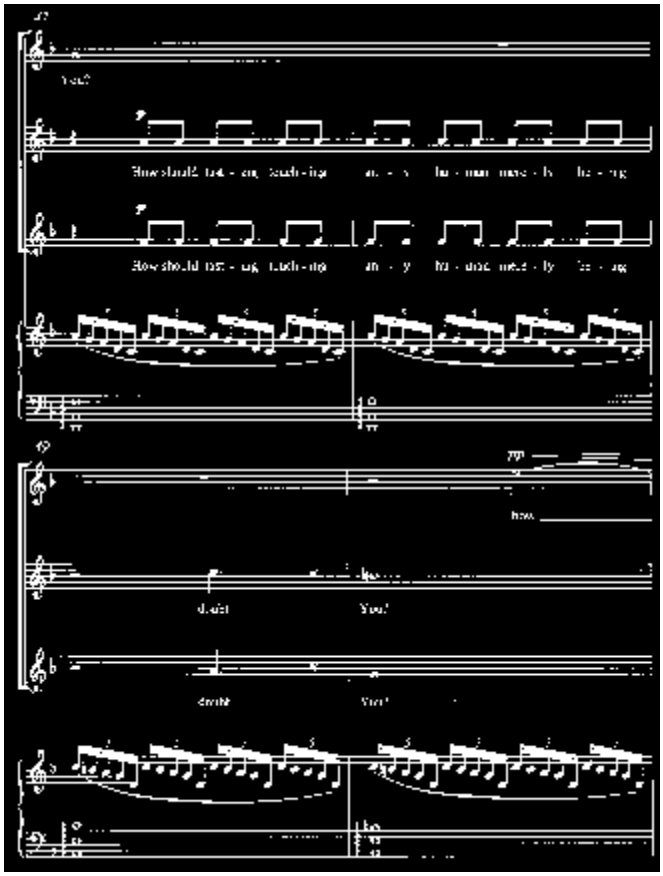
The structure of this work is complex and multi-layered. It is important, as in *White Horses*, to note the author's choice of text and the correlative melodic motives that go with these textual choices, as seen in the outline above. Unlike *White Horses,* Dr. Walker chooses to set the entire poem. Like *White Horses,* however, she chooses several lines from the poem to serve as anchors to which she returns to again and again, and also as in *White Horses,* chooses one particular line, "I Thank You God (for most this amazing day)" to be the predominant text which is repeated more often than any other.

The X1 motive, in the soprano 2 voice in measures 2-3, and the X2 motive, in the alto voice in measures 3-5, may be observed in the following example:



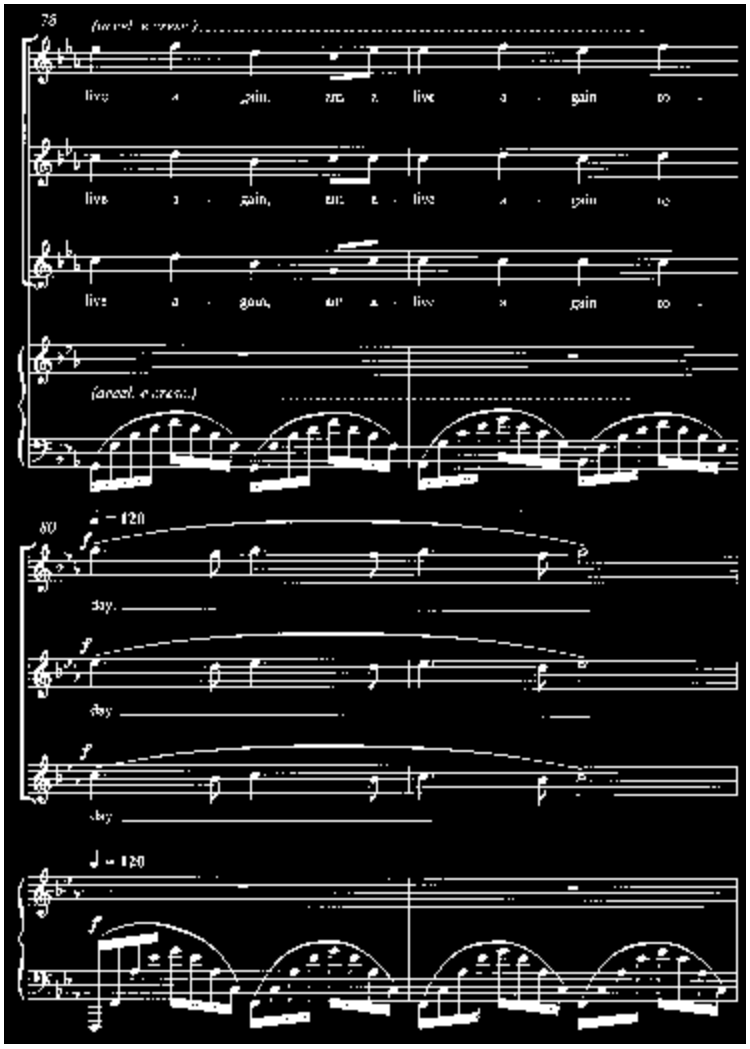
Example 16. Gwyneth Walker, *I Thank You God*, mm. 2-7.

The Y1 motive ("I who have died am alive again today") makes its initial appearance at measure 23, a quarter of the way through the piece. The Y2 motive ("How should any human being doubt you?") is first seen at measure 43 in the soprano 2 voice. From measures 47-56, the composer expands the "How should any human being doubt you" text (Y2 motive) in a notable way. She first strips away the adjectives and sets the simple sentence. In each subsequent setting of the text, she adds more of the original adjectives back in, creating larger and longer phrases. The final result may be observed in the following example:



Example 17. Gwyneth Walker, *I Thank You God*, mm. 47-50.

Dr. Walker chooses to extend "am alive again, am alive again today" when the Y2 motive makes its last appearance, beginning at measure 72. The following example shows this extension of Y2 (the text is also extended), which provides one of the major climaxes of the work:



Example 18. Gwyneth Walker, *I Thank You God*, mm. 78-81.

A hallmark of Dr. Walker's compositional style may be noted in her reiterations of these textual and melodic motives. That is, when she chooses several lines from a poem to be the textual anchors (tied to melodic motives) of the piece and repeats them throughout (even if she chooses to also set the entire text, as in *I Thank You God*), she often expands the number of repetitions of the motives as a piece moves into its middle and/or final sections. For example, beginning at measure 70 of *I Thank You God,* the textual refrain is varied (four iterations of "I Thank You God"), followed by the text "I who have died am alive again today" on the Y motive at measure 72, heard two times with an extra repetition of "am alive again" at the end. Then at measure 82, the refrain is again varied: there are seven iterations of "I Thank You God" with an added expansion of "for most this amazing day." Finally, beginning at measure 92, the "I Thank You God"

text returns on variations of the X1 and X2 motives, which brings the piece to its conclusion.

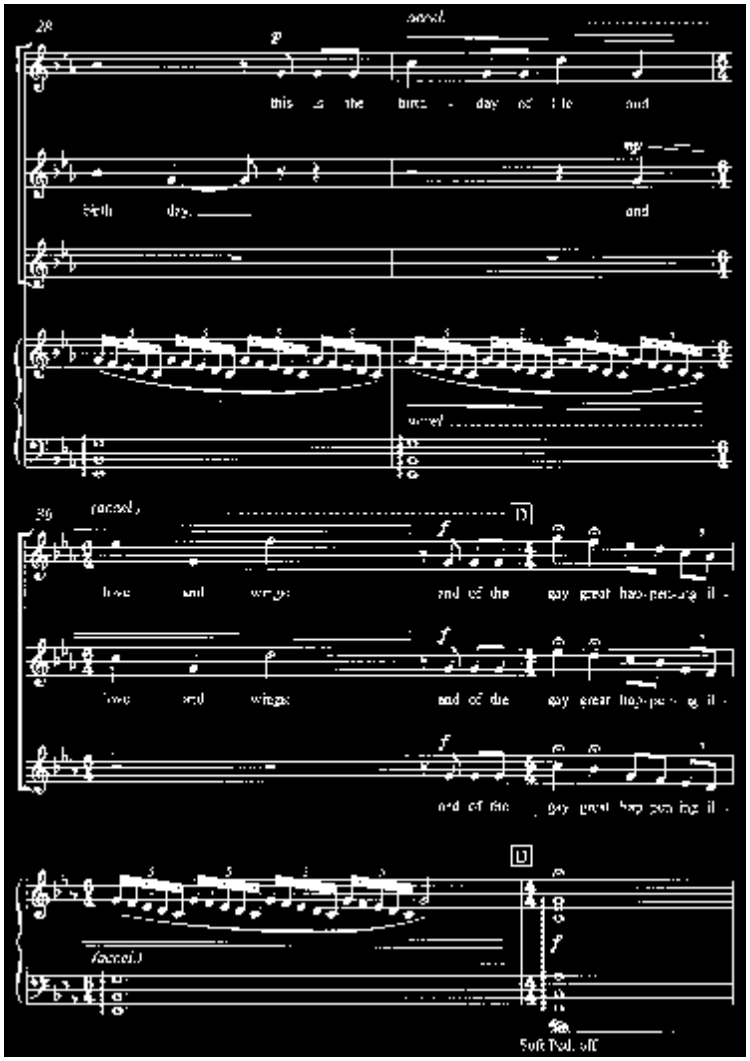
In the women's chorus version, the vocal balance is SSA, with the texture alternating between homophonic and echo sections. Though the vocal distribution is largely homophonic, the middle of the work ("I who have died am alive again today" through "How should any human being doubt you") the composer often uses one vocal line at a time to convey the text, with another vocal section answering or finishing the text, in rhetorical extensions. As the text lengthens ("How should tasting touching hearing seeing breathing any human merely being doubt you?"), Dr. Walker adds choral sections one at a time, and the homophonic and homorhythmic textures return. It is interesting to note the text painting of the slight hesitation before every utterance of the words "doubt you," in "How should any human being doubt you?" (see example 17 above).

The discussion of the pianistic texture will also contain discussion of the rhythm found in the piano. The piano begins with a common Walker gesture: sixteenth or faster notes accelerating into a "blur." The opening pages, under the "leaping, greenly…which is yes" texts, illustrate the composer's frequently chosen pianistic textures of open measures of silence or held chords under the vocal lines. (It is interesting to note the oppositional effect in this section. The piano is at its most reserved, yet the meter is at its most asymmetrical and rapidly changing, with a pattern of 4/4+6/8+4/4+5/8+6/8...; see example 16 above). During the refrain at measure 14, the piano plays a single rolled block chord underneath, effectively setting the text in bold relief. Indeed, in each occurrence thereafter (except the final occurrence starting at measure 86), whenever the textual refrain is heard, the piano plays these rolled block chords, which punctuate the text and the harmony. Beginning at measure 21 (for ten measures) and again at measure 43 (for twelve measures), the piano plays quintuple patterns over each beat of a 4/4 measure (see example 17). At measure seventy-two, this pattern has become sixteenth notes in the piano's left hand only (also seen briefly for two earlier measures: mm. 33-34). By the time measure 88 (Letter K) arrives, the piano is playing eighth note and, later, triplet patterns in the left hand (m. 92), and quarter note patterns in the right hand, which then expand into arpeggios or triplet patterns under the escalating intervals in the

vocal lines. Measures 98-99 are all quarter notes in the piano, reaching four octaves total, and the final measure augments the rhythm to whole and half notes, again spread throughout four octaves.

The melody weaves between the voice parts, with various sections taking up an initial part of the melody, followed by another voice part that finishes the poetic thought. Also of note are the melodic lines sung in most of the text settings of "How should tasting touching any human merely being," and repetitions of "I Thank You God": the voices often stay on one note, or within an intervallic distance of a third (see example 17). The soaring ending (up to a high C in the first soprano part) provides a stunning melodic culmination.

Harmonically, the opening of the piece is notable in that the piano starts rhapsodically, in the lowest registers, and quickly moves several octaves before the vocal line begins, with an ambiguous tonality of a c minor chord with elements of Eb and the 9^{th} (F) present. At letter B, an f minor chord with extensions is heard. At Letter C, the pianist's left hand arpeggiates an Eb Major chord (with the exception of measure 24) every measure for ten measures, while the right hand plays the previously discussed quintuple patterns suggestive of the keys of c minor. At Letter E, the left hand arpeggiates a chord on beat one of each measure of twelve total measures, while the right hand plays similar quintuple patterns which are suggestive of C major. One of the climaxes of the piece, at measure 31, letter D, again illustrates Walker's use of rolled block chords to isolate climatic moments in the piece. Including the notes in the choir and the piano, this extended polychord consists of an f minor chord in the piano's left hand, an Eb Major chord in the right hand, and a c minor chord in the choir.



Example 19. Gwyneth Walker, *I Thank You God*, mm. 27-31.

In the section beginning at measure 74, there is a series of seventh chords in the piano - Ab7-C7-G7, etc.- that does not move in any traditional root movement patterns. (The voices above sing in an ambiguous c minor/Ab Major tonality.) These kinds of uncommon period progressions are a hallmark of her style.

An example of her use of Slonimsky's "wrong note" harmony may be seen in measures 82-85: in measure 82, for example, there is a Db chord in the piano, but the Eb note – which some would see as a ninth – does not seem to fit. In measure 83, there would seem to be a Gb major chord, but the Eb note also present argues for the "wrong note" theory.

The final climax of the piece, where the choir moves to a C Major chord (*a capella* in the measure where the chord is first heard) has an emotional power reminiscent

of Haydn's explosion into C major in the opening of *The Creation.* In the final measure, however, the piano plays the notes G-C-D-E, with the D being another example of the "wrong note" in the harmony.

Another important aspect of the structure of this work is the relationship between the dynamics and the tempo changes, which are as well-planned as the key structure, melodic motives and textual rhetorical devices. When transitions are made, the tempo and dynamics are often coordinated with that transition; that is, when there is a new tempo, there are usually new dynamics. And, *accelerando* and *ritardarndo* are often matched by *crescendi and decrescendi*.

The composer's use of rhythm was previously discussed under pianistic texture, but it is worthwhile to reiterate that perhaps the most interesting aspects of Walker's rhythmic effort in this piece are the tempo markings and the highly structured use of *accelerando* and *ritardando* to contribute to the overall form. The piece never progresses at a regular rate, but pushes ahead, stays behind, or dramatically holds or shifts, building into the piece a drama that captures the surprising turns in cummings's poetry, at least according to her interpretation of the poem.

The actual rhythmic choices in the voices are highly indicative of Walker's style. There is a preponderance of eighth notes in a row, repeating text ("I thank you God, I thank you God, I thank you God…"), which serves to provide intensity and dramatic emphasis to the line. (As an example, see musical excerpt 17.) These are not, however, meant to be sung in a pedestrian manner:

> Do not sing the eighth notes as if you are plodding along!
> They are meant to be emphasized, as in speech, and accented
> according to their meaning. Do not sing them all alike![11]

As noted above, there is changing or alternating meter only in the section reading "for the leaping, greenly, spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural, which is infinite, which is yes." (With her typical sense of play and humor, Walker adds two short "la's" in the lower voices after "for the leaping (la) greenly (la) spirits of trees.") Since this is the only part of the poem that describes nature,

[11] Gwyneth Walker, assisting in rehearsal, "I Thank You God," National Women's Honor Choir Rehearsal, American Choral Directors' Association National Convention, Chicago, IL, 13 April 1999.

this use of mixed meter is surely intentional on Walker's part, an attempt to capture the play of the "spirits" of nature.

The relationship between text and music can be observed throughout the previous analysis, but the final comment on the poem and its setting should come from the composer herself, who was dealing with the illness and subsequent death of her mother during the composition of this poem:

> What does this poem mean to me? What particular lines come from the poem that I want to bring out again and again? You find lines in the poem…that could be sung, that an audience would be able to understand without looking at the program. "I thank you God, I thank you, God, for most this amazing day" are words that anyone can sing and understand…I love that opening because when I look out in the morning, I feel like saying that sentence many times. Another line is, "I who have died am alive again today." One could take that in the Christian manner, but also in a personal manner. We all have times when we feel our spirit has died through the death of a loved one, through depression, or through an experience of spiritual or emotional death. Then for some reason or other, we feel alive again today. That poem really speaks to me.[12]

I Thank You God is one of Walker's finest pieces, starting with a well-respected poem, and making use of the elements of formal control over the architecture of the work and contrast and surprise in the musical elements that culminate in an ecstatic climax. Reviewer Roger MacNeill of Chadron State College writes:

> The composer cleverly presents the e. e. cummings text…and is inventive in fragmenting the text among the parts. The accompaniment is lush and achieves a unique sense of flow through the use of successive beats divided into groups of five. The choral parts are alternately playful, static, flowing and dramatic. What a truly wonderful piece this is. Five stars! [13]

An Hour to Dance

An Hour to Dance was jointly commissioned by the Whitman College Chorale and the Minneapolis Vocal Consort, and published by E. C. Schirmer in 1998. The work is written for mixed chorus (SATB) and piano, with a soprano solo in the last movement.

---

[12] Brooks, "Interview."

[13] Roger MacNeill, "Review of *I Thank You God*," *Nebraska Music Educator*, *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer*, < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/walkinfc.html> 13 May 2003.

The work, which consists of seven songs (divided into three sections: *Introduction; The Dance; The Wheels of Time*), runs a total of twenty-one minutes.

The poems are taken from the American poet Virginia Adair's (b. 1913) first published collection of poems, *Ants on the Melon*. Adair taught for many years at California Polytechnic University Pomona, and was also published in *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The New Republic*.

In her program notes, Gwyneth Walker writes:

> These seven musical settings present an overview of the life and work of poet Virginia Hamilton Adair. From the opening *Key Ring*, filled with the anticipation of life's mysteries yet-to-be-explored, to the closing *Take My Hand,* expressing resignation of a life gone by, the poems grow in vitality, color and romance, and then fade into stillness, loss of color and a vanishing of sight. [Virginia Adair is now blind.] It is intended that a performance of the entire set of *An Hour to Dance* will draw the listener into the world of Virginia Hamilton Adair—a world of unique poetic imagery, of beauty and dance and of personal loss. The musical language aims to reflect the poetry in focusing upon central rhythms and melodic flows inherent in the words. The aesthetic is to allow the poetry to speak through the music. Sonorities therefore range from full and colorful (in the first four poems) to increasingly sparse (in the closing poems).[14]

It is important to note that the poet's husband, Douglass Adair, was a "famous scholar and much-loved teacher, gratified by a happy and vibrant marriage and three bright, healthy children,"[15] according to family friend Robert Mezey, who wrote the Afterword to the poet's first book of poetry. And yet, Mr. Adair committed suicide in 1986, leaving no note of explanation. Since that time, Virginia Adair's work has been influenced by her husband's suicide and her own onset of blindness.

These pieces are among Dr. Walker's best-reviewed works. In an article in the *Los Angeles Times* published February 25, 2000, conductor Bruce Rogers is quoted as saying this of this work:

> Some people over-arrange, almost in a way to say, 'Look how clever I am.' Hers doesn't. It fits so nicely with the text she chooses.[16]

---

[14] Gwyneth Walker, "*An Hour to Dance*: Notes by the Composer," *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer*, < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/anhourto.html> 13 May 2003.

[15] Robert Mezey, "Afterword," *Ants on the Melon: A Collection of Poems by Virginia Adair* (New York: The Modern Library, 1996) 156.

[16] Rene Luna, "Composer Weaves Verse into Music," *Los Angeles* Times, 25 February 2000, *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer*, < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/a-adair.html> 13 May 2003.

This author has chosen two of the seven pieces to analyze: *Summary by the Pawns* and the title piece, *An Hour to Dance.*

Summary by the Pawns is the first poem in the second section of the work (entitled *II: The Dance)*:

> 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!

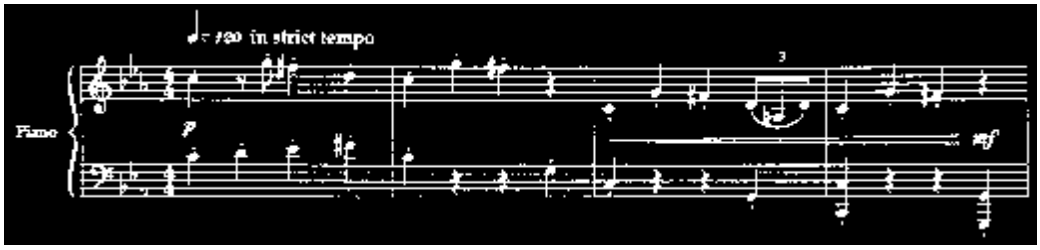
The text illustrates a chess game, with the "pawns" (ordinary people) attempting to outwit fate and the "knights and castles…kings and queens and bishops…and potentates" by which they are surrounded. Themes of fate versus choice are illustrated through the metaphor of the chess game. Dr. Walker uses the opening line, "First the black square, then a white / Moved by something out of sight," to surround the entire text. She also repeats "Still we pawns look straight ahead" once, and repeats the poem's last two lines, "But frequently, before we know / What has got us, off we go!" However, as they might in other of the composer's works, these repeated texts do not really function as textual and musical refrains, but only serve to add emphasis.

Following is an outline of the work:

Tonality	**Large Sections**	**Motivic Development/Comments**
c minor		
m. 1-4	Introduction	X1 motive in piano (both hands); X2 motive in piano (triplets in right hand m. 3)
m. 5-8	A1	X1 unison choral voices m. 5; Y motive soprano voice mm. 7-8
m. 9		Y in piano
m. 11		X1
m. 13		Y in voices (soprano full motive)
mm. 14-15		Z motive in soprano/alto voices
m. 17		Y variation soprano
m. 20		X1 in piano
m. 22		Y in piano
m. 23		Y variation in soprano/tenor
m. 24		X1 in piano
m. 25		X2 in piano twice
m. 26	A2	two measures of triplets in piano's right hand leads to rhythmic augmentation of triplets in voices measures 28-29, Y augmented mm. 30-32; Z in alto mm. 26-27
m. 29		D7 chord with major and minor third simultaneous (held chord)
mm. 30-32		Y expanded
m.32		X1 in piano
m. 33		X2 varied in piano
m. 34		three measures of triplets in piano's right hand; rhythmic augmentation of voices measures 37-40
m. 40		X1 in piano
m. 41		X2 in piano
m. 42-49	A3 (piano interlude)	eight bar interlude and modulation; marked "choreography here;" 7^{th} and9^{th} root progression chords over a walking bass line
d minor		
m. 50-51	B1	Z varied in soprano/alto voices
m. 54-55		Y varied in soprano voice

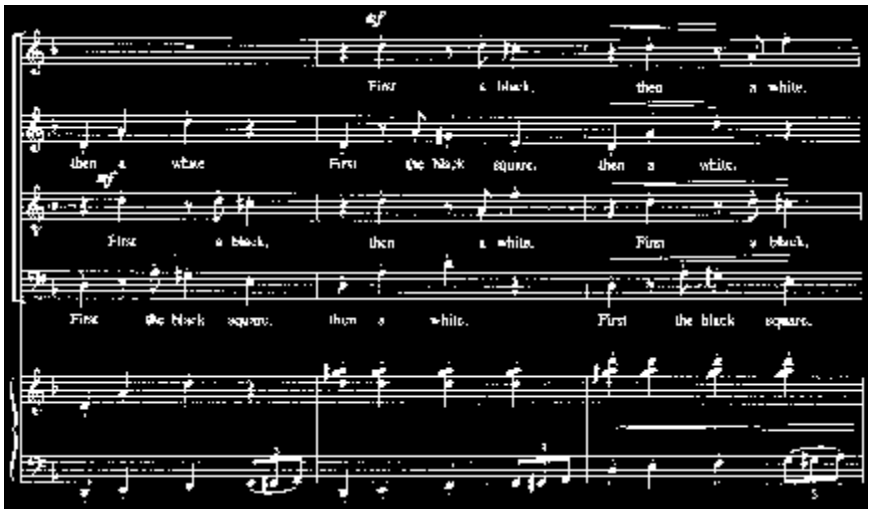
m. 58		X1, X2; first appearance of X3 (piano left hand different)
m. 60	B1 Expanded and Varied	
m. 64		Y expanded in voices
m. 68-71		X1 and X2 varied in piano; rises in register; X2 in m. 71
m. 72-73	Interjection	"free tempo;" 11/8 meter; contrary motion in voices
m. 74	Coda	a tempo; 4/4 meter
m. 75		X1 and X2 varied in piano
m. 76		X1 and X2 variation begins imitation in voices
mm. 79-80		"wrong note harmony" piano right hand, X1 and X2 variation in piano left hand
m. 83		"whispered" ending in voices

This outline demonstrates how motivically driven this piece is, more so than any other piece analyzed in this document. The piano's opening motives appear throughout the piece ornamented or rhythmically expanded. This straightforward (marked "in strict tempo") accompaniment serves to underscore the careful planning during a chess game. Seen below is the X1 motive, in both hands of the piano in the first two measures. The X2 motive may also be observed, in the triplet rhythm in the piano's right hand, in the third measure.



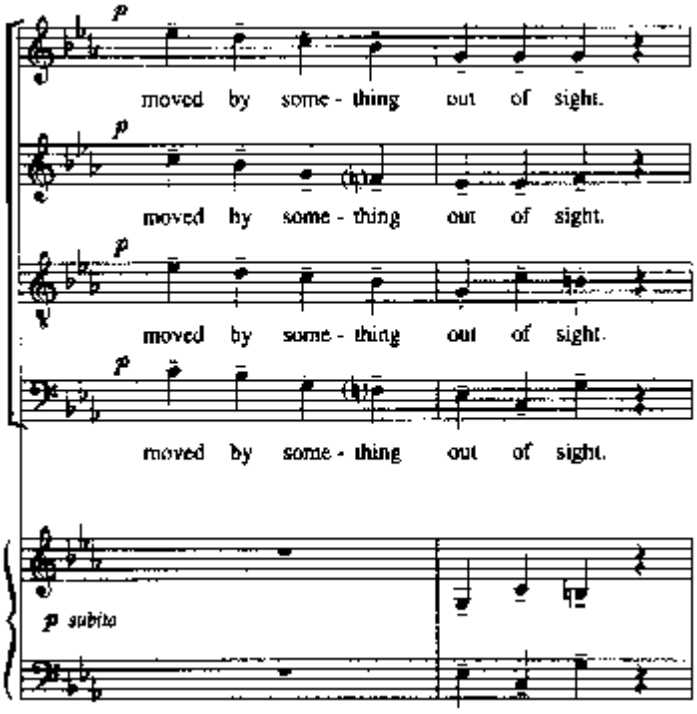
Example 20. Gwyneth Walker, *Summary by the Pawns*, mm. 1-4.

The X3 motive appears for the first time in measure 58. The right hand of the piano plays variations on the original X1 motive, while the piano's left hand plays a new pattern. The following measures show this X3 motive, while the voices sing in a double canon:



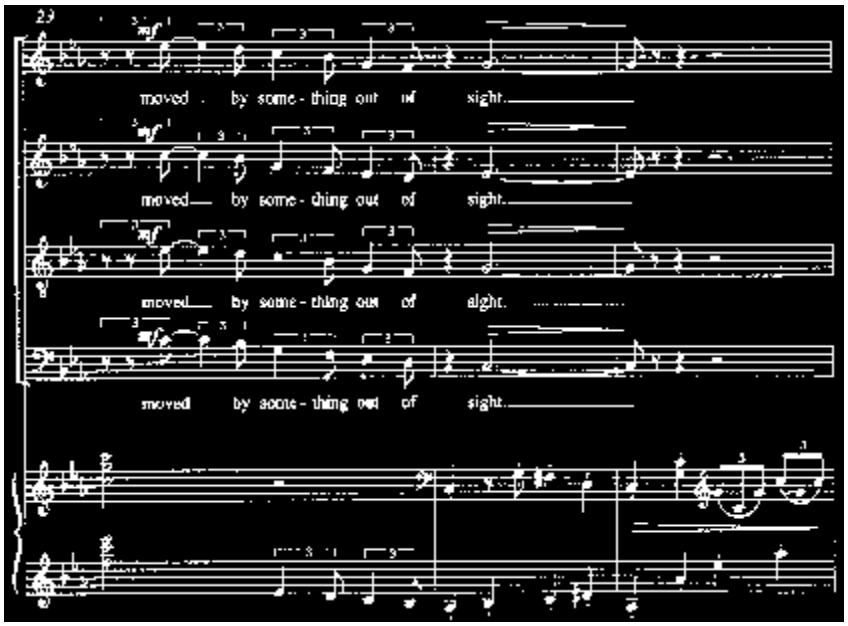
Example 21. Gwyneth Walker, *Summary by the Pawns*, mm. 78-80.

The Y motive is usually seen in the soprano, and sometimes tenor, voices, and often echoed in the piano. It is observed here in the soprano voice:



Example 22. Gwyneth Walker, *Summary by the Pawns*, mm. 7-8.

It is observed here in a later incarnation, in triplet rhythm:

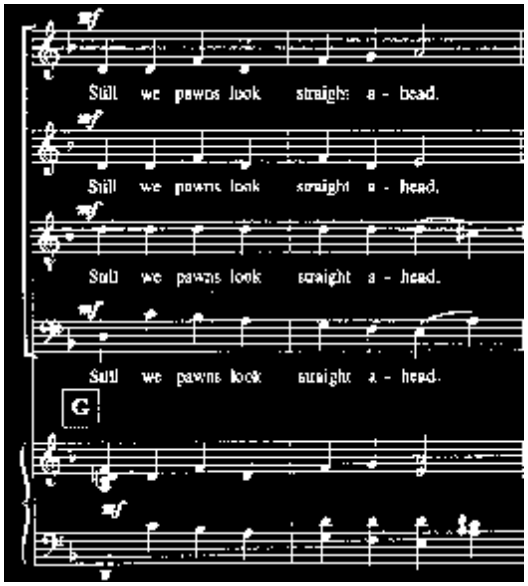


Example 23. Gwyneth Walker, *Summary by the Pawns*, mm. 23-25.

The vocal texture is nearly always homorhythmic. The only exception is the final iteration of the text, "first the black square, then a white," as if the chess pieces are being moved one at a time. At that point, each section sings imitatively. This may be seen in the previous musical example 21. Some use of extended vocal techniques – whispering and speaking – is made, though not extensively.

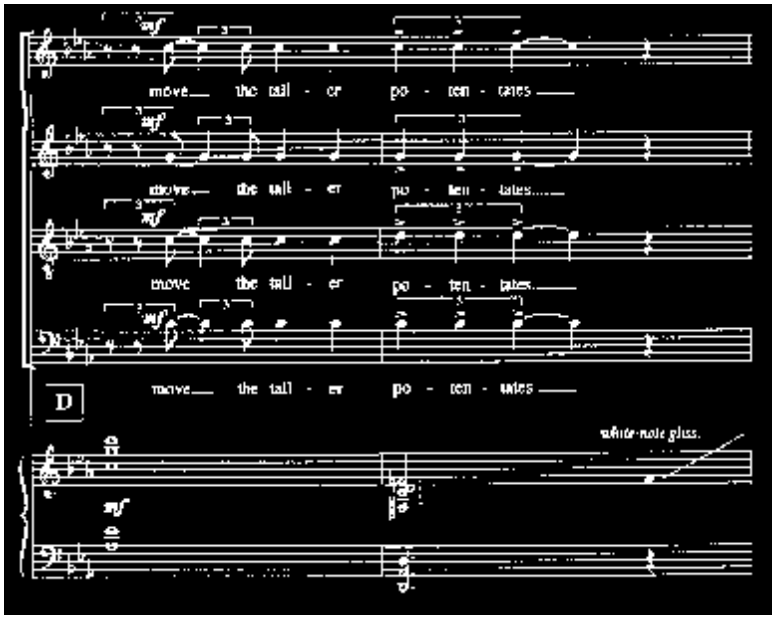
The pianistic texture is sparse throughout most of the piece, without the composer's common "blurs" of notes or rapid, virtuosic passages. Only in the eight bar piano interlude, from measures 42-49, do we see the piano in the forefront. Here the texture thickens, but then returns to a thinner texture immediately after.

The melody winds its way in and out of the various upper voice parts, and as befits the text, the melody is not the prominent interest, as it might be in a soaring love song; instead, the rhythm has the most interest. Twice in the piece, the sopranos rise to a high A, on the text "are as good as <u>mon</u>archs," and "<u>off</u> we go!" Other than these two examples, the melody uses motivic development of the X1 and Y motives or stays in conjunct, restricted motion. As an example of the latter, whenever the pawns are "moving/looking straight ahead," the top three voices sing in conjunct motion quarter notes, or a slight variation of that rhythm, as seen here:



Example 24. Gwyneth Walker, *Summary by the Pawns*, mm. 50-51.

The song begins in c minor, and modulates, at measure 50, to the key of d minor. The piece ends on an assumed A major (the V chord of d minor). Measures 1-25 have traditional chord progressions, such as i-v and i-VI-iv-v-i, but later passages see her technique of writing non-traditional chord progressions, particularly with seventh chords, as in measures 26-29: F7-cmi7-Abmaj7-D7 (with major and minor third intervals sounding simultaneously). Dr. Walker uses some chromatic movement of half steps in the piano as if chess pieces were inching toward their goal. She writes a sustained D7 chord with intervals of a major 3rd and a minor 3rd sounding simultaneously to underscore a textual and musical dramatic high point twice in this piece. These are in the two passages that greet the arrival of the "potentates," seen below in the chord's first occurrence at measure 29.



Example 25. Gwyneth Walker, *Summary by the Pawns,* mm. 28-29.

Unusual for Walker's style, but planned for the best representation of this text, the rhythmic interest is not achieved through mixed meters and constant *tempi* changes, but through a "strict tempo" that contains off-beat figures within the exacting meter (see musical example 20). As is common with this composer, she alternates simple and duple rhythms and uses rhythmic augmentation of each type as one of the structural pillars of the work. The previous musical example 25 demonstrates one of these augmentations, from eighth note to quarter note triplets. Musical excerpt 24 shows her use of simple meter as the pawns "look straight ahead." In the piano interlude, measures 42-49, the rhythm is a slightly stilted, triplet feel swing (marked, oddly, "choreography here," with no further direction). And, as the pawns are being chased at measures 71-73, the "free tempo" marking in 11/8 time assists with the textual declamation and variety.

This may be one of Dr. Walker's most theatrical pieces within a traditional choral setting (that is, not including her works with narrator or other overtly theatrical devices). When the composer marks "choreography here" during the eight bar piano interlude from measures 42-49, it is surrounded by the text "Still we pawns look straight ahead," which is most often written for the melody to stay on the same note. Though the composer gives no further instruction about the "choreography," it seems to indicate that the pawns are taking a 'dance break' away from the stiltedness of their usual demeanor, as if, for a brief time, no one is watching them and they can 'cut loose.' Whenever the text "moved

by something out of sight" occurs, the composer writes a downward, scalar motion for the melody line, as if something is disappearing, and the last appearance of the text has rests between "something-out-of-sight." The melodic high points previously discussed on the words "monarch" and "off we go!" are text painting representing the high social status of a "monarch" and perhaps the increased energy or flight involved in running away as "off we go!" Dr. Walker uses additional text painting for "But frequently, before we know what has got us, off we go!" when she sets the first phrase in a "free tempo (loco)" bar of 11/8 to indicate the pawns being chased. The text-music relationship in this piece is strongly tied to the rhythmic underpinnings.

The fourth and title song, *An Hour to Dance*, is set to this text:

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

Following is an outline of the work:

Tonality	**Large Sections**	**Motivic Development/Comments**
E Dorian/D Major (ambiguous tonality)		
m. 1	Introduction	X motive mm. 1-2 (piano right hand); X varied piano right hand m. 13
mm. 17-25	A1	*ostinati* piano left hand
mm. 25-33	Interlude	

mm. 33-52	A1 extended	X varied piano right hand over *ostinati* left hand
m. 49		X varied piano right hand over *ostinati* left hand
mm. 53-68	A2	X varied mm. 61-67

Ambiguous Tonality (b minor/E Dorian/D major elements)

mm. 69-76	B	"slower, more freely"
m. 82		Y motive men's voices and piano
mm. 86-89		held, rolled chords in the piano
m. 94	A2	
m. 106	C	
m. 114-145		arpeggiation in piano extension of *ostinati*
m. 118		Y varied piano right hand
m. 126		Y varied piano right hand
mm. 140-142		held, rolled chords in piano

Ambiguous Tonality (no key signature at m. 151, presence of Bb and Eb notes)

mm. 146-168	D	"slower, more freely", *a capella* or sparse piano accompaniment; 9^{th} chords measures 149, 157
mm. 168-175		"gradual *accelerando*"

E Dorian/Dmajor (ambiguous tonality)

mm. 176-217	Coda (A1 and Introductory material)	
m. 184		*ostinati* in piano left hand
m. 192	Introduction theme	X in piano right hand
mm. 200-207	New material	duplets in voice and piano; harmony in thirds
m. 210		Y in voices
m. 217		"continue, blurred" in piano

Although this chart shows the use of melodic motives in this composition, the primary architecture is largely achieved through the metrical structure and the rhythmic motives, which will be discussed in depth in the discussion of rhythm.

The text of *An Hour to Dance* suggests the transition to old age and the blindness that slowly engulfed Virginia Adair's life. Dr. Walker's choice to end the piece with the lines "For a while we whirled over the meadows of music" (which functions as a musical and textual refrain) and "[We] came out to leap for love," rather than the poet's choice to end the poem with the more ominous "late late / time to grow / old" mirrors the composer's meter and harmony choices, but again presents the question of whether or not

the composer (or any composer) has the right to alter so radically the form and tone of a poem. In this writer's opinion, it does not lessen, but in fact, heightens the poignancy of the poet's final stanza to bring back the elation of the "leap for love" text and to remind the audience for the setting that the poet's life is about more than the loss of her sight.

The vocal texture is homorhythmic, or in alternation between the men's and women's voices. It is only in the Coda, beginning at measure 176, that there are imitative entrances, starting with the basses and moving up to the sopranos on the text "we whirled over the meadows of music." It is typical of Dr. Walker to make the final refrain more complicated than the ones that preceded it, and measures 180-198 are an example of this.

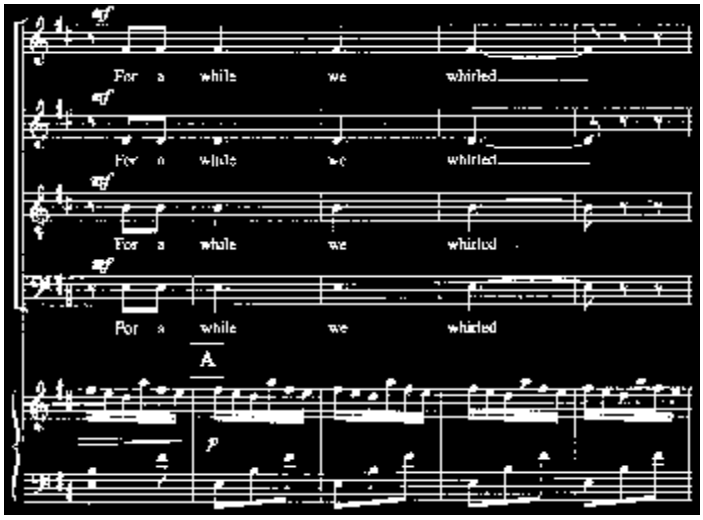
The piano accompaniment is one of the composer's most difficult and compelling in the works examined here. There are arpeggiated chromatic patterns of septuplets and higher numbered groupings which, in the final measure, accelerate into a "blur," so common in this composer's work (see example 29). She uses *ostinati*, duplets, and triplets that make for an interesting tapestry to complement the vocal texture. The D section, beginning at measure 146, features unaccompanied measures and otherwise sparse accompanimental passages.

The melody consists of long, sustained sections of held notes, followed by leaps of thirds and octaves on the text "I leap for love." The D section is marked "slower, more freely" and "sustained," and here the melody becomes a monotone on the text "time to grow old" (measures 157-167). As the piece progresses to the joyful ending, the melody again takes on the leaps of thirds and octaves heard in "I leap for love," and the jump to a high A in the sopranos for the final "love" (see examples 28 and 29).

The work is mostly in ambiguous tonalities, with elements of E Dorian, D Major, and b minor suggested (the D section has no key signature, and the notes Bb and Eb make appearances.) The use of the triplet E-A-F# *ostinato* that is first seen at measure 17 is one of the most prominent harmonic (and rhythmic) elements in the piece, as this *ostinato* is later varied and expanded to provide unity and variety throughout the work. Another important harmonic feature is that, each time (after the first appearance at measure 25) the word "music" appears in the line "For a while we whirled over the meadows of music," a D major chord – with no extensions – is heard. This provides a cadential point that also unifies the work. This device can be seen at measures 61, 106, and 192. Tone

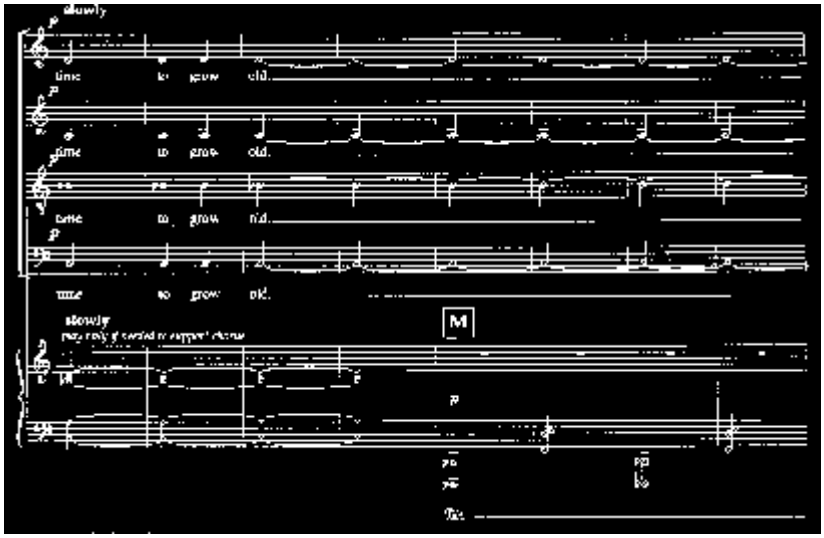
clusters and block chords, often rolled or held - a common Walker device - are occasionally used in contrast to the rapidly moving *ostinati* or arpeggiated patterns in the piano. There is also a proliferation of 7^{th}, 9^{th} and 13^{th} chords. It is interesting to note that the harmony becomes intervals of thirds when the second (and final) appearance of the text "We came out to leap for love" appears, this time in duplet rhythm (see example 28).

As mentioned at the beginning of this analysis, this piece is tied together largely through the rhythmic structure. The opening is written in a 3/8 meter, but with a pulse indicating 1. Triplet *ostinato* patterns in the piano propel this pulse, and accelerate into the choir's text on, "For a while we whirled over the meadows of music."



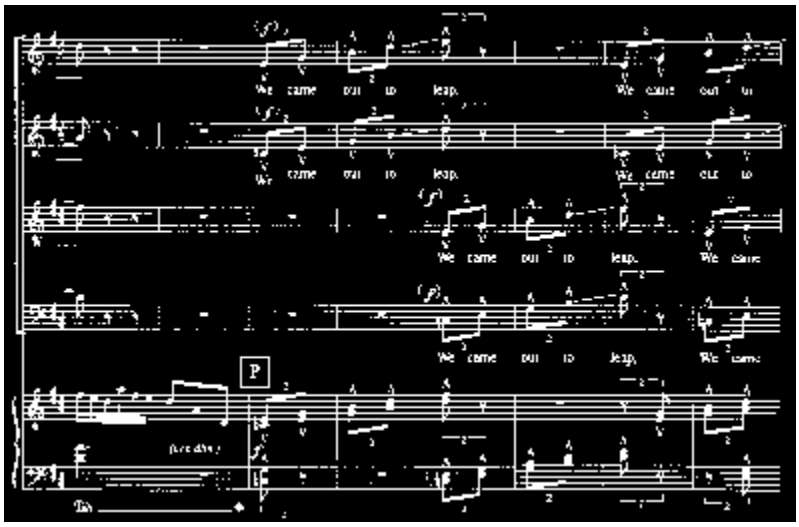
Example 26. Gwyneth Walker, *An Hour to Dance*, mm. 16-20.

The darker poetic sections are from measures 69-76 and in the D section, beginning at measure 146. During the D section, the poet references *Alice in Wonderland*: "No tale is endless. The rabbit opened his watch muttering, 'Late, late – time to grow old.'" The meter here shifts into lengthened time of 4/4, 3/4 and 2/4 and the motion ceases as the choir sustains a six-measure phrase on the word "old." This also foreshadows the sparser textures and rhythms that will be seen in the last two pieces in this set.



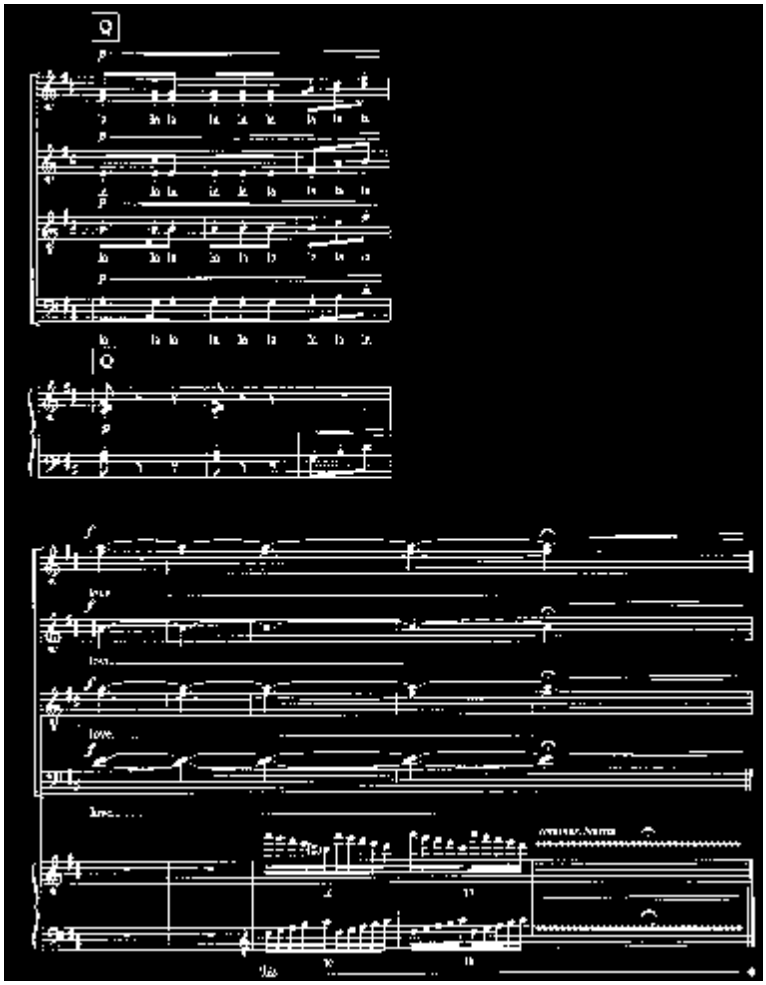
Example 27. Gwyneth Walker, *An Hour to Dance*, mm. 160-167.

It is common for the composer to use alternations of duplets and triplets, as we have previously observed. In the Coda, Dr. Walker therefore adds another layer of complexity to the form: duplets and rising intervals within the 3/8 meter, seen below:



Example 28. Gwyneth Walker, *An Hour to Dance*, mm. 198-205.

Gradually, the piano returns to triple meter as the text "whirling" and "leaping for love" returns. In the last eight measures, there are triplet rhythms in the voices, which become a five-measure held chord on the word "love," while the piano, in the last three measures, plays patterns of ten that become a "blur," a common technique of the composer's.



Example 29. Gwyneth Walker, *An Hour to Dance*, mm. 210-217.

The hemiola also plays a major role in the rhythmic structure of the voices. It adds rhythmic variety and contrast and aids in textual emphasis. Some examples may be seen in measures 21-24 and 86-89.

The text painting is inextricably wedded to the rhythm and harmony, as illustrated above. The use of *ostinati* gives the piece an atmosphere of recurring motion, mirroring the constant references to children "whirling." Measures 69-76 speak of "The children we never were/ from cellars and closets/ attics and faded snapshots." Measures 146 through 167 reference *Alice in Wonderland* and, one might assume, the poet's oncoming blindness, old age and death. In these two passages, the accompaniment is sparse. The second iteration of the text "Time to grow old" which begins at measure 160, is preceded by eighth note triplets that grow to quarter note triplets and end in held notes of six full measures, as if the speaker's life is slowing down. The final choice of the composer to

end the piece on "We came out to leap for love" on an (at first) *a capella* chord (Dmaj7+9), as the piano accelerates into a "blur" is illustrative of the joy of the childhood and love that are now beginning to pass the poet by.

Writing in the *Choral Journal* in 1998 about *An Hour to Dance*, Conductor Richard Coffey writes:

> Gwyneth Walker is a master composer with a fertile imagination and a knack for finding texts of such unusual imagery and beauty that one feels she will never run out of words to set. Walker always lets the poet speak first, and the music takes its shape thereafter. With never a wasted gesture, yet often with crucial and overwhelming repetitions, she grasps the mind of the poet, overlays it with inspired music, and sends it out to the rest of us.[17]

[17] Richard Coffey, "Review of *An Hour to Dance*," *Choral Journal* (December 2000), *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer*, < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/r-anhour.html> 13 May 2003.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Style

Dr. Gwyneth Walker has written both accompanied and unaccompanied choral works for mixed, female and children's voices. She has written only two pieces solely for male voices to this date. Her accompanied pieces are most often for piano, but in the last few years, she has begun to orchestrate many of her best-known works, such as *Songs for Women's Voice*s. Her choral works vary in size and length, and in the last few years, she has begun to compose more overtly theatrical settings that use narration, the speaking of poems before they are sung, notations of "choreography," and other devices.

Her music is, first and foremost, text-driven. The composer has said that she prefers American poets (though her latest works include a setting, in translation, of the Indian writer Rabindrinath Tagore's work) and her settings are all in English. She carefully chooses the texts that appeal to her, sometimes regardless of the fame or popularity of the author. Her Quaker heritage leads her to look for poetry that is not violent, but is beautiful in some way that appeals to her.

Dr. Walker sets each text according to how she believes it will best be understood. She often takes liberties with the text when she feels it is appropriate, choosing certain salient lines as refrains and using the rhetorical technique of repeating, expanding or shortening lines for effect. Such rhetorical devices are a major aspect of her compositional style, as they infuse nearly all of her choral work. There are some cases, however, where she sets a text all the way through: usually it is because of the strong narrative drive of the text.

Dr. Walker's compositional style includes both traditional, conservative elements and non-traditional, experimental elements. Her skill in forming tightly constructed,

musically and dramatically compelling structures emerging from her study of traditional forms is a key to her technique. But within that structure, she chooses not only conservative elements such as logical and idiomatic writing for the voice and triadic harmonies, but also experimental twentieth-century elements such as non-traditional key relationships and chord progressions, quartal harmonies and tone clusters. These two facets form a personal style that is forward-reaching, but grounded in Western musical tradition.

Though Dr. Walker is highly trained, with a doctorate in music composition, the most profound influence on her style is the folk music with which she grew up. This music influences her work most prominently in her attention to the vocal writing. She is unafraid to write a beautiful, simple melody when she believes the text warrants it and her highly singable music is very popular with American choirs. This simplicity does not mean that her work is not artful, but rather suggests that she is skilled at combining the appeal of folk music with sophisticated musical structures.

She is not a published theorist and has not started any new styles or schools of thought. Among contemporary composers whose work has gone into the mainstream, this author would argue that Dr. Walker uses the theme of women's strength and independence as prominently as any current composer. This insistence may be another reason (aside from the beauty and skill of the compositions) that her women's choral music is so popular.

Structure

Even if Dr. Walker chooses to set all of the text of a poem, her overall musical structure usually has a first section that sets up the motives and the main musical ideas, a middle section that may be in an ambiguous tonality or may stray far from the first section in key, tempo, chord choices and texture, and a final section that brings together elements of the first two sections in new and usually more complex ways to tie the piece together. The composer herself, as noted earlier in this document, has said that "growth," "excursion" and "bipolarity (Bartok)" are major aspects of her form choices, and her

work does indeed bear that out. Motivic development is a common technique in her writing, though it is not in the foreground in every piece.

She does not often work in standard choral genres such as madrigals. However, her sacred settings are sometimes influenced by chant or reciting tone. The motet, folk song, opera and oratorio may be seen as influences in the way she sets a piece, though she does not follow the strict dictates of those forms. (It should be noted that the motet does not have a strict form.) Her work is often theatrical and dramatic.

Texture

Dr. Walker's vocal texture is most often homorhythmic, although imitation does occur. She also commonly sets the men's voices against the women's in imitation. She utilizes unison singing, and three-part triadic writing at key structural points. She uses non-traditional (unmeasured fragments or "*quasi recitative*," spoken or whispered segments) techniques as well. Her accompanimental (piano, in this document) textures vary from chordal clusters and arpeggiated passages to sustained chords, "blurs" and accelerated patterns of septuplets and higher. She also writes in a "swing" style or a strict ostinato pattern if she believes that the text calls for it. In no case do her accompaniments call for the pianist simply to play chords underneath the choral writing; rather the accompaniments, even when relatively simple, stand on their own and add depth to the musical structure.

Dynamics are a vital part of this composer's work, and may be considered under the category of texture. Most often, her dynamic choices mirror the changes in *tempi* and meter, which in turn provide transitional points in her work.

Melody

Perhaps because of her own background in singing and in arranging for choruses from the time she was very young, Dr. Walker writes well for the voice. She knows the parts of the voice that are the most beautiful and uses that placement to great effect in her choral and vocal solo writing. The *tessiture* of the individual vocal lines are not

uncomfortable and she saves high notes for the most effective dramatic placement, on a vowel that fits singers' voices in that range. The reach and contour of the melodies vary depending on the text being sung and the accompanying emotion. She writes both conjunct and disjunct melodies; this choice differs according to considerations of text and form. Her phrase structure varies according to these same considerations: she may write very brief phrases of one or two measures, or phrases of six to eight measures.

Harmony

The composer frequently mixes tonality and modality. Her tonal relationships make use of her term "excursion," in that the middle section of a piece will move to an ambiguous or distant key before returning to the original key**.** Common Practice period chord progressions are infrequent. When in a mode, folk song-type progressions are often employed. Her harmonic rhythms fluctuate. Traditional cadences and modulations are rarely seen. Instead, Dr. Walker either sets up a transition through a tone cluster (as she herself has stated) before a new section, or she harmonically "meanders" before resolving to a known chord, as in her technique of setting a series of seventh or higher extension chords in non-traditional progressions.

Dr. Walker's chord choices are very often extended, full of sevenths and higher extensions, and tone clusters. She utilizes Nicolas Slonimsky's concept of "wrong note" harmony, defined earlier, wherein she writes what appears to be an extended chord, but may, in fact, be (for example) a triad or seventh chord with an odd note put in for interest. Similarly, in an area of sparse texture, she may write a three note chord consisting of a fourth and a second (for example) that is not analyzable in any traditional way.

The composer uses both triadic and quartal/quintal harmonies, often moving back and forth between them or using both simultaneously.

Meter and Rhythm

Most commonly of all the techniques discussed, Dr. Walker uses frequent changes in both *tempi* and meter. In her music, *tempi* changes are employed to make

shifts between structural points – either large- or small-scale. Common devices that she uses for these changes are *quasi recitative, ritardando* and *accelerando.* Changing meter is employed, and it is used to provide another layer of complexity and interest to the text and the form, although she does not use it to the extent that she uses *tempi* changes.

An alternation between duplets and triplets (frequently in the same phrase), and often later seen in augmentation, is usual in this composer's work. Repeated eighth notes on the same pitch, commonly accompanying a fragmented reiteration of a key text or an extension of a key text, are also very common.

Text-Music Relationship

Text-music relationship is an important part of this composer's work. Unlike a composer like Francis Poulenc, where there may be a deliberate conflict between the text and the syllabic emphasis (or rhythmic structure) of the text setting, Dr. Walker's settings are most often text-driven, and she seeks to clarify the text through speech-like structures (*quasi recitative*, for example). When she minimizes the syllabic stress of the text, it is most often because emotions like suffocation, cynicism or rigidity are present in the text. One of the most common ways in which she minimizes syllabic stress is through repeated eighth notes on one note.

The composer also uses the techniques of altering sequences of text, adding words in a sequential manner, or cutting words from the original text, usually to repeat salient lines in a refrain, in order (in her view) to make the poem's meaning clearer.

Dr. Walker does not seek out the ritualistic character of a piece (her use of rhetorical devices are the closest she comes to a Stravinsky-like ritualistic setting), but she does seek to illustrate narrative and dramatic qualities in her work. As she herself as stated, and as her work indeed reveals, she seizes on the mood of a poem, by which she then generates the *tempi*, modality, rhythm and architecture of the piece.

The piano functions as a true partner to the choir in the pieces observed here. The piano is often the illustrator of any text painting. In the voices, Dr. Walker does not often use text painting in the manner of madrigals, for example. As already discussed under

the category of style**,** declamation of the text is of utmost importance in the emotionally charged passages of her choral works.

Summary

It has been suggested that Gwyneth Walker is in the lineage of Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, Samuel Barber and Leonard Bernstein. All of these composers used American idioms (particularly folk music and jazz) as a basis for much of their work and as such, each had a uniquely "American" sound within the Western musical tradition. Gwyneth Walker surely fits in that category. Her music is often infused with folk and jazz idioms (though not exclusively).

It's important to note that it is not only Copland, Harris, Barber and Bernstein with whom Dr. Walker shares a tradition: perhaps more relevant to this document is that she lies within an American choral tradition of composers like Randall Thompson, Howard Hanson, Alice Parker and Robert Shaw, Daniel Pinkham, Emma Lou Diemer and Kirke Mechem. In combination with Copland, Harris, Barber and Bernstein, these composers have established an American musical context within which Gwyneth Walker's work clearly lies. In spite of Dr. Walker's insistence that she developed her style at a young age and without any direct influence from any of these composers, there is an inescapable American musical context to which she belongs simply because she grew up in the American culture, attended church, and heard American music (as well as other music) at home and on the radio.

However, as with the other composers mentioned, she is not tied to any one compositional sound and has formed her own unique style. Her compositions have a logic and narrative drive which is based on well chosen texts and thoughtfully planned formal structures. Her vocal and accompanimental (piano, in this document) writing is challenging but idiomatically sensitive, and her melodic and rhythmic choices are interesting and well-suited to the chosen texts. Perhaps most of all, she has an ability to empathize with and convey the emotions of a poet's work, which has made her compositions accessible and beloved by choral singers and their audiences. Copland, Barber and Bernstein were all accused at one time of being too accessible – that their

music was too popular, and therefore, not serious artistic endeavors. Walker may be open to those same accusations. However, time has shown that, for those American icons, popularity did not preclude producing works of serious artistic merit. This author believes the same will be true for Gwyneth Walker.

Recommendations for Further Study

As this is the first dissertation or serious study of the work of Gwyneth Walker, and as she has over nearly 100 choral works to date, the possibilities for further study are many. Possible avenues of study would be to examine the new direction that she has undertaken in the last few years, which is to compose larger works for orchestra and chorus that use theatrical techniques. A study might be made of her sacred works not included here, which would include some types of accompaniment (brass, organ) not covered in this document. A study could be made of her other works for women's chorus, as these are some of her most respected and innovative works to date. There are many mixed choral pieces not covered here, and those could be studied in whatever manifestation might seem important to the future author.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Copley, Evan R. Harmony: Baroque to Contemporary – Part Two. Champaign, Illinois: Stipes Publishing Company, 1991.

La Rue, Jan. Guidelines for Style Analyses. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1970.

Sadie, Julie Anne and Rhian Samuel, eds., The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995.

Articles

Brooks, Gene. "An Interview with Gwyneth Walker." C*horal Journal*. February 1999. *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* http://www.gwynethwalker.com/walkinf5.html>. 13 May 2003.

Coffey, Richard. "Review of *An Hour to Dance*." *Choral Journal*. December 2000. *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/r-anhour.html>. 13 May 2003.

Cooman, Carson P. "Gwyneth Walker: An American Original: An Introduction to Her Work." June 2000. *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* <http://www.gwynethwalker.com/walkinfa.html>. 27 November 2002.

Cooman, Carson P. "Review of *River Songs*." *NewMusica*. Autumn 2000. *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/walkinfb.html>. 27 November 2002.

Sadie, Julie Anne, and Rhian Samuel. *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*. NewYork: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995. S. V. "Walker, Gwyneth Van Anden," by Michele J. Edwards.

Kennicott, Philip. "Young Quartet Gives Fresh Performance." *The St. Louis Post Dispatch*. 18 August 1996. *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/r-short3.html>. 27 November 2002.

Langert, Jules. "Review of *Symphony of Grace*." *San Francisco Classical Voice*. 16 October 1999. *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* <http://www.gwynethwalker.com/r-symph.html>. 27 November 2002.

Luna, Rene. "Composer Weaves Verse Into Music." *Los Angeles Times*. 25 February 2000. *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/a-adair.html>. 13 May 2003.

MacNeill, Roger. "Review of *I Thank You God*." *Nebraska Music Educator*. *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* <http://www.gwynethwalker.com/walkinfc.html>. 13 May 2003.

Metcalf, Steve. "The Music of the Spheres and Then Some." *Hartford Courant*. 7 June 1998. *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* http://www.gwynethwalker.com/walkinf3.html.> 13 May 2003.

Mezey, Robert. "Afterword." *Ants on the Melon: A Collection of Poems by Virginia Adair*. New York: The Modern Library, 1996.

O'Connell, Kathy. "Woman of Words, Woman of Music: Poet Lucille Clifton and composer Gwyneth Walker combine their talents at Sunken Garden." 27 August 1998. *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* http://www.gwynethwalker.com/walkinf8.html>. 13 May 2003.

Van Tighem, Gregory. "Composer, Chorale's Work Comes to Fruition Friday." *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*. 2 February 1998. *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* <http://www.gwynethwalker.com/a-whitma.html >. 13 May 2003.

Walker, Gwyneth. "*For Ever and Ever*: Notes by the Composer." *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/forevera.html>. 13 May 2003.

—. "*An Hour to Dance*: Notes by the Composer." *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/anhourto.html>. 13 May 2003.

—. "*Songs for Women's Voices*: Notes by the Composer." *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* < http://www.gwynethwalker.com/songsfor.html>. 13 May 2003.

—. "*White Horses*: Notes by the Composer." *Website of Gwyneth Walker—Composer* <http://www.gwynethwalker.com/whitehor.html >. 13 May 2003.

Interviews and E-mail Correspondence

Slonimsky, Nicolas. Lecture given. Ft. Worth, TX. Circa 1961.

Thomas, Augusta Read. Conversation with the author. Colorado Springs, CO. 7 November 2002.

Walker, Gwyneth. Assisting in rehearsal. *I Thank You God*. National Women's Honor Choir Rehearsal. American Choral Directors' Association National Convention. Chicago, IL. 13 April 1999.

—. Interview by author. Tape recording. Chicago, IL. 14 April 1999.

—. To Vicki Burrichter. 18 August 2002. "Dissertation Works." Personal e-mail.

—. To Vicki Burrichter. 13 May 2003. "Family history." Personal e-mail.

—. To Vicki Burrichter. 15 May 2003. "Musical discourse." Personal e-mail.

—. To Vicki Burrichter. 3 September 2002. "For Ever and Ever." Personal e-mail.

APPENDIX A

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR.GWYNETH WALKER

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR.GWYNETH WALKER

This interview took place in Chicago, Illinois, in April 1999, during the American Choral Directors Association's National Convention. Dr. Walker's piece, *I Thank You God,* was being premiered at this convention. She was the recipient of the Raymond W. Brock Endowment Commissioned Compositions Award, given by the American Choral Directors' Association. I was also privileged to watch the composer in rehearsal with the National Women's Honor Choir on the commissioned piece.

Vicki Burrichter – Where and when were you born?

Gwyneth Walker – 1947, in New York City, because my parents lived there. Within the year, they moved to Connecticut, so I'm not a New York City person, but I was born in Manhattan.

VB – And did you live in Manhattan until you went to school in Connecticut?

GW – Yes. New Canaan.

VB – And your father's a physicist?

GW – Yes.

VB – And your mother was a house…

GW - …wife, and she did some social work – social research.

VB – Social research?

GW – Right, such as documenting how many adopted children there were in our county and where they were placed, or children with learning problems and how they were handled…she did different studies. But mostly she was at home. She also did a genealogy of her ancestors, which took years, going back to 1630. So, she did lots of things – she didn't just cook.

VB – What is your ancestry?

GW – Well, I know a lot because of my mother's work, and on my mother's side we have Quakers that go back to 1630 on just about the first boat that came over here. There weren't Quakers in 1630, but the people who came over here in 1630 then became Quakers. So, I have known that our family goes way back. Seven generations of them

lived on Long Island, and I can even see where they lived from my home in Connecticut - you can walk up there.

My mother's father's side was the Van Andens, who published the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, which was the leading newspaper in the country. They came from Duchess County, so they started out in Poughkeepsie, New York, and published newspapers. They were really prestigious people; they helped to build the Brooklyn Bridge, and they were very well respected. And the Brooklyn Daily Eagle is still a respected newspaper. So, that's my mother's two sides – the Quaker, and then the Dutch. So, I have a little Dutch (and that's my middle name – Van Anden - because that was the famous family name, supposedly).

On my father's side – he's a descendant of John Baldwin, because my father's name is John Baldwin Walker. John Baldwin founded Baldwin Wallace College in Ohio. And then he went down to Louisiana and founded a town called Baldwin for the freed slaves and built them hospitals and schools and everything else, and then he was run out of town by the local residents, who didn't think that that was what they wanted. But there is a Baldwin, Louisiana, so that's some of my father's father's side.

My father's mother's side was the Hoffmans who founded the General Theological Seminary in New York, and that's why my father was from New York, and my mother was from Brooklyn. The General Theological Seminary is Episcopal, and my great-great grandfather built it. I've been there, and there were portraits of my granny and all of those ancestors, and they all look just like the Walkers.

On my father's mother's side were the Episcopalians, and my father's father's side was the inventors – John Baldwin was an inventor. So, these were very different kinds of people: the Episcopalians were traditional, and perhaps, rested more on protocol. And John Baldwin was a renegade socialist and inventor. And, on my mother's side we had those Quakers who just settled nicely in Long Island and persevered, and then the Van Andens. So those are four different strains.

VB – When you were growing up, did you go to Quaker churches?

GW – No, I never even knew about the Quakers, because it skipped two generations. My grandmother didn't care. Before her, her mother had been born a Quaker, but didn't care that much, and she's the one who married a Van Anden from

Duchess County, so they just became Dutch Reform, which is like Congregational: United Church of Christ. I never knew anything about the Quakers, and I was very active in the UCC. I was head of my little youth fellowship when I was fifteen and very into it. And then I went to a tennis camp in Pennsylvania, and they had a Quaker meeting on the grounds of the school – the West Town school – and I set one foot inside the meeting house, and knew it was for me. I told my mother at the end of the summer how much I'd liked the Quaker meeting. She said, "Oh! That's interesting, dear. Did you know you come from seven generations of Quakers on Long Island?" And I said, "No." It's the most important thing in my life, and I'm sure that they just claimed me! My ancestors were lying around saying, "Whom can we get to speak our values out there – to go out into the world and say Quaker things? Oh! This one – this one here ought to do!" And so they got me.

VB – That's wonderful. So, the Episcopalian part – you didn't go to church in that tradition?

GW – No, my father went to the Episcopal Church with my oldest sister, and then my mother and the younger two girls – me and my middle sister – went to the Congregational Church. When we were growing up, they were next to each other. And then the two grandmothers…when Granny from New York visited, she went with my father to the Episcopal Church, and Grandmother on my mother's side went with us to the Congregational Church. It was an amicable way of dividing up the children. I know it doesn't make very much sense.

VB – How many siblings do you have?

GW – I have two older sisters.

VB – Are either of them in music?

GW – No.

VB – You have talked about how you picked up the piano on your own.

GW – It was just there. I taught myself – it was in the house. I'm an inventor like my father – I'm always interested in mechanical things. I've recently come across these slides of me when I was a baby, because I'm living in my mother's home, and I'm trying to sort through things. And there I was with a stroller – a tiny infant, you know – and my parents threw a picnic blanket on the ground and they were eating a picnic, and my two

sisters were playing, and I was examining the construction of the stroller! Almost every picture of me, I'm trying to take something apart – unless it was a tennis ball, which I was also fascinated with as a child. The piano was a fascination to me - how it worked and what you could do with it. Anything that was in the house I would explore. But the piano I didn't just spend one hour at – I explored it and realized that you had a lifetime of exploring that particular mechanical object.

VB – When you were teaching yourself, did you only play your compositions?

GW – I expressed myself by playing the piano, and then, by ear, I would start playing any song I could hear from records. I could play all the Gene Autry songs or whatever – my mother had these little things. And then, I could read the notes on the page when I was about six.

VB – You taught yourself that?

GW – Well, it's pretty easy when there're these big blobs that either go up or down. I think somebody must have shown me where middle C was. I learned how to read music, but it was more interesting to make up my own. I could play through things, but I lost patience. I'm actually not very visual, so I think that's what it was. I lost interest quickly - I just don't care to stare at anything for very long. So I would play things by ear.

VB – When did you start playing the guitar?

GW – I played all sorts of instruments because my parents could see that I was interested in music, so they got lots of instruments: toy instruments – you could get toy trombones and trumpets – I had the whole arsenal – I had an orchestra. And then, I think there was a ukulele that my mother got. So, by the time I was really small, I could play a melody – just simple steps on the ukulele, not chords, but I could figure out how to go up and down a melody. Somewhere along the line, I used to play the chords, so they got me a bigger ukulele called a baritone ukulele, which is almost like a guitar, and I used to have a shoulder strap so I would be like Elvis Presley with my baritone ukulele. From there, it's not hard to learn the guitar, because the top four strings of the guitar are the baritone ukulele. So, by the time I was 13, my mother had obtained this small size Spanish guitar – we still have it - and I learned to play that. Then I graduated to a full size guitar. So, I've always been playing a stringed instrument.

VB – Did you play mostly folk music on it?

GW – Yeah, and now I play it all the time because I play for the nursing home. I've also been writing some music for flute and guitar that was commissioned by somebody, so my fingers are really tough now.

VB – Do you have any of the early works? Did you keep any of the things that you were writing when you were a kid?

GW – No, most tunes I made up in my mind. But, I did write down little orchestra things. Actually, my father was such a saver of things that I think that, within the piano bench, there are some of my early scribblings of parts. I had written little pieces that my friends had to play, and I would put their name on it: "Mimi," and then it would show what Mimi had to play. So, I still have that, but you wouldn't want to see it.

VB – When did you start formally composing, or did you just always do that with your friends?

GW – I've always done it. In first grade, they all had to come to my house and play my piece before we could go outside. They just accepted that. When I was in junior high, my friends all wanted arrangements for their rock-n-roll songs. And when I was in high school, my parents sent me away to a school which was called Abbot Academy, Abbot was the sister school to Phillips Andover, but now it's all merged. At that time it wasn't. They had very good music and I was in all sorts of singing groups. I did all the arrangements for an octet.

VB – Was that mostly folk music?

GW – Yes, and I played the guitar, and another girl in the group also played the guitar, and we sang. We were really good, so all the boys' schools wanted us to come, which was great because that was a new thing. The girls' school had never sent us – or anybody – outside of the school to perform. But we were taken into Boston to make a record. That was special.

VB – How fun!

GW – Yes. So, I did a lot of writing. I would stay up at night with my flashlight arranging. And then, I would also make up my own melodies, especially at the piano – songs, but nothing orchestral. It was mostly arranging for them.

VB – I know you have said that your mom was interested in Italian opera.

GW – Yes, she was – she still loves opera.

VB – Did you start singing at a young age, or did you start that when you went to the Academy?

GW – I've always sung and put on shows for captive audiences like my bedridden grandmother. The maid's daughter, who had a nice voice, and me, would put on a big production, and descend the stairwell singing, and I'd be playing the guitar.

VB - Where did the theatrical part of your music come from? Do you think that's from your mother?

GW – Oh, yes, that's from my mother. She loves staged things. Somebody asked her where this came from in her, and she blurted out just a couple years ago that she had wanted to be an opera singer. Well, my mother doesn't even sing! And, I gather my Grandmother on my mother's side - the Quaker person - used to put on theatricals. It was some ladies' drama club, and Grandma was active in it. It was before the time I knew her. I just can't imagine this. My Grandmother was a very bright, kind of strict person, and I can't imagine her with theatricals, but obviously, I didn't know that side of her. My mother's got Italian in her also - on my mother's father's side of the family.

I love theatricality, too. But I never really thought about it, until I started throwing a few little things in. It was so great to be in the audience and see how much people enjoyed having anything go on on the stage that was of interest to them. Now my friends and neighbors in Vermont are always trying to get me to do things. And even when I write a serious piece, they're always waiting for something theatrical to happen. Even if anything unusual happens like a door slams shut in the hall, they're sure that something's going to happen! They don't want to miss it.

VB – Do you have any desire to write opera or musical theater?

GW – I'm interested in doing more things that are theatrical, whether it's orchestral or choral. Yes, I'd be interested in doing chamber opera, but not the Houston Grand Opera, that kind of thing - that's not me at all. One has to remember whom one is writing for, and I write for my friends and neighbors in Vermont who are not wealthy people, or for the friends I've met across the country that like to go to concerts and maybe bring their children and wear their regular clothes. So, if I were to start writing grand opera where you had to pay fifty dollars to get in and you had to be all dressed up,

that's wrong – for me – because other people are doing that. But I am interested in anything that's theatrical, including incorporating that style in my choral works – not the one that's done here [*I Thank You God*] – but other pieces. For example, reading a poem and then singing the piece, or if there's some staging that would work – I like that. In orchestral works, I did this piece for the Vermont Symphony that's based on Robert Frost poems about leaves – about foliage – and people can read the poems first. It's really nice at an orchestral concert to have either a narrator or sometimes a conductor just turn around and read a Robert Frost poem in a natural tone – not through a loudspeaker or anything, and then the orchestra plays the piece. So that kind of programmatic theme I'd like to do more of. It's beautiful and interesting. I'm not very interested in writing a cerebral symphony where people either are with me or not. I am interested in something where each person will find that either the poem or the music, or hopefully both, will speak to them.

VB – That's why I asked about the opera, because I thought it would be interesting to see, with your ability to reach people, what you would do with that form.

GW – Well, I would love to do a chamber opera if I had a libretto. I've certainly looked – and looked and looked! But, I think I approximate that just by doing what I do with choral music. I try to make it theatrical, and I'm doing more extended works that have many different poems by one poet. It becomes quite engrossing just as that. It's not standing up and singing the "Hallelujah Chorus." It's more thoughtful words put together.

VB – Let's talk about text a little bit. First of all, what poets attract you the most?

GW – Living American poets. That's my first choice by far. Certainly not Blake [William] or somebody like that – I prefer somebody living, or a twentieth century American. I've never been to Latin America, or to an Asian country – so I would feel artificial, in a way, trying to capture somebody else's culture. That's just me – I realize that other American composers can do that very well. But there are not that many of us who really live in the United States, in the country, and are close to the earth, and so I like to use that. I'm an American person, and that's what I understand: living American poets.

VB – When you were a kid, is that what you were drawn to as well?

GW - When I was a small child, I certainly didn't read poetry, but when I was an adolescent, I got more interested in poetry. But I think I read things that I could understand, at least superficially, like Robert Frost and A. E. Houseman, and poets like that. In college, I did set those kinds of poets. But now, I like people like Lucille Clifton, who I've done a lot with, and May Swenson and e. e. cummings, and I just did a piece on Tagore [Rabindranath], an Indian poet - actually, that's crossing the culture a bit. But I tried very hard to be faithful to his words. So, there are probably other examples from outside the American culture - I don't have anything in front of me of the projects I've done – but mostly I am interested in living American poets.

VB – Virginia Adair.

GW – Oh, yes – Virginia Adair. I set a lot of American folk songs - no folk song is safe from me! I vary between either doing completely original material, or taking a folk song and really changing it. I don't just arrange it: I completely dissect it and add huge amounts of myself to it. I like to do folk songs because they're familiar to people.

VB – Can you put your finger on what draws you to a certain poet or a certain text?

GW – Oh, yes: something that's readily comprehensible - it's not convoluted. Something that, if you were reading it to me and I didn't have it in front of me, I could understand it: I could understand the words, and I could understand the imagery. And I don't mean it has to be simple so you understand everything. It may create some images that you're not sure you understand, but you feel they touch you somewhere. So, anything that's readily comprehensible – and beautiful! I'm not interested in slanderous, violent poetry – that's not my life – I'm a Quaker. I like things that are more beautiful and egalitarian. So, I wouldn't be for anything violent, or anything that praises one person above another.

VB – I asked some of my friends who are fellow conductors, "If you could ask Gwyneth Walker a question, what would you ask her?" And they had several things in common. One of the questions was, "I would want to know how the process works for her, because the texts seem so strongly welded to the music, and it's very clear that the text is prominent and important, and that she pays a great deal of attention to the rhythms of the text." I know you have talked about sitting with the text, and maybe taking a walk,

and then beginning to conjure it as a whole. Can you speak a little more about that process?

GW – Well, it would seem to me obvious how to set a text to music, however, I have heard on occasion some other settings of the same poems that I've set to music, and I don't want to make it sound too snooty, but I've heard some unsuccessful settings of the same poems. I'm amazed why there would be a difference between a successful and an unsuccessful setting, and in the unsuccessful one it seems to me that the person isn't at all sensitive to what the poet is saying! They use the words as sort of a handhold for writing a piece of music, that is, they just throw some notes at the words. So, it's not that you simply assign a note to go with a word; it's that first you understand the meaning of the poem. Just like in the Schubert songs: often the accompaniment says the whole thing, and of course, the accompaniment isn't singing the poem; the accompaniment is summing up some of the moods that will be presented in the poem. It's not the words you're trying to express; it's the underlying meaning of the poem. So, if the poem is one that is very expansive and gentle, then you want to be sure that the overall impression of the piece is expansive and gentle. The last thing one should worry about is what note goes with what word. But, I think sometimes people start with that as the first thing, and then they miss it. I guess it's a special gift.

Some of my friends who are wonderful orchestral composers are not good with setting poems to music. Firstly, they perhaps don't even feel comfortable writing for the voice, but they're also not good at just letting their feelings be out there; they're perhaps more intellectual in a way. I will have a response to the poem, and then let my feelings speak, along with trying to shape the piece of music. So I do use my mind, hopefully, but it's more that you want to have your heart and your soul respond to the poem. And then, you find overall musical language that suits the whole thing, and finally, the specific things.

When people first started reviewing my music and I had an orchestral piece played, which I thought was just a regular orchestral piece, the critics said, "Dr. Walker has a magnificent gift for evoking imagery in her music." And this was an orchestral thing! And I thought, "Well, gee, I wonder what that person heard in it?" Other times, people would come up to me after an orchestral work and say, "Oh, I saw this, I felt

this…!" and I thought, "Whoa, if they would feel that about an orchestral work, imagine what would happen in a choral work!" And so, I'm sort of an imagery, feeling kind of composer, and of course, a poem is imagery and feeling, so that works for me. Another composer could be more skilled than I in orchestral writing, whether it's shaping the piece, or just idiomatic writing for certain instruments, and be superior in that, but not have this particular skill: this is my particular skill. Maybe it's because I started when I was a small child, so I never started later on thinking, "Oh, dear, I better learn how to write music!" I just did it! By the time I realized you were supposed to learn how to do this, it was too late, because I was already writing! So, there is very little separation between me and music. It's all one and the same – just open the door.

VB – That seems pretty clear when you hear your music, yes.

GW – Thank you.

VB – Just to back track a little bit… Can you go through your schooling after high school and how you came to teach at Oberlin?

GW – I told you in high school, I went to Abbot, which was part of Andover, and it had good music, which was one of the reasons my parents sent me there, because the New Canaan Public Schools were excellent academically – in fact, I skipped a grade when I went to private school, believe it or not – but the New Canaan Public Schools did not have good sports and good music, which were two of my main interests: science, sports and music: these were my three things. So, they sent me away. Consequently, I got a very good high school education in all regards, including having some theory tutoring at Abbot, plus all the arranging I was doing. And, I sang in every group: I was in about four different choruses: the Glee Club, the Chapel Choir, my octet – and even a mixed madrigals group with boys from Andover. So, by the time I got to college, I had already had good exposure to music. When you ask about college, it is almost too late. If you don't have some music theory or something when you arrive at college, you are frantically trying to learn the very basic rudiments when you're at college – which seems weird to me. When I showed up at Brown, I got exempted from a lot of the music theory, and I was immediately writing for the orchestra, or taking more advanced theory stuff – not that Brown was a music school, mind you – but I kept getting skipped ahead into more interesting things, so my education at Brown was almost entirely independent study

with Paul Nelson, who's a professor there. Ron Nelson was also there, but he was on sabbatical, so I ended up studying more with Paul Nelson. We studied one-on-one: each week I would bring in a piece I was working on. I wrote two pieces, I think, for the Brown Orchestra – and one where I got a reading from the Rhode Island Philharmonic.

VB – Wow.

GW – Yeah! It was just a reading, but I did have the experience of writing an orchestral work, completing it on time, copying all the parts, and getting into the hands of the conductor at least three times. And if you would say, "Well, of course a student would do that." Well, my God, when I got to graduate school at the Hartt School, some of those students had never completed an orchestral piece. Some of those people had never even really completed a piece! And when I was there, pardon me for saying this, some of them did not complete a piece there! Each lesson time would be another drama, saga, in their life, why they couldn't get another measure down, you know. But, my teacher, Arnold Franchetti, was not one who would accept that. He didn't say, "Oh, of course, the dilemma of the 20th century composer: you can't write!" He would look at them and then look at me, and say, "Well, what do you have?" And to the others, "At least she can write!" So my experience at Brown was mostly independent study.

I was also in this folk group there where I did much more arranging – and we were performing all the time.

VB – This was a mixed group?

GW – No, this was a women's group – at Pembroke – part of Brown. It was a very, good group, and I fought hard to get into it. But I was a freshman – I was the only freshman that they took when I first got there. You can imagine the competition, so it was tough. But, I had my guitar skills, plus I could sight-read, and that's what they needed frantically. I was in that for four years, and we rehearsed every day. I did all the arrangements after the first year. Everything I arranged was immediately rehearsed by this group of women. So, therefore, when I'm writing for women's chorus, I would hope I could write for women's chorus, you know! I did it. And imagine: every single day we rehearsed, and we sang. I didn't arrange a new thing every day, but I did arrange six to eight pieces each year that were full songs and that we performed in public. And some of them were really very creative arrangements. I remember we sang one song that another

group had sung – it was a staple of their repertoire. We sang it at a festival at Cornell. When we sang it, you could hear a pin drop.

VB – Do you remember what it was?

GW – It was an arrangement of "Softly, As I Leave You." But it was very sad – and moving! And at the end, the other group came up and they told us they were going to drop it from their repertoire – they felt their arrangement paled. And theirs was by some professional Hollywood person! Mine wasn't nearly as slick, but it had a lot more heart to it.

When I went to graduate school at Hartt for my Master's degree, I put my guitar away, because it wasn't the same there at all. I had never been to a music school. I did not come from a musical family; I did not come from a town where there were professional musicians. We didn't know anything about music school. But somehow, I was convinced by one of my cousins to apply to the Hartt School in Hartford, because my cousin was an admirer of the school. And when I went there, it was wonderful! It was the most wonderful experience to see all of these other musicians, and I thought, for once I had finally found a place where I really fit in. In fact, I was about the sanest person at the Hartt School! Coming from such a conventional town as New Canaan…well, it was wonderful to see all these crazy musicians running around!

I took all the courses - composition and theory – and I did very well as a Master's student; that's why they wanted me to come back and be their first doctoral student in composition. All of it was interesting to me, including the heavily intellectual material, like advanced music theory - I lapped that up! The more complicated, the better I did. I guess my little scientist mind stepped in. I wasn't afraid to try anything, and so the teachers were very positive towards me. Some of them really hadn't had any further education than where we were at, because we were at the doctoral level. Sometimes they simply provided me with an assignment of a piece that they themselves had perhaps never analyzed and might not be able to do any better than me given the amount of time, you know. And we helped each other through, and it was great fun!

When I applied for a job at Oberlin, I had to compete – hard! I think there were 150 applicants, and it came down – finally – to a Ph.D. from Harvard, and a Ph.D. from Yale – and me! And those two guys had to give their lecture, and they weren't as good at

it as I was, because I had been teaching for years at the Hartt School. So, when it came to the lecture time, and the professors tried to throw barbs at me, I'd already seen all of that before, you know? So, the training at the Hartt School stood me really well.

VB – You were teaching theory and composition?

GW – No, just theory, because I was a teaching fellow. Actually, I was teaching ear training, which I had never been taught, since a lot of the courses that people take at music school I had tested out of. So, I ended up teaching ear training and I found it very interesting. I also taught keyboard harmony, and later, undergraduate music theory. And then when I got to Oberlin, they had me teaching advanced students, because I had a doctorate, and I was right out of music school, and I had studied some of the latest kinds of things, like Schenkerian analysis and set theory. And some of the other professors were older and they had never been at school at the time that some of these theories were in vogue. And yet, they knew those things had to be taught.

The ear training at Oberlin was advanced, the kind where you would talk about different musical styles and listen to them. For an exam, the teacher would simply play excerpts of music from all eras, and the students were supposed to tell what the harmonic language is, what kind of progressions. If they could identify the composer, fine. I never cared about "drop the needle" things. But they were supposed to tell, just from listening to thirty seconds, what century this was from, and why they thought so. So I had really challenging classes at Oberlin, and we analyzed everything.

VB – Did you teach composition?

GW – Yeah, I had a couple of lost composers. They had a faculty teaching composition. But students would come in who were perhaps more interested in folk music or song writing. And the rest of the department said, "Go see Gwyneth Walker!" And I'd have students in tears, because they had been down the hall, and in the whole Theory Department there wasn't one faculty member who wanted to teach them. And I said I would. And they would just burst into tears because somebody was interested.

I was also a tennis coach at Oberlin.

VB – Oh, you were?

GW – Yes. We did very well.

VB – Good for you! So you made a decision to leave Oberlin, around – what year was that?

GW – I guess it was around 1980. I arrived around ’76 or ’77. It was basically about four years, roughly, that I was there. When I first came, I thought, “This is wonderful! This is what I do for my whole life.” I settled right in, and that’s when they got me to be the tennis coach as well. I had a nice apartment and a wonderful office and wonderful students. I wrote thank you notes to my professors from the Hartt School, because it was their training that prepared me to teach more so than some of the other people I was competing with. I was educated very well, and so I thanked my professors, and said, “This is it; I’m so happy!”

And then, I began to notice that I didn’t have any time to write, and neither did any of the other composers – no one was writing! They were waiting until the summer or something, and I thought, “This won’t do!” I kept trying to re-do my schedule so certain days I could write and teach, but the teaching – because they kept assigning me more advanced classes – was big! I was also in the bus with the tennis team all the time, and I just didn’t have enough hours in the day. Giving up sports is not an answer, because if you don’t get any exercise you can’t do anything. By the second year I thought, “Hmm, this is not working.” And so, I had to make a decision early on, when I was about thirty years old, that I wasn’t going to stay, because they were offering me a way to continue to stay there. After all this training and these degrees, I still said, “I’m going to leave teaching because I don’t think I’m ever going to do my writing like this, and I don’t see anybody around me doing it. And if I don’t do this now, I am never going to be able to forgive myself!”

So, I just don’t ever want any regrets, and I still constantly challenge myself in that regard. I’ll do something and then I’ll think, “Am I making the most of my skills? If not, I’m never going to forgive myself.” Now, I’m in my early fifties, and I’ll say, “I’ve got thirty or forty years left of writing – am I doing what I should with my writing?” We all follow paths, and then we realize, maybe, we could adjust that to still go higher. For example, over the past decade or so, I’ve written a lot of works on commission. Very often, people will contact me and ask me for a certain kind of piece, and I will fill that order. I think you saw that page yesterday with all my new choral works?

VB – Yes.

GW – I was exhausted when I typed that! I thought, "Oh, my God! No wonder I'm tired; there were about eighteen pieces on there that I've written, and that's not even including my orchestral and chamber works!" I have been meeting everybody else's needs with pieces that I like to write, but now it's time for me to decide more what I want to do, and then when people offer a commission, I will suggest the kind of work. I don't want to be following any longer. Not that I don't appreciate the offers that came in, but many times, somebody will request a piece because that's all that they know. They requested a similar piece two years ago from another composer, and that was good, so they'll try the same request from me. Sometimes it's the first time a group has commissioned a piece, and they're pretty frightened. So, they'll want to do exactly what the chorus in the next town has done, you know, because they don't want to get 'taken.'

VB – Right.

GW – Now it's up to me to say, "These are the sorts of things I'm interested in doing."

VB – And what direction are you taking now?

GW – More theatrical works, especially in the choral field; I'm interested in doing things with instruments and more interesting poetry – perhaps more extended works. I'm not into having the chorus stand on the stage and sing a three-minute work and look at you. I've done so many of those. But, I already have years worth of things to do first, so I'm not yet working much in the new areas.

VB – Is the humor in your music that is part of the theatricality of your music something that comes naturally to you?

GW – Well, it did, but I never realized that I had that. Let's put it this way: at graduate school, that word was never used! So, my professor, Franchetti, had many views of me, but funny was never one of them! But I did occasionally put a little bit of humor in. I think the first thing I did was "Cheek to Cheek", a arrangement I wrote – I don't know – twenty years ago or more. And it is funny! I have seen the pleasure that singers take in putting a little humor in there. Sometimes I'll suggest to them, "Altos, 'sensuously' at the end – you know [imitates the sound] – 'cheek to cheek'". And then, at the performance, what comes out - each person's view of that - is ten times funnier than

anything I've ever done! Just to see some of those people being themselves is so great! I mean, not everybody's funny, so people who aren't shouldn't try to be, but even people who are very serious can sometimes realize the humor in their overly seriousness, and make fun of themselves.

I have found that humor is universal, and that I will write something that has some humor, and my friends and neighbors in Vermont will laugh at "measure three and one half" – it's always there. Then I'll be with the same piece in Manhattan, and people come in at exactly the same spot! I feel like saying, "Do you realize…?" Because I think that sometimes people in 'prestigious' places think that they might know more. But, I have to tell you that they laughed at exactly the same spot and exactly the same kind of thing.

I have this piece, *Match Point*, where the conductor conducts with the tennis racket, and I really don't know what is so funny about that, but it just occurred to me it would be funny. And it is funny, but for different reasons, for different people, and depending on who's conducting it. Some people will think it's very funny just to see the tennis balls on stage, and other people will think this is very odd, and then, after it's been going on for a little while, proceed to belly laugh as if, "Oh, my God! What am I doing watching this?"

So, especially if I see in a poem that there are a few lines - especially a little pause here, or a little chord there – could just be a little touch that would make it funny – then yes, I like to do that. You can be funny in chamber music, too, or in orchestral music in any number of ways, so you don't have to have words. If you entitle something: *The Charge of the Elephants*, – and then you have the brass doing something - I think people would get it pretty quickly. I have my Braintree Quintet, a woodwind quintet that has the oboe and the bassoon as sheep, and it really is very funny. But, when I did this, I said, "Oh, I don't know – this could be silly." There was nothing that people would know, "Oh, here come the sheep." It was just, "What was that sound?" But when the ensemble performed it, it was very funny. The audience broke in – you know, you're not supposed to clap between movements – but that one, people just hooted and hollered and screamed. Everybody did! And I thought, "Oh, thank God they thought it was clever!" That piece has been performed a lot. If you have just one funny number, then people are engaged

much more in the whole concert. So often, I'll have a funny number, and then I will write my most serious, heartfelt selection right after that, and people don't start to chuckle and then stop themselves – it's not at all like that. It's that, I think people know, "Oh, this composer is writing something for us to listen to, and now what is she saying? Oh, now she is putting forth her feelings! Oh, let's listen to that! Oh, I feel that way, too!"

VB – With the e. e. cummings, you said something yesterday in rehearsal about dealing with his poetry…

GW – Yes, his poems. To some people, they don't make sense - my mother would be an example. She would not be able to make any sense out of an e. e. cummings poem, and I know other people often don't, either – because they read a poem very literally. One of the things about e. e. cummings is, although he uses, many times, just average words, he sticks them in unusual order so that they jolt you. You say, "What? I thank you God for MOST this amazing day? Aren't you trying to say, 'I thank you God for this MOST amazing day?" No, no, it's the other way around. Then you realize that you paid special attention to the words because they were re-ordered, so they're odd. But, that entire poem, you have to read a couple times, especially in the middle, to think, "What is he saying?" And some of the words are almost impossible to understand, so in this setting, I chopped them up; there were a string of about eight words in the middle that were very hard to understand. So what I did was use three of them with the subject and the verb, and then I went back and used one-two-three-four-five of them (subject and verb also included), and then all of them, so you get an understanding about the cumulative effect. I had to get special permission from the publisher, because I knew we couldn't re-order his words. But, if I didn't do that, it wouldn't make sense to the listener, and it might not make sense to the singers, either.

In the song *White Horses* that people know fairly well, I took just five lines from a poem that is much longer. Because I focused on those lines only, most people get some meaning from that song. It may not be the same meaning, but they get some meaning. But if you were to look at the entire poem, it would be an impossible one to sing, because it goes off in different tangents. You wouldn't know what the choir was singing about!

So, cummings is a poet whose imagery is beautiful, and the words are beautiful, but I often have to take special care in presenting them in a way that people who are not

poetry lovers in the audience can understand. Not everybody in the audience is there with a background in reading poetry! They're more used to hearing an *Ave Verum* or something. So if somebody starts singing a new contemporary poem, you have to be sure that people can get something out of it.

VB – I know you say that you don't like to think of composers as influences, but as people you admire, because you are always writing as yourself. And yet, you mention certain composers, for example, that you believe a student should start with Mozart and go to Beethoven. In articles I have read, you have mentioned Strauss, Britten, Bartok and Shostakovich, and a lot of American composers – like Ives – that you think should be studied.

GW – I like American composers, yes - and Charles Ives with his hymn tunes. Ives is from Danbury, Connecticut, which is nearby. People often say of my music, "Well, that's sort of like Charles Ives." They mean in the concept, they don't mean in the sound, because Charles Ives was not a particularly warm, melodious kind of composer. But he did have a quirky sense of humor, and he was a New England person, and he borrowed from the American tradition. So, in those regards, I'm like Charles Ives; however, I was doing all the things I was doing before I ever even heard the name Charles Ives. He certainly wasn't an influence; he's just like a neighbor to me. Copland also happened to live not far away in New York. I love *Appalachian Spring*, and some of my music that is very American sounding sounds like Aaron Copland, but I wrote things that sounded like that before I ever heard *Appalachian Spring*. I played a lot of folk music, that's mostly it: American folk songs, all of that. Peter, Paul and Mary, the Everly Brothers, Judy Collins – I played all of those things a thousand times over.

VB - You have mentioned James Taylor and Joni Mitchell…

GW – I listened to all that, and I also studied other music. I love Richard Strauss and Puccini for their vocal writing. I love the Strauss *Last Songs.* I'd be flattered to think that they influenced my music, but I am sure my training in that regard did contribute to my writing.

VB – Was Joni Mitchell an influence on you as far as her poetic writing and her guitar tunings?

GW – No. She writes song lyrics; I don't. She's a very imaginative, creative songwriter and I'm not like that: I don't write lyrics and I don't do guitar tunings like that. But I've listened to a lot of that music, so some of the chord progressions and rhythms used were interesting to me.

VB – Have you felt any desire to write your own lyrics?

GW – No, occasionally I have to, with a couple of songs I've done, especially when it's for a wedding music for friends. But I don't have the training, so why would I be better than any other beginner? What I do love is finding good poetry that's already in existence.

VB – Nature is clearly a big influence on your writing.

GW – Yes, I was just reading Emerson's essay on nature today.

VB – And is that an aural influence on you, as well as a spiritual influence?

GW – No, it's more just the spiritual aspect of it. [Reading from Emerson] "Nature says, Man is my creature; he shall be glad with me. Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its trivial delight." The peace and the harmony with God, being part or parcel of God when standing in nature - yes! That is the whole point, isn't it? I love living in the country; I'm very happy. I don't particularly like coming to cities and staying in hotels.

VB – I loved what you said in the Gene Brooks' Choral Journal article: "Music is what you do when you're in the midst of your responsibilities."

GW – Yes, the rest of your life is always happening, too. Right now, with my mother's illness, I would love to say, "Oh! I'm a composer," but sometimes you have to do other things, too. And even when I'm not taking care of her, I still have all my responsibilities. So, I can't say, "Well, I'm a composer and the world is just me and my page." Firstly, I'm writing for other people who perform the music, they're doing a lot for me: we all work together. I write the piece for them and hope that they like it. It's not always possible to just be a composer: you are, at the very least, a member of a family or a relationship, and you're a member of community – which I am very much in Vermont, and I feel responsible to them. My music business is a lot of work – it takes time to get all that music out to people; not only because I have several publishers – but a lot of it does come down to me putting the music in an envelope and keeping in touch with

everyone. I spend as much time at that as at my writing. But why spend hundreds of hours writing a piece if it's just going to sit there unrealized? If you write a piece you really believe in, you should get it out there! But a lot of people don't want to do that. They say, "Oh, I can't be bothered." Or, "I'm not practical." Well, baloney! It's just not fun to do it, that's all! And it doesn't give you an ego thrill to be binding scores and putting them in the mailers.

VB – Right.

GW – But then the piece gets out there, and people really do perform it. And two days later, when the priority mail has gotten there and you get a call from someone that says, "That's perfect, we're programming it for next season and buying 75 copies from E. C. Schirmer," you think, "Oh, I'm so glad I took the time to send that out!"

VB – Here's a question another one of my choral director friends had. She said, "Ask her about the shimmering quality that she achieves with a lot of her pieces like *White Horses*, *Silver Apples of the Moon* – a lot of the women's music. Ask her what she wants the singers to communicate when she writes with that texture, because a lot of her music has that quality."

GW – You picked pieces that have to have shimmering qualities, because that's what the poem is about. I know that in *Silver Apples of the Moon* there's a lot of gentle arpeggio in the piano, while people are singing, "The silver apples of the moon, the golden apples of the sun." I'm attempting, as best I can, to create the image of the poem, and it's ephemeral. So you would have filigree patterns in the accompaniment that would give you that delicacy of these things. We're not talking about anvils and concrete dams; we're talking about apples in the sun, and the moon and rippling water.

In *White Horses*, there's a nice melody, so you want to make sure that it comes through. But the first eight measures in the piano say it all - they create an atmosphere – because it's very high and gentle in the accompaniment. I remember I was at some kind of Connecticut Arts Awards thing in some big convention hall. It wasn't a musical event at all – they were giving people awards for being writers. But for some reason, they had hired this chorus, *Concora*, to come and sing. They had decided to sing a few songs written by Connecticut composers, so they chose *White Horses*. The governor and all these dignitaries were at this event – and it was very tense and pompous because it was

being televised. Then *Concora* stepped forward, and the accompanist, who was Larry Allen, who's a very good pianist, played the accompaniment for *White Horses*. The chorus hadn't even sung yet, and the audience listened to Larry Allen play eight measures on the piano in the high range, gently, and you could see about a thousand pairs of shoulders going, "Aaaahh!" It was wonderful, because the audience didn't have to feel any pressure – they could relax. It was the first time within these arts awards that there had been anything – artistic! So, that is what I work toward in my accompaniments – being able to convey the image of the poem.

VB – To me, that's one of the best things about your writing: the piano is never just plunk, plunk, plunk.

GW – I try to express. I never studied the piano, so I'm always grateful when I write something that's even mildly pianistic. I'm sure I don't exploit the full capabilities, because I try to write something that I could play at least even slowly. And since I'm not really a pianist, I'm missing the boat. But, now that I play a lot of piano in the nursing home – I'm playing the piano all the time for everybody - and people are coming up to me all the time and saying, "I've never seen anybody play the piano and put so much feeling into it!" And that's because I never had a teacher who said, "Oh! Nope! Nope! None of that!" The piano is like my heart opening, and so I'll play folk songs, or whatever I feel like playing.

Remember when you hear my piano accompaniments that the person who wrote it never had a Germanic teacher saying, "You do this, or else!" Nor did I have a composition teacher, until I'd been writing music for at least fifteen years, who said, "You may not do that, or that!" I never had a teacher like that; I only had myself who said, "I love the piano!" And I said, "I love writing music!" So, my experience is completely pure; nobody ever murdered my love of music. Even my composition teacher, Franchetti, loved to write, and he loved my writing. My teacher at Brown, who was not like Franchetti, he was not an Italian teacher – but I think he had been to Italy – he said, "Music just pours out of you, doesn't it?" As if to say, "You Waspy person from Connecticut, why is music just pouring out of you?" He said that because every week I came to my lessons and had written quite a bit of music and was so enthusiastic about it

all the time. Of course, I went to my singing group every day and my friends all believed in me, and I know that that helped, too.

VB – Do you ever have writer's block?

GW – I don't have a lack of ideas, but certainly I can get into a place where I am writing a portion of a piece where I would like to do such-and-such, and I'm not sure that I know how to do it. Sometimes it's harder than other times. But, I don't have a single day that goes by that I can't get something done. But, it has been harder with my mother's illness because there have been so many distractions.

VB - Sure. Do you still listen to other people's music?

GW – I do listen to it some of the time at home. My colleagues send me tapes of their latest works, or colleagues and friends send me CDs of music that they really like. My friend Hilary Tan, who is mostly an orchestra composer with Oxford [Publishers] – Welsh – my name is Welsh and I love Welsh things – she sends me recordings of her works, which I love to listen to. She sent me a CD of William Matthias, a Welsh composer. She was in China and sent me some Chinese music. But, when I go to concerts and conventions, that's when I can hear things, and I'm always interested to do so. Mostly, my music is not put on programs with new music; it's put on traditional programs, which is what I like. So, I don't mind listening to traditional works, either. But, if there are works by other living composers, of course, I listen very attentively and am very interested – I don't want to bury my head in the sand. Somebody could write something that really sparks me to write better; or somebody could write something that, per se, is interesting, and I want to know that.

VB – So, now you mostly listen to living composers that you know, as opposed to Stravinsky, and…

GW – Yes. I wouldn't go home at night and put on Strauss. I wouldn't customarily spend my evenings listening to traditional repertoire CDs at home. I do a lot of my mailings and my correspondence in the evening and listening to music is a distraction. But I did spend all those years getting my masters and doctorate and teaching, so I have put in my time. I listened to a lot of music at the Hartt School. There's nothing like being at a good school with a good music library. Also, teaching all that repertoire taught me a lot. So I do know it, and when I'm at concerts, I'm not a

composer who would go hear my work and then walk out of the hall. I listen to everything. And often, when I'm working with an orchestra or a chorus, I go to several rehearsals, which means I listen to the entire program several times.

I was recently in Florida with the Brevard Symphony in Melbourne, and we did six school concerts which had one of my overtures on it, and it had a whole bunch of other pieces on it – mostly Ravel and Mozart and Beethoven. I heard the concerts from the stage, just off to the side. It was great! It helped me with my orchestration a lot, I mean, I could feel the percussion and the brass through my feet. I was almost a member of the percussion: if I'd taken a step to the left, I would have been in the percussion section. So I learned more about the orchestra from that hands-on experience – because I never played in an orchestra. I had done a lot of singing, so I feel more secure about that kind of writing. But, there's nothing like standing in the middle of an orchestra!

VB – When you were singing in choruses, were you an alto or a soprano, or did you sing a little of both?

GW – Well, I certainly wasn't a first soprano! I was probably a higher sort of alto. I was told by David Isley, who's a choral conductor, voice teacher and friend of mine, "Why, Gwyneth, your voice isn't half bad when you're up higher!" I said, "Oh, you mean I'm not a second alto?" He said, "No, if you had learned how to support your voice, you would be able to sing higher." But, I never had any voice lessons – I just belt it out!

VB – In *River Songs: The Water is Wide*, where you re-wrote the standard folk melody, was that a visceral thing where you decided, "I think I'm going to change and re-do the melody?"

GW – I don't know why I decided to re-do the melody. Was it because I thought the other one might be copyrighted, or was it because I was tired of it…I don't know. It's a beautiful melody, but people have done such wonderful arrangements, I just decided not to use the regular melody. I decided instead to have the shimmering in the strings, and then for the melody to all be on one pitch: [sings] "The water is wide, I cannot get o'er," as though you're just floating across the water. And then in the accompaniment, the strings are the water: [sings] "And neither have I the wings to fly." So, it's a much less melodic contour than the original folk song, but I thought, if you could have the

strings rippling like the water, it would be nice to hear the chorus [She sings on one pitch] kind of on a pitch while floating on the water, instead of: [She sings the original melody] "The water is wide, I cannot get o'er" – because then you end up trying to arrange that melody that people know so well, and there already have been so many!

VB – Where do you think your independence and your populism come from?

GW – That's the Quaker in me. But, I was just born with those feelings. I was born into a town that could be quite judgmental: New Canaan, Connecticut, is a very well-to-do town. However, when I was a child and my father was a physicist, we were not affluent. We lived in a house that my grandmother had given to us, so we didn't even own our house! We were trying desperately to scrape by. My grandmother paid for my private school. So, I was somebody who lived amongst wealthy people without ever being a wealthy person. And I knew both ends of it; I was privileged to go to a fine private school, and then a fine college, and my grandmother paid for college, too. My inheritance from her paid for my tuition the first year at the Hartt School – then it ran out, and I was a Teaching Fellow. But she never paid for all the other things. We belonged to the country club, because my grandfather had founded it, but we didn't have the money for the lessons for the tennis pro to teach me, so my father taught me! I would earn enough money for a lesson by picking up all the balls left on the court after other kids' lessons. And here I was, the granddaughter of the founder of the club, you know – isn't this ridiculous?! I knew both ends.

Sometimes when I would be picking up balls on the court or helping out the pro in the shop to earn enough money for a lesson, members of the club who didn't know who I was would come in and order me around, "Hey, hey, girl, sell us some tennis balls!" They never called me by my name, and I thought, "Oo – that feels awful to be treated like that!" And, I didn't have it in me to say, "Do you know who you're talking to?" I would never do that. I always identified more with the employees than with the people there, and I always thought the employees were more genuine. Where I live in Vermont now, it's lower middle class at best; there's real poverty there. And boy, am I relaxed around people like that: they're not judgmental. They're much more interested in coming to hear a new piece of music, and if they like it, they like it. They're not affected by the snobbery of wealth. Wealth is a very snobby thing: people judge you more on the money

you have or the credentials you have, or the credentials of the composer, and not on the worth of the music.

Quakers are supposed to be egalitarian, so that ties in: everybody's equal. Isn't that obvious, you know? That's obvious! But not in the arts, it isn't. So sometimes I will have conversations with artists where I say, "Everybody's equal." They say, "Yes." And then I say, "All right…we're at this symphony hall. I hope that you are evaluating the works of new music purely on merit." And they say, "Are you kidding?" They see somebody who's won a Pulitzer Prize and they immediately program it, or the composer is a friend of the conductor, or whatever. But I say, "Now wait a minute! That's not very fair. There are people out there who might be writing better pieces, but they don't happen to know the conductor, or they don't happen to live in Manhattan. Are we giving them a fair chance?" And some people are; and some people aren't. Wherever they do, that's where music is flourishing, because there's open-mindedness, and pieces of interest are being programmed, and people know it in the community, and they know that this is a place where fresh air is abounding - and they want to come! So, that's the way you should do it. It works!

VB – Yes, that's a great philosophy!

GW – I guess I've always been a populist, but I'm more so now.

VB – Do you think of yourself as political in any way?

GW – You mean in the general sense, like I have an agenda?

VB – I suppose.

GW – I'm not able to be as active in politics as I would like, although I did take off a day when I was in Vermont to drive Jeannie Robbins around, because she was our local candidate – to each and every farm house in Braintree on the eastern side - while she went and talked to each and every very conservative farmer and tried to convince some of them to vote for her. So, I did do a little, but I'm, shamefully, not doing enough. But I definitely have a people message, which is that the arts should be for everyone, and we must not get ourselves wrapped in the money and the name identification more than in the quality of the work. We can get more people to come to our concerts, definitely, if we just remind ourselves that we want them to come, and that we're going to program for them. I definitely have a social message. I'm supported by people who believe in me

when I go back to Vermont. They all believe in me, you know? They come up to me at the Grand Union and poke me and say, "We're with you, girl!" Then I'm sent out into the world again. My neighbors are decent people, and they know that I write something of interest to them. I really try hard. So they make me feel that I should try another piece – and another.

VB – If somebody had never heard your music and you had to say to them, "Here is what my music is like." What would you say to somebody on the street? I'm sure people ask you this all the time.

GW – Yes: well-meaning friends of my mother's. "Oh, Dear! How is your music? Now, what does it sound like?" And they don't know anything about music, so at first I say, "It sounds very American." Then they kind of nod, because maybe they think I'm going to write like Mozart – they don't know! They think a composer today writes like Mozart. So, I say, "It sounds American, and it sounds, hopefully, new and fresh – it doesn't sound old and crusty – but it's not too abrasive, and it sounds mostly like me! I have energy – you know – I play tennis." And they all know that, so they nod again. "I have energy and sometimes, even some humor. It sounds sort of like my personality put into music." Then they nod as though they can understand.

I should say, "I like to write melodies that people like to sing, and I actually put my feelings into it." But, that's more introverted, so I just say, "Oh! It's full of life and energy!" Actually, my music is very heart felt and genuine. But, sometimes when they talk to me in the post office, I don't feel like saying that full volume and having everybody turn around! You know, my music sounds just like me, which is embarrassing sometimes, because it sounds like the outer me and it sounds like the inner me. It contains my most tender feelings, and even some of my most sensuous ones, like – do you know *Love is a Rain of Diamonds*?

VB – Yes.

GW – My chorus in Randolph, Vermont performed that, and I wasn't at a rehearsal; I was somewhere else. I came to town the day of the concert, and people said, "We really like what you're writing now!" I said, "Oh?" One woman said, "Oh, it's so sensuous!" Then they all gave me this big smile like, how nice! They didn't say, "Who's in your love life now?" They never said that. Then I went to the concert, and

my God! Out came this sensuous music, and I was sure everybody was staring at me and wondering where I had been and what I had been doing in the last year! I just put my parka – it was cold, and I had my parka there in the church – and I remember inching it closer and closer around me, and slinking down in the pews, because I really felt like – Ahhhhh….OOOOHHH – exposed! The poem, *Love is a Rain of Diamonds,* is a very sensuous poem, so I could say, "Well, I just tried to express May Swenson's poetry." But my God! I was proud but a little embarrassed. So, yes, yes! I know those feelings and I put them in my music.

Everything about me comes out in my music – what's sad about me comes out in my music, what is sensuous about me comes out in my music, what is spiritual about me, what is funny, what is energetic – whatever – it's all there! That's probably because I started writing before somebody told me that I couldn't express myself. Nobody told me not to put myself into my music until it was too late. And then I got too much support from people for doing this to stop me. Nothing would stop me from writing music now, because I have too many other people who would not buy into that. I don't have the luxury of saying, "Oh, I don't feel like writing." I mean, are you kidding? I'd be murdered when I got home.

VB – Yes, I remember that one [*Love is a Rain of Diamonds*] very well! Those feelings are so universal.

GW – Thank God!

VB – Do you make a lot of revisions after you hear a piece, or when it's done, is it just done?

GW – No, sometimes I do revise and sometimes I don't. You mentioned *The Water is Wide* – I re-did the melody, as well as the entire piece, later. It was very tricky balancing the orchestration. Writing for chorus and orchestra is something I love to do, but I haven't done a lot of it. And because people insist on putting the orchestra in front of the chorus, a composer has to very careful.

Sometimes I'll hear a piece and I'll change three notes. Maybe there'll be one note that was copied wrong, and maybe there'll be one I could have tied over to an eighth note and I didn't. Other times, I'll hear a piece and I'll say, "That really could be a good piece, but I didn't do justice to the ending." I have to assign myself a time to re-do it, and

not right away. First, I don't have the time, but secondly, it's very hard to fix things like that. That's why I usually don't give the piece to E. C. Schirmer to put in print before the premiere, although I did for this case [the ACDA National Convention], because of the obvious marketing situation. I write by hand, because I travel, and then I send it immediately to my copyist, Ron, who does it in Finale. The chorus, or the ensemble, premieres it off of the Finale score. If I'm happy with it, I send it to E. C. Schirmer. Sometimes there are pieces when the chorus premieres it where I think, "I'm going to make some changes and I want to hear other people perform it with the changes." A couple of years could pass before I give it to E. C. Schirmer. It's not like I'm trying to pull a sly one or something like that, but why give it to a publisher to put in print if you're not satisfied? It's not skill level - hopefully I get better and better as I go along. But I could try something and then, when I stand back, change it.

Also, some things I do are very long, like the Virginia Adair pieces. When you write it, you are just trying to complete all the pieces according to the outline you made. You cannot expect that all eight or ten selections are going to be perfect; you are just hoping that you can sustain this huge piece and then later – pick away. Because it's so exhausting when you write it, that you don't sometimes say, "Now this one song – instead of taking two weeks I should have taken two months on this one!" Because you wanted to finish!

VB – Do you write out of your head, or do you use a piano?

GW – I use a piano. I write first by going for a walk and thinking about it, and writing down words, descriptive words of what I'd like to do. And sometimes I'll go to the piano right away. Of course, if you're writing something like a brass quintet, it doesn't help to go to the piano!

VB – What kind of descriptive words do you write down?

GW – I'll frame it in my mind and then I'll go write it down and say, "O.k., introduction; now, this main idea; now I have in mind a secondary idea; then the main idea comes back, but it's kind of impacted by the secondary idea; then humorous interlude; then all hell breaks loose and everybody leaves the stage; and then we recapitulate this and then wouldn't it be great if we ended with the whole thing again except no pitches, just flute and guitar.

VB – So, you write mostly from notes?

GW – Yes, a sense of describing the concept.

VB - Do you have any favorite choral pieces, besides your own – things that you admire?

GW - I remember hearing that Conrad Susa thing based on Anne Sexton called *Transformations*, which I thought was dynamite.

VB – The opera.

GW – Yes, published by E. C. Schirmer. I went to see that in New York City and I thought, "That's the kind of thing I would do, would be to take poems…" I was with another person, who I will not identify, who did not find that this was at all interesting. This other person said, "Well, what's the plot?!" The plot is that, by the end of the evening, you are Anne Sexton. You see? But this other person did not get into that. I felt that I entered Anne Sexton's world. But, it's subtle, and it's not for everybody. It doesn't hit them over the head by saying, "Ah! Now we're going to stab the woman and then she dies and that's the end of the play." His work was subtle and it left a lot of room for one's imagination. I remembered when I heard that Susa piece that that's the kind of thing that I like to do with poetry. But poetry set the way Susa did it – I had never heard that before, plus it had chamber instrumentation that was beautifully done. I remember telling someone at E. C. Schirmer that I liked Susa's opera. And he was really gratified. He said, "Oh, yes, we published that. You didn't find that it was outdated, because it was written in the fifties?" And I said, "By no means."

VB – A friend of mine just did that role last year in Cleveland.

GW – Oh, really? I could mention other choral or vocal pieces I've heard, but I'll tell you that the Susa opera came to mind because it was not overkill. It was a reflective thing. I like to do that – not overload a work. I present the poem and usually some humor, too. If I'm tapped into people's kinds of experiences, then people will get it. And usually, I am connected to their experience in some way. The piece that I mentioned earlier, with the Robert Frost text about leaves, sometimes I play the last movement for people who don't know anything about poetry. I tell them that this is a Robert Frost poem. A tennis-playing friend of mine said, "Oh, there's a storm! Oh, and now the

leaves have fallen off the tree!" I said, "I didn't know that!" He's not even a musician! So, there's something within us that's universal.

VB – That's wonderful! Thank you for your time, Gwyneth.

GW – You're welcome.

APPENDIX B

A COMPLETE LIST OF WALKER'S CHORAL WORKS

A COMPLETE LIST OF WALKER'S CHORAL WORKS

TITLE	DATE OF COMPOSITION	PUBLISHER
	Mixed Chorus	
Acquaintance With Nature	(2002)	Gwyneth Walker
(Text by Henry David Thoreau)		
American Ballads[17]	(1992)	
No. 1 - Lonesome Traveler		ECS#4930
No. 2 - Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies		ECS#4931
No. 3 - Careless Love		ECS#4932
No. 4 - Clementine		ECS#4933
No. 5 - Shenandoah		ECS#4934
Appalachian Carols	(1998)	
No. 1 - Wondrous Love		ECS#5666
No. 2 - Cherry Tree Carol		ECS#5667
No. 3 - Jesus, Jesus Rest Your Head		ECS#5668
No. 4 - Go Tell it on the Mountain		ECS#5669
As a Branch in May	(1983)	ECS#4888
(Text by Gwyneth Walker)		
Be Our Light in the Darkness	(1988)	ECS#4480
(from Bethesda Evensong)		
Cheek to Cheek	(1978)	ECS#4308
(Text by Carl Tucker)		
Chords of Love	(2002)	Gwyneth Walker
Christ-Child's Lullaby	(1988)	ECS#4380
Come Life, Shaker Life!	(2001)	Gwyneth Walker
Dreams and Dances	(1992)	
(Texts by Lucille Clifton)		
No. 1 - Bones, Be Good!		ECS#5029
No. 2 - Some Dreams Hang in the Air		ECS#5030
No. 3 - Let There Be New Flowering		ECS#5031
Every Night (When the Sun Goes Down)	(1996)	ECS#5135
For Ever and Ever	(1986)	ECS#4316
Give Over Thine Own Willing	(1997)	ECS#5252
(Text adapted from the writings of Isaac Pennington by Paul Lacey)		
God Speaks to Each of Us	(1999)	ECS#5664
(Text by Rainer Maria Rilke)		
God's Grandeur	(2002)	Gwyneth Walker
(Text by Gerard Manley Hopkins)		
The Golden Harp	(1999)	MMB Music
(Text by Rabindranath Tagore)		

[17] Note: Pieces listed without a lyricist contain standard folk song or Biblical texts.

Harlem Songs	(2000)	
(Texts by Langston Hughes)		
No. 1 - Spirituals		ECS#5769
No. 2 - Harlem Night Song		ECS#5770
No. 3 - Tambourines		ECS#5771
Hour to Dance, An	(1998)	
(Texts by Virginia Hamilton Adair)		
No. 1 - Key Ring		ECS#5282
No. 2 - Summary By the Pawns		ECS#5283
No. 3 - April Lovers, The		ECS#5284
No. 4 - An Hour to Dance		ECS#5285
No. 5 - Slow Scythe		ECS#5286
No. 6 - White Darkness		ECS#5287
No. 7 - Take My Hand		ECS#5288
How Can I Keep From Singing?	(1995)	ECS#5100
(Text traditional Quaker hymn)		
I Thank You God	(2002)	ECS#5977
(Text by e. e. cummings)		
I Will Be Earth	(1992)	ECS#4887
(Text by May Swenson)		
Let Freedom Ring!	(1995)	Gwyneth Walker
(Texts by Martin Luther King)		
Long Ago Lady	(1984)	Gwyneth Walker
(Text and melody by Jon Gailmor)		
Love—by the Water	(1997)	
No. 1 - Blow the Candles Out		ECS#5249
No. 2 - Fare Thee Well		ECS#5250
No. 3 - Banks of the Ohio		ECS#5251
Love Unfolding	(2001)	ECS#5947
Text by Julian of Norwich		
Motherless Child	(1996)	ECS#5131
My Love Walks in Velvet	(1978)	ECS#4312
(Text by Gwyneth Walker)		
New Millennium Suite	(1999-2000)	
No. 1 -- Sinner Man		ECS #5865
No. 2 -- Peace, I Ask of Thee, O River		ECS #5866
No. 3 -- Down by the Riverside		ECS #5867
O Gracious Light (from Bethesda Evensong)	(1988)	ECS#4476
Peace Like a River	(1989)	ECS#4485
Psalm 23	(1998)	ECS#5374
Quiet Wonder	(2001)	ECS#5851
(Text by Gwyneth Walker)		
Rejoice! -- Christmas Songs	(2001)	Gwyneth Walker
(Texts by William Chatterton Dix, John Mason Neale, Christina Rossetti)		

Right to Vote, The	(1998)	Gwyneth Walker
(Text by Gwyneth Walker)		
River Songs	(1996)	
No. 1 -- Deep River		ECS #5383
No. 2 -- A Mule Named Sal		ECS#5384
No. 3 -- The Water is Wide		ECS#5385
Sounding Joy	(1985)	ECS#4318
(Text from the Bible [Psalm 95])		
St. John's Trilogy	(1990)	ECS#4699
(Texts from the Episcopal Eucharist Service, Rite II)		
Sweet Molly and Friends	(1998)	Gwyneth Walker
(Texts based on the songs "Ain't She Sweet," "Molly Malone" and "Five Foot Two")		
This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made	(1985)	ECS#4314
(Text by Isaac Watts and Gerard Manley Hopkins)		
This Train	(1997)	ECS#5189
Three Songs in Celebration of the Family Farm	(1988)	Gwyneth Walker
(Texts by Martha Holden)		
Troubled Sweet of Her, The	(1978)	ECS#4307
(Text by Amante)		
Two Songs	(1993)	
(Texts by e. e. cummings)		
No. 1 - spring!		ECS#5045
No. 2 - i carry your heart		ECS#5067
White Horses	(1979)	ECS#4548
(Text by e. e. cummings)		
With Thee That I May Live	(1997)	ECS#5277
(Text by Anna Barbauld and Isaac Watts)		
Writings on the Wall, The	(1998)	Gwyneth Walker
(Texts from Berlin Wall inscriptions)		

<u>Women's Chorus</u>

Hebrides Lullaby	(1996)	ECS#5263
(Based on the traditional Scottish song "Christ-Child's Lullaby")		
How Can I Keep From Singing?	(1999)	ECS#5655
(Text traditional Quaker hymn)		
I Thank You God	(1998)	ECS#5331
(Text by e. e. cummings)		
Let Evening Come	(2001)	ECS#5946
(Text by Jane Kenyon)		
Lord's Prayer, The (from Bethesda Evensong)	(1988)	ECS#4479
(Text from the Bible)		
Magnificat (from Bethesda Evensong)	(1988)	ECS#4477

My Girls	(1998)	
(Texts by Lucille Clifton)		
No. 1 - This Morning		#TC-151
No. 2 - To My Girls		#TC-152
No. 3 - Sisters		#TC-153
My Love Walks in Velvet	(1978, 1999)	ECS#5663
(Text by Gwyneth Walker)		
Now I Become Myself	(1999)	ECS#5409
(Text by May Sarton)		
Silver Apples of the Moon, The	(1986)	ECS#4313
(Text by William Butler Yeats)		
Songs for Women's Voices	(1993)	
(Texts by May Swenson)		
No. 1 - Women Should Be Pedestals		ECS#5020
No. 2 - Mornings Innocent		ECS#5021
No. 3 - The Name is Changeless		ECS#5022
No. 4 - Love is a Rain of Diamonds		ECS#5023
No. 5 - In Autumn		ECS#5024
No. 6 - I Will Be Earth		ECS#5025
The Spirit of Women	(2000)	
No. 1 - So Many Angels!		Gwyneth Walker
(Based on the traditional song "Angels Watching Over Me")		
No. 2 - Walk That Valley		Gwyneth Walker
(Based on the traditional song "Lonesome Valley")		
No. 3 - Never Sit Down!		Gwyneth Walker
(Based on the traditional song "Sit Down Sister")		
The Tree of Peace	(2002)	Gwyneth Walker
(John Greenleaf Whittier)		

<u>Children's Chorus</u>

Chords of Love	(2002)	Gwyneth Walker
Whole World (in His Hands), The	(1999)	Gwyneth Walker

APPENDIX C

DISCOGRAPHY OF CURRENT RECORDINGS

DISCOGRAPHY OF CURRENT RECORDINGS

Two selections from *American Ballads*
Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies and *Shenendoah*
on the CD "Sounds So Entrancing"
are available from
Bel Canto Company
PO Box 10752
Greensboro, NC 27404

Three American Portraits for String Quartet, *The Golden Harp* for Chorus and String Quartet, and *White Horses* for SATB Chorus and Piano, and *Cheek to Cheek* for SATB Chorus and Piano
on the CD "The Golden Harp"(ARS-006)
is available from
APAD Digital Recordings
810 W. Kilpatrick
Cleburne, TX 76031
Phone: (817) 641-5100

Hebrides Lullaby
on the CD "A Retro Christmas With CONCORA"
is available from
CONCORA (Connecticut Choral Artists)
90 Main Street
New Britain, CT 06051
Phone: (860) 224-7500 / Fax: (860) 827-8681

Hebrides Lullaby
on the CD "Christmas in Our Time"
is available from
CONCORA (Connecticut Choral Artists)
90 Main Street
New Britain, CT 06051
Phone: (860) 224-7500 / Fax: (860) 827-8681

I Thank You God
on the CD "ACDA National Convention: Chicago 1999 -- National Women's Honor Choir"
is available from
ViaMedia A/V Productions, Inc.
568 Shores Ave.
Cave Springs, AR 72718
Phone: (501) 248-7548

I Thank You God
on the CD "ACDA Raymond W. Brock Endowment, Commissioned Compositions, Volume I"
is available from
American Choral Directors Association
502 SW 38th Street
Lawton, OK 73505
Phone: (580) 355-8161

My Girls
on the CD "Celestial Sirens Demo 2000"
is available from
Early Music Vermont
163 Waterworks Road
Lincoln, VT 05443
Phone: (802) 453-3016

Rejoice! -- Christmas Songs
on the CD "Juletide 2001 -- Luther College"
is available from
Luther Book Shop
700 College Drive
Decorah, IA 52101
Phone: (563) 387-1036
Toll-free Phone: (888) 521-5039

River Songs
on the CD "Sounds & Colors of Vermont"
is available from
MaltedMedia
176 Cox Brook
Northfield, VT 05663
Phone: (802) 485-3972

Two selections from *Songs for Women's Voices*
Mornings Innocent and *In Autumn*
on the CD "Taking Shape"
are available from
Vox Femina Los Angeles
3341 Caroline Avenue
Culver City, CA 90232

Sounding Joy
on the CD "Sounding Joy" (ARSIS #105)
is available from
ARSIS Audio (ECS Publishing)
138 Ipswich Street
Boston, MA 02215-3534
Phone: (617) 236-1935; (800) 777-1919 (USA/Canada) / Fax: (617) 236-0261

This Train
on the CD "1998 All-OMEA Festival Concert"
is available from
Century Records
1220 NW 39th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
Phone: (405) 528-4077

APPENDIX D

CURRENT SCORE PUBLISHERS AND WEBSITES

CURRENT SCORE PUBLISHERS AND WEB SITES

ECS Publishing
138 Ipswich Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02215-3534
Telephone: 1-617-236-1935; 1-800-777-1919 (USA/Canada)
Fax: 1-617-236-0261
Email: office@ecspublishing.com
Website: http://www.ecspublishing.com/

Treble Clef Music Press
415 Wesley Dr.
Chapel Hill, NC 27516-1521
Telephone: 1-919-967-0669
Email: mlycanclef@aol.com
Website: http://www.trebleclefpress.com

Marcia Lee Goldberg
MMB Music, Inc.
Contemporary Arts Building
3526 Washington Avenue
Saint Louis, Missouri 63103-1019
Telephone: 1-314-531-9635; 1-800-543-3771 (USA/Canada)
Fax: 1-314-531-8384
Email: mmbmusic@mmbmusic.com
Website: http://www.mmbmusic.com/

Walker Music Productions
273 Brainstorm Road
Braintree, VT 05060
Telephone/Fax: 1-212-656-1367
Email: Walkermuse@aol.com

Arsis Press
distributed by Empire Publishing Service
P.O. Box 1344
Studio City, CA 91614
Telephone: 1-818-784-8918
Fax: 1-818-990-2477
Email: empirepubsrvc@att.net
Website http://www.instantweb.com/~arsis/

APPENDIX E

SCORES ANALYZED IN THIS DOCUMENT

VITA

VICKI BURRICHTER
845 East Yampa Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
(719) 635-5988

EDUCATION

2003 Doctor of Arts in Music
University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO
Choral Literature and Conducting/Secondary in Orchestral Literature and Conducting

1994 Master of Music
University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO
Choral Literature and Conducting

1989 Post-Baccalaureate Studies
California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles, CA
Jazz and African Music

1981 Bachelor of Arts
Florida State University
Theater/English Education

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

1990- David Craig Musical Theater Performance Classes
Los Angeles, CA

1993- Aspen Music Festival Chorus/Colorado Symphony Orchestra Chorus member
Duain Wolfe, Chorus Master

1994 Robert Shaw American Festival Chorus (soprano)
Carnegie Hall, New York City

1996- Maestra Marin Alsop, private conducting studio
National Orchestral Institute; Interlochen; Denver, Colorado studio

1997 *Chanticleer* Internship with Artistic Director Joseph Jennings

2001 Pierre Boulez Conducting Workshop
Carnegie Hall, New York City

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2000-present Assistant Professor
Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO
- Director of College Choir (and professional/student orchestra)
  - **Voices of Light* with composer Richard Einhorn present
- Director of Women's Chamber Choir
  - *Tour of Cuba and concert with the National Choir of Cuba
- Professor of Women in Music
- Professor of Conducting
- Professor of American Musical Theater History

1997-present Founder and Artistic Director
Canto Spiritus Chamber Choir, Denver, CO
- *New York Choral Festival at Lincoln Center: Gold Rating
  Judges: Weston Noble, Moses Hogan, Jeffrey Unger
- *Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble Co-Production of Mary Lou William's jazz mass – regional premiere: Denver Performing Arts Center
- *Denver Mayor's Office of Art, Culture and Film Performing Arts Festival
- *CD: Brazilian music arranged by Marcos Leite – U.S. premiere
- *CD: *Mary Lou's Mass*, with Geri Allen and Carmen Lundy

2001-present Choir Director, Soloist
Mile Hi Church of Religious Science, Lakewood, Colorado
- 60 member church choir serving a congregation of over 5,000

1998-2001 Artistic Director
Littleton Chorale, Littleton, CO
- 50 voice community choir
- * Conducted a co-concert with the Littleton Symphony
- * Conducted a co-concert with the Young Voices of Colorado

1995-1997 Artistic Director
Harmony: A Colorado Chorale, Denver, CO
- 100-voice community chorus
- *World Methodist Conference performance
- *Denver's Boettcher Concert Hall performance (w/Holly Near)
- *National GALA Convention, Tampa, FL
- *Commissioning of 3 large new works

1998-1999 Assistant Conductor
Musica Sacra Chamber Orchestra, Denver, CO
- *Conductor National Lutheran Convention, Bach *Cantata 78*

1998-1999 Assistant Conductor
Colorado Youth Symphony Orchestra, Denver, CO

1993-1996 Doctoral Conductor and Teaching Assistant
University of Northern Colorado
Women's Glee Club (100-voice)
Men's Glee Club (80-voice)
Madrigal Singers (12-voice)
University Singers (60-voice)
Sinfonietta (Chamber Orchestra)

2000 Vocal Problems Coach
Royal Shakespeare Company/Denver Center Theater Company, Denver, CO
Tantalus production

1997-2000 Voice School Jury Judge, Voice School Audition Judge, Guest Performing Artist
Denver School of the Arts, Denver, CO

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

National Association of Teachers of Singing
Conductors Guild
American Choral Directors Association
International Federation of Choral Musicians
Actors Equity
International Association of Jazz Educators
International Alliance of Women in Music
American Association of University Women
Colorado Music Educators Association