Gwyneth Walker

From the Depths of the Soul

songs for Contralto and Piano

“Go Down, Moses”
“Deep River”
Interlude: “Time for Reflection”
“Down to the River to Pray”
“Every Night, When the Sun Goes Down”
Program Notes

The Contralto voice is characterized by depth of sonority, speaking with a deep, rich tone. Thus, From the Depths of the Soul was created to explore the powerful expression of the low range. Each of the songs in this set contains the words deep or down in the title. These are dark songs – traditional American spirituals which are rooted in sorrow and suffering.

“Go Down, Moses” is placed in the key of C Minor, with the Contralto often singing in the low range around G below middle C. The message is one of oppression. Starting quietly and sadly, the music grows in strength with emphatic statements of Let my people go! Accented chords in piano underline the conviction/command of the song.

“Deep River” features a flowing, arpeggiated accompaniment, as a river. Contrasting sections stop the flow briefly, rising to a higher range with thoughts of the Promised Land. There is some anxiety about the river travel (tremolo piano patterns), but with the Lord’s blessing, the journey is taken in safety.

The tempo quickens for a swing rhythm version of “Down to the River to Pray.” The trip is joyous, with a crescendo ending of “Lord, show me the way!” In the last measure, the pianist slides down into the river (musically, with a glissando!).

This arrangement of the traditional Appalachian song, “Every Night, When the Sun Goes Down,” focuses on the transcendence of faith over sorrow and of peace (through death) over suffering and pain:

True love, don’t weep or mourn for me. The Lord has come to set me free.

A new verse is added at the end:

And when I rise up in the sky, if you look up quickly,
You will see me passing by. On wings of silver, I will fly.

During this verse, the listener might hear a fluttering of wings (gently repeated notes) in the accompaniment. This is to symbolize the spirit of a bird hovering close by.
From the Depths of the Soul
for Contralto and Piano

1. Go Down, Moses

**VERSE 1**

*Slowly, with the weight of sorrow and oppression*

When Israel was in Egypt Land, Let my people...

Go! Oppressed so hard they could not stand, Let my people go!

**REFRAIN**

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt Land.

*Cue-sized notes are an ossia for higher voices.*
Tell old Phar'ah to let me peo-ple go!

The Lord told Mo-ses

what to do, Let my peo-ple go! To lead the child-ren of
Is - rael through, Let my peo - ple, let my peo - ple go_

down, Mo - ses, way down in E - gypt Land.

Tell old Phar - aoh to let my peo - ple_

Tell old Phar - aoh to let my peo - ple._
With some motion $\frac{\dot{q}}{108}$

$mf$

go!

With some motion $\frac{\dot{q}}{108}$

$mf$

loco

with pedal

Verse 3

assertively, with anger $f$

“Thus spoke the Lord,” bold Moses said.
“If not I’ll smite your first-born dead.”

“Your foes shall not before you stand.”

“I’ll lead you to the Promised Land.”

(REFRAIN)

Oh, go down, Moses,
way down in Egypt Land. Tell old Phar.

Freely, p, Slower

Freely, p, Slower loco

accel.

a tempo (q = 108)

f

rit.

go.

a tempo (q = 108)

f

rit.

p — f

Dur. 3:00

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 1. Go Down, Moses
2. Deep River

Gently flowing $\frac{4}{4} = 100$ (or slower)

smoothly, as a river

with pedal

REFRAIN

Deep river, my home lies over Jordan.

Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into camp ground.
VERSE 1

Oh, don’t you want to go to that gospel

Slightly faster \( \frac{4}{4} = 108 \)

VERSE 1

Oh, don't you want to go to that gospel

Slightly faster \( \frac{4}{4} = 108 \)

VERSE 1

feast, that promised land where all is

Slightly faster \( \frac{4}{4} = 108 \)

VERSE 1

peace? Deep river, my

Slightly faster \( \frac{4}{4} = 108 \)

VERSE 1

* Cue-sized notes are an ossia for lower voices.

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 2. Deep River
home lies o - ver Jor - dan._

riv - er, Lord, I want to cross o - ver in - to camp - ground._

I'll go on up - to

heav - en, and take my seat, and
cast my crown at Jesus', Jesus',

Je-sus', feet. Deep river, my

home lies o-ver Jordan. Deep

riv-er, Lord, I want to cross o-ver in-to camp-ground.

*Cue-sized notes are an ossia for lower voices.

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 2. Deep River
INTERLUDE

52   lightly separate  growing into (mild) anxiety of the river travel

56   \textit{p} with anxiety

59   \textit{p} with anxiety

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 2. Deep River
car-ry me, car-ry me on.

Deep...

my home lies o-ver.

Jor-dan.

I want to cross o-ver.
want to cross over, I want to cross over into camp ground.

with pedal

delicately, shimmering
rolled chords, as a gesture of blessing
Lord, bless this

Slowly, freely

p impassioned

boat I ride, bless it safely on the water. Bring it home at

p

simile
Eventide to shelter in your harbor, Lord, to

shelter in your harbor. Deep

accel.

accel.

river, my home lies over
Jor - dan.  

Deep

riv - er, Lord, I want to cross o-ver, I___ want to cross o-ver, I___

want to cross o-ver in-to camp-ground.

Dur. 3:30

(connect directly to “A Time for Reflection” without break)

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 2. Deep River
A Time for Reflection
*(as a bridge between songs 2 and 3)*

Slowly $\frac{4}{4} = 100$

With energy $\frac{4}{4} = 120$

gently tap hands

With energy $\frac{4}{4} = 120$

tap gently on piano ledge *(to set tempo for next song)*

(continuation of the musical notation)

Walker | *From the Depths of the Soul* | A Time for Reflection
3. Down to the River to Pray

With energy $\text{\( \frac{\text{eighth}}{\text{quarter}} \)} = 120$

\text{swing eighths (\( \frac{\text{eighth}}{\text{quarter}} \))}

(gently tap hands)

With energy $\text{\( \frac{\text{eighth}}{\text{quarter}} \)} = 120$

\text{swing eighths (\( \frac{\text{eighth}}{\text{quarter}} \))}

As I went down to the river to pray, studying about the
good old way. And who shall wear the starry crown!

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 3. Down to the River to Pray
Lord, show me the way.

VERSE 1

O, my sisters, let's go down, let's go down,

come on down. O, my sisters, let's go down, down to the river,

go-in' down to the river to pray. As I went down to the river to

REFRAIN
pray,
lightly

stud - y - ing a - bout the good old way. And

who shall wear the star - ry crown?

Good Lord, show me,

show me, show me the way.

VERSE 2

O, my broth - ers, let's go down, down, down, come on down,

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 3. Down to the River to Pray
come on down.

O, my broth-ers, let's go down, down, down, go-in'

down to the riv-er.

go-in' down to the riv-er to pray. As I went

down to the riv-er to pray,

lightly

stud-y ing a-bout the

good old way. And who shall wear the star-ry-crown?

Good
Lord, show me, show me, show me the way.

INTERLUDE
With much energy and joy (and extra swing!)

Down to the river, down to the river, down to the river to pray, goin'

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 3. Down to the River to Pray
down by the river, down by the river, down by the river to pray.

VERSE 3

Slower, straight eighths

lift your head, my weary friend, and taste the pleasure that heaven will send. Let

Slower, straight eighths

Start slowly and accel.

nothing cause you to delay... but... has ten on the good old,

(as if rushing to depart on a trip!)

Start slowly and accel.

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 3. Down to the River to Pray
REFRAIN
With energy $\text{j} = 120$

$\text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}$

As I went down to the river to pray, to

$\text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}$

study ing about the good old way. And

$\text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}\quad \text{f}$

who shall wear the starry crown?

Good Lord, show me,
Lord, show me, show me, show me, show me, show me, Lord.

show me, show me, show me the way.

cresc. poco a poco (to m. 102)

show me, show me, show me the way.

cresc. poco a poco (to m. 102)

Lord, show me, show me the way!

high gliss.
4. Every Night When the Sun Goes Down

VERSE 1

Slowly, freely

Ev-'ry night when the sun goes down,
Ev-'ry night when the sun goes down,
I hang my head and mournful

cry. True love don't weep,
true love don't mourn. True love, don't weep
or mourn for

REFRAIN

a tempo \( \text{\textit{p}} \) = 60

with pedal
Slightly faster $\frac{\text{d}}{\text{t}} = 66$

me. The Lord has come to set me free. And ev'-ry

Slightly faster $\frac{\text{d}}{\text{t}} = 66$

night, and ev'-ry night, and ev'-ry night, and ev'-ry night, and ev'-ry night, and ev'-ry

INTERLUDE

night, and ev'-ry night, I pray the Lord my train would

VERSE 2

Slightly faster $\frac{\text{d}}{\text{t}} = 72$

-night, and ev'-ry night, I pray the Lord my train would

Slightly faster $\frac{\text{d}}{\text{t}} = 72$
come. I pray the Lord my train would come. I pray the Lord my train would come to take me back where I come from. True love don’t

Slightly faster

\( \text{Slightly faster } j = 80 \), \( \text{Slightly faster } m f \)

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 4. Every Night When the Sun Goes Down
REFRAIN

weep, true love don’t mourn. True love don’t

weep, true love don’t mourn. True love don’t

weep or mourn for me. The Lord has come to set me

weep or mourn for me. The Lord has come to set me

free. And ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry

free. And ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry

Walker | From the Depths of the Soul | 4. Every Night When the Sun Goes Down
41

night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, and ev’ry night, And when I rise up in the

accel.

44

sky, and when I rise up in the sky, if you look up

47

quickly you will see me passing by, on wings of silver I will

[a abrupt break]
If you look up quickly, you will see me passing.

passing, passing, passing, passing by,
on wings of silver, on wings of silver,
delicately, as fluttering wings

with pedal
*Silver,* I will fly.

_Faster_ as a bird in flight

I will fly.

_Dur. 3:30 | Total: 14:30
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