Gwyneth Walker

From the Depths of the Soul

songs for Contralto and Viola

“Go Down, Moses”
“Deep River”
Interlude: “Time for Reflection”
“Down to the River to Pray”
“Every Night (When the Sun Goes Down”)
From the Depths of the Soul

Viola

1. Go Down, Moses

VERSE 1

Slowly, with the weight of sorrow and oppression

Op-pressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people—

REFRAIN

go!

Slower

poco accel.

With some motion \( \wedge = 108 \)

VERSE 2

Same tempo

rolled pizz.

arco

INTERLUDE

Slower

pizz.

With some motion \( \wedge = 108 \)
From the Depths of the Soul – Viola

VERSE 3

Mo - ses said. first-born dead."

Prom - ised Land."

REFRAIN

let my peo - ple,

Slower Freely

accel. a tempo (d = 108)

f with anger

and determination

agitated

f

snap pizz.

snap pizz.

(f)

fore you stand."

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From the Depths of the Soul – Viola

2. Deep River

Gently flowing \( \text{\textit{d}} = 100 \) (or slower)

\( \text{\textit{con sord.}} \)

smoothly, as a river

Gently flowing

\( q = 100 \) (or slower)

con sord.

*The Viola should play whichever notes the Contralto does NOT sing, to harmonize with the voice.*
From the Depths of the Soul – Viola

45
rolled pizz.  

INTERLUDE
lightly separate

49

53  growing into (mild) anxiety of the river travel

57

VERSE 3

59

VERSE 4

65

69  rolled pizz.  
sul pont.
delicately, shimmering

74  rolled pizz.  

78  Slowly, freely

83  gentle tremolo
From the Depths of the Soul – Viola

REFRAIN

accel. arco  a tempo ($= 108$)

rolled pizz.  rit. to end

(connect directly to “A Time for Reflection” without break)
A Time for Reflection
(as a bridge between songs 2 and 3)

Slowly \( \frac{4}{4} \) = 100

(con sord.) gently, reflectively

\( \text{p legato} \)

With energy \( \frac{4}{4} \) = 120

gently tap instrument (to set tempo for next song)

\( \text{p} \)
3. Down to the River to Pray

With energy $\frac{\text{q}}{\text{J}} = 120$

swing eighths ($\frac{\text{J}}{\text{J}} = \frac{7}{12}$)

 senza sord.

m$	ext{f}$

p playfully

lightly

m$	ext{f}$
**From the Depths of the Soul – Viola**

**REFRAIN**

With much energy and joy (and extra swing!)

**INTERLUDE**

**VERSE 3**

[Voice enters] Slower, straight eighths

[lift your head, my weary friend and taste the pleasure that heaven will send. Let nothing cause you
From the Depths of the Soul – Viola

Start slowly and accel.

swing eighths

(accepting voice)

REFRAIN

With energy \( \frac{\text{with energy}}{\text{poco poco, to m. 102}} \)

(cresc.)
From the Depths of the Soul – Viola

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From the Depths of the Soul – Viola

4. Every Night When the Sun Goes Down

**VERSE 1**

Slowly, freely when the sun goes

**REFRAIN**

rolled pizz.

**VERSE 2**

Slightly faster

**INTERLUDE**

Slightly faster

**REFRAIN**

From the Depths of the Soul – Viola

4. Every Night When the Sun Goes Down
Program Notes

The Contralto voice and Viola are characterized by depth of sonority. Similar in range, they speak with a deep, rich tone. Thus, From the Depths of the Soul was created to explore this powerful combination of low voices. 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 viola underline the conviction/command of the song.

“Deep River” features a flowing, arpeggiated viola 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 viola 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 viola 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 viola accompaniment. This is to symbolize the spirit of a bird hovering close by.