

Gwyneth Walker

The Right to Vote

for Mixed Chorus

Duration: 4'15"

Program Notes

The Right to Vote was composed in celebration of the sesquicentennial of the Women's Rights Movement: 1848 – 1998. This work is essentially a dialogue between the voices of society at large (19th century), denying women the right to vote, and the voices of individual women working toward suffrage. At first, the dialogue is uneven. Many sing, "No! You can't vote!" Only a few voices answer, "But I believe that we are equal. I believe that we are free."

As the verses unfold ("No, you can't speak!" "No, you can't own a business!" "No, you can't express yourself!"), the women speaking for themselves expand their message. They grow in strength into a final flurry of "Yes! Yes! Yes!"

The Women's Rights Movement was initiated mostly by Quaker women. Therefore, in this song, the references to faith as the source of equality spring from the Quaker philosophy. And God is referred to as the One Teacher.

"And in God's eyes we are equal. And in God's eyes we are one!"

Performance Notes

It is suggested for performance that the men and women stand on opposite sides of the stage, facing each other. This will visually enhance the dialogue. This a dramatic presentation rather than a musical selection. The singing should emphasize rhythm and diction more than vocal tone.

About the Composer

Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. Degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, Walker resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. She now lives on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont.

Walker's catalog includes over 130 commissioned works for orchestra, band, chorus and chamber ensembles. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E.C. Schirmer of Boston (choral & vocal music) and MMB Music of St. Louis (orchestral & instrumental music).

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of Vermont. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Vermont Arts Council.

The Right to Vote

Composed in celebration of the Sesquicentennial of the Women's Rights Movement: 1848–1998

Gwyneth Walker

♩ = 120

tap leg gently and inconspicuously – just loudly enough to provide an audible rhythmic background

tap leg gently and inconspicuously – just loudly enough to provide an audible rhythmic background

pp almost whispered

S.

A.

T.

B.

A

S.

A.

T.

B.

No! you can't vote! Not to-mor-row.

B

S.

A.

T.

B.

Not to-day. No! you can't

rit. - - - - -

S. *p* Ah Ah

A. *p* Ah Ah

T. no no a gen - tle crea-ture.

B. vote! You are a wo-man, a gen - tle crea-ture.

a tempo ♩ = 120

S. (taps) *mp* *p* But

A. (taps) *mp* *p*

T. *mp* Bet - ter not go to the polls to - day no no no no no no no no

B. *mp* Bet - ter not go to the polls to - day.

C slightly slower

rit. - - - - -

S. I be - lieve that we are e - qual. And I be - lieve that we are free.

A. *p* I be - lieve e - qual I be - lieve that we are free.

T.

B.

D a tempo ♩ = 120

tap leg gently

S.

A.

T. *(p)*
no no no *p* no no no no no — no

B.

no no no no — no no no no no — no

S.

A.

T. *mp*
no no no no

B. *mp*

No! you can't speak! Not to-mor-row. Not to-day.

E

S.

A.

T. *p* no no no no no — no *mp* no no

B. *p* *mp*

no no no no — no No! you can't speak

rit. -----

mp *a tempo* ♩ = 120

(taps) *mp*

S. Ah Ah

A. Ah Ah

T. no a si - lent crea-ture Bet-ter not raise your voice to -

B. You are a wo-man, a si - lent crea-ture Bet-ter not raise your voice to -

mf *mf* *mf* *mf*

F slightly slower

S. *p* *mp* But I be - lieve that in the eyes of God we are

A. *p* *mp* I be - lieve eyes of God we are

T. day no no no no no no no no no

B. day

rit. -----

S. e - qual. And I be - lieve that in the eyes of God we are free

A. e - qual. I be - lieve eyes of God we are free

B. e - qual I be - lieve eyes of God we are free

G a tempo ♩ = 120

S. *p*

A. *p*

T. *p* *p* *mf* *p* (*non cresc.*)

B. *p* *mf*

no no no no— no no no no no— no no no no— no

no no no no— no No! you can't own!

S.

A.

T. *p* *mf*

B. *p* *mf*

no no no no— no no no no no— no no no no— no

Not a busi- ness. Not a home. no no no no— no

H

rit.

S. *mf* *mf*

A. *mf* *mf*

T. *mf* *p* *mf*

B. *mf*

no no no no— no no no no no— no You are a wo-man. You have no pow-er.

No! you can't own! You are a wo-man. You have no pow-er.

Ah— Ah— Ah— Ah—

a tempo ♩ = 120 *mf*

S. *mf* But

A. *mf* But

T. *f* Bet-ter not start your own busi-ness to - day No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No!

B. *f* Bet-ter not start your own busi-ness to - day No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No!

I **slightly slower** *rit.* - - - - -

S. I be-lieve that there is one Teach - er, the Lord our

A. *mf* I be-lieve Teach - - - - er, the Lord our

T. *mf* *p* no

B. *mf* *p* no

freely, cantabile *p* *f* *rit.* *p* *f*

S. God. And in his eyes, we are e - qual, we are free

A. God. eyes, we are free

A. God. eyes, we are free

J a tempo ♩ = 120

S. [Musical notation]

A. [Musical notation]

T. *p* no no no no— no no no no— no no no no— no

B. *p* no no no no— no no no no— no No! you can't write!

B. *p* no no no no— no no no no— no No! you can't write!

K

S. [Musical notation]

A. [Musical notation]

T. *mf* *p* no no no no— no no no no— no no no no— no no no no— no

B. Not a po-em. Not a play. no no no no— no No! you can't

B. *mf* Not a po-em. Not a play. no no no no— no No! you can't

The Right To Vote Not a po-em. Not a play. no no no no— no No! you can't

S. *Ha! Ha! Ha!*

A. *Ha! Ha! Ha!*

T. no no no no— no no no no— no no no no— no

B. no no no no— no no no no— no no no no no— no

no no

rit.

S. *f gleefully* *a tempo* ♩ = 120 *f*
ha! ha! ha! Bet-ter not try to

A. *f gleefully* *f*
ha! ha! ha! Bet-ter not try to

T. *f* WOM-EN CAN'T WRITE MUS-IC! *f* Bet-ter not try to

B. *f* WOM-EN CAN'T WRITE MUS-IC! *f* Bet-ter not try to

WOM-EN CAN'T WRITE MUS-IC! Bet-ter not try to

S. *(f)*
 Bet - ter not try to ex-press your - self to - day! But

A. *(f)*
 Bet - ter not try to ex-press your - self to - day! But

T.
 Bet - ter not try to ex-press your - self to - day! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO!

B.
 Bet - ter not try to ex-press your - self to - day! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO!

M *Same tempo, rhythmically (non rit.)*

S.
 I be - lieve — that there is One Teach-er, — the Lord Our God, the

A.
 I be - lieve — that there is One Teach-er, — the Lord Our God, the

T. *p barely audible*
 la

B. *p barely audible*
 la

S.
 Spir - it with - in. And in God's eyes we are e - - qual. And

A.
 Spir - it with - in. And in God's eyes we are e - - qual. And

T.
 la

B.
 la

(non rit.)

N (♩ = 120)
p subito

S. in God's eyes we are one. None may have the pow-er to be ex -

A. in God's eyes we are one. None may have the pow-er to be ex -

T. la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la None may have the pow-er to be ex -

B. la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la None may have the pow-er to be ex -

gradual cresc.

S. al - ted, ex - al - ted, And none may have the right to step a - bove.

A. al - ted, ex - al - ted, And none may have the right to step a - bove.

T. al - ted, And none may have the right to step a step, step, step a - bove.

B. al - ted, And none may have the right to step a step, step, step a - bove.

S. None may have the pow-er to si - lence, si-lence the oth-ers. And none may have the right to hold them,

A. None may have the pow-er to si - lence, si-lence the oth-ers. And none may have the right to hold them,

T. None may have the pow-er to si - lence oth-ers. And none may have the right to hold them,

B. None may have the pow-er to si - lence oth-ers. And none may have the right to hold them,

ff

S. none may have the right to hold them, None may have the right to hold them

A. none may have the right to hold them, None may have the right to hold them

T. none may have the right to hold them, None may have the right to hold them

B. none may have the right to hold them, None may have the right to hold them

O

rit. - - - - - slower, triumphantly

f

S. down. For I be - lieve that there is on - ly One Teach - er,

A. down. For I be - lieve that there is on - ly One Teach - er,

T. down. I be - lieve that there is on - ly One Teach - er,

B. down. I be - lieve that there is on - ly One Teach - er,

S. The Lord our God, The Spir - it with - in. And in God's eyes we are e - - - - qual. And

A. The Lord our God, The Spir - it with - in. And in God's eyes we are e - - - - qual. And

T. The Lord our God, The Spir - it with - in. And in God's eyes we are e - - - - qual. And

B. The Lord our God, The Spir - it with - in. And in God's eyes we are e - - - - qual. And

The Right To Vote The Lord our God, The Spir - it with - in. And in God's eyes - we are e - - - - qual. And

a tempo ♩ = 120

P

p

S. in God's eyes we are. one.

A. in God's eyes we are one.

T. in God's eyes we are none may have the right to hold us, none may have the right to hold us,

B. in God's eyes we are none may have the right to hold us, none may have the right to hold us,

exclaimed — no pitch

rit.

S. *ff* Yes! Yes! Yes!

A. *ff* Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!

T. *ff* none may have the right to hold us down. Yes!

B. *ff* none may have the right to hold us down. Yes!

Duration: 4'15"
November 15, 1996
Braintree, Vermont