

A decorative blue floral border with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns, framing the text. The border is composed of four corner pieces and four side pieces, all in a matching blue color.

Gwyneth Walker

Emily!

(from New England)

musical settings of the poems of Emily Dickinson

for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

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PROGRAM NOTES

The poetry of Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) is especially appealing due to the wide range of topics, diversity of mood and peculiar imagination of the poet. The writings are reflective, passionate, witty, sensuous, observant and ridiculously humorous. Her heart soars. Her mind pokes fun!

Emily was truly a New Englander. Her poems are understated and compact. Her love of Nature focuses on small things—birds, bees, meadows and a pond.

In creating the musical settings, the composer (herself a New Englander) endeavored to capture the spirit of the poetry, and of the poet, with songs diverse in style, and concise in form. Everything from romance to frogs is explored, briefly.

Great delight is taken in creating musical translations of the colorful imagery: the letters floating off on the breeze (“My Letter to the World”); the shimmering moonlight (“The Moon and the Sea”); a frog croaking in a bog (“The Frog in the Bog”); *hopeful* birds hopping about (“Hope” with Feathers); the *boat of passion* riding the waves and then settling into its mooring (“Passion”); the ship’s cannon firing in celebration (“Joy”); and the tiniest, lightest gifts of Nature (“All I Have to Bring”).

These are the poet’s *Letters to the World*. She lived as a recluse, yet her words took flight—traveling the universe as messengers of the soul.

Duration: 14 minutes

THE COMPOSER

Widely performed throughout the country, the music of American composer **Gwyneth Walker** is beloved by performers and audiences alike for its energy, beauty, reverence, drama, and humor. Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. For nearly 30 years, she lived on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont. She now divides her time between her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut and the musical communities of Sarasota, Florida and Randolph, Vermont.

Gwyneth Walker has been a proud resident of Vermont for many years. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Vermont Arts Council as well as the 2008 “Athenaeum Award for Achievement in the Arts and Humanities” from the St. Johnsbury (VT) Athenaeum. In 2012, she was elected as a Fellow of the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Walker’s catalog includes over 300 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus, and solo voice. A special interest has been dramatic works that combine music with readings, acting, and movement. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E. C. Schirmer (choral and vocal music) and Lauren Keiser Music (orchestral and instrumental music).

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

THE POEMS

1. My Letter to the World

This is my letter to the World
That never wrote to Me –
The simple News that Nature told –
With tender Majesty
Her Message is committed
To Hands I cannot see –
For love of Her – Sweet – countrymen –
Judge tenderly – of Me

2. The Moon and the Sea

The Moon is distant from the Sea –
And yet, with Amber Hands –
She leads Him – docile as a Boy –
Along appointed Sands –
He never misses a Degree –
Obedient to Her eye –
He comes just so far – toward the Town –
Just so far – goes away –
Oh, Signor, Thine, the Amber Hand –
And mine – the distant Sea –
Obedient to the least command
Thine eye impose on me –

3. The Frog in the Bog

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you – Nobody – Too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'd advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody!
How public – like a Frog –
To tell one's name – the livelong June –
To an admiring Bog!

4. Hope (with Feathers)

"Hope" is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all –

And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –
And sore must be the storm –
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –

I've heard it in the chilliest land –
And on the strangest Sea –
Yet – never – in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of me.

5. Passion

Wild Nights – Wild Nights!
Were I with thee
Wild Nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile – the Winds –
To a Heart in port –
Done with the Compass –
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden –
Ah, but the Sea!
Might I but moor –Tonight –
In Thee!

6. Joy

'Tis so much joy! 'Tis so much joy!
If I should fail, what poverty!
And yet, as poor as I,
Have ventured all upon a throw!
Have gained! Yes! Hesitated so –
This side the Victory!

Life is but Life! And Death, but Death!
Bliss is, but Bliss, and Breath but Breath!
And if indeed I fail,
At least, to know the worst, is sweet!
Defeat means nothing but Defeat,
No drearier, can befall!

And if I gain! Oh Gun at Sea!
Oh Bells, that in the Steeples be!
At first, repeat it slow!
For Heaven is a different thing,
Conjectured, and waked sudden in –
And might extinguish me!

7. All I Have to Bring

It's all I have to bring today–
This, and my heart beside–
This, and my heart, and all the fields–
And all the meadows wide–
Be sure you count – should I forget
Someone the sum could tell –
This, and my heart, and all the Bees
Which in the Clover dwell.

Emily! (from New England)

for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)

Gwyneth Walker

G. Walker, alt.

1. My Letter to the World

Singer pretends to write a letter (a poem).

Gently flowing ♩ = 92

as a single leaf of paper floating off with a breeze

Piano

p delicately

with pedal

3

6

mf

rit.

p

mf cantabile

9 *a tempo*

a tempo

mf

mf cantabile

This is my let - ter to the

Note setting and format by Gwyneth Walker Music Productions

12

World that nev - er wrote to Me. The

Ped. *simile*

15

sim - ple news that Na - ture told - with ten - der Maj - es - ty.

18

Her Mes - sage is com - mit - ted to Hands I can - not see. For

rit. *Slower (mf)*

rit. *Slower* *p*

21

love of Her — Sweet — coun - try - men — judge ten - der - ly of

mf *p*

23 *a tempo* (♩ = 92)

Me.

a tempo (♩ = 92)

(p) *cresc. poco a poco*

with pedal

26

Her mes - sage is com - mit - ted to Hands I can - not

mf *rit.* *f*

(cresc.) *mf* *rit.*

2. The Moon and the Sea

Start slowly *pp* *gently, as moonlight* *with pedal* *accel. poco a poco* *shimmering tremoli*

4 *a tempo* (♩ = 112) *p*
The Moon is dis - tant from the Sea _____ and

a tempo (♩ = 112)
(Ped.) Ped. Ped. Ped.

8 *rit. mf* **Slightly slower**
yet, with Am - ber Hands, She leads Him, do - cile as a
rit. **Slightly slower**
mf
Ped. Ped. Ped.

12 *p* *a tempo* (♩ = 112)
Boy, a - long ap - point - ed Sands. *a tempo* (♩ = 112)
p
(Ped.) Ped.

16 *(p)*

He nev - er miss - es a De - gree, o - be - dient to Her

Ped. _____

20 *mf*

eye. He comes just so far - to - ward the

Ped. _____

24 *poco rit.* **Slightly slower** *rit. p (as a waning moon)*

Town - just so far, goes a - way.

poco rit. **Slightly slower** *rit.*

Ped. _____

28 *(rit.)*, *a tempo* (♩ = 112)

(rit.), *a tempo* (♩ = 112)

(p)

(Ped.) _____ *with pedal*

31 *mf espr.*

Oh, Si - gnor, Thine, the Am - ber

34

Hand, and mine, the dis - tant Sea - o -

37 *rit.*

a tempo (♩ = 112)
p

be - dient to the least com - mand Thine eye im - pose on me.

rit. *a tempo* (♩ = 112)
p

41

f impassioned

Oh, Si - gnor,

f impassioned

simile

3. The Frog in the Bog

With energy ♩ = 112

playfully
p

The piano introduction consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 112.

no pedal

3 *p* *mf* *rit.*

I'm no-bod - y! Who are you? — Are you no-bod - y -

mf *rit.*

The first vocal line starts at measure 3. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and rhythmic patterns. The tempo slows down towards the end of the phrase.

Slower

6 *p* *mf* Looking at pianist

Too! Then there's a pair of us!

Slower
(for rehearsal only) *mf* *answering the voice*

The second vocal line starts at measure 6. The piano accompaniment includes a section marked 'Slower (for rehearsal only)'. The tempo then returns to the original speed.

a tempo (♩ = 112)

9 *p*

finger to lips – "hushed"

Don't tell, they'd ad - ver - tise, you

a tempo (♩ = 112)

The third vocal line starts at measure 9. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of chords. The tempo is marked as a tempo (♩ = 112).

13 *rit.*

know!

rit.

p

8vb-----

16 *a tempo* (♩ = 112), *as a tango* *p drearily*

How

a tempo (♩ = 112), *as a tango*
as a dreary bog

f gruffly

8vb-----

20

drear - y, — drear - y, drear - y, drear - y, drear - y, —

p

8vb-----

23

to be some - bod - y! How pub - lic like a

8vb-----

4. Hope (with Feathers)

Joyful tempo ♩ = 126

p lightly, birdlike

Joyful tempo ♩ = 126

p light and feathery

Hope is the thing with

And.

4

feath - ers - that perch - es in the soul - and

(And.)

7

sings the tune with - out the words - and nev - er ___ stops at

And. And. And.

mf with exuberance

all. Ho - ho - ho - ho - hope,

mf

Red.

rit. (mf)

ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - hope. And

rit.

Relaxed tempo

sweet - est in the Gale is heard, and sore must be the storm, that

Relaxed tempo

rit. Slowly *p* a tempo (♩ = 126)

could a - bash the lit - tle Bird that kept so man - y warm.

rit. Slowly a tempo (♩ = 126)

p

22 *mf* with exuberance

Ho - ho - ho - ho - hope,

mf

25 *rit.* **Slower**, (*mf*)

ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - ho - hope... I've

rit. **Slower**

28

heard it in the chill-est land, and on the strang-est Sea, yet -

Slower

32 *rit.* *p*

nev - er - in Ex - trem - i - ty, it asked a crumb of me.

rit. *p* (answering voice)

5. Passion

With motion ♩ = 112

5

with passion **f**

Wild_

9

nights! Wild_ nights! Wild_

13

rit. Slower

nights! Were I with thee,

rit. *8va* ----- Slower

20

17

rit. *p*

wild nights should be our lux - ur - y, our lux - ur - y.

rit.
mf *p* (*p*)

(*And.*) *And.*

20

a tempo (♩ = 112)

mf espr.

a tempo (♩ = 112)

Fu - tile, the Winds, to a

p *mf*

as tumultuous waves of romance

simile

(*And.*) *And.*

23

Heart in port. Done with the Com - pass,

mf

simile

26

done with the Chart!

mf

28

Row - ing in E - den, ah! but the Sea!

Slower

a tempo (♩ = 112)

31 *rit.*

Might I but moor - To - night - in Thee!

rit. **Slower** *(mf)* peacefully, tenderly *a tempo* (♩ = 112)

34

Wild

with passion ***f***

37

nights! Wild nights! Wild!

6. Joy

With a joyful bounce ♩ = 108

The first system of music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The bass staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with dotted eighth notes. A *cresc.* (crescendo) marking is placed above the treble staff in the third measure. The system concludes with a *slight pedal* instruction.

The second system begins at measure 4. The treble staff continues with eighth-note patterns, marked with a *(cresc.)* (crescendo) and a *f* (forte) dynamic. The bass staff features a wavy line representing a sustained pedal point. A *more pedal* instruction is placed below the bass staff.

The third system begins at measure 7. The treble staff has a *LH* (Left Hand) marking above it. The bass staff continues with a wavy line and a *rit.* (ritardando) marking above the treble staff. A *ped.* (pedal) marking is placed below the bass staff. The system ends with the instruction *(pedal stays through break)*.

The fourth system begins at measure 11. The top staff is a vocal line with the lyrics: "'Tis so much joy!". It starts with the instruction *Start slowly and accel.* and a tempo marking of *with excitement ♩ = 120*. The dynamic is *f ecstatic*. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic, followed by an *accelerate into an unmeasured blur of sound* instruction, and then a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The system concludes with *with excitement ♩ = 120*. Pedal markings (*ped.*) are shown below the bass staff.

rit.

'Tis so much joy! If

Loco.

17 *Slower, as a recitative*

> mf

, p

I should fail, what pov-er-ty! And yet, as poor as I, have ven-tured all up-on a throw! Have

Slower, as a recitative

20 *loco*

gained! Yes! Hes-i-ta-ted so. This side the vic-tor-

23 *accel.*

f

a tempo (♩ = 120)

y!

26 *poco rit.* **Slightly slower** ♩ = 108
p reflectively

Life is but life, and

poco rit. **Slightly slower** ♩ = 108

dim. *p*

29 *cresc. poco a poco*

death but death! Bliss is but bliss, and breath but breath! And

cresc. poco a poco

32 *(cresc.)* *rit.* **Slower, as a recitative** *f* *mf*

if, in - deed I fail, _____ At least to know the worst is sweet. De -

rit. **Slower, as a recitative**

8va

(cresc.) *f*

47

at first re - peat it slow! For

50 *rit. poco a poco* *dim.*

hea - ven is a dif - ferent thing, con - jec - tured and waked

rit. poco a poco

53 (*dim.*) *p* **Slowly** *rit.*

sud - den in, and might ex - tin - guish me!

Slowly *rit.*

(*dim.*) *p*

ped.

*As cannons fired from a ship at sea

7. All I Have to Bring

Singer pretends to write another letter, as in Song #1.

Lightly ♩ = 108, with moderate energy
as a single leaf of paper floating off with a breeze

p delicately

with pedal

The piano introduction consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The right hand plays a delicate, flowing melody of eighth notes, while the left hand provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. The music is marked *p* (piano) and *delicately*. A wavy line above the right-hand staff indicates a 'pedal' effect, and a double bar line with repeat dots is placed at the end of the first measure.

3 *p* gently, meekly

It's all I have to

pp barely audible background

The first system of the vocal and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a rest for three measures, then enters with the lyrics "It's all I have to". The piano accompaniment continues with a wavy, barely audible background texture. The piano part is marked *pp* (pianissimo) and "barely audible background".

6 bring to - day - this, and my heart be -

The second system of the vocal and piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "bring to - day - this, and my heart be -". The piano accompaniment features a wavy background texture in the right hand and a more active eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand.

9 *with more strength*
cresc.

side. This, and my heart, and

cresc.

The third system of the vocal and piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "side. This, and my heart, and". The piano accompaniment becomes more active and is marked *cresc.* (crescendo) in both hands.

26 *Slightly slower, earnestly*
(f)

It's all I have to bring, it's all I have to bring, it's all I have to

Slightly slower, earnestly

29 *p* *rit. to end*

bring to - day,

p *rit. to end*

rit. to end
8va

p

rit. to end

33 *(rit.)*

Singer raises hand skyward, in appreciation of Nature's gentle gifts.

to - day,

(rit.)

pp very delicately

rit.

1'30"

Total: 14 minutes

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New Canaan, Connecticut

