Were You There?

Gwyneth Walker

SATB Chorus and Piano

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This new arrangement for mixed chorus with piano focuses on the inherent drama of this passionate spiritual song. Each verse expresses a different reaction to (question about) the crucifixion:

1. *Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*
2. *…when they nailed him to the cross?*
3. *…when the sun refused to shine?*
4. *…when they laid him in the tomb?*

At each new verse, the piano accompaniment varies within the mood of the lyrics—from simple chordal support at the beginning, to harsh rhythms (“nailed him to the cross”), to rapid “sunburst” patterns (“the sun refused to shine”), to sorrowful descending lines (“laid him in the tomb”). The choral expression is articulated in similar manner to the accompaniment.

Between the verses, interjections are inserted of “My Lord, my Lord, He was my Lord.” These phrases provide the personal, individual statements (“my Lord”) to balance with the group singing of the verses.

The piano accompaniment plays a featured role in this music. Often the tone of the ensuing verse is established in the piano. At the end, as the chorus descends into the lower range on the words “laid him in the tomb,” the piano line ascends, marked “the spirit rising.” These delicate patterns drift to heaven.

—Gwyneth Walker

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**Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)**

For more information, visit her website at:
www.gwynethwalker.com
Were You There?
for SATB Chorus and Piano

African American spiritual
Altered and with additional words by G. Walker

Gwyneth Walker

Piano

At a slow, somber tempo \( \text{d} = 100 \)

Verse 1

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Lord?        Oh.

Lord, my Lord?

Oh,

Oh,

Oh,

Oh,

Oh,

Oh,

Oh,

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Oh,

Oh,
tremble. Were you there when they tremble. Were you there when they tremble. Were you there when they tremble. Were you there when they
tremble. Were you there when they tremble. Were you there when they tremble. Were you there when they
crucified my Lord? crucified my Lord? crucified my Lord? crucified my Lord?
with intensity and urgency

My Lord,
my Lord,
my Lord.

Slightly faster $\downarrow = 112$, with motion

Slightly faster $\downarrow = 112$, with motion
VERSE 2

\[ D \] (Same tempo \( \frac{d}{d} = 112 \))

\( mf \) dramatically

Were you there when they

\[ D \] (Same tempo \( \frac{d}{d} = 112 \))

They nailed him, they nailed him to the cross.

nailed him to the cross?

They

Were you there when they nailed him, and they nailed him to the
nailed him, and they nailed him to the cross.

Oh, some times it causes me to

(no break)
Were you there when they nailed him to the cross, and then they nailed him, they

Were you there when they nailed him to the cross, and then they nailed him, they

trem-ble, trem-ble, trem-ble.

trem-ble, trem-ble, trem-ble.

trem-ble, trem-ble, trem-ble.

trem-ble, trem-ble, trem-ble.
nailed him to the cross?

(f) with intensity and urgency

My Lord,
(maintain tempo) Suddenly slower $\frac{4}{4} = 100$

and tenderly

Lord, my Lord, my Lord, He was my Lord.

Lord, my Lord, my Lord, Hmm And then the

my Lord, my Lord, my Lord, Hmm And then the

(maintain tempo) Suddenly slower $\frac{4}{4} = 100$

and tenderly

loco
VERSE 3

G grandly

sun refused to

G

And then the

And then the shine.

shine.

dim.

dim.

dim.
sun refused to

sun refused to

lococo

shine.

shine.
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
And then the sun,
With motion $\downarrow = 112$

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With motion $\downarrow = 112$

lightly, as faint touches of sunlight

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(\textit{xoo}) \\
\textit{poco ped.}
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**VERSE 4**

J (Same tempo $\downarrow = 112$)

(p) with sorrow and heaviness

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And then they laid him in the

(p) with sorrow and heaviness

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J (Same tempo $\downarrow = 112$)

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\textit{poco ped.}
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And then they laid him in the tomb. (p) with sorrow and heaviness

And then they laid him in the tomb. (p) with sorrow and heaviness

And then they laid him in the tomb. poco ped. poco ped.

And then they laid him in the tomb. cresc. My Lord, my Lord,

And then they laid him in the tomb. cresc. My Lord, my Lord,
And then they laid him down.

And then they laid him in the tomb.

the spirit rising

dim. poco a poco to end
Ah, ________ were you ______ there?

Ah, ________ were you ______ there?

Ah, ________ were you ______ there?

Ah, ________ were you ______ there?

Ah, ________ were you ______ there?

let ring