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### The Brass Music of Gwyneth Walker: An Overview

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THE BRASS MUSIC OF GWYETH WALKER:

AN OVERVIEW

By

Kevin P. Madden

A DOCTORAL DOCUMENT

Presented to the Faculty of

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## ABSTRACT

### THE BRASS MUSIC OF GWYETH WALKER:

#### AN OVERVIEW

Kevin P. Madden, D.M.A.

University of Nebraska, 2020

Advisor: Scott Anderson

Gwyneth Walker (b.1947) is an American composer known primarily for her choral music. Dr. Walker's catalog contains over 350 works for all types of ensembles. Research exists about Dr. Walker's music. It is in the form of reviews, notes, and journal articles. There have been three major research papers on her music. They are Carson Cooman's 2005 essay "Defining a Personal American Quartet Tradition: The Four String Quartets of Gwyneth Walker", Tana Rene Field-Bartholomew's 2007 DMA dissertation "A Performer's Guide to the Songs of Gwyneth Walker" focusing on her solo songs, and Vicki Lynne Burrichter's 2003 DMA dissertation, "The Choral Music of Gwyneth Walker: An Overview". These theses address Dr. Walker's work, but do not include her composition for brass instruments. The list is extensive and includes five works for solo trumpet with various accompaniments, six for accompanied solo tuba, and thirteen for brass chamber ensemble (quintet or trio). Brass ensembles are also often the instrumental accompaniment of choice for many her choral works. Despite her prodigious output for brass there are no research papers written about it.

I will create a general summary of what Dr. Walker's musical language is, with focus on textures and tonalities. I will then go on to explore how her brass writing fits into this thesis.

I will provide a description and analyses of five of her brass chamber works. These works are; her 2007 setting of *Let all Mortal Flesh Keep Silent* titled *The Light Descending*; 1989's *Bright Brass*; 1987's *Raise the Roof*; 2007's *A Season of Wonder*"; and 1994's *Shaker Tunes*. *Shaker Tunes* is a five-movement setting of traditional shaker melodies. Walker made simple vocal arrangements of the five original tunes and intends for the tunes to be performed by a choir (or the audience) before the performance of each brass setting. This leads to how "Each movement would explore, expand upon, or reinterpret the original." (notes from the composer). This thesis will include appendices listing all her works that include brass (including the choral works with brass accompaniment) and a discography of recordings of her quintet works.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is my opinion that the brass quintet, as an ensemble, has a major repertoire problem. There appear to be two types of performing quintet; the quintet that is interested in playing music that is recognizable and enjoyable for a commercial audience that makes use primarily of arrangements, transcriptions, and other ‘novelty’ pieces; and the quintet that is interested in presenting only compositions originally written for the ensemble usually to an academic or otherwise learned audience. While this divide can be found almost any genre of ensemble, it is most prevalent in the brass quintet. I believe that there can be a middle ground between these two ensembles, that is there can be quintets that play music originally written for the ensemble that is also enjoyable for the audience.

Throughout this document, I make use of the word ‘accessible’ in describing Gwyneth Walker’s music. To me, accessible means that a work is technically easy enough to be played by a wide variety of ensembles, and that is ‘easy’ or ‘unchallenging’ to listen to. This is not necessarily a good thing, nor is it necessarily a conscious choice of the composer, but usually a result of other aesthetic and compositional choices. I am of the opinion, however, that music like this may slowly bridge the gap between the two distinct types of quintet. At the very least, as a brass player myself, it is important to celebrate any composer of renown (which Walker has, particularly in the choral and vocal genres) who is writing for brass quintet.

## CHAPTER 1: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Gwyneth Van Anden Walker was born in New York City on March 22, 1947. Less than a year after her birth she moved with her parents and two older sisters to the wealthy suburb of New Canaan Connecticut. While Walker's immediate family was firmly in the middle class—her father was a physicist and inventor and her mother was a housewife and social researcher<sup>1</sup>—her extended family went back at least seven generations in Long Island, New York to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and produced several high profile individuals,<sup>2</sup> including the founder of the New Canaan Country Club.<sup>3</sup> Walker's childhood therefore consisted of many things typical of a middle class American family in the middle century. There was a piano in the home; Gwyneth taught herself to play and was given some formal lessons, until her penchant for ignoring the prescribed lessons to go on flights of her own creative fancy ended them.<sup>4</sup> Walker taught herself to read and notate music and would write small compositions for her and her friends to perform on toy instruments. In addition to music, Walker has always maintained a physically active lifestyle and her primary athletic interest is tennis. This interest in music and tennis led to her leaving the New Canaan public schools (despite them being some of the best in the

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<sup>1</sup> Vicki Lynne Burrichter, "The Choral Music of Gwyneth Walker: an Overview" (dissertation, 2003), p.9)

<sup>2</sup> Burrichter, (p.9-10)

<sup>3</sup> "We belonged to the country club, because my grandfather had founded it, but we didn't have the money for the lessons for the tennis pro to teach me, so my father taught me!" Gwyneth Walker, interview by Vicki Lynne Burrichter, tape recording, Chicago, IL, 14 April 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Richard L. Schnipke, "Gwyneth Walker: an Annotated Bio-Bibliography of Selected Works for Mixed Chorus" (dissertation, 2008), p.9)

country<sup>5</sup>) for the private Abbot Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, a school with superior arts and athletics programs to the public schools. A high school music theory class would be the first major formal musical education Walker would receive.

After high school, Walker attended Pembroke College (the female college of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island which was not co-ed until 1971) initially as a Physics major, but quickly switched to Music Composition, earning a B.A. in 1968. She completed her graduate study at the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford in Connecticut, earning both her M.M. (1970) and D.M.A. (1976) in Music Composition from that school. She was the first doctoral composition student at Hartt.<sup>6</sup>

Walker has been a devout Quaker since discovering the faith while at a high school tennis camp in Pennsylvania.<sup>7</sup> The primary tenants of American Quakerism are peace, integrity, equality, community, simplicity, and care for the environment.<sup>8</sup> The tenant that all people are equal has been a major factor in Walker's musical style, particularly for her songs. Burrichter notes, "The influence of the Quaker heritage on Dr. Walker's music is profound, and may be seen in her attempt to make her music understandable and clear to anyone who hears it, and in her egalitarian career approach of accepting commissions from groups of all types, sizes and musical status, from professional orchestras to elementary school choirs."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "How Does New Canaan High School Rank Among America's Best High Schools?" U.S. News & World Report, <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/connecticut/districts/new-canaan-school-district/new-canaan-high-school-4491>

<sup>6</sup> Schnipke, (p. 11)

<sup>7</sup> Schnipke (p. 10)

<sup>8</sup> "FAQs," Friends General Conference, accessed July 01, 2020, <https://www.fgcquaker.org/discover/faqs-about-quakers>

<sup>9</sup> Burrichter (p. 10)



Dr. Walker briefly pursued an academic career, teaching composition at the Oberlin College Conservatory until 1982.<sup>10</sup> She then decided that she would devote herself to full-time composing. Indeed she views composing and her faith as being completely intertwined, and comprising the totality of her purpose:

To me, music is a gift from God. To be able to sing or play an instrument well is indeed a gift from God. To create music is a gift from God. Therefore, if one pursues this craft, develops one's skills and is able to put them to use, this is a form of worship. If one writes music which touches the soul of just one other person, this is indeed a form of worship. If the music reaches many people, it is even more an experience of faith. If one trains oneself to develop musical skills, and then is able to write many works which get into print and then into the hands of many musicians, this may be viewed as 'success'. Or, it may be viewed as a manifestation of the course of life intended by God for any one of us.<sup>11</sup>

To those ends, her career as a composer has also been an influence on her personal life as well. Writes Walker: "I am not married, and I do not have any children. Composing music is a full, complete life. And, my musical compositions are my 'children.' I created them, and I love them, just I would create and love children"<sup>12</sup> She rented a house on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont for nearly 30 years. The massive disparity in both population density and affluence<sup>13</sup> of Braintree compared to New Canaan is seen by the composer as an influence on her style, as she believes the rural Vermont audience allows her more freedom in composition. As Walker Says,

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<sup>10</sup>“ Gwyneth Walker - Composer,” Gwyneth Walker - Composer, accessed February 27, 2020, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/>)

<sup>11</sup> Gwyneth Walker - Letters and Replies: Letter from Rose Babington, November 19, 2002 ("Career Thoughts")

<sup>12</sup> Gwyneth Walker - Letters and Replies: Letter from the students of Corin Maple, January 29, 2004 ("Questions from Young Students")

<sup>13</sup> New Canaan is less than 50 miles from New York City, and has a median family income (in 2019) of \$192,428. Orange County, VT (where Braintree is located) has ~28,000 residents with a median family income (in 2019) of \$60,159 ("U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States," Census Bureau QuickFacts, accessed July 07, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>)

Where I live in Vermont now, it's lower middle class at best; there's real poverty there. And boy, am I relaxed around people like that: they're not judgmental. They're much more interested in coming to hear a new piece of music, and if they like it, they like it. They're not affected by the snobbery of wealth. Wealth is a very snobby thing: people judge you more on the money you have or the credentials you have, or the credentials of the composer, and not on the worth of the music.<sup>14</sup>

Walker's catalog now contains more than 350 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus, and solo voice. She is the recipient of the 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, Vermont Athenaeum. In 2012, she was elected as a Fellow of the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences. She also received the 2018 Alfred Nash Patterson Lifetime Achievement Award from Choral Arts New England. As of 2018 she has moved off the dairy farm in Braintree and now splits her time between Randolph, Vermont and her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut. Walker was recently named Composer-in-Residence for the Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra in Petoskey, Michigan.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Gwyneth Walker, interview by Vicki Lynne Burrichter, tape recording, Chicago, IL, 14 April 1999.

<sup>15</sup> "Gwyneth Walker - Composer," Gwyneth Walker - Composer, accessed February 27, 2020, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/>

CHAPTER 2: *THE LIGHT DESCENDING*

*The Light Descending* is the most straightforward of the works this document intends to explore. It is also the most choral in setting. The piece is a setting of the traditional hymn, *Let all Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*, that was commissioned in 2007 by the Nebraska Brass for their 20<sup>th</sup> Christmas Season. A recurring theme in existing analyses of Walker's music is that of 'accessibility'<sup>16</sup> and *The Light Descending* is potentially the most accessible, both to listener and performer, of her quintet works. It is roughly four minutes in length, scored for standard brass quintet [two Trumpets (in this instance in C), Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba]. Other than cup mutes for the trumpets, no 'special effects' or extended techniques are called for.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 2.1: mm. 1-2<sup>18</sup>

*Let all Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* is one of the oldest hymns in current use in Christian churches today, and parts of its text date back to chant of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the

<sup>16</sup> Burrichter 17, Schnidke 15, Field-Bartholomew 1

<sup>17</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *The Light Descending* (Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

<sup>18</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *The Light Descending* (Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

Liturgy of St. James.<sup>19</sup> While in current usage it is not necessarily a Christmas hymn,<sup>20</sup> its connection with the Eastern Orthodox feast of St. James (December 26<sup>th</sup>) and connection with Christmas Sunday celebrations of St. James in other denominations gives the hymn a definite Christmas association.

The text in common usage (in Catholic and Protestant hymnals) comes from Gerard Moultrie who set translated it from Greek and adapted it for use in the Anglican Church in 1864. Ralph Vaughan Williams attached the hymn's tune, a French folksong *Picardy*, to the text in 1906.<sup>21</sup> The text in four stanzas is:

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
And with fear and trembling stand;  
Ponder nothing earthly minded,  
For with blessing in His hand,  
Christ our God to earth descending  
Comes our homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,  
As of old on earth He stood,  
Lord of lords, in human vesture,  
In the body and the blood;  
He will give to all the faithful  
His own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven  
Spreads its vanguard on the way,  
As the Light of light descendeth  
From the realms of endless day,  
Comes the powers of hell to vanquish  
As the darkness clears away.

At His feet the six winged seraph,

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<sup>19</sup>“ History of Hymns: ‘Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence,’” Discipleship Ministries, August 9, 2019, <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-let-all-mortal-flesh-keep-silence>)

<sup>20</sup> Most hymnals list this hymn as simply a Eucharist or Communion hymn. “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence,” Hymnary.org, accessed March 17, 2020, [https://hymnary.org/text/let\\_all\\_mortal\\_flesh\\_keep\\_silence](https://hymnary.org/text/let_all_mortal_flesh_keep_silence))

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

Cherubim with sleepless eye,  
 Veil their faces to the presence,  
 As with ceaseless voice they cry:  
 Alleluia, Alleluia  
 Alleluia, Lord Most High!<sup>22</sup>

Of these stanzas, Walker sets two of them plainly, and a third in an elongated and emphasized variation. While there is no direct reference for this, I believe that it is the first three stanzas that are set, primarily because stanza three contains the line from where the title of the work is derived, “as the Light of Light Descendeth” This stanza also occurs at the climax of the work.

*The Light Descending* is in d minor, with a modulation to e minor (and ultimately resolving to E Major). D minor, appropriately, is also the key that *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* is almost always set in.<sup>23</sup> The trumpets, horn, and tuba establish a tonic with three bars of D across 4 octaves. The first statement of the melody is presented plainly in the middle and lower middle register of the trombone, with tuba only providing a pedal D (with V-I motion from an A each phrase) and the trumpets providing a whole step motive in parallel 4ths on every third and fourth measure.

Figure 2.2: mm 6-11<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup>“ Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence,” Hymnary.org, accessed March 17, 2020, [https://hymnary.org/text/let\\_all\\_mortal\\_flesh\\_keep\\_silence](https://hymnary.org/text/let_all_mortal_flesh_keep_silence))

<sup>23</sup> At least across the 66 hymnals scanned on Hymnary.org.

<sup>24</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *The Light Descending* (Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

I believe this harmonic simplicity is a nod to the hymn's chant origins. For the statement of lines 3 and 4 (measures 12 to 19) the horn has joined the tuba on pedal tonics. At rehearsal C, which is line 5 in the text, a contrasting melodic phrase is presented with the horn providing nearly homo-rhythmic harmony. Rehearsal C is also the first place that Walker strays from the original melody, with a small embellishment in the trombone in the second bar.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of three measures. A rehearsal mark 'C' is placed above the first measure. The Horn in F part is in the treble clef and plays a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a half note G4 in the second measure, and quarter notes G4, F4, E4, D4 in the third measure. The Trombone part is in the bass clef and plays quarter notes: G3, F3, E3, D3, followed by a half note G3 in the second measure, and quarter notes G3, F3, E3, D3 in the third measure. The Tuba part is in the bass clef and plays a single half note G2 in the first measure, followed by a half note G2 in the second measure, and a half note G2 in the third measure.

Figure 2.3: mm 20-23 <sup>25</sup>

The second stanza begins at rehearsal D with the horn and trombone taking over the trumpet's whole-tone motive and the trumpets taking the melody. The melody itself is found in second trumpet, while trumpet 1 has an accompanying figure that moves in contrary motion to the melody and ends with a very descant-esque leap at each phrase's end. The pedal motion in the tuba has also accelerated, while the part is still exclusively tonic and dominant, the rhythm has shifted to a syncopation, with the dominant As being embellished with an octave.

<sup>25</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *The Light Descending* (Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

The musical score for Figure 2.4, measures 29-33, is in 4/4 time and D major. It features five staves: Trumpet in C (top), Trumpet in C, Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba (bottom). The music consists of several measures of music with various note values and rests.

Figure 2.4: mm. 29-33<sup>26</sup>

At rehearsal G, we enter an interlude or transitional section, The tuba's material introduces some C major harmony (in passing motion) and uses a Phrygian scale to prolong dominant (a minor) harmony. At rehearsal H, the music repeats, this time with the tuba resting, the trombone playing the tuba's previous material up an octave, and the previous trombone, horn, and trumpet 2 materials all moving up a part. While the tuba returned to D minor after its bars of A eighth notes (measure 58), the trombone takes a different direction. We are given three stacked 4ths on beat 4 of measure 67,<sup>27</sup> and transition roughly into a new key area.

<sup>26</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *The Light Descending* (Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

<sup>27</sup> Quartal and Quintal harmonies are recognized by other writers as being very common in Dr. Walker's harmonic language. (Burrichter 15, Schnidke 16, Field-Bartholomew 124)

The image displays a musical score for four brass instruments: Trumpet in C, Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (mm. 62-73) shows the Trumpet in C, Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba parts. The second system (mm. 64-73) shows the Trumpet in C, Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba parts. The score includes a rehearsal mark 'I' at the beginning of the second system. The key signature changes from one flat to one sharp at the start of the second system.

Figure 2.5: mm. 62-73<sup>28</sup>

While the score would indicate movement to either G major or E minor, the CMaj7 sonority on the downbeat of Rehearsal I offers no help. The tuba is presenting the melody here in the expected e minor, though it begins on C, perhaps suggesting some

<sup>28</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *The Light Descending* (Gwyneth Walker, 2007)



Lydian modal material<sup>29</sup>. The upper voices have a unison rhythmic figure on the static CMaj7 harmony. The long notes that have ended each phrase so far are doubled in duration (to eight beats) in the tuba's melody to allow time for the upper voices to resolve to a C major triad. In the second four bars of the melody the harmony of the upper voices this time move from CMaj7 to an eMaj7. These eight bars repeat verbatim, with an unmarked but appropriate crescendo to a peak before rehearsal K<sup>30</sup>. The text at this moment would be: "As the Light of light descendeth / From the realms of endless day". The consequent phrase is presented in the four upper voices and comes to a conclusion at Rehearsal L. At rehearsal L, Walker begins a final for the piece, with a long section primarily prolonging the minor dominant b. As in the transition, she uses Phrygian scales to prolong harmonic areas until finally arriving at an E major sonority in the final bar. The final chord is voiced quite high in the register for the tuba, and the major sonority is appropriate given the end of the text dealing with endless light and the removal of darkness. It is also a bit of referential comedy to end this piece with a Picardy third.<sup>31</sup> The overall major-ness of this final chord is somewhat undermined however, by the trombone's F#. The crunchiness of this second is simultaneously amplified and diminished through scoring. It is exactly a major 2<sup>nd</sup> away from the tuba's E (not a 9<sup>th</sup> as would be more expected in this octave), but the tuba is exceedingly resonant in that high

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<sup>29</sup> The extensive use of modes is recognized by other writers as being very common in Dr. Walker's harmonic language. (Burrichter 76, Schidke 20, Field-Bartholomew 124, Cooman 20)

<sup>30</sup> The crescendo is penciled in on my copy of the score, courtesy of Nebraska Brass, it can be heard on the recording found on Dr. Walker's website.

<sup>31</sup> As previously mentioned, the name of the tune for this work is 'Picardy.'

octave and will easily over balance the trombone. This inclusion of a 2<sup>nd</sup> in an otherwise clean triad is also found often in Dr. Walker's music.<sup>32</sup>

Figure 2.6: mm. 108-113<sup>33</sup>

This work contains many features that other authors have described as being central to Dr. Walker's harmonic language. It presents a melody that is easy to hear, and presents it in a way that is generally unadorned or otherwise hidden. Her harmonic language is usually open, making use of quartal and quintal harmonies. When she uses scales they are often modal, and often Lydian, as Walker believes the Lydian mode has an upward or lifting quality and she prefers her music to be uplifting, positive or celebratory.<sup>34</sup> *The Light Descending* is a good reference point to start exploring the rest of Dr. Walker's brass catalog from.

<sup>32</sup> Schidke 16, Cooman 20.

<sup>33</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *The Light Descending* (Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

<sup>34</sup> Schidke, 20.

CHAPTER 3: *BRIGHT BRASS*

In her opening notes to *Bright Brass*, the composer writes:

“Bright Brass” was composed for the Alaska Brass Quintet in conjunction with Gwyneth Walker’s visit to the Fairbanks musical community in 1989. The rhythmic language of this music is crisp (accents, rests), to emphasize the lively and bright qualities inherent in the brass quintet genre.

The work opens with thematic statements and responses, as various pairings of the instruments answer each other. Then, the theme returns in a homophonic and abrupt manner which ushers in an interlude section of soli, superimposed freely. The patterns coalesce into a final statement of the theme, punctuated by cadenzas in the trumpet.

The alternation between metrically strict and free sections is characteristic of this work.<sup>35</sup>

As mentioned in the chapter 1, Gwyneth Walker left the academic world to pursue composing full-time in 1982 as she felt that a teaching career did not leave her ample free time to pursue her actual passion: composing. Her catalog lists less than ten published works dating to before 1982. Carson Cooman suggests three style periods for Dr. Walker’s works, “For these purposes, Walker’s output is broken into three style periods – ‘early’ works (before 1985), ‘first mature period ’(1985 – 1990), ‘second mature period ’ (1990 – present).”<sup>36</sup> This ‘first mature period ’is interesting because it is the primary period of Walker’s composition that was done without commission as she was “amplifying [her] catalog.”<sup>37</sup> Her first string quartet, *Three American Portraits* was composed without commission. Both of Walker’s brass quintets from this period, *Bright*

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<sup>35</sup> Notes from the Composer, “Gwyneth Walker,” Gwyneth Walker: Bright Brass, accessed March 18, 2020, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/brightbr.html>

<sup>36</sup> Carson P. Cooman, *Defining a Personal American Quartet Tradition: The Four String Quartets of Gwyneth Walker*, 2005, p.2

<sup>37</sup> Personal e-mail to Carson P. Cooman October 17 2005, cited in Cooman, p. 3

*Brass* and *Raise the Roof!* were done on commission but bear significant stylistic similarities to the string quartet.

*Bright Brass* is, as Walker's program notes describe, a short lively piece roughly four minutes in length for standard brass quintet. As with other works in her catalog, 'accessible' is an appropriate descriptor for *Bright Brass*. There are higher technical demands for the performers in *Bright Brass* than there were in *The Light Descending*. Mutes are called for in all five parts, as are glissandi, flutter-tonguing, and trills. There is also an aleatoric interlude towards the end of the work. These challenges would not classify this work as inaccessible to most brass quintets.

The primary motivic material is found in measure 1-4 of the first trumpet part.<sup>38</sup> Pentatonic scales and syncopation are used extensively as the piece progresses. Syncopation is a hallmark of Walker's 'livelier' works and is considered a critical characteristic of her rhythmic language. Walker writes in the introduction to her analysis of "A Splash of Cold Water" from her *Short Set for String Quartet*, "The rhythmic language of Gwyneth Walker has been described as "American" – influenced by jazz and rock styles... A specifically jazz-derived rhythm is syncopation."<sup>39</sup> This syncopation along with the noted accents, rests and the lively tempo help push this work forward and maintain energy. Throughout *Bright Brass* there are no note values longer than a dotted quarter note that are not either ornamented by a trill or flutter themselves, or are accompanied by faster motion in some other part.

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<sup>38</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Bright Brass* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1989)

<sup>39</sup> Gwyneth Walker, "A Splash of Cold Water" from *Short Set for String Quartet: A Musical Analysis*, 2004, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/ana/gw-spla.pdf> p. 3

Walker's harmonic language is often "both simple and complex."<sup>40</sup> "Bright Brass" is a good example of this dichotomy. As in the first movement from her *Short Set for String Quartet*, "A Splash of Cold Water"<sup>41</sup>, *Bright Brass* has a very clear tonal center, but a mode that is unclear. The first two eighth notes, repeated and accented, give a simple open fifth F-C. The tuba parts near the beginning, and in fact for most of the piece, are centered around F and C suggesting quite clearly that we are in an F of some kind. Looking at the score, with its four flats, it would seem to suggest that we are in f minor, but aurally there is no hint of the minor mode. Walker accomplishes this masking of modality by using pentatonic scales and patterns. These pentatonic patterns allow Walker to avoid sounding the third scale degree (either natural or flat) until two measures before rehearsal G. She also avoids scale degree six (D-flat) and. Scale degree seven (E-flat) is often sounded, but is not raised, and is most often approached by a skip of a third in the pentatonic pattern, so its tone leading characteristics are obscured. While pentatonic scales certainly give the work a folksy American feel, the composer does not claim to have used them for that particular quality.<sup>42</sup>

Structurally this work is based around two motives, a five note pattern in the trombone in measure one, (F-F-C-Eb-F) and a four measure melodic motive (A),

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<sup>40</sup> *ibid.* p. 2

<sup>41</sup> In her own analysis of this work (*ibid.*) Walker states, "This opening movement of the string quartet was selected for analysis because of its concise form and readily comprehensible harmonic language. This work appears to epitomize various aspects of the composer's techniques." (p.1)

<sup>42</sup> "While other scholars have inferred this use of modal writing to be an influence of Walker's background in folk music, Walker herself considers it utilizing her skills and training in a manner to best express the text or to set the atmosphere for each piece" (Schnidke 21)

presented first in 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet, which is repeated, and followed with a four measure ‘tag’ from the horn and trombone, ending with a flutter-tongued whole note.



Figure 3.1: mm 1<sup>43</sup>

The image shows two staves of music for Trumpets in B-flat in treble clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The first measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The second measure contains a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B3. The third measure contains a quarter note A3, a quarter note G3, and a quarter note F3. The fourth measure contains a whole note E3, which is marked with a flutter-tongue symbol and a fermata.

Figure 3.2: mm. 1-4<sup>44</sup>

Walker uses this flutter-tongued whole note as a demarcation for sections throughout the piece. It will be referred to as the T (or transition) motif. After this 12-measure phrase, an attempt is made to repeat it again, but this is subverted by some trumpet ornamentation and the horn providing new material before it should. The horn’s material of a syncopated pentatonic scale ending with a glissando final whole step (B) that occurs five measures before rehearsal C is a miscue for a few reasons, it is ‘early’ happening only eight measures after the start of this phrase, and we have not heard the T motif yet to move on to new material. The trombone ushers in T with the horn at C, but the trumpets have a final say with one more statement of the A motive before the trombone is finally able to present B material at rehearsal D. As this B motive is handed off around the quintet the first trumpet remarks on each glissando with a fast three-note F - E-flat - C figure set over sixteenth notes and in cup mute (also marked ‘blurred’). Three measures after rehearsal F, the horn and trombone again play the T motif this time to

<sup>43</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Bright Brass* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1989)

<sup>44</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Bright Brass* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1989)

move to a section where they have the A material. The trumpets seem displeased at this, as they continue to interject with the sixteenth note 3 over 4 pattern, and eventually their own flutter-tongued ‘move it along’ gesture. The trombone gets a few more chances to sound B material, this time with the tuba and horn providing the fast, muted, and ‘blurred’ sixteenth notes, this first major section is concluded after a reprise of the A material by rehearsal J.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Trumpet in Bb and Trombone. The score is for measures 33-35, marked with a box labeled 'D'. The Trombone part begins with a series of sixteenth notes, each with an accent (>), followed by a long glissando. The Trumpet part begins with a series of sixteenth notes, each with an accent (>), followed by a long glissando. The instruction 'cup mute (blurred)' is written above the Trumpet part for the final measures.

Figure 3.3 mm. 33-35<sup>45</sup>

Rehearsal J is a section that is not in strict time. It is unmetered, and consists of small melodic cells separated by general pauses. These cells are the open fifth eighth notes (like at the very beginning of the piece), a four note quartal and quintal motif, the A motif, and finally a combination of the quartal/quintal motif and a long glissando (sort of an extended T). Rehearsal K starts an elongated aleatoric section. This type of aleatory is not uncommon in Walker’s works of this period. Cooman states,

“Walker’s works of this period tend to use aleatoric techniques for one of two purposes: 1) to create a pulse-less, murmuring tapestry over which a melodic idea is presented; or 2) as an expression of “out of sync” energetic playing. In this latter case, it is again as if the instruments have “burst” whatever metrical confines had been previously imposed. It is this second kind of aleatory that Walker employs in the first movement of this quartet. It represents the developmental culmination of the building energy of the previous sections.”<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Bright Brass* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1989)

<sup>46</sup> Cooman, 6.

The aleatory used in “Bright Brass” is a blending of both of these types. Like the quartet, rehearsal K is a ‘developmental culmination’ of the beginning of the piece; the tuba’s repeated cell is based on A material, the trombone’s on the B glissando material, the horn is similar to the ‘blurred’ sixteenth notes but in an eight note elongation. The second trumpet has new material, again based primarily on pentatonic patterns. The effect of these four lines creates the “pulse-less murmuring tapestry”<sup>47</sup> that Cooman states as indicative of the first type of aleatory, and the first trumpet presents the overreaching melodic idea. Rehearsal L is a reprise of the material from rehearsal J, this time “punctuated by cadenzas in the trumpet.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Cooman, 6

<sup>48</sup> Walker, program notes for *Bright Brass*



[K] INTERLUDE

The first system of the musical score is for an interlude. It consists of five staves: two for the piano (treble and bass clefs) and three for the bass (treble, bass, and a lower bass clef). The key signature has two flats. The piano part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. A *cup mute* instruction is placed above the first staff, with a *pp* dynamic marking below it. The bass part starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a section marked *mf* (mezzo-forte). The system concludes with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking.

*enter ad lib.*

The second system of the musical score begins with the instruction *enter ad lib.* (ad libitum). It features five staves: two for the piano and three for the bass. The piano part starts with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. The bass part includes a section marked *mf* and another marked *p*. The system ends with a *p* dynamic marking.

The third system of the musical score consists of five staves: two for the piano and three for the bass. The piano part features a section marked *mf*. The bass part includes a section marked *p*. The system concludes with a *p* dynamic marking.

Figure 3.4 mm. 81<sup>49</sup>

Rehearsal M is the beginning of the closing section. Important for the harmonic movement of the work, G-Flats and C-Flats have entered the texture, suggesting a move to A-flat minor. After a brief statement of A material, the tuba presents the opening trombone motive which is followed with staggered entrances up to the high trumpet. This technique is a common way to stack entrances in brass writing but is also the first half of a technique Walker will use in her choral music, building “Pyramids of Joy”<sup>50</sup>. Once all five voices are playing, there is a syncopated whole step motif scored in the high register of all five instruments, ending with a long glissando to a high peak.

<sup>49</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Bright Brass* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1989)

<sup>50</sup> Schidke, 26.

*accel.*

Figure 3.5 mm. 85-88<sup>51</sup>

Following a general pause after this glissando is the final bit of extended technique that will be often called for in Walker’s instrumental music. The score notes “players turn and face audience – hold instruments to mouth” and “valve taps (tremolo).”<sup>52</sup> These sorts of extra-instrumental sound effects are not uncommon in 20<sup>th</sup> century chamber music<sup>53</sup>. Walker often ends her works with this kind of extended technique “as an expression of energy. It is as if the music has burst beyond what the instrumental pitches can express – into these non-pitched sonic expressions.”<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Bright Brass* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1989)

<sup>52</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Bright Brass* (MMB Music Inc., 1989)

<sup>53</sup> Cooman 4-5

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.* 5

Quickly

Players turn and face audience - hold instruments to mouth

G.P.

valve taps (tremolo)

valve taps (tremolo)

valve taps (tremolo)

rattle slide (tremolo)

valve taps (tremolo)

Quickly

turn back

Figure 3.6: mm. 92-94<sup>55</sup>

*Bright Brass* uses many techniques that Walker will use throughout her later brass repertoire, like *The Light Descending* there are uses of modal scales, quartal and quintal harmonies, and a diatonic pitch set. Unlike *The Light Descending*, the freer *Bright Brass* also makes use of aleatory and the extra instrumental sound effects of the ending.

<sup>55</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Bright Brass* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1989)

CHAPTER 4: *RAISE THE ROOF*

The composer writes of *Raise the Roof*:

Commissioned by the Chandler Cultural Foundation, Randolph, Vermont in 1987 to celebrate the restoration of Chandler Hall -- a community concert hall and theater.

Much local pride and effort was given to providing the Randolph residents with this performance space. And the spirit was that of American "Barn Raisings." Thus, "Raise the Roof!" was inspired by the energy of the community renovation activity. The hand and foot tapping are derived from the rhythms of hammers pounding and carpenters at work.<sup>56</sup>

1987's *Raise the Roof!* is the first published brass quintet work by Dr. Walker.

Like *Bright Brass* it contains many techniques that are central to Walker's style and compositional approach. Unlike her other brass works, *Raise the Roof!* requests a specific seating arrangement for the ensemble.

*Please sit in the formation diagramed below:*

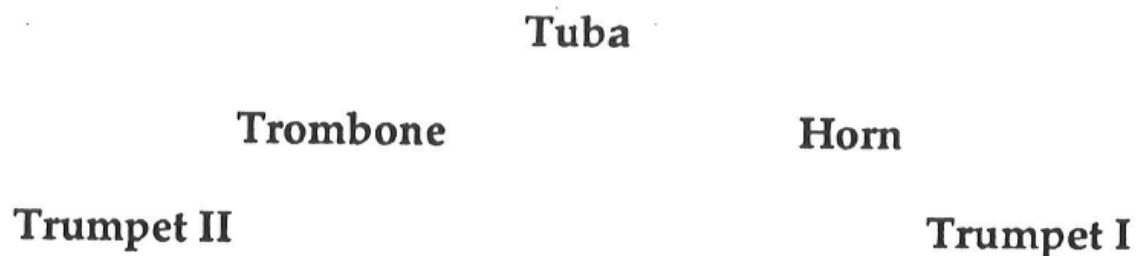


Figure 4.1: Seating arrangement from the score<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Notes from the composer "Gwyneth Walker," Gwyneth Walker: *Raise the Roof!*, accessed March 23, 2020, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/raisethe.html>

<sup>57</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Raise the Roof!* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music Inc., 1987)

Chandler Hall is a large music hall built in 1907 in Randolph, Vermont. Randolph is not far from where Walker was living at the time in Braintree, and is still a place where she keeps a residence. The town has a strong community and strong love of music that Walker mentions repeatedly as a reason for why she stayed so long in rural Vermont.<sup>58</sup> Walker's penchant, at times, for extra-instrumental sounds is extremely apparent in this work as it calls for much tapping, slapping, and hissing to be done by the performers. These sounds were intended to mimic the sound of people working by hand to build a building, the music hall literally, but a New England barn raising figuratively<sup>59</sup>. The piece begins with all performers tapping their hands on their legs in unison, and then moving to an alternate pattern of eighth notes between right and left hands. At rehearsal A, the tapping splits with each performer announcing their own tapping motive. This is one section where the suggested seating arrangement has importance; the taps are scored such that they will progress from stage left to stage right in order.

The image shows a musical score for rehearsal A, measures 9-12. The score is for five instruments: Trumpet in Bb, Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba. The notation shows rhythmic patterns with 'x' marks indicating tapping or slapping sounds. The first measure is marked with a box containing the letter 'A'. The second measure shows a change in the rhythmic pattern. The third and fourth measures continue the pattern with various rests and notes. The fifth measure shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many 'x' marks.

Figure 4.2 mm. 9-12<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Jonathan Babcock and DMA, "Season 1, Episode 6 - Gwyneth Walker, Composer "TXST Choirs Today,"

<sup>59</sup> Notes from the composer "Gwyneth Walker," Gwyneth Walker: Raise the Roof!, accessed March 23, 2020, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/raisethe.html>

<sup>60</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Raise the Roof!* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1987)

At rehearsal B, the trumpet begins to play a melody that is very syncopated as expected from Dr. Walker. In continuing with the idea of hammer strikes, pitches are often repeated. Over the next 20 bars, each instrument will stop their leg tapping and join in the rhythmic played line. The tuba at measure 37 presents the first real melodic material we hear, with sparse accompaniment from the ensemble. As has often been the case with Walker's music the mode is obscured at the outset of the work. B-flat seems to be a tonal center as the quintet builds to full strength (and indeed we will eventually settle on b-flat minor) but the tuba's initial entrance is with material that seems to be in e-flat minor. At rehearsal D, the wide open B-flat and F fifth confirm our tonal area. From there, the tuba has an ascending scalar line that moves up a B-flat minor scale (though with the 7<sup>th</sup> omitted, so we cannot comment on mode) while the other four voices continues their rhythmic 'pounding' in parallel 5ths.

The image shows a musical score for rehearsal D, measures 41-48. The score is in 4/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The tuba part (bottom staff) shows an ascending scalar line starting on B-flat. The other four voices (trumpet, trombone, saxophone, and piano) continue their rhythmic 'pounding' in parallel 5ths.

Figure 4.3: mm. 41-48<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Raise the Roof!* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1987)

At measure 72 we get an extended sequence of Walker’s “Pyramids of Joy” more complete than in “Bright Brass”. These bell-tone pyramids outline chords that are also consistent with Walker’s style. The first ascent outlines our B-flat tonal open fifth, but with an added C in the trombone. This C can be read either as adding a second to a B-flat triad (common in Walker’s music) or with the scoring used by Walker it makes a quintal structure. The descent (over tuba’s F) is over an F-dominant chord, it re-ascends and descends again this time outlining an open G-flat D-flat fifth, with an added A-flat 2<sup>nd</sup> or quintal.

The musical score for measures 72-75 is presented in a system of five staves. The instruments are 1st Trumpet in Bb, 2nd Trumpet in Bb, Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The music features a sequence of bell-tone pyramids. The 1st and 2nd Trumpets play a melodic line that ascends and then descends. The Horn in F plays a similar melodic line. The Trombone plays a line that includes a C note, which is part of the B-flat tonal open fifth. The Tuba plays a steady F bass line. The overall texture is a quintal structure.

Figure 4.4 mm 72-75<sup>62</sup>

The energy subsides somewhat after the “Pyramids of Joy” and there is a recurrence of the hand tapping before we enter a section of tuba cadenza. During the tuba cadenza, the rest of the ensemble provides a background of ‘work noises’ both tapped and vocal.

The tuba cadenza is comprised of materials using pentatonic patterns, a G-flat Lydian scale, and B-flat minor scale. The cadenza ends with a long descending glissando

<sup>62</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Raise the Roof!* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1987)



of “muddled chromaticism”<sup>63</sup> that ultimately crash lands into a new key area, c minor. This upward modulation is accompanied by a return of the rhythmic motives from the beginning of the work, and just 12 measures later we ascend again to c-sharp minor. This time the energy of c-sharp minor increases over a long accelerando and crescendo until there is a sudden break back to foot stomps (the “bursting beyond what the instruments can express”<sup>64</sup>)

The image shows a musical score for measures 124-127. It consists of five staves. The top two staves are for the piano, and the bottom three are for the percussion (foot stomps). The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo markings are 'accel.' and 'Faster'. The piano part includes a long glissando in the bass line. The percussion part is marked 'L. R. foot stomps' and consists of a series of rhythmic patterns. The score ends with a double bar line and a key signature change to two sharps (D minor).

Figure 4.5 mm. 124-127<sup>65</sup>

These stomps give way to a final upward key shift, to d-minor. This rise in tonality from B-flat up to D is representative of both a building literally rising up, and of the joy and emotion of a community about to finish a major project. The energy is high enough at this point that the ensemble breaks free of the existing meter and a section of alternating duple and triple meters. At the finale, a long tutti glissando of “muddled chromaticism” leads to a final climatic D-A fifth and another explosion of extra-instrumental sounds.

<sup>63</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Raise the Roof!* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1987) mm. 96

<sup>64</sup> Cooman, 5

<sup>65</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Raise the Roof!* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1987)

139 muddled chromaticism  
 p  
 muddled chromaticism  
 p  
 muddled chromaticism  
 p  
 ad lib. descent  
 p  
 muddled chromaticism  
 p

f  
 L. R. foot stomps  
 See  
 L. R. foot stomps  
 See  
 L. R. foot stomps  
 See  
 L. R. foot stomps  
 See  
 L. R. foot stomps  
 See

Figure 4.6 mm. 139-142<sup>66</sup>

*Raise the Roof!* and *Bright Brass* create a good foundation of Walker's brass music style when she is unrestricted by an existing melody. *The Light Descending* is an example of her style when she is starting with an existing melody and endeavoring to change it as little as possible. *A Season of Wonder* and *Shaker Tunes* demonstrate Walker's brass style when she is both writing a longer work and when there is an existing melody, but that is not being adhered to so closely.

<sup>66</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Raise the Roof!* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1987)

CHAPTER 5: *A SEASON OF WONDER*

Commissioned by Nebraska Brass for the same 2007 Christmas season as “The Light Descending”, *A Season of Wonder* was also recorded on the Nebraska Brass album, *Season of Wonder* from the same year. From my experience performing with Nebraska Brass, they know that one of the quintet’s primary goal when programming their very popular Christmas series is to ‘play songs you know in ways you haven’t heard before.’ To that end, the quintet rarely plays traditional Christmas carols in the traditional ways; all the kitschy jazz, Latin, and other style adaptations that brass players are so familiar with in Christmas repertoire are present. In my opinion Walker’s versions of these standard carols are more interesting and musically satisfying, without losing any of the charm.

*A Season of Wonder* is in four movements; “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”, “We Three Kings”, “Sing We Noel!”, and “The Good King”. The first two movements are settings of the hymns in their titles, while “Sing We Noel!” is a setting of *Sing We Now of Christmas*, and *The Good King* is a medley of *Good King Wenceslas*, *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*, and *Joy to the World*. When discussing her compositional process Walker writes, “When I create any of my works, whether with texts or without, I aim to employ both my sensitivities (emotions) and my intelligence to create a work of meaning and logic. In other words, I try to have a message in my music, whether that is in expressing a text, my feelings about the text, or simply a musical message. And, I endeavor to shape the music so that the message can be most effectively delivered.”<sup>67</sup>

The meaning and emotions of these settings are more associated with the general

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<sup>67</sup>“Questions on the Compositional Process” August 27, 2004 Gwyneth Walker, Letters and Replies, accessed March 4, 2020, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/letrep.html>

joyousness of the season than with any following to more traditional settings.<sup>68</sup> The work also makes extensive use of Walker's standard musical idioms such as open harmonies, unclear modal areas, and syncopation.

#### 1. "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing"

The melody and text of this common Christmas Carol were composed in 1840 using an existing melody from Mendelssohn's *Gutenberg Cantata*.<sup>69</sup> *Hark, The Herald Angels Sing* is often sung as a stirring processional or recessional in Christmas services and the original Mendelssohn text, "Vaterland, in deinen Gauen / brach der goldne Tag einst an,"<sup>70</sup> confirms that the melody is intended to be fanfare-ish and uplifting.

Walker's setting follows these general moods. "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" is the first movement of the work, and is set primarily as a fanfare. The movement will eventually settle into F-major but the opening four bars which serve "as a triumphant introduction"<sup>71</sup> are on the dominant, giving the establishment of 'real' tonic at measure 5. The opening four measures are not unsettled, however. In fact, the first two bars are unison concert C across the ensemble, with the lower voices eventually arpeggiating a Cdom7 chord<sup>72</sup> and ultimately landing on a held Cdom7 (with trombone on the fourth) that is marked *forzando piano crescendo* into the big arrival on tonic.

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<sup>68</sup> The normally choral *Sing We Now of Christmas* is a Polka for example.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> "Fatherland, the golden day dawned on your regions" (Google Translate)

<sup>71</sup> notes in the score

<sup>72</sup> With an added F – scale degree four, as Walker often does

Measures 5-8 serve as further introduction to the melody, this time firmly in the tonic F major. Importantly in this section of music are two things; first, the regular inclusion of E-flat, which suggests that we may still be in a dominant area;<sup>73</sup> secondly, the trumpets present this scalar/pentatonic bell-tone motive that will be interjected throughout the melody.

At rehearsal B, the melody will finally enter in the horn. Walker presents the melody in the horn essentially unadorned, but she does extend the final beat of each phrase to a full bar allowing the trumpets to add their bell-tone motive over the extended whole-note. The trombone and tuba provide extremely basic quarter note counterpoint under the horn melody, with a very conservative harmonic movement: I-V, V-I for the first couplet, V/V – half cadence for the 2<sup>nd</sup> couplet, on dominant for the third couplet, V-I for fourth couplet, and again V/V - V - I for the refrain. In measure 30, when the text would be “Christ is born in Bethlehem,” the trumpets play a short fanfare motive (two repeated grace notes and a longer note) on an open fifth that is not heard elsewhere in the melody.

Following this first complete statement of the melody, there is a 19-measure interlude made up of the trumpet motive from the beginning (scalar/pentatonic), ascending Lydian scales in the tuba, and a repeated triplet eighth-note motif. At measure 50, there is a key change up a fifth to C-major, though the harmonic motion is from the

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<sup>73</sup> We are not, though there will be a very impactful arrival later that suggests B-flat major, so the F-dominant-ness of this whole section could be preparation for that, though that arrival does not stay in B-flat for long. The presence of E-flats could also suggest some modal obscuring as Walker is also fond of doing. The common presence of the major 3<sup>rd</sup> (A-natural) would undermine this reading, as usually when Walker is trying to obscure mode, she will avoid sounding the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

‘old tonic’ F-major into the dominant of the new key, G. The interlude section ends with final arrival in C major at measure 57, which is immediately undermined by the addition of a B-flat in measure 58 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet. This B-flat is at the end of a grand ritard with crescendo that plainly signals a return to the primary melody, and the B-flat signaling a Cdom7 harmony suggests a dominant function to return to F. What Walker actually does is arrive in B-flat major instead, perhaps fulfilling the F dominant that has been present throughout the opening section. This B-flat arrival is quickly ‘corrected’ with movement to the relative minor (g), which serves as a minor secondary dominant to F (v / V) through C (V) and back to F-major tonic.

Figure 5.1. mvt. 1 mm. 59-67<sup>74</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

The melody here is from the refrain of the carol, and it is repeated from measures 65 to 70. After measure 70 a closing section based around the fanfare material from the introduction and interlude is presented. The triplet fanfare figure takes control and an increase in tempo and syncopation occurs, as Walker usually does at moments of increasing energy. While the tuba arpeggiates downward in a pattern reminiscent of the trumpets scalar/pentatonic figure from earlier in the work, the upper voices hold an F major triad (with added 2<sup>nd</sup>, G in trumpet as Walker often does). This G in the trumpet, and presence of E-flat in the tuba arpeggiation undermine a true finality to this movement.

The image shows a musical score for five parts: 1 pts., 2 pts., tn., vn., and ba. The score is for measures 76-79. The tempo is marked 'Very quickly' and the ending is marked 'ritard.'. The music features a triplet fanfare figure in the upper voices and a tuba arpeggiation in the lower voices. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or F minor).

Figure 5.2 mvt. 1 mm. 76-79<sup>75</sup>

## 2. "We Three Kings"

*We Three Kings*, also known as *We Three Kings of Orient Are*, is a hymn written for a Christmas pageant in 1857,<sup>76</sup> and has become a staple of any collection of Christmas

<sup>75</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

<sup>76</sup> Lowe, Cody (December 24, 1993). "The Stories Behind The Songs". *The Roanoke Times*. p. NRV5. Retrieved December 27, 2013

carols. For her setting in *A Season of Wonder* Dr. Walker has kept the melodic material consistent to the original. The biggest change is a shift from the normal 6/8 meter to a fast 3/4. While this should make no difference mathematically,<sup>77</sup> it seems in performance that the lilt and ‘triple-ness’ is felt stronger with the fast 3/4 than with the slower 6/8, it also gives this movement a strong waltz feeling, particularly with the trumpet’s rest-2-3 rhythm at the beginning. As with “Hark, The Herald Angels Sing”, the initial melody is presented in the horn with the final note of each line of text elongated to allow the trumpets to ‘comment’ with their opening waltz rhythmic figure.

The image shows a musical score for a brass ensemble. The top system (measures 1-7) includes parts for Trumpets in C (1 and 2), Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba. The tempo is marked 'With motion ♩ = 132'. The trumpets play a rhythmic figure of a quarter rest followed by two eighth notes (2-3). The horn plays a melodic line. Dynamics include piano (p) and mezzo-forte (mf). A rehearsal mark 'A' is at the end of measure 7. The bottom system (measures 8-15) continues the horn's melody and the trumpets' rhythmic figure. Dynamics include piano (p). A rehearsal mark 'B' is at the end of measure 15.

Figure 5.3 mvt. 2 mm. 1-15<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> The marked tempo of ♩=132 would translate to a very comfortable ♩.= 44 for a traditional 6/8 meter

<sup>78</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)



As with *The Light Descending* Walker has stayed true enough to the source to stay in the original key.<sup>79</sup> She also maintains the minor to major shift found between the verse and refrain. As is done in the hymnal settings of this carol, the e minor tonic is abruptly shifted to D major to serve as dominant for the relative major key of G. Along with the pattern of elongating major phrases she has employed to this point, she adds an extra two measures with fermata before launching into the refrain. This adds extra emphasis on the V-I motion in the relative major key and produces a stronger impact of the refrain. This is perhaps a nod to the practice of singing each verse as a solo from a different king's point of view.<sup>80</sup> The melody of the refrain is presented in an almost unison rhythmic texture, with the trumpets providing some ornamentation and the tuba doing some pedaling, but neither occurring in any quantity to obscure the clarity and understandability of the melody.

After four measures of material similar to the opening of the movement, there is a second verse and refrain section extremely similar to the first, but with the trumpets providing melody and the other three voices having similar 'waltz' accompaniment to what the trumpets had earlier. Trills on the first note of each phrase in the trumpets and

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<sup>79</sup> John H. Hopkins, "We Three Kings of Orient Are," Hymnary.org, accessed March 24, 2020, [https://hymnary.org/text/we\\_three\\_kings\\_of\\_orient\\_are](https://hymnary.org/text/we_three_kings_of_orient_are)

<sup>80</sup> This was the initial intent of the hymn's author, though it is rarely observed now, "John Henry Hopkins Jr. organized the carol in such a way that three male voices would each sing a single verse by himself in order to correspond with the three kings. The first and last verses of the carol are sung together by all three as "verses of praise", while the intermediate verses are sung individually with each king describing the gift he was bringing. The refrain proceeds to praise the beauty of the Star of Bethlehem. Nowadays, however, the Magi's solos are typically not observed when singing the carol." Lowe, Cody (December 24, 1993). "The Stories Behind The Songs". The Roanoke Times. p. NRV5. Retrieved December 27, 2013.

more accompanying notes in the lower three voices increase the overall energy of this second verse.

The image displays a musical score for measures 47 through 69 of the second movement. The score is arranged in three systems, each with five staves: two for Trumpets (Tpts.), one for Horns (Hn.), one for Trombones (Tbn.), and one for Tubas. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system (measures 47-54) features a rehearsal mark 'F' at measure 51. The second system (measures 55-62) features a rehearsal mark 'G' at measure 59. The third system (measures 63-69) continues the piece. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano). The score shows a variety of rhythmic patterns and melodic lines across the instruments, with some instruments playing sustained notes while others have more active parts.

Figure 5.4 mvt. 2 mm. 47-69<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

At rehearsal J, the piece enters an interlude or developmental section as Walker has done in her other hymn settings for brass. Both e minor and G major harmonies are utilized, as are C Lydian scales, which we frequently see in these developmental areas. Perhaps to signify the magi being lost in the desert, the development then takes a “slower, more free(ly)”<sup>82</sup> movement through an area of 4/4. This is new melodic material that is quite static around an e-minor sonority, with melodic material again voiced low in the ensemble with trumpets adding only small fills over long melodic notes. At rehearsal M, a build to return to the main theme begins. At this point it is unclear whether we will have another verse, or just the refrain and these bars alternate patterns that could lead to either the minor verse or the major refrain. The last measure of 4/4 before the return of main melodic material has a B and F-sharp open fifth in the tuba and trombone (suggesting dominant of the minor verse) under an F-sharp fully diminished 7 (fifth omitted), which would suggest movement up to G major and the refrain.

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<sup>82</sup> notes from the score

The image displays a musical score for five instruments: Trumpet in C, Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba. The score is divided into two sections, M and N. Section M (measures 120-129) shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes. Section N (measures 130-139) is marked 'Tempo primo' with a tempo of quarter note = 132. It features a more melodic and ornamented line for the trumpets and horns, with a descant-like quality. The horn part in section N is particularly notable for its chromatic movement.

Figure 5.5: mm 120-130<sup>83</sup>

Ultimately, the high voices win and a final statement of the major refrain is presented with the most ornamented and descant-esque figures thus far. After this final burst of energy, the movement fades away and returns back to e-minor. The ending is left again unsettled however, as the four outer voices establish an e-minor triad, the horn which begins consonantly on a b-concert skips first up to the 2<sup>nd</sup>, F-sharp, and instead of falling to tonic which would be expected, falls too far to the minor 7<sup>th</sup>, D, ultimately not allowing the movement to settle.

<sup>83</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

## 3. “Sing We Noel!”

While the carol “Sing We Noel!” is based on is generally titled *Sing We Now of Christmas*, “Sing we Noel” is the first line of text of the refrain and thus could be an alternative title for the carol. Immediately interesting in this movement is the optional eight-measure introduction, for use only when all four movements are being performed together. This introduction provides some closure for the ending of the movement that precedes it, as the horn finally resolves upward to an E that was so sorely missing at the end of “We Three Kings”. The introduction itself does not necessarily bridge the stylistic gap between the relatively solemn “We Three Kings” and the boisterous “Sing We Noel!” however, ending with the bottom three voices playing the familiar open fifth with an injected fourth, the A-E fifth between the tuba and trombone does lead us nicely into the d-minor of “Sing We Noel!”

Optional introduction to #3. “Sing We Noel!”, when being performed as a set.

The musical score is for a brass ensemble and is in 3/4 time. It consists of five staves: Tpts. 1, Tpts. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tuba. The tempo is marked 'Slowly, freely' and the dynamics range from *mf* to *p*. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The introduction ends with a *ritard.* and a final chord in D minor.

Figure 5.6 Optional Introduction to Mvt. 3<sup>84</sup>

*Sing We Now of Christmas* is based on a French folk song titled *Noel Nouvelet*<sup>85</sup> and is already a somewhat upbeat and energetic song that tells the story of the Nativity.

<sup>84</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

Walker decides to use this folk energy and sets the hymn as a polka, complete with tuba downbeats and horn and trombone offbeats. The jaunty melody already fits with Walker's bouncy style found in *Bright Brass* and *Raise the Roof!* The original hymn setting is quite short, in 2/4 with an eight-measure verse followed by an eight-measure refrain, AABA. Walker expands this somewhat, though not through simply expanding the final note of each line of text as she has done so far. She instead adds two bars by repeating the first phrase of the refrain to make an AABBA structure. She embellishes this repeat of the B phrase by having the 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet join the first trumpet on the melody a third higher.

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<sup>85</sup>“Sing We Now of Christmas,” Hymnary.org, accessed March 24, 2020, [https://hymnary.org/text/sing\\_we\\_now\\_of\\_christmas](https://hymnary.org/text/sing_we_now_of_christmas))

The image displays a musical score for a brass ensemble, specifically for Mvt. 3, measures 8-22. The score is arranged in five staves: two for Trumpet in C, one for Horn in F, one for Trombone, and one for Tuba. The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 4/4 time signature. The score is divided into three sections labeled A, B, and C. Section A (measures 1-4) features a melodic line in the first Trumpet part and a rhythmic accompaniment in the other parts. Section B (measures 5-10) continues the melodic and rhythmic themes. Section C (measures 11-13) introduces new material, including a change in the key signature to two flats (B-flat major or D minor) and a change in the time signature to 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Figure 5.7 Mvt. 3 mm. 8-22<sup>86</sup>

At Rehearsal C, as Walker has done in the previous two movements, she moves into an interlude section of new material. As has been mentioned before, this new

<sup>86</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

material is often syncopated, and contains pentatonic like patterns. At Rehearsal D there is a large arrival back into the tonic d-minor, with the trombone and tuba presenting a boisterous pesante quarter note figure. This figure is actually the melody in half tempo. The trumpets take over the off-beat and syncopated role to keep energy and time moving through this passage. Notably, the low brass do not get a statement of the refrain at this point, only two repetitions of the main verse phrase material.

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The image displays two systems of musical notation for a brass ensemble. The first system, labeled '23' and 'D', covers measures 23 to 25. It includes parts for Trumpets 1 and 2, Horns, Trombone, and Tuba. The trumpets play a syncopated, eighth-note pattern. The low brass (trombone and tuba) play a boisterous, pesante quarter-note figure. The second system, labeled '26', covers measures 26 to 29. It includes parts for Trumpets 1 and 2, Horns, Trombone, and Tuba. The horn part features a final statement of the melody, which is elongated and more obscured than in the previous system. The low brass continues with their quarter-note figure.

Figure 5.8 Mvt. 3 mm 23-29<sup>87</sup>

At Rehearsal G, there is a final statement of the melody in the horn, still in elongation but more obscured than when it was in the low brass. At H, the trombone and

<sup>87</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)



tuba take back the melody, this time presenting the refrain B material in elongation. The final build of the movement grows to another *forzando piano crescendo fermata*, this time over a quartal type of harmony. A ‘tag’ ending that trades the motive of the second measure of the melody through the voice and ends with a staccato quintal gesture with the tonic fifth, D-A, sounding at the same time as a conflicting fifth, C-G.

Figure 5.9: mvt. 3 mm. 66-69<sup>88</sup>

#### 4. “The Good King”

Comprising three popular and upbeat songs, “The Good King” provides a rousing finish to this collection of songs. It is short, and the most straightforward of the four movements, as the tunes are presented clearly, quickly, and without much alteration.

While the story told in *Good King Wenceslas* is rather dark<sup>89</sup> the tune associated with it in

<sup>88</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

<sup>89</sup> As is the story of the actual historical Duke Wenceslas, (Lizzie Davis and Elizabeth Davis, “The Real Story behind the Carol Good King Wenceslas,” *Classic FM* (Classic FM, December 4, 2018), <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/real-story-good-king-wenceslas-carol/>)

both the traditional carol and Walker’s setting is upbeat and happy. It is also the first of this collection to sit solidly and inarguably in B-flat major right from the opening. The melody is only presented with ornamentation on the third syllable that is maintained throughout every statement and transposition. As she did in “Sing We Noel!”, Walker states the melody first in the 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet alone, then joined with the 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet a third above, then trades the melody with the horn and trombone, and finally finishes the phrase with the four higher voices. The second verse which begins at rehearsal C is in the tuba, both because the tuba seemingly needs an opportunity at playing the melody, but also because the text of the second verse of the carol is the King Wenceslas himself speaking, so it is appropriate to voice it in the bass-baritone range of the tuba. The tuba, not without inherent comedic value, has a slight bit of humor to add to its interpretation: when in the past the phrase had ended with a simple repetition of the final note, the tuba takes a rest, then enters an octave down accented.



Figure 5.10: Mvt. 4 mm. 10-13 Trumpet 1 <sup>90</sup>



Figure 5.11: Mvt. 4 mm. 35-38, Tuba<sup>91</sup>

At measure 50, the tuba finishes its statement of the melody with more gratuitous low range playing. What is interesting about measure 51 however, is that the tuba goes

<sup>90</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

<sup>91</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

from B-flat to E-flat back to B-flat when a descent to the dominant F would be expected. The melody definitely ends on tonic, so the fall to the fourth seems out of place. What the E-flat actually signals is a beginning of a transitional section that will modulate us down a step and into the next tune of the medley. The goal, at rehearsal G, is C major and Walker intends to get there by half-steps through C-flat major.<sup>92</sup> The transition is accomplished by slowly adding flats to existing melodic material. First trumpet 1 plays the opening melodic motive with an A-flat instead of A-natural. Trombone answers with a D-flat in its answering figure, the tuba which has been moving down a pentatonic scale under this sounds a G-flat, and at measure 68 begins a C-flat pentatonic scale that will eventually land on C-natural. The goal of C major is reached solidly at the downbeat of rehearsal G along with an  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$  meter change to 3/8 and an eight-measure fanfare signaling a new tune.

The image shows a musical score for measures 67-81. The top system (measures 67-72) includes parts for 1st trumpet, 2nd trumpet, 1st trombone, 2nd trombone, 1st tuba, and 2nd tuba. Measure 67 is marked 'ritard.' and measure 68 is marked 'cresc.'. The score ends at measure 72, marked 'Joyously ♩. = ♩'. The bottom system (measures 73-78) includes parts for 1st trumpet, 2nd trumpet, 1st trombone, 2nd trombone, 1st tuba, and 2nd tuba. The score is marked 'Joyously ♩. = ♩' and 'f'.

Figure 5.12 Mvt. 4 mm 67-81<sup>93</sup>

<sup>92</sup> more accurately, C-flat Lydian.

<sup>93</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

*We Wish You a Merry Christmas* is presented briefly at rehearsal H, melody in trombone and horn with a flexible syncopated accompaniment in the tuba. At rehearsal I, an interlude of accented, repeated, rhythmic notes sounds, reminiscent of *Raise the roof!* This very quickly gives way to the final carol in the movement, *Joy to the World*. There is a modulation up another step that is completely abrupt. The actual melody of *Joy to the World* is presented conservatively in the trumpets with the lower voices providing a fast scalar accompaniment. Walker is building to a climax that, in other works of hers, might call for some sort of extra-instrumental sound effects, though in this piece it results in a resounding syncopated bell-tones and large leaps across the ensemble. The harmony for the final 10 measures is essentially D major, with both of Walker's preferred added tones, the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet motive and the 4<sup>th</sup> in the 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet motive. At the very end we finally get an authentic cadence on a major triad with no added tones, the first strong conclusion of the work.

Trumpet in C

Trumpet in C

Horn in F

Trombone

Tuba

5

9

K

Figure 5.13

Mvt. 4 mm. 107-118<sup>94</sup>

*A Season of Wonder* is a prime example of Walker's compositional techniques including quartals, quintals, pentatonics, and Lydian scales. It also shows her ability to take well-known melodies and present them in interesting ways while keeping them very recognizable. The work also achieves her goal of egalitarianism and accessibility. The work is high energy, and very listenable by all audiences while also providing enough

<sup>94</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *A Season of Wonder* (Braintree, VT: Gwyneth Walker, 2007)

interest for the performers and the more trained audience members. Melody and 'solo' moments are well balanced throughout the work and 'importance' is very well spread amongst all five voices.

CHAPTER 6: *SHAKER TUNES*

Consisting of five movements over roughly eighteen minutes, 1994's *Shaker Tunes* is the longest of Dr. Walker's brass-only chamber works. While another work, 2009's *The Circus of Creation* is twenty-four minutes, it includes narrator, and including the optional choral portions to *Shaker Tunes* brings the total run time to twenty-eight minutes, so the distinction still stands. The work is a setting of five American Shaker songs, each with an accompanying simple choral version. These choral versions are intended to "introduce the audience to the Shaker melodies. And it offers a satisfying 'framing' to the brass music."<sup>95</sup>

The Shakers were a Christian sect founded in the 1780s in England who eventually took deepest root in the northeast United States, particularly in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York State.<sup>96</sup> While Walker most likely chose Shaker melodies for their strong connection to New England, Walker's Quaker faith offers another connection to the Shakers. When the Quakers began to distance themselves from frenetic spiritual expression to develop the calm, thoughtful, and non-musical services they are now known for, the Shakers wanted to continue expressing themselves loudly and charismatically in worship. In fact they were first known as "the Shaking Quakers."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Notes from the score, Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music Inc., 1994)

<sup>96</sup> Elizabeth Freeman, "The Rhythms of Shaker Dance Marked the Shakers as "Other"," JSTOR Daily, August 21, 2019, accessed March 26, 2020, <https://daily.jstor.org/the-rhythms-of-shaker-dance-marked-the-shakers-as-other/>)

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

Six years prior to writing “Shaker Tunes”, Walker had done a similar experiment with updating old spiritual songs (Baptist hymns in this case) into a chamber piece to be presented alongside simple vocal arrangements in her *Braintree Quintet* for woodwind quintet. The success of this work inspired Walker to try it again when approached by Vermont’s Constitution Brass Quintet for the commission of “Shaker Tunes.”<sup>98</sup> The five melodies chosen for use in this work all represent a different value Walker holds as a composer, “Since I am a composer who values energy, beauty, humor, spirituality, and familiarity of the music, I selected the following tunes: “Welcome, Welcome Precious Gospel Kindred” (energy); “I Will Bow and Be Simple” (beauty); “Followers of the Lamb” (humor); “I Never Did Believe” (spirituality); and “Simple Gifts” (familiarity).”<sup>99</sup>

As with *Seasons of Wonder* and *The Light Descending* these go beyond simple arrangements. They enter the territory of what Walker calls, musical excursions. Walker writes,

“Within the Walker catalog are works which are described as “contemporary adaptations” of pre-existing sources (hymn tunes, folk songs, spirituals). These are not simply arrangements. For, there are enough alterations and additions to the original material to step beyond the definition of arrangements. Rather, these are “musical excursions,” which start with a familiar song and move off into a creation of their own.”<sup>100</sup>

1. “Welcome! (Welcome, Welcome, Precious Gospel Kindred)”

Walker chose an appropriate opener for this collection, quite literally a welcoming song. Shakers, like the Quakers they separated from, were extreme egalitarians known for

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<sup>98</sup> Gwyneth Walker, “Shaker Images: A Contemporary Adventure Into the Past,” *The New England Organist*, 1994, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/e-shaker.html>

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Gwyneth Walker, “Simple Gifts” from “Shaker Tunes for Brass Quintet”: *A Musical Analysis*, accessed March 25, 2020, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/ana/gw-sgift.pdf>



manners, politeness, and forgiveness.<sup>101</sup> The tune Walker presents in the chorus is simple and unadorned by harmony, common for early Shaker songs.<sup>102</sup>

**I. Welcome! Welcome! Precious Gospel Kindred**

*Performance suggestions:*

meas. 1-8: men answered by women  
 meas. 9-16: men answered by women  
 meas. 1-8: again, in canon (at 2 measure intervals) and repeated

Enfield, NH 1869

*at a jovial tempo*

Wel - come! Wel - come! pre - cious gos - pel kin - dred. We are hap - py you to meet and  
 make you free - ly wel - come. By the chords of u - nion pure our hearts are bound to - geth - er.  
 And the love we bear to you no friend - ship e'er can sev - er.

Figure 6.1: choral arrangement of Mvt. 1 from the score<sup>103</sup>

This is a high-energy composition, and like *Bright Brass* or *Raise the Roof!* we would expect there to be usage of extra-instrumental effects, but they are not present in this movement. There are some wide tremolos, flutter tonguing, and long glissandi marked “with abandon”

While the melody is in a very basic F-major, the brass setting is primarily in F mixolydian, with some departures to the F minor, and a brief moment in b-minor. The first twenty measures are a fanfare introduction, with classic staggered bell-tone entrances leading to major chords with added 2nds and 4ths. The most exciting moment

<sup>101</sup> "FAQs," Friends General Conference, accessed July 01, 2020, <https://www.fgcquaker.org/discover/faqs-about-quakers>)

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

(accurately marked ‘excited’) is the difficult leaping triplet figure at measure 12. Walker describes this as, “leaps of joy” from the welcoming Shakers.<sup>104</sup>

Figure 6.2: mvt. 1 mm 11-14 "Leaps for Joy"<sup>105</sup>

When the melody enters in the horn at measure 21, Walker does again what she did throughout *A Season of Wonder* and elongates the final work of each phrase.<sup>106</sup> This elongation allows the trumpets to provide commentary on each line of welcoming, “Therefore, in the brass version, while the melody is given to the horn, the trumpets answer with ‘welcome’ (2-note) patterns initiated by grace notes to signify the group waving and shouting “welcome!”<sup>107</sup> At the second phrase of the melody, “by the chords of union pure...” which is in the trombone. There appears to have been a shift to f-minor though there is no let up in the energy or excitement of the piece as the trumpets continue to voice their seemingly uncontrollable welcoming utterances.

The sudden shift to both a swing feel and b-minor (first spelled c-flat) at rehearsal G is jarring and undercuts the extreme joy of the opening section. When the horn returns

<sup>104</sup> Gwyneth Walker, “Shaker Images: A Contemporary Adventure Into the Past,” *The New England Organist*, 1994, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/e-shaker.html>

<sup>105</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

<sup>106</sup> The score very helpfully contains the intended text above the instrumental line.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

to presenting the melody at rehearsal H, the trumpets still have their waving back (flutters marked 'impishly this time') while Walker confirms that they are still excited hand waves,<sup>108</sup> this section perhaps implies the new convert, or perhaps the audience, who are taken aback at just how excitable these Shakers are.

The image displays a musical score for 'Shaker Tunes' in three systems. The first system, labeled 'G', is in a swing rhythm and marked 'rit.' (ritardando), with a forte (*f*) dynamic. It features piano, violin, and bass staves. The second system, labeled 'H', is marked 'a tempo' and 'slightly bouncy and impish', with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The third system, labeled 'I', includes 'flutter' markings and dynamics of piano (*p*) and mezzo-piano (*mp*). The score is attributed to 'Shaker Tunes' at the bottom left.

Figure 6.3: mvt. 1 mm. 36-57<sup>109</sup>

<sup>108</sup> “Later the trumpets flutter-tongue (i.e., 'wave') impishly” *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

The energy of this section continues to build until a return back to F-major, and an even more frenetically accompanied statement of the melody. By the final sixteen measures the energy has gone beyond meter; into another section of ‘jumping for joy’ as in measures 12 and 13; and 4:3 sixteenth notes. There are also the ‘with abandon’ glissandos and a final ending flutter tongued ‘wave’.

The image shows a musical score for measures 100-116 of the first movement. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 100-106) features a piano part with a 'triumphantly' marking and a flute part. The second system (measures 107-112) includes performance directions such as 'rit.', 'a tempo', '4:3', 'flutter', and 'a tempo, boisterous'. The third system (measures 113-116) is marked 'with abandon' and 'flutter', showing glissandos and flutter-tongued passages in both piano and flute parts.

Figure 6.4 Mvt.1 mm. 100-116 <sup>110</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

## 2. "I Will Bow and Be Simple"

For Shakers, the pursuit of simplistic perfection was an act of worship.<sup>111</sup> Great beauty was found in the most simple of expressions. Walker used the very simple two-verse hymn, *I Will Bow and Be Simple*, as the basis for her second movement that she intended to use to express beauty.<sup>112</sup> The text is plain and directly states the Shaker beliefs in humility, simplicity, and work.

I will bow and be simple  
 I will bow and be free  
 I will bow and be humble  
 Yea, bow like the willow tree

I will bow, this is the token  
 I will wear the easy yoke  
 I will bow and will be broken  
 Yea, I'll fall upon the rock<sup>113</sup>

Walker's performance suggestions for the vocal introduction are for Verse 1 to be performed by a soloist, Verse 2 to be tutti choir, and for a third verse to be performed on a neutral syllable. When the brass version enters attacca to the choir, this third neutral verse presents a stirring connector between text and instrumental sounds.

Mirroring this suggestion for the choral performance, the first statement of melody in the brass version is a first trumpet solo. On the repeat of the phrase, the second trumpet enters with an echoing statement, always one eighth note off the downbeat, on either complete major scales, or major scales with occasional third and step alteration that

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<sup>111</sup> "Quaker Testimonies," San Francisco Friends School, August 05, 2019, accessed July 01, 2020, <https://www.sffriendsschool.org/quaker-values/quaker-testimonies>)

<sup>112</sup> Gwyneth Walker, "Shaker Images: A Contemporary Adventure Into the Past," *The New England Organist*, 1994, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/e-shaker.html>

<sup>113</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music Inc., 1994)

suggests pentatonic scales. At measure 17, the second verse is complete and the 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet sustains the final tonic for an elongated two measures while the second trumpet and trombone continue their echoing patterns. The trombone is in a high register here to answer the trumpet in true unison. Throughout most of this movement, after the initial melodic statements, there will be a constant pulse somewhere in the ensemble, either passed around the ensemble, or occurring in all the instruments at once. This pushing ahead is unexpected for a slow ballad like this, but it perhaps signifies the work ethic and anathema to laziness displayed by both Quakers and Shakers. At rehearsal C, the tuba begins the melody, ascending into an octave where the trombone can take it from them. After this low brass statement of the melody, Walker shifts the feel to an almost bluesy triplet. She marks, “with gentle motion” and helpfully gives the words of the melody under the trombone and tuba parts.

The image shows a musical score for 'Shaker Tunes'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system is marked 'D' and 'with gentle motion'. It features a piano accompaniment with a steady pulse and a vocal line with lyrics: 'low and be sim - ple, low and be free, low and be hum - ble.' The second system is marked 'gradual rit. .... slowly (gentle oscillation)'. It features a piano accompaniment with a more complex, oscillating pattern and a vocal line with lyrics: 'like the wil - low tree.' The score is titled 'Shaker Tunes' at the bottom left.

Figure 6.5 mvmt. 2 mm. 39-51<sup>114</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

The “easy yoke” mentioned in the second verse of the text is likely a biblical reference to Matthew:11 28-30.<sup>115</sup> This triplet section is the ‘rest ’mentioned in the verse, giving the worshipper reprise after a long period of work and strife (the ‘moving forward ’ section that precedes Rehearsal D).

The next clear statement of the melody comes from the first trumpet at Rehearsal H, over the most ‘busy ’of accompaniments so far; a dense 3:2 in the lower voices. The effect is the “murmuring tapestry” of sound that Walker usually achieves through aleatory.<sup>116</sup> This effect, plus the trumpet’s instruction to play “grandly” give this statement of the melody a triumphant or hopeful quality.

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<sup>115</sup>“ The reference to the "easy yoke" is surely to Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to me, all who are tired and burdened, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke [ζυγον, zygon] upon you, and you will find rest for your souls [ψυχαις, psychais, i.e. psyches]. [30]. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Robert B Waltz and David G Engel, “I Will Bow and Be Simple,” The Ballad Index, 2019, <http://www.fresnostate.edu/folklore/ballads/AndSh113.html>)

<sup>116</sup> Cooman 6

The image displays a musical score for the second movement, measures 64-75. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes parts for Trumpet in C (two staves), Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba. The second system includes parts for a string quartet (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass). The music is in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 2/2 time signature. The brass instruments play a melodic line, while the woodwinds and strings play a rhythmic accompaniment featuring cascading downward repetitive figures and triplets. The Tuba part is marked with a triplet in measure 64.

Figure 6.6: mvt. 2, mm. 64-75<sup>117</sup>

Following this “triumphant” melody, there are a series of cascading downward repetitive figures that could be seen as the back half of one of Walker’s “Pyramids of Joy” leading to another “rest” section with the triplet feel. The final measure with the tuba ending in its high range over murmuring high brass who have the instruction to

<sup>117</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)



“fade out, ad lib., leaving tuba sustained at end” is described by Walker, “The music ends with the tuba alone on a high Eb (Eb1) [sic, it’s E-flat 4] as the other instruments fade away. I felt that the ending should portray the same 'solitary beauty' as the opening, perhaps with the heightened [sic] poignancy of an instrument stranded at the limits of its range.”<sup>118</sup>

### 3. “Followers of the Lamb”

After the sparse beauty of “I will Bow and Be Simple”, the jaunty “Followers of the Lamb” is a welcome bit of comedic relief. The lively 6/8 setting of both the hymn and the brass interpretation are reminiscent of Movement 1, and so is the overall joyful mood. The text is less poignant than Movement 2, instead issuing a repetitive urge to “be happy” and “sing on, dance on”

Like in other Walker compositions, she is not afraid to use a minor mode to elucidate a joyous emotion, and “Followers of the Lamb” is in g-minor. The horn and tuba open up a sort of open fifth drone that Walker states is a chant of “happy”<sup>119</sup>. When the trombone enters with the melody after eight bars, the word “happy” is again extended and embellished with grace notes, perhaps suggesting a loss or crack in the singers voice as they shout with such joy.

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<sup>118</sup> Walker, *Shaker Images*

<sup>119</sup> note in score

*respeccando per Edm Kees*

♩ = 132 *lightly, bouncy*

The score is divided into three systems. The first system includes parts for Trumpet 1 in C, Trumpet 2 in C, Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba. The Horn and Tuba parts are marked with *con sord.* and *p*. The second system, labeled 'A', features piano accompaniment and vocal lines with lyrics: "Oh— Breth - ren ain't you hap - py. Oh Breth - ren ain't you hap - py". The piano part is marked with *p* and *mf bouncy*. The third system, labeled 'B', continues the piano accompaniment and vocal lines with lyrics: "Oh— Breth - ren ain't you hap - py. hap - py. hap - py. Fol - low - ers of the Lamb.".

Figure 6.7: mvt 3 mm. 1-23<sup>120</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

In the choral setting, bass voices sing first while treble voices follow, the brass adaptation is ordered similarly with trumpets taking the melody after the trombone. A downward cascade of “followers of the” leads into the refrain section where, while the horn and trombone present melodic material, the trumpets have their joyous “trill waves” as they did in Movement 1. When the trumpets take over the melody for a repeat of the refrain, the happy trilling moves to tuba.

The image displays a musical score for Movement 3, measures 33-56. It consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 33-40) includes piano accompaniment and vocal lines with lyrics: "hap - py, hap - py, fol - low - ers of the...". The second system (measures 41-50) continues the piano accompaniment and vocal lines with lyrics: "fol - low - ers of the... Lamb. sing on... dance on...". The third system (measures 51-56) features piano accompaniment and vocal lines with lyrics: "fol - low - ers of E - man - u - el, sing on... dance on, fol - low - ers of the Lamb." The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (mf, p), articulation (trills), and performance instructions (Joyously, in strict time).

Figure 6.8: mvt 3 mm 33-56<sup>121</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

The tuba is the feature of this movement, which culminates in a large tuba cadenza, from rehearsal S to the end. This use of tuba is no doubt part of Walker's striving for 'humor' in this movement: the tuba has certain cultural comedic stereotypes attached to it, as Walker explored in "The Good King" and *Raise the Roof!* However, it is interesting that the movement of "funny tuba" is juxtaposed so closely to the "solitary beauty and poignancy" of the tuba from the finale of the second movement. The middle section has the upper brasses delivering a melodic fragment, "aren't you hap-py" while the tuba and trombone reply in the affirmative with descending pentatonic patterns from the top of the tuba's register.<sup>122</sup>

The section at Rehearsal L begins a slow build to a thick "murmuring tapestry"<sup>123</sup> that Walker uses often, but instead here there is no grand melody to float over the top, instead the grand melodic moment comes at Rehearsal O, with trumpets and horn "grandly" proclaiming, "Glad I am a Shaker" and the trombone and tuba replying with a glissando and tremolo filled "Shaker!" this is repeated until a grand cluster of tremolos in the same octave at measure 130.

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<sup>122</sup> As a tubist, I find it intriguing that Dr. Walker admits that the high E-flat is the "limits of its range" while then writing high Gs in the next movement. I know from her solo repertoire that Walker is not afraid of giving the tuba As or even B-flats up there, but they are usually accompanied by the type of musical support that allows the tubist to really blow through the notes and get them out effectively. For non-tubists, F above middle C is considered 'near the top' for the standard tuba range and anything above that would be considered unusually high.

<sup>123</sup> Cooman, 6

Grandly  $\text{♩} = 66$   
 Glad I am a Sha-ker I'm glad I am a Sha-ker

accel. ....

**P** with character  
 a tempo  $\text{♩} = 132$

Figure 6.9 mvt 3. mm 124-131<sup>124</sup>

The brief soloistic section that follows is a signifier of individual testimony, an important portion of Shaker worship.<sup>125</sup> It is also an opportunity for the various instruments to make “funny” idiomatic sounds, a trumpet trilling, stopped horn ripping, and trombone with a sloppy “wa-wa trill”. The tuba leads into a final statement of the melody before its cadenza. The tuba cadenza is constructed out of long glissandi, and many figures repeated in various octaves. While this is happening, the rest of the ensemble has an every accelerating leg tapping effect. The tuba ultimately ends with long

<sup>124</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

<sup>125</sup>“History of the Shakers (U.S. National Park Service),” National Parks Service (U.S. Department of the Interior), accessed March 26, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/history-of-the-shakers.htm>

“very-low” to “very-high” non-specific ascent, which leads into a conclusion that has the “Players turn to audience, horns at mouth, rattle valves/slides, gleefully.” The energy that was somewhat contained in the first movement has finally exploded in the third.

as fast as possible

boisterously, quickly

random ascent from low to very high pitch (double-tongue)  
4.3 4.3 sim.

*f*

*in tempo*  
Players turn to audience, horns at mouth,  
rattle valves/slides, gleefully

Shaker Tunes

Figure 6.10 mvt 3 mm 174-183<sup>126</sup>

#### 4. “I Never Did Believe”

I never did believe that I could ever be saved without giving up all to god  
So I freely give the whole, my body and my soul, to the Lord God, Amen<sup>127</sup>

Like the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, the text of Movement 4 is simple, plain, and to the point.

The term ‘freely’ appeared before in Movement 1, “make you freely welcome.” Since

<sup>126</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

<sup>127</sup> Walker, *Shaker Tunes*

celibacy was a core Shaker virtue, any growth of the sect had to come from conversion, even children born to Shaker parents (who were pregnant when they converted) were given the free option to leave or stay at the age of 21.<sup>128</sup> This idea of freely choosing the austere and simple lifestyle of the Shakers is essential to their faith.

The brass movement is chorale-like in its structure and voicing. The movement is ultimately in a-minor. The opening 'wailing' motive presented over staggered entrances in the horn and trumpet, is more likely in b-minor. This motive of an ascending minor 7<sup>th</sup> followed by a descending minor 3<sup>rd</sup> will occur throughout the piece to destabilize harmonies and undermine the conclusion of phrases. This motive, when it occurs on the pitches E-D-B may represent the doubt of the believer, or perhaps the struggle to live as simply and 'perfectly' as Shaker society demanded. The motive first recurs before rehearsal B when it adds extra 'crunch' to an otherwise open 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> in the lower brasses.

Figure 6.11 Mvt 4 mm. 14-17<sup>129</sup>

<sup>128</sup>Edward Deming Andrews and Faith Andrews, "The Shaker Childrens Order," *Winterthur Portfolio* 8 (1973): ,accessed July 1, 2020

<sup>129</sup>Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

This idea of dissonance undermining what would otherwise be a beautiful consonant chorale is central to the energy and drive of the movement. In addition to the wailing motive from the beginning, the horn and trombone have a glissando motive that begins on a minor 3<sup>rd</sup>, but moves to a minor 2<sup>nd</sup>. This happens three times in the movement, twice in quick succession at measures 26 and 28,

Figure 6.12: Mvt 4, mm. 26-29<sup>130</sup>

and again at measure 47.

Figure 6.11: Mvt 4. mm 45-48<sup>131</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

<sup>131</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)



At measure 34 the trumpets have a similar figure, but have more consonant intervals, so the disruption is minimized.

Figure 3.12 shows a musical score for measures 33-37 of Mvt. 4, mm. 33-37. The score is in 4/4 time, marked "and faster" with a tempo of 72. It features a piano part with a treble and bass clef, and a trumpet part with a treble clef. The piano part includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. The trumpet part features a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *mf* and *mf*.

Figure 3.12: Mvt. 4 mm 33-37<sup>132</sup>

At measure 51, the trombone and horn have the glissando figure a third time, but this time they move from an open 5<sup>th</sup> to a major 2<sup>nd</sup>, the tension is easing as the song goes on perhaps.

Figure 6.13 shows a musical score for measures 51-52 of Mvt. 4, mm. 51-52. The score is in 4/4 time. It features a piano part with a treble and bass clef, and a horn part with a treble clef. The piano part includes a glissando figure in the right hand and a glissando figure in the left hand. The horn part features a glissando figure. Dynamics include *p* and *f*.

Figure 6.13 mvt 4 mm. 51-52<sup>133</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

At the close of the movement, the trombone has the final statement of melody and a small cadenza-like moment. The brass have the upwards motion of a “pyramid of joy” but the interval of a minor 7<sup>th</sup>, and the tuba’s entrance on a C means that the penultimate chord is a B dominant 7<sup>th</sup> with an added 2<sup>nd</sup> in the bass, anything but settled and far from tonic. The chord releases with the trombone holding tonic (A) alone, signifying that perhaps the individual has achieved stability, but there has been no resolution.

Shaker Tunes  
Figure 6.14 mvt 5 mm. 85-88<sup>134</sup>

### 5. “Simple Gifts”

Walker chose the song *Simple Gifts* as the closing movement to end with familiarity. *Simple Gifts* is of course well-known as a commonly used hymn in its own right, as well as a section of Aaron Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*. Walker acknowledges in her own analysis of this movement that making a setting of this particular tune both recognizable and thoroughly original was going to be a challenge: “This song is so familiar, and has been arranged so many times, that it posed a challenge for new adaptation. How could this material be treated differently enough to warrant the

<sup>133</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

<sup>134</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

endeavor?”<sup>135</sup> This is the first movement of *Shaker Tunes* where the brass does not begin in the same key as the voice. The vocal arrangement is in F major and the brass adaptation begins in D major. Walker says that this is for the trombone, who starts “Simple Gifts” would begin on the same pitch (A) that they ended the 4<sup>th</sup> movement on, “thus linking the two movements”<sup>136</sup> The movement will eventually end in F major, connecting it to the vocal setting. The melody is initially presented plainly and recognizably, though with some freeness of meter and tempo. At measure 6 the harmony is quite unexpected, with the C natural in the 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet. The ascending A pentatonic scale in the tuba that follows shows that we will be in another area where Walker is deciding to avoid notes with strong harmonic implications. The use of C natural also suggests that this will be focused on the Mixolydian mode, a choice Walker make for its “prevalence in Celtic and American folk music.”<sup>137</sup>

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Simple Gifts" from "Shaker Tunes for Brass Quintet". It consists of five staves: a vocal line with lyrics, a piano accompaniment, and three brass staves. The lyrics are: "where we ought to be, and when we find our - selves in the place just right, it will". The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano accompaniment includes a treble and bass clef. The brass staves are for trumpet, trombone, and tuba. The score shows a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are: "where we ought to be, and when we find our - selves in the place just right, it will".

Figure 6.15 mvt 5 mm. 4-7<sup>138</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Gwyneth Walker, "Simple Gifts" from "Shaker Tunes for Brass Quintet": A Musical Analysis, accessed March 25, 2020, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/ana/gw-sgift.pdf>

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

At rehearsal A, after the first statement of the melody, the energy accelerates with the recognizable repeated sixteenth note figures that Walker uses often with brass. The melody is restated in double time with “Emphasis placed on idiomatic brass writing, with staccato articulation and rapid, separate tonguing of the 16th notes.”<sup>139</sup> Walker presents the refrain material at rehearsal D with a sudden shift to F Major. The melody here is “completely altered, melodically and harmonically. There is only a slight resemblance rhythmically. Even the words are changed!”<sup>140</sup> Walker helpfully writes the text in the score to show the relationship to the original melody.

The image shows a musical score for rehearsal D, marked 'abruptly'. It features a vocal line with lyrics: "When true sim - plic - i - ty is gained, we shall nev - er, nev - er, nev - er, nev - er be a - sham'd, to". The score includes staves for vocal and piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of repeated sixteenth note figures in the right hand and bass lines in the left hand. Dynamics include piano (p) and fortissimo (ff).

Figure 6.16 mvt 5 mm. 43-46<sup>141</sup>

Walker continues to spin out the melody with further alterations and a continuation of her compositional style, open harmonies, non-functional sonorities, syncopation and repetitive sixteenth note figures.<sup>142</sup> The final build results in a very open

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

<sup>142</sup> Walker’s own analysis of this movement is as complete an analysis as one could create, Gwyneth Walker, "Simple Gifts" from "Shaker Tunes for Brass Quintet": A Musical Analysis, accessed March 25, 2020, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/ana/gw-sgift.pdf>

F major triad with a G added in the top voice. The ending is final and conclusive, but still maintains Walker's harmonic color.

Figure 6.17 mvt 5 mm. 105-109<sup>143</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Gwyneth Walker, *Shaker Tunes* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 1994)

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The choral world already considers Gwyneth Walker to be one of their serious contemporary composers.<sup>144</sup> Her choral and vocal output is massive and includes works commissioned by every conceivable level of ensemble. Her choral music ranges from the sacred and serious to the light and humorous, but there is no doubt that Walker's choral music is worthy of performing and treating every bit as seriously as any other composer in the choral canon.

Her instrumental work, sadly, does not yet enjoy the same reputation. Though she has written a significant amount of music for instruments,<sup>145</sup> her most famous instrumental work, *Match Point*, is seen as a novelty piece.<sup>146</sup> In my opinion, Walker's instrumental music deserves to enter the contemporary repertoire just as it has in the choral realm.

As a both a D.M.A performance student and a member of a professional brass quintet, I am aware of the divide that exists in the brass quintet repertoire. The number of works that are considered 'serious' or 'academic' that are worthy of being performed on a recital stage in a school of music is fairly small, and very modern. The overwhelming

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<sup>144</sup> "Gwyneth Walker is one of today's most prolific and widely performed American composers of choral music." (Schidke 179)

<sup>145</sup> 18 Piano trios/quartets, 15 string quartets/trios, 8 woodwind quintets, 13 brass quintets/trios, 20 works for flute, 5 for oboe, 21 for clarinet or saxophone, 3 for bassoon, 5 for trumpet, 6 for tuba, 8 for guitar/lute, 7 for violin, 3 for viola, 12 for cello, 14 for piano solo, 6 for organ solo, 20 for full orchestra, 4 for chamber orchestra, 20 for string orchestra, and 5 for concert band.

<sup>146</sup> To be fair, it *does* call to be conducted with a tennis racquet and for the timpani to be played by bouncing tennis ball off the drum heads (Gregory Jaynes, "Four Movements for Orchestra and Tennis Balls," *New York Times*, January 23, 1988, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/a-king2.html>)

majority of music that exists for the ensemble are arrangements and transcriptions. Many of the arrangements also fall into the category of ‘novelty arrangements:’ pieces that present existing melodies in unrelated styles, with seemingly no musical reason, other than entertainment value, to do so. Walker’s brass quintets fall into a middle ground perfect for the ensemble; pieces that do not take themselves too seriously, are enjoyable to listen to, but also present real 20<sup>th</sup>-century compositional techniques and can be musically and technically satisfying for the performers, without being prohibitively difficult. Scholars have generally referred to this aspect of Walker’s music as “egalitarian [and] practical”<sup>147</sup> or “accessible”<sup>148</sup>, and Walker consider it “humanistic”.<sup>149</sup>

It was always Walker’s goal to make sure that her music maintained an internal energy, a meaningful drive that is easily felt by performers and heard by audiences. This humanistic approach is in direct reaction to other 20<sup>th</sup> (and 21<sup>st</sup>) century music that may be deeply academic, but ultimately failing in audience reaction:

As I Listen to certain styles of contemporary music, I often feel a disquieting lack of response. Is this due to possible over-complexity in the planning? Is the uniformly dense texture or unrelenting dissonance wearing thin on the listener? Perhaps so, but on closer inspection, I have come to believe that formal considerations are the most critical. Simply stated, these pieces all too often lack an inner conviction; a drive to their conclusion. There is a lack of energy, of physical and emotional energy, the energy forms that I would describe as humanistic. These pieces do not sustain themselves. I am not convinced by their logic nor moved by their shape.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Schidke 179

<sup>148</sup> Field-Bartholomew, 121

<sup>149</sup> Gwyneth Walker, (1982), <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/pdf/lecture-humanism-1982.pdf>

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*

One thing that cannot be said of Walker's brass quintets is that they lack energy. Vicki Burrichter wrote:

Dr. Walker's compositional style includes both traditional, conservative elements and non-traditional, experimental elements. Her skill in forming tightly constructed, musically and dramatically compelling structures emerging from her study of traditional forms is a key to her technique. But within that structure, she chooses not only conservative elements such as logical and idiomatic writing for the voice and triadic harmonies, but also experimental twentieth-century elements such as non-traditional key relationships and chord progressions, quartal harmonies and tone clusters. These two facets form a personal style that is forward-reaching but grounded in Western musical tradition.<sup>151</sup>

Dr. Burrichter was discussing Walker's choral music but this document has shown the same to be true of her brass quintet music. The vast majority of her quintets are written with normal idiomatic technique,<sup>152</sup> she writes in 'easy' key signatures and generally in 'easy' meters. But her harmonies are often far from triadic, and her tonal shifts are usually to distant areas and with little in the way of common-practice preparation. She does make use of extended technique, but it is usually easy to execute. The large amount of foot stomping, clapping, and hissing in a piece like *Raise the Roof* may put even a seasoned brass quintet (especially one that stands when they perform) out of their comfort zone, but no extra instrumental virtuosity is required to execute these effects.

As is true with most composers of vocal music, interpretation of the text is a most important starting point for any musical analysis.<sup>153</sup> With Walker there is an added

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<sup>151</sup> Burrichter 74

<sup>152</sup> As a composer who works mainly on commission, Walker's compositional process allows "for ample time to confer with the players and to incorporate their suggestions (mostly technical and idiomatic) into the score." (Walker, *Shaker Images*)

<sup>153</sup> Bartholomew, 121



complication because she will often adjust an existing text, sometimes substantially, to better suit her musical needs.

When I set poetry to music, I focus on the central images in the poem. To me, poetry is not words. It is the images that the words create. And thus, with the musical setting, it is important that the images in the poetry translate into musical imagery. Often, the accompaniment is the central means of creating the imagery. The world of the poem may be established within the opening measures of accompaniment. *The vocal lines, while also participating in the musical imagery, have a primary function of conveying the words.*

The song must have a cogent and dramatic form of its own. The form of the song may mirror the form of the poem. Or, it may transcend the poem. But, the music should stand on its own as a well-constructed entity. Thus, I always try to create the overall shape of the song before I start composing.<sup>154</sup> (Italics added)

When she is writing for an instrumental ensemble, she has no sounded text to be concerned about, yet her source materials are often songs and she has to maintain some connection to the text of her sources. The environment of an instrumental ensemble gives Walker an expanded palette for the emotional utterances that help her create the imagery that would otherwise be presented by a text.

Ultimately Gwyneth Walker should be a composer more brass quintets consider when programming their concerts. Most of her quintets are able to be performed by good high school or young collegiate quintets, but also could provide musical and technical challenges for more advanced groups. Her music has a great inherent energy and often exhibits (either in one cohesive movement or across a suite) a wide array of moods, including humor. Her works are extremely listenable. There is also enough contemporary compositional technique thoughtfully applied to leave even the most learned listener challenged and entertained.

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<sup>154</sup> Gwyneth Walker, "Words and Music," Gwyneth Walker - Composer, accessed March 27, 2020, <https://www.gwynethwalker.com/e-words.html>

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## APPENDIX A: LIST OF BRASS WORKS BY GWYNETH WALKER

**Brass Chamber**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Bright Brass	1989	
The Circus of Creation	2009	With narrator and Percussion
Fanfare Among Friends	2012	
Hymns and Spirituals	2000	Brass Trio
The Flying Trapeze	2005	
The Light Descending	2007	
The Race	2004	With narrator
Raise the Roof!	1987	
Seacoasts	2000	
A Season of Wonder	2007	
Shaker Tunes	1994	With optional choir
Sweet Imagination	2007	
A Time Apart	2004	

**Brass Solo****Trumpet**

All Through the Night	2008	With strings or piano
Close Encounters	2006	Duet with Bassoon
A Concerto of Hymns and Spirituals	1997	With orchestra or piano
Language of the Soul	2008	With strings or piano
Suite for Trumpet and Piano	2005	

**Tuba**

Beloved Bass	2012	
Beneath the Stars	2015	With string quartet or piano
Celestial Keys	2004	With organ
Chanties and Ballads	1995	With orchestra or piano
Profound Praise	2013	With organ
Sweet Molly and Friends	1998/2009	With choir

**Brass as Accompaniment**

Alpha and Omega: No. 3 – The Child is Born	2009	
Appalachian Carols: No. 1 – Wondrous Love	1998/2008	SATB or SSAA versions
Appalachian Carols: No. 2 – The Cherry Tree Carol	1998/2008	SATB or SSAA versions
Appalachian Carols: No. 3 – Jesus, Jesus Rest Your Head	1998/2008	SATB or SSAA versions
Appalachian Carols: No. 4 – Go Tell it on the Mountain	1998/2008	SATB or SSAA versions
Crossing the Bar	2004	
Down by the River to Pray	2015	
The Earth is Risen	2013	

Every Life Shall Be a Song	2005/2016	SATB or TTBB versions
How Can I Keep from Singing?	2004	SATB, SSA, or TTBB versions
I've Got Some Singing To DO!	2012	
Love Flows from God	2004	
Love Unfolding	2001	
Magnificat (from Bethesda)	1988	
Evensong		
The Morning Train:	2010-2011	
No. 4 – Worrisome Blues		
My Beloved Son	2006	
New Millennium Suite:	1999-2000	SATB or TTBB versions
No. 1 – Sinner Man		
New Millennium Suite:		
No. 3 – Down by the Riverside		
Now Let Us Sing!	2004	SATB or SSAA versions
Peace I Ask of Thee, O river	2005	
Rejoice! – Christmas Songs	2001/2010	SATB or TTBB versions
Rig Out, Wild Bells	2006	
Songs of Faith:	2011	
No. 1 – We Stand on a Rock		
Songs of Faith:	2011	
No. 2 – Glorious Things		
Songs of Faith:	2011	Trumpet only
No. 4 – Were You There?		
Songs of Faith:	2011	
No. 6 – Where Moses Stood!		
Together in Song:	2005	
No. 1 – Hear the Trumpet Sound		
Together in Song: No. 2 - Prayer	2005	
Together in Song:	2005	
No. 3 – The Gospel Plow		
The Tree of Peace	2002/2006/2007	SSAA, SATB, or TTBB versions
Wayfaring Stranger	2008	
With Thee That I May Live	1997	
When Jesus Wept	2006	

**APPENDIX B: COMMERCIAL RECORDINGS OF GWNETH WALKER'S  
BRASS WORKS**

<b>Artist</b>	<b>Album</b>	<b>Track</b>
Lyric Brass Quintet	American Music for Brass Quintet	Shaker Tunes
Nebraska Brass	Volume IV: Season of Wonder	A Season of Wonder
Nebraska Brass	Volume IV: Season of Wonder	The Light Descending
Iowa Brass Quintet	Americana: A University of Iowa Celebration	Raise the Roof!
Florida State Brass Quintet	Strophes of the Night and Dawn	Raise the Roof!
The Louisville Brass	Season to Dance	Shaker Tunes