

Winner of the Euphonia! Choral Composition Competition

If You Can Walk You Can Dance (If You Can Talk You Can Sing)

Zimbabwean proverb

SAB choir, piano and claves



Elizabeth Alexander

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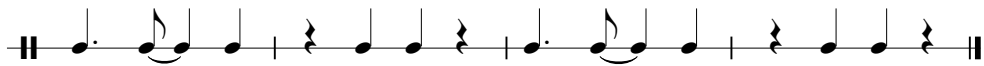


“If you can walk you can dance, if you can talk you can sing.”

Zimbabwean proverb

NOTE TO THE CLAVES PLAYER:

The claves part in this song, which is played during the chorus, consists of a repeating two-measure ostinato pattern. It may either be played like this:



Or with the measures reversed, like this:



You may wish to alternate between these two pattern variations each time you begin a new chorus of the song!

* If you have bass and marimba players available, they may join in during the sections marked "CLAVES," playing the pianist's left and right hand parts, respectively.

Commissioned by Farmington (Connecticut) High School Friends of Music,
in honor of Scott Campbell, Teacher of the Year

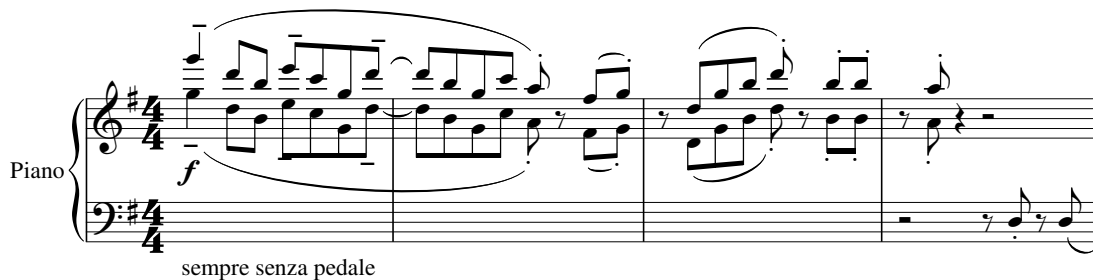
If you can walk you can dance (If you can talk you can sing)

Zimbabwean Proverb

Elizabeth Alexander

(♩ = 80) **With gentle marcato and precise rhythmic energy**

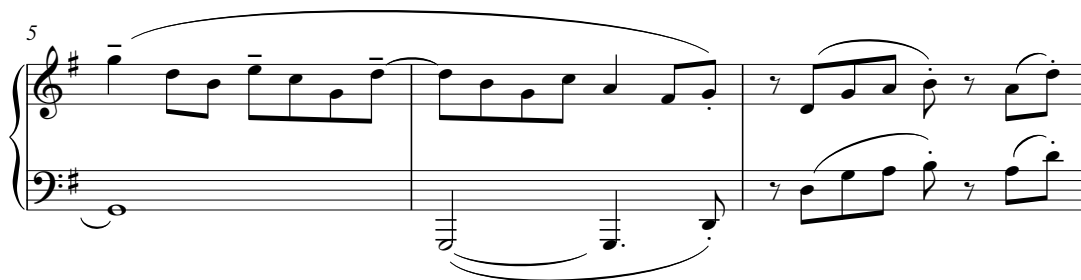
Piano



f

sempre senza pedale

The piano introduction is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand features a series of eighth-note patterns, some beamed together and some with slurs, creating a rhythmic melody. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with eighth notes. The instruction "sempre senza pedale" is written below the staff.



The piano continuation continues the rhythmic patterns from the introduction. It features similar eighth-note figures in both hands, maintaining the energetic and precise feel of the piece.

8

smoothly, sempre legato
mp

S
If you can walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing.— If you can

smoothly, sempre legato
mp

A
If you can walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing.— If you can

smoothly, sempre legato
mp

B
If you can walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing.— If you can

CLAVES

mp

The vocal and piano accompaniment for the song begins at measure 8. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, and Bass) are written in a simple, rhythmic style that matches the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "If you can walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing.— If you can". The piano accompaniment includes a section for CLAVES, which provides a rhythmic accompaniment for the vocalists. The dynamics are marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) and the phrasing is *smoothly, sempre legato*.

13

S walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing,— If you can

A walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing,— If you can

B walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing,— If you can

17

S walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing.— If you can

A walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing.— If you can

B walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing.— If you can

21

S walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing.

A walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing.

B walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing.

NO CLAVES

25

S *mp* If you can talk you can sing,— if you can

A *mp* If you can walk you can dance, If you can talk you can sing,— if you can

B *mp* yes, you can dance, if you can

mp

Ped. *

29

S walk then you can dance,

A walk then you can dance,

B walk then you can dance, *mp* If you can

p

33

S *mp* If you can

A *mp* If you can

B walk you can dance,— If you can talk you can sing.—

CLAVES

mp

Opal Palmer Adisa, poet ◦ Margaret & George Alexander, parents ◦ Yehuda Amichai, poet ◦ Bjorn Arneson, generous web designer ◦ Scott Bates, poet ◦ Abbie Betinis, composer/colleague ◦ Dennis Blubaugh, music dealer ◦ Michael deVernon Boblett, poet ◦ Ray Bradbury, writer ◦ Norbert Capek, visionary ◦ e. e. cummings, poet ◦ Philip Dacey, poet ◦ Emily Dickinson, poet ◦ Evelyn Dudley, poet ◦ Rob Eller-Isaacs, minister/writer ◦ Sophia Lyon Fahs, writer ◦ Richard M. Fewkes, writer ◦ Peshla Gertler, poet ◦ Richard S. Gilbert, minister/writer ◦ Jack Gallagher, composer/teacher ◦ Paul Gerike, proofreader ◦ Steve Harper, technical advisor ◦ Steve Hawkins, generous web designer ◦ Edie Hill, composer/colleague ◦ Langston Hughes, poet ◦ Mark Humphrey, piano technician ◦ Karel Husa, composer/teacher ◦ Kalidasa, poet ◦ Garrison Keillor, storyteller ◦ Denise Levertov, poet ◦ George Ella Lyon, poet ◦ Jonathan Machen, artist ◦ Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet ◦ J. David Moore, composer/colleague ◦ Joan Wolf Prefontaine, poet ◦ Gerald Rich, poet ◦ Carl Sandburg, poet ◦ King Sigismund III, religious reformer ◦ Steven Stucky, composer/teacher ◦ Rabindranath Tagore, poet ◦ Howard Thurman, civil rights leader/writer ◦ John Greenleaf Whittier, poet ◦ Theodore S. Lockering Williams, poet ◦ Daniel Winter, pianist/teacher ◦ Nancy Wood, poet ◦ Yehudi Wyner, composer/teacher ◦ Paul Adams, technical advisor ◦ Opal Palmer Adisa, poet ◦ Margaret & George Alexander, parents ◦ Yehuda Amichai, poet ◦ Bjorn Arneson, generous web designer ◦ Scott Bates, poet ◦ Abbie Betinis, composer/colleague ◦ Dennis Blubaugh, music dealer ◦ Michael deVernon Boblett, poet ◦ Ray Bradbury, writer ◦ Norbert Capek, visionary ◦ e. e. cummings, poet ◦ Philip Dacey, poet ◦ Emily Dickinson, poet ◦ Evelyn Dudley, poet ◦ Rob Eller-Isaacs, minister/writer ◦ Sophia Lyon Fahs, writer ◦ Richard M. Fewkes, writer ◦ Peshla Gertler, poet ◦ Jack Gallagher, composer/teacher ◦ Paul Gerike, proofreader ◦ Steve Harper, technical advisor ◦ Steve Hawkins, generous web designer ◦ Edie Hill, composer/colleague ◦ Langston Hughes, poet ◦ Mark Humphrey, piano technician ◦ Karel Husa, composer/teacher ◦ Kalidasa, poet ◦ Garrison Keillor, storyteller ◦ Denise Levertov, poet ◦ George Ella Lyon, poet ◦ Jonathan Machen, artist ◦ Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet ◦ J. David Moore, composer/colleague ◦ Joan Wolf Prefontaine, poet ◦ Gerald Rich, poet ◦ Carl Sandburg, poet ◦ King Sigismund III, religious reformer ◦ Steven Stucky, composer/teacher ◦ Rabindranath Tagore, poet ◦ Howard Thurman, civil rights leader/writer ◦ John Greenleaf Whittier, poet ◦ Theodore S. Lockering Williams, poet ◦ Daniel Winter, pianist/teacher ◦ Nancy Wood, poet ◦ Yehudi Wyner, composer/teacher ◦ Paul Adams, technical advisor ◦ Opal Palmer Adisa, poet ◦ Margaret & George Alexander, parents ◦ Yehuda Amichai, poet ◦ Bjorn Arneson, generous web designer ◦ Scott Bates, poet ◦ Abbie Betinis, composer/colleague ◦ Dennis Blubaugh, music dealer ◦ Michael deVernon Boblett, poet ◦ Ray Bradbury, writer ◦ Norbert Capek, visionary ◦ e. e. cummings, poet ◦ Philip Dacey, poet ◦ Emily Dickinson, poet ◦ Evelyn Dudley, poet ◦ Rob Eller-Isaacs, minister/writer ◦ Sophia Lyon Fahs, writer ◦ Richard M. Fewkes, writer ◦ Peshla Gertler, poet ◦ Jack Gallagher, composer/teacher ◦ Paul Gerike, proofreader ◦ Steve Harper, technical advisor ◦ Steve Hawkins, generous web designer ◦ Edie Hill, composer/colleague ◦ Langston Hughes, poet ◦ Mark Humphrey, piano technician ◦ Karel Husa, composer/teacher ◦ Kalidasa, poet ◦ Garrison Keillor, storyteller ◦ Denise Levertov, poet ◦ George Ella Lyon, poet ◦ Jonathan Machen, artist ◦ Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet ◦ J. David Moore, composer/colleague ◦ Joan Wolf Prefontaine, poet ◦ Gerald Rich, poet ◦ Carl Sandburg, poet ◦ King

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49

S snap fingers: 

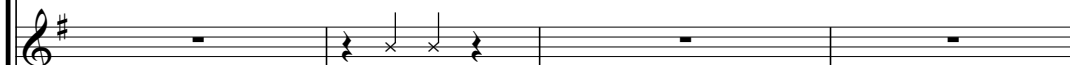
A snap fingers: 


B *un poco marcato*
mp 

If you, if you walk, If you walk, then you can dance, — You can dance.

53

S 

A 

B 

If you, if you walk, If you walk, then you can dance, — You can dance.

57 *mp marcato*

S 

If you can, can talk, you can sing, you can,


A *mp marcato* 

If you can, can talk, you can sing, you can,


B 

If you, if you walk, If you walk, then you can dance, — You can dance.


61

S 

If you can, can talk, you can sing, you can,

A 

If you can, can talk, you can sing, you can,

B 

If you, if you walk, If you walk, then you can dance, — You can dance.

65 7

mf

S
yes, you can dance, _____ If you can

A
If you can walk you can dance, _____ If you can talk you can sing, _____ If you can

B
If you can talk you can sing, _____ If you can

(NO CLAVES)

mp *mf*

69

Solo *mp*

Solo *mp*

S *p subito*

A *p subito*

B *p subito*

p subito

and you can

then you can sing, _____

walk, then you can dance, _____ talk, then you can sing, _____

walk, then you can dance, _____ talk, then you can sing, _____

walk, then you can dance, _____ talk, then you can sing, _____

p subito

73

Solo  dance, _____

Solo  _____ yes, you can sing, _____

S  walk, then you can dance, _____ talk, then you can sing, _____

A  walk, then you can dance, _____ talk, then you can sing, _____

B  walk, then you can dance, _____ talk, then you can sing, _____



76

Solo  If you can walk, then you can dance, _____ *f*

Solo  _____ If you can walk, then you can dance, _____ *f*

S  If you can walk, then you can dance, _____ *f*

A  If you can walk, then you can dance, _____ *f*

B  If you can walk, then you can dance, _____ *f*



* Note: The material in these three measures was not in the original printing of this piece.

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Descant parts may come in at any point during the repeating measures

95 *mf*

Solo  *mf*

If you can, can talk, you can sing, you can,

Solo  *mf*

If you, if you walk, If you walk, then you can dance, — You candance.

* Note: If desired, solo lines may be sung by a small group.

S *(mf)*

walk you can dance, — If you can talk you can sing. — If you can

A *(mf)*

walk you can dance, — If you can talk you can sing. — If you can

B *(mf)*

walk you can dance, — If you can talk you can sing. — If you can

(CLAVES)



Senza misura
lunga: 5-8 seconds

99 Solo  **2/4**

If you can, can talk,

Solo  **2/4**

If you, if you walk, if you walk

***NOW EVERYBODY TALK,
SPEAKING OUT CLEARLY, AND
CUT OFF RIGHT WITH THE CONDUCTOR!***

S  **2/4**

walk you can dance,— If you can talk,

A  **2/4**

walk you can dance,— If you can talk,

B  **2/4**

walk you can dance,— If you can talk,

 **2/4**

NO CLAVES

Ped.

102 **a tempo**

S *f* If you can talk, you can sing!—

A *f* If you can talk, you can sing!—

B *f* If you can talk, you can sing!—

(for rehearsal only)

^
v
*

105

S

A

B

f

How can I keep from singing?

If You Can Walk You Can Dance, SAB: SEA-022-03
If You Can Walk You Can Dance, TBB: SEA-022-05
If You Can Walk You Can Dance, SSA: SEA-022-06
If You Can Walk You Can Dance, SATB: SEA-022-07

If You Can Walk You Can Dance was commissioned by Farmington High School Friends of Music, in honor of the district's Teacher of the Year, **Scott Campbell**. Perceptive listeners might glean in the piano's introduction and conclusion a few quotes from one of his favorite songs, *How Can I Keep From Singing?*

The composer is grateful to **Molly MacMillan** for sharing her knowledge and love of Latin jazz, and for her creative spirit.

Elizabeth Alexander spent her childhood in the Carolinas and Appalachian Ohio, the daughter of a minister and a piano teacher. Her passion for language and music is reflected in her catalogue of over 100 songs and choral works, which have received over 20 national and international awards.



Reviews of her music have referred to “the close personal resonance between the composer and the words,” as well as her music’s “delicacy and sincerity,” “elegance,” and “freshness within a well-known language.”

Performers of her music have included instrumental ensembles such as Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, North/South Consonance, Society for New Music, and Sounds New; solo singers such as Ruth MacKenzie, Bradley Greenwald and Janet Youngdahl; and over 1000 choirs, including VocalEssence, Elmer Iseler Singers, Gregg Smith Singers, New York Virtuoso Singers, MUSE, San Francisco Gay Mens Chorus, and the entire student body of Waunakee Elementary School.

Among her composition teachers were Jack Gallagher at The College of Wooster, and Steven Stucky, Yehudi Wyner and Karel Husa at Cornell University, from which she received her doctorate in music composition. She has received awards, grants and fellowships from the McKnight Foundation, Jerome Foundation, New York Council on the Arts, Wisconsin Arts Board, National Orchestral Association, International League of Women Composers, and American Composers Forum.

Alexander lives in St. Paul, MN, where her frequent commissions include works for orchestra, chorus, chamber ensembles and solo musicians. She reads voraciously, shamelessly encourages her teenagers' jokes, and tends her garden during the three month period in Minnesota that is not winter. She believes she has the best job in the world.

For more information about Elizabeth's music, visit www.elizabethalexander.com

Choral Music by Elizabeth Alexander

April Rain Song (Langston Hughes)	SATB	SEA-006-01
Before the Bread (English folk prayer)	SSSS	SEA-023-00
Blessed Be the Flower That Triumphs (Boblett)	SATB	SEA-078-00
Cherish Your Doubt (Alexander)	SSAA, pno	SEA-063-02
Climb (Edna St. Vincent Millay)	SATB, pno	SEA-059-00
Dragon Dance (Elizabeth Alexander)	S, pno	SEA-001-00
The Earth Called To My Friend (Nancy Wood)	SSA, pno	SEA-057-00
Even a Fist Was Once an Open Palm (Amichai)	SATB	SEA-026-01
Faith Is the Bird That Feels the Light (Tagore)	SSA	SEA-068-00
Fighting Over What We Believe (Alexander)	SAB youth choir, SATB	SEA-099-00
Finally On My Way To Yes (Pesha Gertler)	SSATB, pno	SEA-019-00
Folks, I'm Telling You (Langston Hughes)	SSATB, pno	SEA-027-00
For So the Children Come (Sophia Fahs)	SATB, pno	SEA-010-00
Glen Song (Scott Bates)	SSATB, pno	SEA-025-00
I Write This Poem Out of Darkness (George Ella Lyon)	SSA, fl, vln, pno	SEA-024-00
If You Can Walk You Can Dance (Zimbabwean Proverb)	SAB, pno	SEA-022-03
Immortal Love (John Greenleaf Whittier)	SATB	SEA-017-00
Infant Holy, Infant Lowly (arr. Polish carol)	SSA	SEA-020-00
The Journey (Evelyn Dudley)	TTBB	SEA-075-00
Jump! (Ray Bradbury)	SSA	SEA-090-00
Life is not a Garden (Alexander)	SATB, pno	SEA-064-00
May This Be a Working Alleluia (Alexander)	Children's choir & SATB	SEA-098-00
Morning Bread (Amy Lowell)	SATB	SEA-060-00
...or a musician (Philip Dacey)	SATB, orchestra	SEA-007-00
A Palette To Paint Us As We Are (Gerald Rich)	SA, pno	SEA-014-00
Praise Wet Snow Falling Early (Denise Levertov)	SATB, pno	SEA-015-00
Reasons for the Perpetuation of Slavery (Alexander)	SSAA	SEA-091-00
Spring Grass (Carl Sandburg)	SATB	SEA-006-03
They Have Freckles Everywhere	SSAA	SEA-076-00
Those Who Wish To Sing Always Find a Song	SSS, pno, oboe	SEA-022-01
To Make a Prairie (Emily Dickinson)	SSA, pno	SEA-016-00
Tomorrow, God Willing (Garrison Keillor)	TTBB	SEA-077-00
Trust the Seeds (Alexander)	SATB	SEA-009-00
We Lift Up Our Hearts (Richard Fewkes)	Children's choir & SATB	SEA-021-00
We Remember Them (Sylvan Kamens & Jack Riemer)	SATB	SEA-083-01
Where There Is Light in the Soul (Chinese proverb)	SAB	SEA-070-00
When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled (Thurman)	SSAA	SEA-062-04
Why I Pity the Woman Who Never Spills (Prefontaine)	SSAA	SEA-058-00
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