

Gwyneth Walker

Brothers in Peace
The Christmas Truce of 1914

for SATB Chorus,
Narrator and String Quartet (or Piano)

Duration: 7 minutes

Commissioned by the Toledo Choral Society
Richard Napierala, Music Director
premiered on December 16, 2019
Toledo, Ohio

In 1914, at the start of World War I, British and German troops faced off against each other from their rows of trenches in Flanders. Often they were within sight and sound of one another.

Christmas Eve approached – a time of celebration and reverence for all of the soldiers. The men spontaneously joined in sharing blessings of peace, calling out to one another over the battlefield. The carol *Silent Night* could be heard sung in English and in German.

Gaining courage, some of the soldiers climbed out of their trenches and greeted one another, exchanging gifts. An impromptu game of soccer was played.

For this brief time, sustained by faith, the soldiers became **Brothers in Peace.**

Brothers in Peace

The Christmas Truce of 1914

for Narrator, SATB/SATB Choirs and String Quartet

Traditional
adapted by G. Walker

Gwyneth Walker

Suggested props, displayed at the front of the stage on a music stand or lectern, visible to the audience: large bars of chocolate, a plum pudding, warm woolen scarf and a soccer ball (!) [symbolizing the gifts that the soldiers exchange]

At a walking tempo $\text{♩} = 60$

These rhythms and the walking tempo are suggestive of soldiers walking to war, across the battlefield. . . or simply the passing of time.

Violin 1
p sostenuto

Violin 2
p sostenuto

Viola
p sostenuto

Violoncello
p sostenuto



5 All Singers on stage
p

S
A
T
B
p

Hmm

Hmm

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Chorus begins to walk slowly into the hall, dividing into two groups along the sides:
Chorus I (to sing in English) representing the British soldiers,
Chorus II (to sing in German) representing the German soldiers.

9

S
A

Hmm

T
B

Hmm

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

the radiance of the Holy Night



[Chorus moving into position]

13

S
A

Hmm

T
B

Hmm

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

the radiance of the Holy Night

17 [Chorus moving into position]

Reading (presented below) begins.

S
A
T
B

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.

Chorus and String Quartet continue repeating 4 measure phrase behind the reading (approximately 5-6 times) until the NARRATOR says "calling out."

Narrator:

In December 1914, in Flanders, British and German soldiers faced off against each other from their rows of trenches. The men were in close proximity, within sight and sound of one another.

Christmas was approaching – a time of celebration and reverence common to all soldiers. On Christmas Eve, troops began to sing Christmas carols back and forth over the trenches. As dawn came, some of the soldiers climbed up and walked across "no man's land," **calling out:**

21

S
A
T
B

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vlc.

Various choir members shout back and forth across the hall (battlefield) ad lib.

25 Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!

Fröhliche Weihnachten! Fröhliche Weihnachten! Fröhliche Weihnachten!

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

SOLO VOICES sing back and forth over "no man's land"

Free Tempo, not conducted
let Soloists create a natural dialogue

26 Solo *mf*

T I Solo
 My broth - er, _____ Let us lay down our

T II Solo
 Mein Bru - der, _____

32

T I Solo
 arms. _____

B I Solo
 This is the birth-day of the Prince of Peace.

T II Solo
 Leg dei - ner Ar - me runt - er. _____

B II Solo
 _____ der

36

S I Solo
 The Son of God. . . _____

S II Solo
 der Sohn _____ Got - tes _____

B II Solo
 Frie - ders - fyrst

Vln. 1
con sord.
pp gently sparkling

Begin conducting

gathering energy

42

A I Solo *Solo p* Peace, — peace, — *All Alto I (p)* peace, — peace, —

A II Solo *Solo p* Frie - den, frie - den,

gathering energy

Vln. 1 *con sord.*

Vln. 2 *pp gently sparkling*

Vla. *con sord. pizz. p*

Vcl. *con sord. pizz. p*

p

46

Solo mf *a tempo* ♩ = 120

S I Solo My Son! My Son, my *All Sop I (All) mf*

A I Solo my

S II Solo *Solo mf* *All Sop II*

All Alto II (p) Mein Sohn! mein Sohn, mein *(All) mf*

A II Solo Frie - den, frie - den, mein

a tempo ♩ = 120

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla. *arco*

Vcl. *arco*

mf

50

S
A
I
son, my son! Come and walk to - geth - er in peace.

T
B
Come and walk to - geth - er in peace.

S
A
II
Sohn, mein Sohn! Komm und get in

T
B
Komm und get in

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

54

S
A
II
Frie - den. _____

T
B
Frie - den. _____

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

p

rit.

pizz.

p

During the following reading, various members of each chorus move towards the center, as if greeting one another.

Narrator:

The men emerged from their trenches and greeted one another. They exchanged gifts of chocolates, plum puddings, and warm woolen scarves. . . Then they played a game of soccer.

57 *via sord.*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.



$\text{♩} = 132$

*gently, but with the joy and energy of soldiers
greeting one another. . . and exchanging gifts*

58 *senza sord.
pizz.*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.



62

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

66

arco

mf

(pizz.)

(p)

(pizz.)

(p)

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

70

arco

mf

arco

mf

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

... and playing a bit of soccer ...

74

high, joyful gliss., ad lib.

gl

gl

arco

mf

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

accel.

... the soccer game ends.

poco rit.

78

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

VERSE 1

At a walking tempo ♩ = 60

82 *p*

S
A
I
T
B

Si - - - lent night! Ho - - - ly night!

p

Si - - - lent night! Ho - - - ly night!

S
A
II
T
B

Stil - le Nacht! Hei - li - ge Nacht!

p

Stil - le Nacht! Hei - li - ge Nacht!

At a walking tempo ♩ = 60

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vcl.

p

86

S
A
I
T
B

All is calm, all is bright 'round yon

All is calm, all is bright 'round yon

S
A
II
T
B

Al - les schläft, ein - sam wacht

Al - les schläft, ein - sam wacht

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vcl.

91

S
A
I
T
B

Vir - gin — Moth - er and child. Ho - ly

Vir - gin Moth - er and child. Ho - ly

unis.

S
A
II
T
B

Ah, Mut - ter und kind...

Ah, Mut - ter und kind...

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

95

S
A
I
T
B

in - fant, so — ten - der and mild, sleep in hea - ven - ly

in - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in hea - ven - ly

unis.

S
A
II
T
B

Ah, zart und mild...

Ah, zart und mild...

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

100

S
A
I
T
B

peace, sleep in hea - ven - ly

S
A
II
T
B

Schlaf in himm - lisch - er Ruh, Schlaf in himm - lisch - er

Schlaf in himm - lisch - er Ruh, Schlaf in himm - lisch - er

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vcl.

104

S
A
I
T
B

peace. Hmm

peace. Hmm

S
A
II
T
B

Ruh. Hmm

Ruh. Hmm

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vcl.

108 *rit.*



During this reading, members of the chorus return to their opposing sides.

Narrator:

This *Christmas Truce of 1914* came five months after the start of the war – a war which many predicted would last only a few months, but indeed became one of the most prolonged and deadly wars in Europe. The *Truce* was not to happen again. But for this brief time, it was a sign of hope that even on the battlefield, faith endures. Soldiers can be Brothers in Peace.

112



113 *a tempo* ♩ = 60

sparkling with the radiance of the Holy Night

VERSE 2

116

Soprano I: *mf* Si - - - lent Night!

Tenor I: *mf* Si - - - lent Night!

Soprano II: *mf* Stil - le Nacht!

Tenor II: *mf* Stil - le Nacht!

119

Soprano I: Ho - - - ly Night! Son of

Tenor I: Ho - - - ly Night! Son of

Soprano II: Hei - li - ge Nacht!

Tenor II: Hei - li - ge Nacht!

128

S
A
I
face with the dawn of re -

T
B
face with the dawn of re -

S
A
II
dein Ge - sicht Ah, unis.

T
B
dein Ge - sicht Ah, unis.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

131

S
A
I
deem - - - ing grace. Je - sus,

T
B
deem - - - ing grace. Je - sus,

S
A
II
ret - ten - de Stund'

T
B
ret - ten - de Stund'

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

134

S A I Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus,

T B Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus,

S A II Je - sus, in dei - ner ge - burt,

T B Je - sus, in dei - ner ge - burt,

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

138

S A I Lord, at Thy birth. Hmm

T B Lord, at Thy birth. Hmm

S A II Je - sus, in dei - ner ge - burt. Hmm

T B Je - sus, in dei - ner ge - burt. Hmm

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Slowly, with strength
calling across the battlefield

142 *non dim.* *rit.* *f*

S A I My broth - er,

T B *non dim.* *f* My broth - er,

S A II *non dim.* *f* Mein

T B *non dim.* *f* Mein

rit. **Slowly, with strength**

Vln. 1 *f*

Vln. 2 *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

146

mf

S
A
I
T
B
Come and walk to - geth - er in peace.

mf

S
A
II
Bru - der, Frie - den. . .
pp as if from afar

T
B
Bru - der, Frie - den. . .
pp as if from afar

Vln. 1
pizz.
mf
pp
arco

Vln. 2
pizz.
mf
pp
arco

Vla.
pizz.
mf
pp

Vlc.
pizz.
mf
arco
pp

arco

6:30
String version completed: June 3, 2019
New Canaan, Connecticut