

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 Piano

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 ♩ = 60

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

Piano

poco ped. ad lib.

5 All Singers on stage

S
A

T
B

p

Hmm

p

Hmm

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

the radiance of the Holy Night

3 3 3 p

13 [Chorus moving into position]

S
A

Hmm

T
B

Hmm

3 3 3 p

Reading (on next page) begins.

17 [Chorus moving into position]

S
A

Hmm

T
B

Hmm

Chorus and Piano 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

Hmm

Hmm

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

25 Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!

Fröhliche Wiehnachten! Fröhliche Wiehnachten! Fröhliche Wiehnachten!

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

Free Tempo, not conducted
let Soloists create a natural dialogue

26 *Solo mf*

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

T II Solo
8 _____ *Solo mf*
Mein Bru - der, _____

32

T I Solo
8 arms.

B I Solo
8 _____ *Solo mf*
This is the birth-day of the Prince of Peace.

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

B II Solo
8 _____ *Solo mf*
der

36

S I Solo
8 _____ *Solo mf*
The Son of God... _____

S II Solo
8 _____ *Solo mf*
der Sohn _____

B II Solo
8 _____
Frie - ders - fyrst

a star (gentle, sparkling repetitions of the same pitch)
8va
pp

Begin conducting

41 *Solo p* **gathering energy** All Alto I (*p*)

A I Solo Peace, - peace, - peace, peace,

S II Solo Got - tes

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

loco **gathering energy**

(8va)-----

pp *p*

46 *Solo mf* **a tempo** ♩ = 120 All Sop I

S I Solo My Son! My Son, my (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

mf

50

S
A
I
T
B

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

mf

mf

mf

S
A
II
T
B

Sohn, mein Sohn! Komm und get in

(All) mf

All mf

Komm und get in

8va - - -

loco

Red. _____

54

S
A
II
T
B

Frie - den. _____

p

p

rit.

8va - - -

3

3

3

3

rit.

3

Red. _____

Red. _____

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

$\text{♩} = 132$

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

58

poco ped. ad lib.

63

68

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

73

77

VERSE 1

At a walking tempo $\text{♩} = 60$

82 *p*

S
A
I
T
B

Si - lent night! Ho - ly night!

Si - lent night! Ho - ly night!

p

S
A
II
T
B

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

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

At a walking tempo $\text{♩} = 60$

86

S
A
I
T
B

All is calm, all is bright

All is calm, all is bright

S
A
II
T
B

Al - les schläft, ein - sam wacht

Al - les schläft, ein - sam wacht

90

I
S A
T B
'round yon Vir - gin — Moth - er and child.

II
S A
T B
unis.
Ah, Mut - ter und kind...
unis.
Ah, Mut - ter und kind...

94

I
S A
T B
Ho - ly in - fant, so — ten - der and mild,

II
S A
T B
unis.
Ah, zart und mild...
unis.
Ah, zart und mild...

98

I
S A
sleep in hea - ven - ly peace, _____ sleep _____ in

T B
sleep in hea - ven - ly peace, _____ sleep _____ in

II
S A
Schlaf in himm-lisch-er Ruh,

T B
Schlaf in himm-lisch-er Ruh,

103

I
S A
hea - ven - ly peace. _____ Hmm _____

T B
hea - ven - ly peace. _____ Hmm _____

II
S A
Schlaf in himm-lisch-er Ruh. _____ Hmm _____

T B
Schlaf in himm-lisch-er Ruh. _____ Hmm _____

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* $\text{♩} = 60$ *sparkling with the radiance of the Holy Night*

116 **VERSE 2**

mf Si - - - - - lent

mf Si - - - - - lent

I
S A Night! Ho - - - - ly
T B Night! Ho - - - - ly

II
S A *mf* Stil - le - - - Nacht!
T B *mf* Stil - le - - - Nacht!

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

Ped. Ped.

I
S A Night! Son of
T B Night! Son - - - - of

II
S A Hei - li - ge Nacht!
T B Hei - li - ge Nacht!

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

Ped. Ped.

122

I
S A
T B
God, love's pure

II
S A
T B
Got - tes Sohn,
Got - tes Sohn,

Ped.

124

I
S A
T B
light ra - diant beams from

II
S A
T B
O wie lacht Ah,
O wie lacht Ah,

unis.

unis.

Ped.

127

I
S A Thy ho - ly face with the
T B Thy ho - ly face with _____ the _____

II
S A dein Ge - sicht
T B dein Ge - sicht

Ped. Ped.

130

I
S A dawn of re - deem - ing grace.
T B dawn of re - deem - ing grace.

II
S A *unis.* Ah, ret - ten - de Stund'
T B *unis.* Ah, ret - ten - de Stund'

Ped. Ped.

133

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

II
S A
T B
Je - sus, in dei - ner ge -

Je - sus, in dei - ner ge -

5 5 5 5

ped.

136

I
S A
T B
Je - sus, Lord, at Thy

Je - sus, Lord, at Thy

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

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

ped. *ped.* *with pedal*

147 *mf*

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

mf

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

S
A
II
Frie - den... —

pp as if from afar

T
B
Frie - den... —

pp

one last star

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system (I) features Soprano (S) and Alto (A) voices in the upper staff and Tenor (T) and Bass (B) voices in the lower staff. Both vocal parts sing the lyrics 'Come and walk to - geth - er in peace.' with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment is also marked *mf*. The second system (II) features Soprano (S) and Alto (A) voices in the upper staff and Tenor (T) and Bass (B) voices in the lower staff. The vocal parts sing 'Frie - den... —' with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic, specifically marked as 'as if from afar'. The piano accompaniment is also marked *pp*. The third system features the piano accompaniment in the lower staff, marked *pp*, with the instruction 'one last star' above the final chord.

6:30
May 5, 2019
New Canaan, Connecticut