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**.

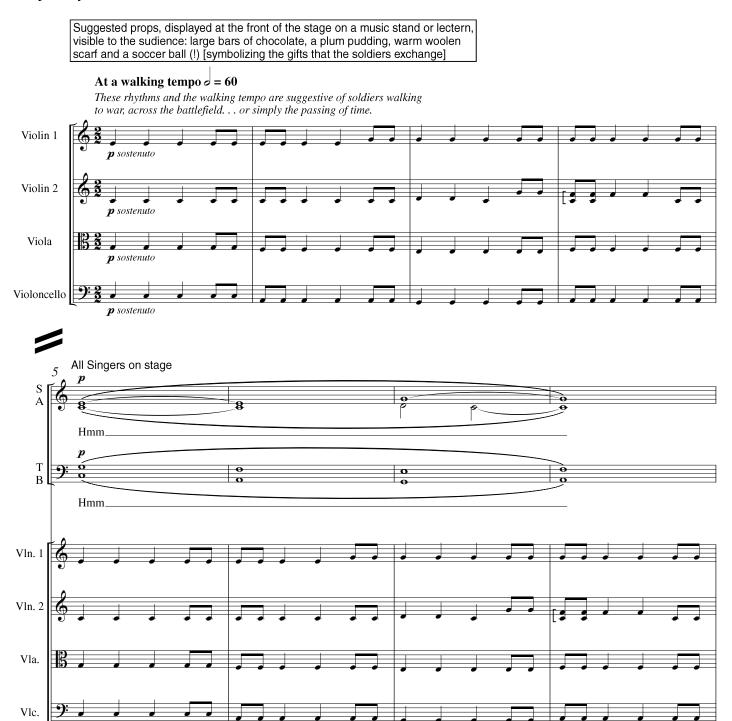
Brothers in Peace

The Christmas Truce of 1914

for Narrator, SATB/SATB Choirs and String Quartet*

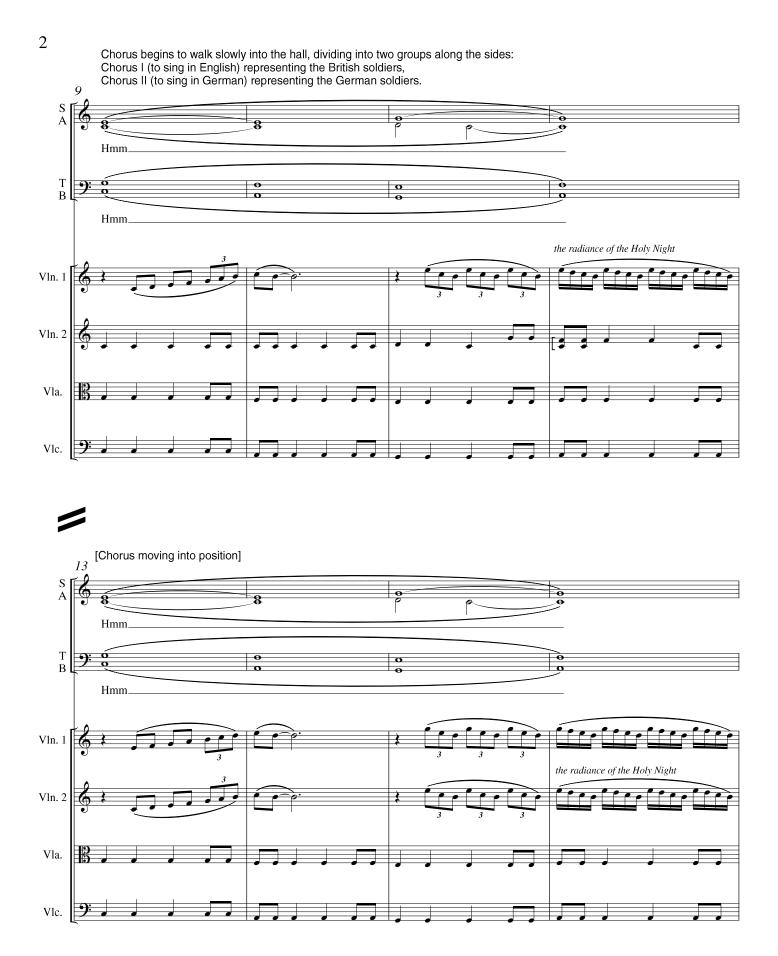
Traditional adapted by G. Walker

Gwyneth Walker

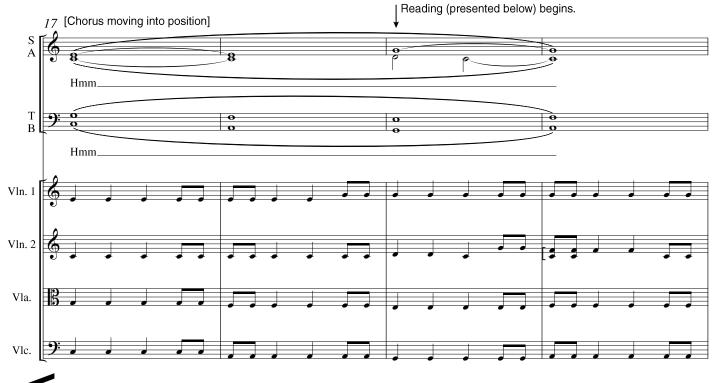


*A Contrabass part is available upon request.

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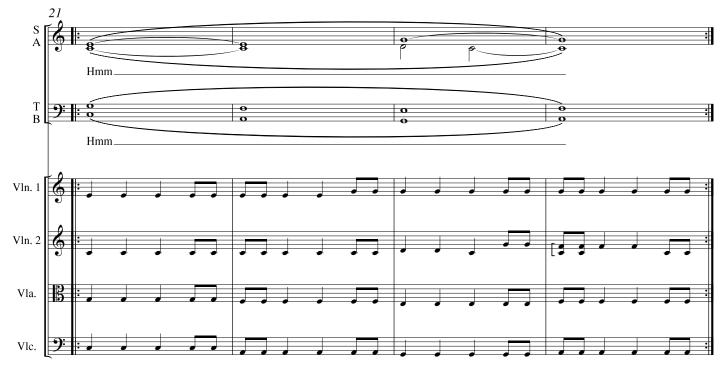


Chorus and String Quartet continue repeating 4 measure phrase behind the reading (approximately 5-6 times) until the NARRATOR says "calling out."

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 reverance 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:**



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

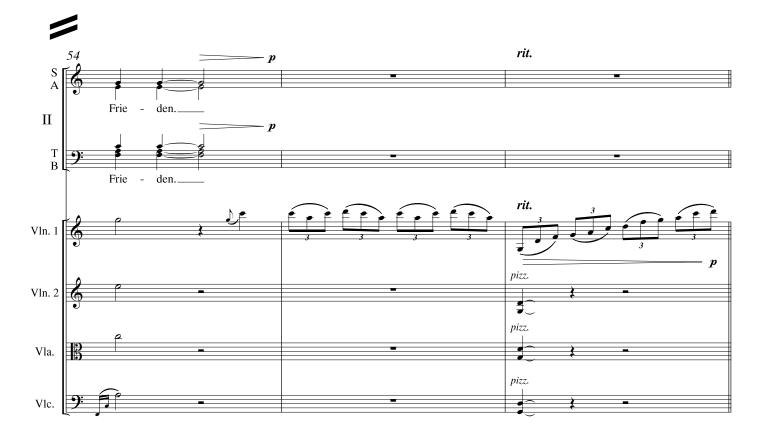


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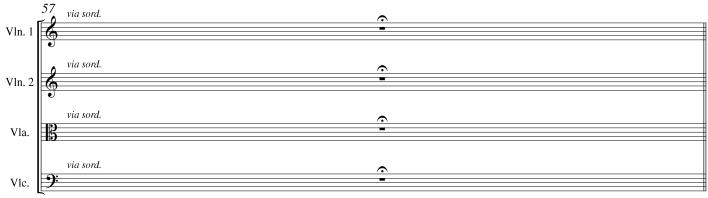
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During the following reading, various members of each chorus move towards the center, as if greeting one another.

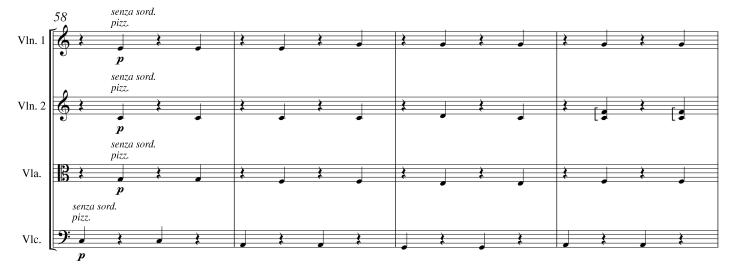
Narrator:

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.



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







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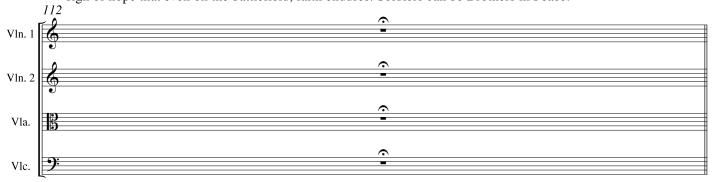
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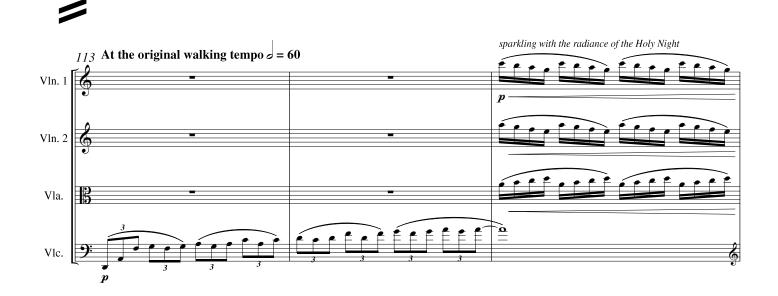


During this reading, members of the chorus return to their opposing sides.

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.





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