

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 $\text{♩} = 60$

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

2

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
T
B

Hmm
Hmm

the radiance of the Holy Night
p

13 [Chorus moving into position]

S
A
T
B

Hmm
Hmm

p

Reading (on next page) begins.

17 [Chorus moving into position]

S
A
T
B

Hmm
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 Weihnachten! Fröhliche Weihnachten! Fröhliche Weihnachten!

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, _____

T II Solo
8 _____

Solo mf

Mein Bru - der, _____

Let us lay down our

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' Ih - re Waf - fen 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 - dens - fest

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

8^{va}

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,

(8va) *loco* **gathering energy** *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 Mein Sohn! mein Sohn, mein

All Alto II (*p*) (All) *mf*

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

a tempo ♩ = 120 *mf*

6

50 *mf*

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! (All) *mf*
Komm und get in

T
B
All *mf*
Komm und get in

8va *loco*

Red.

54 *p* *rit.*

S
A
II
Frie - den. *p*

T
B
Frie - den. *p*

8va *rit.*

3 *3* *3* *3* *3* *3*

3

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

p

poco ped. ad lib.

63

mf

68

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

73

77

accel. *cresc.* *f animated* *poco rit.*

. . . the soccer game ends.

At the original walking tempo $\text{♩} = 60$

82 *p*

I
S A
Si - lent night! Ho - ly night!

T B
Si - lent night! Ho - ly night!

II
S A
p
Stil - le Nacht! Hei - li - ge Nacht!

T B
p
Stil - le Nacht! Hei - li - ge Nacht!

At the original walking tempo $\text{♩} = 60$

86

I
S A
All is calm, all is bright

T B
All is calm, all is bright

II
S A
Al - les schläft, ein - sam wacht

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

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

103

I
S
A
T
B
hea - ven - ly peace. Hmm

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

At the original walking tempo $\text{♩} = 60$

sparkling with the radiance of the Holy Night

113 *p*

VERSE 2

116 *mf*

S
A
I
T
B

mf

Si - - - - lent

Si - - - - lent

mf

I
S A
T B

Night! Ho - - - - ly

II
S A
T B

mf Stil - le - - - Nacht!
mf Stil - le - - - Nacht!

ped.

I
S A
T B

Night! Son of
Night! Son - - - - of

II
S A
T B

Hei - li - ge Nacht!
Hei - li - ge Nacht!

ped.

122

I
S A
T B
God, love's pure
God, love's pure

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

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

Ped. *Ped.*

124

I
S A
T B
light ra - diant beams from
light ra - diant beams from

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

unis.
unis.

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

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

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

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

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

ped. *ped.* *with pedal*

16

139

non dim.

S A I birth. Hmm

T B birth. Hmm *non dim.*

S A II burt. Hmm *non dim.*

T B burt. Hmm

non dim.

Slowly, with strength
calling across the battlefield

143 *rit.*

S A I *f* My broth - er,

T B *f* My broth - er,

S A II *f* Mein Bru - der,

T B *f* Mein Bru - der,

rit. **Slowly, with strength**

cresc. *f*

147 *mf*

S
A
I
T
B

Come and walk to - geth - er in peace.

mf

Come and walk to - geth - er in peace.

S
A
II
T
B

pp as if from afar

Frie - den... —

pp as if from afar

Frie - den... —

one last star

mf

pp

The musical score is arranged in 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 parts sing the lyrics 'Come and walk to - geth - er in peace.' with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment is in the bottom system, also starting at *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, marked 'as if from afar'. The piano accompaniment continues in the bottom system, ending with a *pp* dynamic and the instruction 'one last star' above the final chord.

6:30
 May 5, 2019
 New Canaan, Connecticut