

A STAR in the EAST

Three Carol Settings

by

Gwyneth Walker

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Premiered at Emmanuel Episcopal Church
of Petoskey, Michigan, on December 24, 2020

André Strydom, organist, Judith Zorn, soprano,
with musicians from the Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra

PROGRAM NOTES

Christmas Eve 2020 was a special time. Although choirs could not gather for group singing during this pandemic, soloists were ready. And therefore, new music for solo voice with instruments (brass, percussion, and organ) was created for this year. The title is *A Star in the East*. These are three songs (revisiting traditional carols) which combine the intimacy of a solo voice with the varied instrumental timbres. [New versions for two-part treble chorus and SATB chorus were soon added.] A central message is the tenderness of the Mother's love for Child. The gift is of the heart.

The first song in the set is a traditional French carol "Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella." There is joy for those coming to the manger. And Mary, guarding her sleeping son, must quiet the noisy shepherds! *Hush! Hush! Ah! que l'enfant est beau! [Ah! the beautiful son!]*

"In the Bleak Midwinter" (text by Christina Rossetti) follows next. In order to suggest *bleakness* of landscape, the music opens with a low, sustained chord in the organ. Above this *barren land* floats the melody played by the French horn. Maracas add a touch of quiet, peaceful slumber.

The voice enters to present the four verses, each with an increasingly active accompaniment. Finally comes the plaintive question of *What can I give him, poor as I am?* This is repeated with urgency until the answer brings resolution: *I would give my heart.*

"Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow" presents a new dimension to the Nativity story. For it is shepherds (i.e., working-class folk) who follow the star to Bethlehem, in contrast with the Magi (kings). The shepherds travel by foot, perhaps at a jaunty, swing-rhythm pace. They heed the angel's word: *You'll forget your flock, you'll forget your herd.* And thus, they leave behind all that they own to witness the Savior's birth.

—Gwyneth Walker

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

For biographical information visit:
www.gwynethwalker.com

TEXTS

Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella

Bring a torch, Jeannette, Isabella,
Bring a torch, to the cradle run!
It is Jesus, good folk of the village;
Christ is born and Mary's calling;
Ah! ah! beautiful is the Mother!
Ah! ah! beautiful is her Son!

Ah! Que la mere est belle!

Quiet, all, don't waken the baby;
Quiet, all, and whisper low.
Silence as you gather around him,
Lest your noise awaken Jesus.
Hush! hush! Quietly now he slumbers;
Hush! hush! Quietly now he sleeps!

Voyez comme il dort!

Softly to the little stable,
Softly for a moment come;
Look and see how sweet is Jesus.
See how he smiles! With cheeks so rosy!
Hush! hush! Quietly now he slumbers;
Hush! hush! Quietly now he sleeps!
Ah! ah! beautiful is the Mother!
Ah! ah! beautiful is her Son!

Que l'enfant est beau!

Traditional French carol
alt. Gwyneth Walker

Rise up, Shepherd, and Follow

There's a star in the East on Christmas morn,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
It will lead to the place where Jesus is born,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

REFRAIN

Follow, follow,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the star of Bethlehem.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

In the Bleak Midwinter

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone.
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Heaven cannot hold Him
Nor can earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign.
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable warm sufficed
Our Lord God Almighty,
Our Savior Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there.
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the evening air,
But his mother only,
In her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the Beloved
With a tender kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would give a lamb,
If I were a wise one,
I would do my part,
But what can I give Him,
I would give my heart.

Christina Rossetti
alt. Gwyneth Walker

Leave your sheep and leave your lambs.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Leave your ewes and leave your rams.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow. (*Refrain*)

If you take good heed to the angel's word.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
You'll forget your flock; you'll forget your herd.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow. (*Refrain*)

—Traditional spiritual

A Star in the East

for SATB Chorus, Brass Quintet, Percussion and Organ

Gwyneth Walker

1. Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella

Traditional French Carol

With joyful energy ♩ = 66

Piano (reduction)

mf

with pedal

9 **A** *unis.*
mf lightly

S
A

Bring a torch. Jean - nette, Is - a - bel - la! Bring a torch to the cra - dle

A

16 **B**

S
A

run!

T
B

mf

It is Je - sus, good folk of the vil - lage;

p (*"running" motive*) **B** *mf*

23

Christ is born and Mar - y's call - ing. *(as a call in the distance)*

p

29 C *p delicately*

Ah! Ah! beau - ti - ful is the moth - er! Ah!

p delicately

Ah! Ah! beau - ti - ful is the moth - er! Ah!

C

35

Ah! beau - ti - ful is her son. _____

Ah! beau - ti - ful is her son. _____

D

mf

D

42

E (*p*)

(*unis.*) *p* (as a quiet commentary, an "aside")

Qui - et, all, — don't

Ah! que la mere est bel - le!
 (Ah! beau - ti - ful moth - er!)

E*a quiet sparkling accompaniment*

p (*p*)

with pedal

48

[Mary quiets the shepherds]

wa - ken the ba - by; Qui - et, all, — and

[The noisy shepherds
need quieting!]

f (*p*)

54

F

whis - per low. Si - lence as — you

(*p*)

[The shepherds keep quiet]


F

(*p*)

60



gath - er round him, lest_ your noise a - wa - ken Je - sus.



67

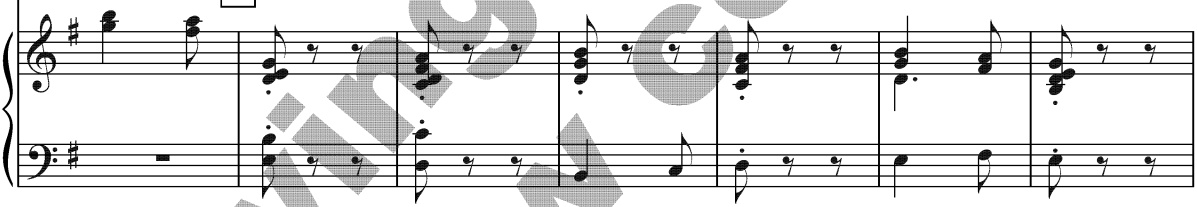
G



Hush! Hush! qui - et - ly now he slum - bers; Hush!

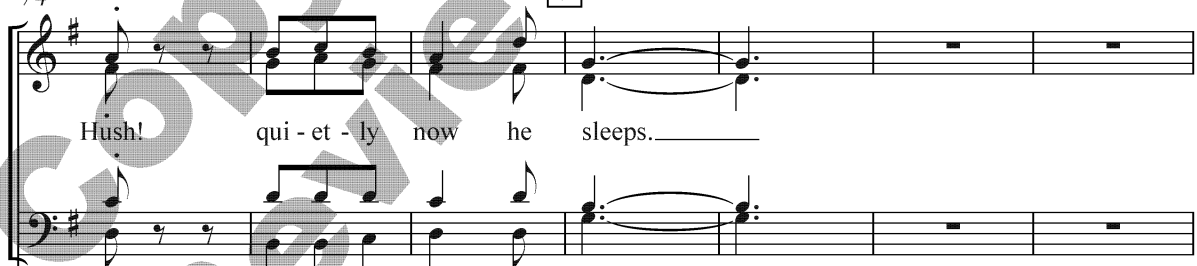
Hush! Hush! qui - et - ly now he slum - bers; Hush!

G



74

H



Hush! qui - et - ly now he sleeps.

Hush! qui - et - ly now he sleeps.

H



(p)

81 *p* (as a quiet commentary, an "aside")

I

Vo - yez comme il dort!
(See how he sleeps!)

I

mf especially joyous

88

J

J

tr

97

mf

Ah

mf

Ah

105 **K** *p* lightly, delicately (almost whispered)

Soft - ly to the lit - tle sta - ble, soft - ly for a mo - ment,

p lightly, delicately (almost whispered)

Soft - ly to the lit - tle sta - ble, soft - ly for a mo - ment,

K

112

L

mf

come. Look and see how sweet is Je - sus. See how he smiles!

mf

come. Look and see how sweet is Je - sus.

L

cresc.

mf

119

f

with cheeks so ro - sy!

f

with cheeks so ro - sy!

f

Rec.

126

M

p

Hush! Hush! qui - et - ly now he

p

falsetto

Hush! Hush! qui - et - ly now he

M

p

Rec.

133

slum - bers; Hush! Hush! qui - et - ly now he sleeps. —

slum - bers; Hush! Hush! qui - et - ly now he sleeps. —

140

N
mf
— Ah! Ah! beau - ti - ful is the moth - er.

mf
— Ah! Ah! beau - ti - ful is the moth - er.

N
mf

147 *rit.*

Ah! Ah! beau-ti-ful is her son! _____

Ah! Ah! beau-ti-ful is her son! _____

rit.

154 **Slower** *p*

Que l'enfant est beau! _____
 (Beau-ti-ful is her son!) _____

Que l'enfant est beau! _____
 (Beau-ti-ful is her son!) _____

Slower *p*

2. In the Bleak Midwinter

Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)
G. Walker, alt.

adapted from the hymn tune
by Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

Free tempo, introduction

(to suggest the bleakness of midwinter)

A **Slowly, reverently** ♩ = 92

p

mf cantabile

Ped.
(pedal stays throughout, for blurred harmony effect)

6

Ped.

10

B

Ped.

15

(mf)

with pedal

19

p.

poco accel.

C Slightly faster ♩ = 100

23 *mf cantabile*

S In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan.

A *p*
Hmm hmm

T *p*
B Hmm hmm

C Slightly faster ♩ = 100

p a quiet background

27

S Earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone.

A hmm hmm hmm

T hmm hmm hmm

p a quiet background

31 **D** *mf*

S
A
Snow had fal - len, snow on snow, snow on snow.

T
B
mf
Snow had fal - len, snow on snow, snow on snow.

D

35

In the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.

+Bass
mf In the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.

40 **E** [Same tempo ♩ = 100]

Solo (or a few voices) (mf)

Hea - ven can - not hold him,

E [Same tempo ♩ = 100]

mf

Rec. *simile*

nor can earth sus - tain. Heaven and earth shall flee a - way

48

when he comes to reign. In the bleak mid - win - ter, a

52

sta - ble warm suf - ficed. Our Lord God al - might - y, our

56

Sa - vior Je - sus Christ.

Sa - vior Je - sus Christ.

(mf)

60

G [Same tempo ♩ = 100]
(mf)

An - gels and arch - an - gels

G [Same tempo ♩ = 100]

p delicately, shimmering

Leg. with pedal

63

may have gath - ered there.

(mf)

Cher - u - bim and

Musical notation for measures 66-68. The top staff is a vocal line with a whole rest in measure 66 and a half note in measure 67. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with eighth notes and chords.

ser - a - phim thronged the eve - ning air.

Piano accompaniment for measures 66-68. The right hand features a melodic line with triplets and slurs. The left hand provides a bass line with triplets.

69 **H**

Musical notation for measures 69-71. The top staff is a vocal line with a half note in measure 69 and quarter notes in measure 70. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with a whole rest in measure 69 and quarter notes in measure 70.

But his moth - er on - ly, in her maid - en

Piano accompaniment for measures 69-71. The right hand features a melodic line with triplets and slurs. The left hand provides a bass line with triplets.

72

Musical notation for measures 72-74. The top staff is a vocal line with a half note in measure 72 and a whole rest in measure 73. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with a whole rest in measure 72 and quarter notes in measure 73.

bliss,

wor - shipped the be - lov - ed child

Piano accompaniment for measures 72-74. The right hand features a melodic line with triplets and slurs. The left hand provides a bass line with triplets.

75

with a ten - der kiss.

mf

78 *poco accel.*I **Faster** ♩ = 112, more animated and rhythmic

mf

What can I give him,

mf

What can I give him,

poco accel.

I **Faster** ♩ = 112, more animated and rhythmic

82

poor as I am?

If I were a shep - herd,

poor as I am?

If I were a shep - herd,

p

mf

I would give a lamb. If I were a wise one,

I would give a lamb. If I were a wise one,

p *mf*

I would do my part. But what can I give him?

I would do my part.

unis. **J**

J

What can I give him? What can I give him?

unis. *f* with more urgency **Slower**

f with more urgency

rit. **Slower**

98

mf *a tempo* (♩ = 100)

I would give _____ my heart, _____

I would give _____ my heart, _____

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal and piano parts for measures 98-101. The vocal parts are in treble and bass clefs, with lyrics "I would give _____ my heart, _____". The piano part is in grand staff. Dynamics include *mf* and *a tempo* (♩ = 100). There are slurs over the vocal lines and a *loco* marking under the piano part.

a tempo (♩ = 100)

loco

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 98-101. It is written in grand staff. Dynamics include *mf* and *a tempo* (♩ = 100). A *loco* marking is present at the beginning of the piano part.

102 *rit. to end*

p *pp*

my heart. _____

my heart. _____

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal and piano parts for measures 102-105. The vocal parts are in treble and bass clefs, with lyrics "my heart. _____". The piano part is in grand staff. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*. There are slurs over the vocal lines.

rit. to end

p

loco.

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 102-105. It is written in grand staff. Dynamics include *p*. A *loco.* marking is present at the end of the piano part.

3. Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

Traditional African-American spiritual

Relaxed tempo ♩ = 100, swing rhythm (♩ = ♪³♩)
(with the joy of seeing the "star of the East")

Piano introduction, measures 1-3. The music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo is relaxed (♩ = 100) with a swing rhythm. The dynamic is *f* (forte). The melody is in the right hand, and the bass line is in the left hand.

Piano introduction, measures 4-6. The music continues in the same style as the previous system.

Piano introduction, measures 7-9. Measure 7 is marked with a box containing the letter 'A'. The tempo changes to **Lively tempo** ♩ = 112. The dynamic is *mf* (mezzo-forte). The music becomes more rhythmic and celebratory.

Vocal entry and piano accompaniment, measures 10-12. The vocal line is marked with a 'S' for Soprano or Baritone. The tempo remains lively (♩ = 112). The dynamic is *mf*. The lyrics "There's a" are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment continues with a rhythmic accompaniment.

Solo (or a few voices)
 [Soprano or Baritone]
in celebration mf

There's a

13 **B**

Solo

star in the East on Christ-mas_ morn.____

mf

S
A

Rise up, shep - herd, and

mf

T
B

Rise up, shep - herd, and

B (with the energy of rising up and following the star)

16

It will lead to the place where Je - sus is born.____

fol - low.____

fol - low.____

C

Another Solo (or a few voices)
[Soprano or Baritone]

19

Leave your ewes and

Rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low.

Rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low.

C

22

leave your lambs.

(mf)

Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.

(mf)

Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.

25

Leave your sheep and leave your rams.

Rise up, shep - herd, and _
Rise up, shep - herd, and _

28

fol - low. _ **D** fol - low, fol - low,
fol - low. _ fol - low, fol - low,

D *f*

31

S
A

rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low... Fol - low the star of

T
B

rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low... Fol - low the star of

34

S
A

Beth - le - hem. Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low...

T
B

Beth - le - hem. Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low...

37

Solo

E

E

mf

40 *Solo (or a few voices) mf* **F**

Solo *If you take good heed to the an - gel's word.---*

43

Solo *You'll for - get your flock, you'll for -*

S *mf*
A *Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.---*

T *mf*
B *Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.---*

46

Solo *get your - herd.---*

S *Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.---*

A *Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.---*

T *Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.---*

B *Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.---*

49 **G** *emphatically*

Solo

Leave those ewes and leave those lambs.

S
A

Rise up, shep - herd, and

T
B

Rise up, shep - herd, and

G

52

Solo

Leave those sheep and leave those rams.

S
A

fol - low.

T
B

fol - low.

55 H

S
A
T
B

Rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low. Fol - low,

Rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low. Fol - low,

f

58

fol - low, rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low.

fol - low, rise up. shep-herd, and fol - low.

61 I

Fol - low the star of Beth - le - hem. Rise up, shep - herd, -

Fol - low the star of Beth - le - hem. Rise up, shep - herd, -

I

Rise up, shep - herd, -

Rise up, shep - herd, -

rise up, shep - herd, - and fol - low, -

rise up, shep - herd, - and fol - low, - and fol - low, -

low, fol - low, -

and fol - low, fol - low, -

*The singer may "sneak a breath" in this passage if necessary.

74 *rit.*

fol - low!

fol - low!

rit.

Ped.

The musical score consists of three staves. The top two staves are vocal lines in treble and bass clefs, respectively, with lyrics 'fol - low!'. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The score includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking above the piano staff. A 'Ped.' (pedal) marking is located below the piano staff. The music is in a key with two flats and a 4/4 time signature.

2:45 | Total 9:30

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New Canaan, Connecticut

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