No. 6423 | Walker | Tell the Earth to Shake | Piano/Choral Score

# GWYNETH WALKER Tell the Earth to Shake

for SATB Chorus (divisi) and Chamber Orchestra or Piano Commissioned by the Clearview Regional High School Vocal Ensemble, Mullica Hill, New Jersey Jack Hill, Music Director Completed August 11, 2004 in Braintree, Vermont; Duration: 4'15" Premiere performance: February 2, 2005 at the National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association, Los Angeles, California

#### **Program Notes**

The poem *Earthquake*, by the Trappist Monk Thomas Merton (1915–1968), presents the powerful voice of God: "Tell the earth to shake... for a new world is born, and all my people shall be one." This is an insistent poem, with repetitions of stanzas and only slight variations. Through forceful restatement, the poem grows into the closing lines:

There shall be no more hate

And no more oppression

The old wrongs are done

My people shall be one.

The musical setting adopts the form of the poem. As the lyrics are structured into verse "pairings" ("tell the earth to shake..." "the old wrongs are over..."), so the men's voices are paired with and answered by the women's voices. The alternation continues several times, with the tonal center shifting up a step with each section.

The modulations, intended to increase the strength and intensity of the song, are effected through sections of "*pacem*" (peace). This word has been inserted by the composer to form bridges between the verses. For, as the earth will shake "with marching feet of messengers of peace..." so peace becomes the means of bringing the people together as one.

-Gwyneth Walker

#### Earthquake

Go tell the earth to shake	For the old wrongs are over	So tell the earth to shake	So tell the earth to shake
And tell the thunder	The old days are gone	With marching feet	With marching feet
To wake the sky	A new world is rising	Of messengers of peace	Of messengers of peace
And tear the clouds apart	Where my people shall be one.	Proclaim my law of love	Proclaim my law of love
Tell my people to come out	So tell the earth to shake	To every nation	To every nation
And wonder	With marching feet	Every race.	Every race.
Where the old world is gone	Of messengers of peace	For the old world is ended	There shall be no more hate
For a new world is born	Proclaim my law of love	The old sky is torn apart	And no more oppression
And all my people	To every nation	A new day is born	The old wrongs are done
Shall be one.	Every race.	They hate no more	My people shall be one.
So tell the earth to shake With marching feet Of messengers of peace Proclaim my law of love To every nation Every race.	And say The old wrongs are over The old ways are done There shall be no more hate And no more war My people shall be one.	They do not go to war My people shall be one.	—Thomas Merton "Earthquake" by Thomas Merton, from THE COLLECTED POEMS OF THOMAS MERTON, copyright © 1977 by The

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#### Earthquake

Gwyneth Walker

Thomas Merton (1915–1968) G. W., alt.



\* The capitalization of the opening ten lines of the poem has been altered to accomodate the spacing of the spoken lyrics.

"Earthquake" by Thomas Merton,

from THE COLLECTED POEMS OF THOMAS MERTON,

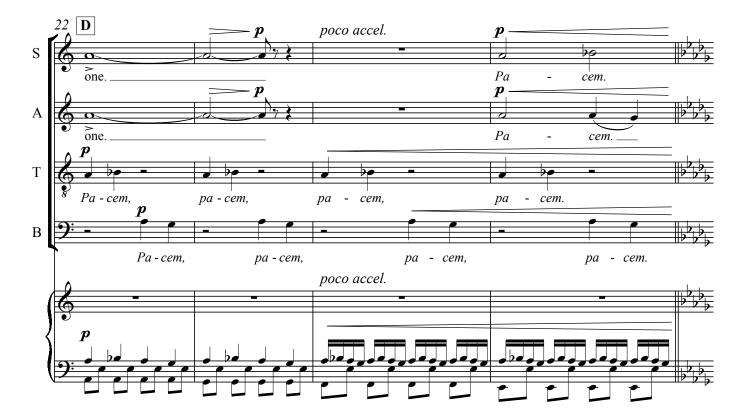
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## **Composer's Notes**

The composer recommends performing this work as part of a set of three songs with orchestral accompaniment: *Tell the Earth to Shake* (Piano/Choral Score = Catalog No. 6423, Full Score = Catalog No. 6937, Parts = Catalog No. 6938), *The Tree of Peace* (Piano/Choral Score = Catalog No. 6439, Full Score = Catalog No. 6940, Parts = Catalog No. 6941) and *There Is a Way to Glory* (Piano/Choral Score = Catalog No. 6974, Full Score = Catalog No. 6975, Parts = Catalog No. 6976).

## **Publisher's Notes**

The instrumentation of the version with chamber orchestra accompaniment is 2 flutes, 1 oboe, 1 clarinet, 1 bassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 1 trombone, 1 percussionist and strings. The full score (Catalog No. 6937) and parts (Catalog No. 6938) are available from the publisher.

## **Gwyneth Walker**

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. Degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 to pursue a career as a full-time composer.

Walker's catalog includes over 170 commissioned works for orchestra, band, chorus and chamber ensembles. Her music is published by E. C. Schirmer Music Company of Boston (choral & vocal music) and MMB Music of St. Louis (orchestral & instrumental music).

Walker is a proud resident of Braintree, Vermont, where she lives on a dairy farm. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Vermont Arts Council.



