

# 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](http://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

\*Trumpets in C 1 2

Horn in F

Trombone Tuba

Percussion  
(Triangle, Tambourine, Bongo, Maracas, Tenor Drum, Cowbell, Tom-Tom, Wood Block, Suspended Cymbal)

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

S  
A

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

Tpts. 1 2

Hn.

Tbn.  
Tuba

Perc.

Org.

\*Parts for B♭ Trumpets are also available

17

**B**

*mf*

T  
B

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

Tpts. 1  
2

*p* *mf*

Hn.

*p* *mf*

Tbn.  
Tuba

Perc.

Tambourine

*p* *mf*

Org.

**B**

25

**C**

*p* *delicately*

S  
A

Ah! Ah! beau - ti - ful is the

T  
B

Mar - y's call - ing. *p* *delicately*

Hand over bell

Tpts. 1  
2

*(mf)* *p*

Hand over bell

Hn.

*(mf)* *p*

Hand over bell

Tbn.  
Tuba

*(mf)* *p*

Tri. - muted

Perc.

*p*

Org.

**C**

*p*

33

S  
A  
T  
B

moth - er! Ah! Ah! beau - ti - ful is her son.

1  
2

Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.  
Tuba

Perc.

Tri. open to Bongo

Org.

42

S  
A  
T  
B

(unis.) *p* (as a quiet commentary, an "aside") Qui - et, all, don't wa - ken the

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

1  
2

Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.  
Tuba

Org.

*pp*  
Solo

*p*

**D**

**E**

**E** a quiet sparkling accompaniment

[Mary quiets the shepherds (brass)]

49

S  
A

ba - by; Qui - et, all, and whis - per

[The noisy shepherds need quieting!]

Tpts. 1  
2

Hn.

Tbn.  
Tuba

Perc.

Bongo (sticks)

Org.

*f* *p*

*f* *p*

*f* *p*

*f* *p*

55

S  
A

low.

T  
B

Si - lence as you gath - er round him,

**F**

Tpts. 1  
2

Hn.

Tbn.  
Tuba

Perc.

Org.

*p* gently

*p* gently

*p* gently  
(w/ hands)

to Tri.

**F**

## 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** [A] Slowly, reverently ♩ = 92

Hn. *mf cantabile*

Perc. **Maracas**  
(to suggest peaceful slumber)  
*p* → *pp*

**Free tempo, introduction**  
Soft strings, no upper partials  
(to suggest the bleakness of midwinter) [A] Slowly, reverently ♩ = 92

Org. *p* → *pp*

Ped. *p* → *pp*

7 [B]

Tpts. 1 *mf cantabile*

2

Hn.

Tbn. Tuba

Perc. *p* → *pp* [B]

Org.

Ped.



16

14

Tpts. 1  
2

Hn.

Tbn.  
Tuba

Perc.

Org.

Ped.

*mf*

*mf*

*p* *pp*

*pp*

*mf*

to Bongo

21 *poco accel.*

S

A

T  
B

Hn.

Tbn.  
Tuba

Org.

Ped.

*p*

*p*

*poco accel.*

**C** Slightly faster ♩ = 100  
*mf cantabile*

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

*p*

Hmm hmm

*p*

Hmm hmm

*p* *a quiet background*

*mf*

26

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

A  
hmm

T  
B  
hmm

1.  
Tpts. 1. 2. (p)

Hn. (p)

Tbn. Tuba (p)

Org.

(1.)

31 **D** *mf*

S  
Snow had fal - len, snow on snow, snow on snow. In the bleak mid -

A  
T  
B  
*mf*

+2.  
Tpts. 1. 2. (p)

Hn.

Tbn. Tuba

Org. **D**

36

S  
A  
T  
B

win - ter, long a - go.

1  
2

Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.  
Tuba

Perc.

Bongo

Org.

42

T  
B

Hea - ven can - not hold him, nor can earth sus - tain.

1  
2

Tpts.

Org.

Ped.

[E] [Same tempo ♩ = 100]

Solo (or a few voices)  
(mf)

[E] [Same tempo ♩ = 100]

### 3. Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

Traditional African-American spiritual

Relaxed tempo ♩ = 100, swing rhythm (♩ =  $\bar{\cdot}\bar{\cdot}\bar{\cdot}$ )

(with the joy of seeing the "star of the East")  
lightly tongued

**f**  
(with the joy of seeing the "star of the East")  
lightly tongued

**f**  
(with the joy of seeing the "star of the East")  
lightly tongued

Suspended Cymbal  
on crown, dry sound

**f**

Relaxed tempo ♩ = 100, swing rhythm (♩ =  $\bar{\cdot}\bar{\cdot}\bar{\cdot}$ )  
Full sound (but not to overpower the trombone)

**f**

5

to Bongo

The musical score is arranged in systems. The first system includes Tpts. 1 & 2, Hn., Tbn./Tuba, Perc., Org., and Ped. The second system includes Tpts. 1 & 2, Hn., Tbn./Tuba, Perc., Org., and Ped. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, and dynamics. Performance instructions are provided for several instruments, including 'lightly tongued' for brass and 'full sound (but not to overpower the trombone)' for the organ. A large watermark 'Copyrighted Material' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

9 **A** Lively tempo ♩ = 112 Solo (or a few voices)  
[Soprano or Baritone] *mf* in celebration

Solo *mf* There's a

Tpts. 1 *mf*

2

Hn. *mf*

Tbn. *mf*

Tuba *mf*

Perc. *mf* Bongo to Wood Block

**A** Lively tempo ♩ = 112  
+mixture, +2' (a light touch)

Org. *mf*

13 **B**

Solo star in the East on Christ-mas morn. It will

S *mf*

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

T *mf*

B

Tpts. 1 *(mf)*

2 *(mf)*

Hn. *(mf)*

Tbn. *(mf)*

Tuba *(mf)*

Perc. Wood Block *(mf)*

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

Org. *(mf)*

17

Solo lead to the place where Je - sus is born. —

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

T B

Tpts. 1 2

Hn.

Tbn. Tuba

Perc. (W. Blk.)

Org.

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

Solo Leave your ewes and leave your lambs. (mf)

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

T B (mf)

Tpts. 1 2

Hn.

Tbn. Tuba

Perc. Susp. Cym. (on crown)

Org. [C]

25

Solo

S  
A

T  
B

Tpts. 1  
2

Hn.

Tbn.  
Tuba

Perc.

Org.

29 **D**

S  
A

T  
B

Tpts. 1  
2

Hn.

Tbn.  
Tuba

Perc.

**D**

Org.

Ped.

Leave your sheep and leave your rams.

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

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

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*