

Gwyneth Walker

Prayers and Blessings

*Sacred Songs for
Bass-Baritone, Cello and Organ*

*"Ubi Caritas" ("Welcome Love")
"Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace"
"Gaelic Blessing"*

Prayers and Blessings was commissioned in 2003 by David Arnold, a North Carolina bass-baritone who is a soloist in the 80-voice Chancel Choir at Centenary United Methodist Church in Winston-Salem, and a member of Bel Canto Company, a professional choral ensemble based in Greensboro. Mr. Arnold premiered these songs at Centenary with organist Ray Ebert and cellist Jennifer Alexandra Johnston on February 27, 2005.

Duration: 10'

Program Notes

These three songs are interconnected motivically, yet distinct in meter, tonality and message. Peace and reverence flow throughout.

The lyrics for "Ubi Caritas" are based on a new translation, by Christopher Brunelle, of the traditional "Ubi Caritas Est Vera." A recurrent image in this translation is the gesture of welcoming: welcoming love, welcoming God, welcoming the "friendly unfamiliar thought," welcoming Christ with us. The musical interpretation of welcoming is stepwise motion, either up or down, around a pitch center. Perhaps this might be heard as an opening of the door, or an opening of the heart.

The three verses of the poetry are set in strophic manner (similar melodic and harmonic material in each verse). Growth is achieved through increased participation of the cello, which introduces, and then rests during, the first verse, accompanies the second verse, and is given the theme, in dialogue with the voice, for the last verse.

Rhythmically, the musical flow is mostly in even eighth-notes, in plainchant style.

A cello interlude leads to the second song, "Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace," a musical setting of the Prayer of Saint Francis. One unusual musical device used in this song is the cello providing the only accompaniment for the first verse. Perhaps the simplicity of the cello-ostinato pattern, played beneath the voice, was inspired by the title phrase, "make me an instrument of thy peace."

The organ enters sparingly above the voice, with material reminiscent of the "welcoming" pattern in the first song. Remaining in the background during the opening phrases, the organ bursts forth with the theme as the singer sings the word "joy."

This song alternates between triple meter for the thematic sections ("Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace") and duple meter for the more recitative sections ("O Divine Master..."). The music ends as it began, with an ostinato pattern in the cello.

An organ interlude provides the bridge to the third song, "Gaelic Blessing." The text for this song is a series of blessings for peace. The gentle pizzicato strumming of the cello is intended to provide a peaceful accompaniment. [Once again, the stepwise intervals and recurrent regular rhythms relate to the first song.]

In keeping with the simplicity and repetition of the text, the music is formed by a series of four-measure phrases (blessings). The blessings are similar in contour, each spanning an interval of a fourth. Growth is achieved through repetition and some dynamic contrast. However, the principal aesthetic of this song is constancy and gentle flow.

Only at the end of the song, when the voice descends into the deep range, is the melodic contour altered, and dynamic contrast introduced. As the voice ends on low tones, the cello and organ rise, perhaps to the source of peace.

About the Composer

Dr. 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, Walker resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. She now lives on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont.

Walker's catalog includes over 130 commissioned works for orchestra, band, chorus and chamber ensembles. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E.C. Schirmer of Boston (choral & vocal music) and MMB Music of St. Louis (orchestral & instrumental music).

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of Vermont. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Vermont Arts Council.

UBI CARITAS EST VERA
anonymous, circa 800
tr. Christopher Brunelle, 2004

When we truly welcome love, we welcome God.

Let our love bloom in many forms:

The love of Christ, uniting us in joy,

The love and reverence of the living God,

The honest love that binds our human hearts.

When we truly welcome love, we welcome God.

Let our welcome take many shapes: (be rich and free):

Welcome the friendly unfamiliar thought,

Farewell to bitter quarrels, welcome peace,

Welcome dear Christ with us, Emmanuel.

When we truly welcome love, we welcome God.

So let true joy be our reward:

The joy that we will share with all the saints,

The glorious joy, to see the face of God,

The great and good and everlasting joy.

PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving, that we receive,

It is in pardoning, that we are pardoned,

And it is in dying, that we are born to eternal life.

GAELIC BLESSING

Deep peace of the running waves to you.

Deep peace of the flowing air to you.

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.

Deep peace of the shining stars to you.

Deep peace.

Deep peace of the early Spring to you.

Deep peace of the budding flower to you.

Deep peace of the warming sun to you.

Deep peace of the life to come to you.

Deep peace of the Autumn rain.

Deep peace of the harvest grain.

Deep peace of the Winter night.

Deep peace of the fading light.

Deep peace when my life is done.

Deep peace to you.

Prayers and Blessings

for Bass/Baritone, Violoncello and Organ

1. Ubi Caritas (Welcome Love)

Ubi Caritas Est Vera
anonymous, circa 800
translation: Christopher Brunelle, 2004

Gwyneth Walker

at a gentle tempo ♩ = 72

Bass/Baritone

Violoncello

Organ

at a gentle tempo ♩ = 72

A
mf cantabile

5

B./Bar.

When we tru - ly wel - come love, we wel - come God. —

(on the string)
p

Vc.

A

5

Org.

9

B./Bar. *Let our love bloom in ma-ny forms. The love of Christ, u-ni-ting us in*

Vc.

Org. *(p)*

13

B./Bar. *joy, the love and rev-erence of the liv-ing — God, the hon-est love that binds our hu-man*

Vc.

Org.

17

B./Bar. *hearts. When we tru-ly wel-come love, we wel-come God.*

Vc. *p mf p*

Org. **B**

21

B./Bar. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Let our wel-come be rich and free. Wel-come the friend-ly un - fa - mil - iar

Vc. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Org.

25

B./Bar. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

thought, fare - well to bit - ter quar - rels, wel - come — peace, wel - come dear Christ with us,

Vc. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Org.

29

B./Bar. *mf* *pizz.* (*mf*)

E - man - u - el.

Vc. *mf* *pizz.* (*mf*)

Org. *mf*

32 C

B./Bar. *(mf)* When _____

Vc. *(pizz.)* *p* *mf* arco

Org. C

35

B./Bar. — we tru - ly wel - come love, we wel - come God. So let

Vc. *(pizz.)* arco

Org.

38

B./Bar. true joy be our re - ward: the joy that we will share with all the

Vc.

Org.

41

B./Bar. *p*

saints, the glor - ious joy to see the face of

Vc.

Org.

44

B./Bar. *f* *ritard.* *Slower* **D**

God, the great and good and e - ver - last - ing

Vc. *f* *fp* *f*

Org. *f* *ritard.* *Slower* **D**

48

B./Bar. *a tempo* (♩ = 72) *mf* *mf*

joy. When we wel - come love, when we

Vc. *p* *mf*

Org. *a tempo* (♩ = 72) *mf* *mf*

2. Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace

The Prayer of St. Francis

Gently ♩ = 138 (♩. = 46) *mf cantabile*

B./Bar. *p* Lord, make me an in - strument of Thy peace.

Vc. *p*

Org. Gently ♩ = 138 (♩. = 46)

B./Bar. ⁹ where there is ha - tred, — let me sow love; —

Vc. *p*

Org. ⁹ *p*

B./Bar. ¹⁷ **A** Where there is in - jur-y, — par - - - don; —

Vc. *mp* *p*

Org. ¹⁷ **A**

25

B./Bar. *mp* *p* Where there is doubt, faith; Where

Vc.

Org.

B accel. to letter C

32

B./Bar. there is des - pair, hope; Where there is dark - ness, light;

Vc.

Org. *p* *mp*

(accel.) **C** more quickly ♩ = 160 (♩. = 54)

f

40

B./Bar. Where there is sad - ness, joy.

Vc. *f*

Org. *mf* *f*

47 *(f)*

B./Bar. *O, Di - vine*

Vc. *p*

Org.

D ♩ = 160 (♩ = 80)

53

B./Bar. *Mas - ter, grant that I may not so much seek to be con - soled as to con -*

Vc. *f* *p*

53 **D** ♩ = 160 (♩ = 80)

Org. *p*

58 *mf* *p* *ritard.*

B./Bar. *sole; to be un - der - stood as to un - der - stand; — to be loved, as to love. —*

Vc. *p*

58 *ritard.*

Org.

65 **E** ♩ = 160 (♩. = 54)

B./Bar. *mf* For it is in

Vc. *mf*

Org. *p*

73 **F** (♩ = 80)

B./Bar. giv - ing, that we re - ceive, _____ it is in par-don-ing that we are par - doned,

Vc. *p mf p mf*

Org. *mf*

80 **ritard. Slowly**

B./Bar. and it is in dy - ing, that we are born to e - ter - nal life, _____

Vc. *p pp*

Org. *ritard. Slowly p*

G a tempo ♩ = 160 (♩. = 54)

86 *p*

B./Bar.

Vc.

Org.

92 *poco ritard.* (*p*) **Slowly**

B./Bar.

that we are born to e - ter - - - nal life. _____

Vc.

Org.

H a tempo

99 *f*

B./Bar.

Vc.

Org.

131 **ritard.**

B./Bar.

Vc.

Org.

3. Gaelic Blessing

traditional text adapted by composer

At a peaceful tempo ♩ = 108 **A** *p*

B./Bar.

Vc.

Org.

gently rolled pizz. *p* *simile*

At a peaceful tempo ♩ = 108 **A** *pp*

pp *

Deep peace — of the run-ning

7

B./Bar.

Vc.

Org.

waves to you. — Deep peace — of the flow-ing air to you. —

* *

* Play only to support Violoncello, if performance space lacks resonance

B
13

B./Bar. *poco* *mp* *p*
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you. Deep peace

Vc.

Org. *pp*

18

B./Bar. *mf*
of the shi-ning stars to you. Deep

Vc. *mf*

Org. *mf*

24

B./Bar. *p*
peace.

Vc. *p*

Org. *p*

C
 29 (*p*)
 B./Bar. Deep peace of the ear - ly Spring to you.
 Vc. *pp* *p* *3* *3*
 Org. (*p*) *3* *3*
p

33
 B./Bar. Deep peace of the bud - ding flower to you.
 Vc. *pp* *p* *3* *3*
 Org. *3* *3*
p

D
 37 *poco* *mp*
 B./Bar. Deep peace of the warm - ing sun to you.
 Vc. *p*
 Org. **D** 37 *p*
p

41 *p*

B./Bar. *p*
 Deep peace of the life to come to you.

Vc. *p*

Org. *p*

45 **E** *mf*

B./Bar. *mf*
 Deep peace of the au - - - tumn rain.

Vc. *mf* 3 3

Org. *mf*

49

B./Bar. *mf*
 Deep peace of the har - - - vest grain.

Vc. 3 3

Org.

F
53 *p*

B./Bar. Deep peace of the win - - - ter night.

Vc. *p*

Org. *p*

57

B./Bar. Deep peace of the fa - - - ding light.

Vc. *p*

Org. *p*

G
61 *ritard.* *mf*

B./Bar. Deep peace when my life is done.

Vc. *mf*

Org. *mf*

a tempo
(mf)

65

B./Bar. *Deep*

Vc. *(mf)*

Org.

69 *p*

B./Bar. *peace.*

Vc. *p*

69 *p*

Org.

H *mf* (*ossia for higher voices*)

73

B./Bar. *Deep*

Vc. *(p)* *mf*

73 **H** *mf*

Org.