

The Turtle Dove

A lament based on the English folk ballad
Fare Thee Well or *The Turtle Dove*

Gwyneth Walker

*for Oboe and String Orchestra,
or String Quartet or Quintet*

*Premiered by the Choir of Grace Church, Rutland, Vermont,
with Dan Frostman, oboe, and the Grace Festival String Orchestra,
Stephanie Taylor, concertmaster, Alastair Stout, conductor;
May 21, 2023, Rutland, Vermont*

PROGRAM NOTES

The *Turtle Dove* (also known as *Fare Thee Well*) is a beloved English folk ballad and song of sorrow. The turtle dove longs for his mate:

*Oh yonder sits the turtle dove, he sits in yonder tree,
a-making moan for the loss of his love, as I will do for thee.*

It is an expression of solitude and mourning. And thus, the musical language is sparse, often “lonely.” The opening phrase in the Violins, an ascending minor 6th followed by a falling minor second, is described as a “lament motive.” It may be heard as a tear, which serves as the main countermove to the melody, introduced in the Oboe.

At the end of each verse, the Cello rises in a pizzicato scale to merge with the Oboe. One might hear the turtle dove joining with his mate, if only briefly.

Several verses (sections) follow, always separated by falling steps (tears) passages. The closing section allows the dove (Oboe) to be truly alone, as a cadenza over held chords in the strings. And finally, the Oboe rises to a high B-flat, alone, estranged from the strings in the “home key” of D minor.

This work was commissioned as a prelude to the Ralph Vaughan Williams choral setting of *The Turtle Dove*. The choral arrangement is in the key of B-flat minor, so the high B-flat ending note for Oboe serves as a bridge. While the original setting was created for string orchestra, this arrangement may also be performed by a string quartet or quintet by following the performance notes in the full score.

—Gwyneth Walker

THE COMPOSER

Widely performed throughout the country, the music of American composer Gwyneth Walker is beloved by performers and audiences alike for its energy, beauty, reverence, drama, and humor. 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, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. For nearly 30 years, she lived on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont before returning to live in her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut.

A composer since age two, Gwyneth Walker has always placed great value on writing in a broad array of genres. More than 400 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, solo instruments, chorus, and solo voice have been created—all arising from the impetus of performers and collaboration with musicians. Over the decades, she has traveled throughout North America to attend performances of her works and to meet her musician colleagues.

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of New England. She was the recipient of the 2000 “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Vermont Arts Council and the 2018 “Alfred Nash Patterson Lifetime Achievement Award” from Choral Arts New England. In 2020, her alma mater, the Hartt School of Music of the University of Hartford, presented her with the Hartt Alumni Award.

Walker’s catalog includes musical works of many sorts: arrangements of traditional folk songs; original music in both vocal and instrumental genres inspired by great American poetry; dramatic works that combine music with readings, acting, and movement; works for student performers of all ages; and large-scale pieces for professional players and ensembles. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E.C. Schirmer (choral/vocal/instrumental music) and Lauren Keiser Music (orchestral/instrumental music).

Further information concerning Gwyneth Walker and her works is available at: www.gwynethwalker.com

Catalog No. 9270

Commissioned in loving memory of Gary F. Salmon by his family and friends

The Turtle Dove

A lament based on the English folk ballad *Fare Thee Well* or *The Turtle Dove*for Oboe and String Orchestra,
or String Quartet or Quintet**

Gwyneth Walker

Slowly, flowing (♩ = 100)

The musical score is written for Oboe and String Orchestra (or String Quartet/Quintet). It is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The tempo is 'Slowly, flowing' with a quarter note equal to 100 beats. The score consists of two systems. The first system includes staves for Oboe, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The Oboe part is mostly rests. Violin 1 and Violin 2 have melodic lines starting with a 'p' (piano) dynamic. The Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass parts provide harmonic support with patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes, marked with 'p' and 'pizz.' (pizzicato). The second system starts at measure 6 and features a more prominent melodic line for the Oboe, marked 'as a lament' and 'p'. The string parts continue with their patterns, with some sections marked 'arco' (arco) and 'pizz.'.

*lament motive

**While originally scored with divisi passages for a small string orchestra, this may be performed with a string quartet or quintet by playing the suggested notes at the divisi sections. The Contrabass may be omitted for performance by string quartet.

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11

Ob.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

arco

arco

16

Ob.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

rit.

a tempo

Solo

Tutti

pizz.

pizz.

21

Ob.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

B

mf

rolled pizz.

mf

rolled pizz.

mf

rolled pizz.

mf

rolled pizz.

mf

rolled pizz.

mf

rolled pizz.

56 E *rit.* *lightly tongued* *a tempo* 7

Ob. *div.** *unis.*

Vln. 1 *pizz.*

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

62 F

Ob.

Vln. 1 *p* *delicately*

Vln. 2 *arco* *p* *delicately*

Vla. *p* *delicately*

Vlc. *pizz.* *arco* *p* *rolled pizz.*

Cb. *pizz.* *p*

67

Ob. *3* *3* *3* *3* *cresc. poco a poco (to G)* *rolled pizz.*

Vln. 1 *cresc. poco a poco (to G)*

Vln. 2 *cresc. poco a poco (to G)* *rolled pizz.*

Vla. *cresc. poco a poco (to G)* *rolled pizz.*

Vlc. *cresc. poco a poco (to G)*

Cb. *cresc. poco a poco (to G)*

*Violin 1 plays C when performed by a single player.

116

Ob.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

122 *rit. to end*

Ob.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

p

lightly tongued

rolled pizz.

rolled pizz.

rolled pizz.

rolled pizz.

unis.

pizz.

p

5:30
February 12, 2023
New Canaan, Connecticut