
TO SOAR WITH PEACE

for choir (SATB a cappella)

JACOB BERANEK

PROGRAM NOTES

I was once told that in order to deliver a complete sermon, one must first find the trouble and grace in the text, and then find the trouble and grace in the world. The image of this two-part relationship—a duality between trouble and grace—has been a powerful one for me, and as I wrote this piece, I have tried to create the musical representation of this concept.

First, to present the trouble in the world, I decided to take some artistic liberty and write a brief portion of text that would introduce some of humanity's common struggles: weakness, exhaustion, and anxiety. Flowing together in a chant-like style, two melancholy tenor lines intone the seemingly hopeless words over a bass drone. Next, to reinforce the two-part concept that inspired me, I decided to use two verses from the Bible—an Old Testament text and a New Testament text—to build the main body of the piece. The first verse, taken from the book of Isaiah, is essential in that it presents the grace in the text (“they shall renew their strength”) amidst trouble (by referencing the feelings of weariness and faintness introduced at the beginning of the piece). Developing through a tempo change and a change in tonal center, the music of this section builds up until a moment of climax, at which point there is abrupt silence. From the emptiness emerges the final section: an echo of the chant-like introduction, but with a new sense of peace and hope. Here is the grace in the world: the words of Jesus from the book of Matthew ring out, “Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. You shall find rest for your souls.”

—Jacob Beranek

TEXT (adapted by composer)

I am weak. I am weary. I am worn. Come to me, peace, at last.

Those who trust in the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall soar on wings like eagles; they shall run, and not grow weary;
they shall walk, and not be faint. They shall renew their strength.

Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
You shall find rest for your souls.

duration: c. 6' 00"

Commissioned by the Jubilate Chorale, Waukesha, WI, Vicki Taylor, Director

To Soar with Peace

adapted from

Isaiah 40:31 and Matthew 11:28-29

SATB a cappella

Jacob Beranek

Freely, inwardly ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 40$)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

OH

Freely, inwardly ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 40$)

(rehearsal only)

9

S

A

T

B

am worn. Come to me, peace, at last.

mp p pp

ppp

mp p pp

Text: adapted by composer from Isaiah 40:31 (KJV) and Matthew 11:28-29 (KJV), 1611 (PD).

Music: newly composed, copyright by composer.

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16 Flowing, with motion (♩ = c. 80)

S *mp* Those who trust in the Lord, those who trust in the Lord shall re - *mf* *mp*

A *mp* Those who trust in the Lord, those who — trust in the Lord. shall re - *mf* *mp*

T *tutti p* Lord, — those who trust — in the Lord shall re - *mf* *mp*

B *mp* Who trust in the — Lord shall re - *mf* *mp*

16 Flowing, with motion (♩ = c. 80)

mp *mf* *mp*

S *p* new their strength, re - new their strength. *mf*

A new their strength, their — strength, new strength. Those who *mf*

T new — their strength, their — strength, new strength. Those — *mf*

B new, re - new their strength, new strength. *mf*

mf