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The Peacemakers

*for Clarinet, Violin, Viola, and Violoncello,
with optional Readers*

Inspired by the life and writings of
Leymah Gbowee
Winner of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize

Music by
Gwyneth Walker

Poetry by
Martha Greene Eads

Dedicated to *Musica Harmonia*

Joan Griffing, Violin
Diane Phoenix-Neal, Viola
Beth Vanderborgh, Violoncello
Leslie Nicholas, Clarinet

and especially to Leymah Gbowee

Premiered by *Musica Harmonia*
June 13, 2013
Harrisonburg, Virginia

Duration: circa 14 minutes

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About the Work

The Peacemakers is inspired by Leymah Gbowee's book *Mighty Be Our Powers*—the story of Leymah's organizing the Liberian women into peaceful protest against the Liberian dictator, Charles Taylor. Ultimately, Taylor was forced from power, and years of violent civil war were brought to an end.

The chamber music comprises four movements which parallel the course of the book: "A Time of Innocence," "Changes," "What Is Lost," and "And Great Shall Be Thy Peace." The connection between the book and the music is created through narrative poetry shaped from Gbowee's memoir by Martha Greene Eads. It is envisioned that the poems be read aloud before the playing of each of the movements. Although the music can stand on its own without the reading, the full presentation will be most effective.

1. A Time of Innocence

The first movement portrays two aspects of youthful innocence: the flirtatious schoolgirl who loves to dance, and the thoughtful child turning to parent and faith for comfort. The musical interpretation is similarly focused on two styles: one rhythmic, the other hymn-oriented.

An introductory section features tapping on the instruments, suggestive of drumming. This is followed by the "dance" theme, presented in the clarinet. The language is tonal and straightforward, with the simple exuberance of youth.

A middle section introduces strains of the Lutheran hymn tune "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." The melody, which floats above the accompaniment, may be heard as the voice of the father (or Father in Heaven), watching over the child.

The dance theme returns and then fades into the night. All is well in this child's world:

*Night warm, moon up—
Nayah, play the drum!
Mala, shake the saa-saa,
School days now are done!*

2. Changes

Changes are seen, as once-peaceful Liberia descends into civil war. Initially, home on Monrovia's Old Road is "sweet." The various tribes coexist easily, even sharing in each other's religious holidays. Then resentments arise, and "grief begins to boil." Violence erupts. The residents flee; their homes are ransacked. Children move "from innocence to pain."

The music depicts a similar "before and after" story. A tranquil theme is introduced in the clarinet (the voice of the child). The listener might align the words "Home in Monrovia is sweet" with this melody. F major is a suitably gentle key for this section.

The tranquility is shattered as the music erupts into dissonant chords of anger. Accented rhythms in the strings are reiterated, as the clarinet "wails" above. Ultimately, the "Monrovia" theme returns, but now in the minor mode. The violin descends in a chromatic line marked "as falling tears." The final "tears" belong to the clarinet (child).

3. What Is Lost

Much is lost during the war. A school classmate, remembered as the “Class Clown,” vanishes—his jokes and smile are gone. In church, a mother wears her “Sunday Best,” while violence erupts around her. She clings to any vestige of decency.

The clarinet portrays the playful child, joking with the surrounding players (classmates). Then trembling sonorities of war build in the strings. The familiar hymn tune “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” is heard, this time in the minor mode. The hymn represents the voices of the frightened congregation. As they sing, the trembling sounds around them grow louder and more menacing. Brutality enters the church.

The joker (clarinet) makes a brief reappearance, scampering around the pews. His “joke” is cut short.

4. And Great Shall Be Thy Peace

The fourth movement is inspired by two poems: “From Dusk to Dawn” (“Gather the women to pray for peace...”) and “The Peace Mothers’ Blessing” (“And great shall be thy peace.”). “From Dusk to Dawn” speaks of the perseverance and victory of the women who protest for peace. This is a triumphant text, and thus the musical language is strong. Tremolo chords build in the strings, and a rhythm (marked “grandly”) introduces the theme. The strings and clarinet play in unison (and octaves) a phrase which matches the words “And great shall be thy peace.” This theme is expanded upon to form the first section of this movement.

The music quiets into chords stating a repeated five-note rhythm of “Blessings upon you, blessings upon you.” Gentle phrases float above the “blessings,” growing in range and in celebratory mood. Then the opening theme returns, more slowly and triumphantly than before. The instruments rise into their highest ranges, with strong tremolo chords. But the final notes fade away, and the players bow their heads in remembrance of the many who perished before the peace could be achieved.

About the Artists

Leymah Roberta Gbowee is a Liberian peace activist responsible for leading a women’s peace movement that helped bring an end to the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003. This led to the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia, thus making Liberia the first African nation to have a female president. Leymah, along with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Tawakkul Karman, were awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize “for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work.”

Martha Greene Eads (poet) grew up in North Carolina’s Blue Ridge mountains and studied literature and theology at Wake Forest University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of Durham (UK). Before coming to Eastern Mennonite University, she taught at the North Carolina Correctional Center for Women and at Valparaiso University in Indiana, where she held a Lilly Fellowship in Humanities and the Arts from 2001–2003.

Dr. Gwyneth Walker (composer) 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. She is a native and resident of New Canaan, CT. 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. Walker’s catalog includes music for orchestra, chorus, solo voice, and chamber ensembles. She is particularly interested in works with dramatic potential, often combining music with poetry readings and acting.

Musica Harmonia is a chamber ensemble formed to promote peace and cultural understanding through musical collaboration. The members are **Joan Griffing**, Violin, and **Leslie Nicholas**, Clarinet (Professors of Music, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA), **Diane Phoenix-Neal**, Viola (Assistant Professor of Music, Central College, Pella, IA), and **Beth Vanderborgh**, Cello (Assistant Professor of Music, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY). The players spend their summers together on the faculty of the Eastern Music Festival in Greensboro, NC.

The Poetry

based on *Mighty Be Our Powers* by Leymah Gbowee

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The World's Her Gift

Night warm, moon up—
Napa, play the drum!
Mala, shake the saa-saa,
School days now are done!

Little sister Fatah
Do your crazy dance.
Get everybody laughing
With your sideways glance—

Everybody toast the girl-grads;
See their earrings flash.
Bring your own offerings:
Bright blouses, boots, and cash.

Leymah's looking good tonight!
(Don't she know it, too?)
Long black braid, all that height—
The world's her gift, brand new.

Father Love

Quarantined for cholera at eight:
Alone, afraid, in pain.
But when I look outside my room
Papa smiles and waves, again.

He doesn't leave. He watches, waits.
And when I'm well, he urges,
"Leymah, do your best. Be great."
His voice, like thunder, surges.

God watches, too. Great, indeed—
far greater than we, of course.
Yet He watches over, smiling—
I am blessed. He is the Source.

During the reading of the first poem, some finger snaps may be added, ad libitum. The reader(s) may wish to listen to the playing of the first movement of the music to get some ideas for dance-like snapping rhythms which might tie together the reading and the music.

The second poem should be read as is, without finger snaps.

Then, the first poem can be repeated, just the first and fourth stanzas, with finger snaps once again.

—Players perform "A Time of Innocence"—

Home on Monrovia's Old Road

Home on Old Road is sweet:
 Papa, a Kpelle poor-boy made good;
 Mama, lovely in a lappa and gold;
 Gentle Geneva, then four younger girls;
 Wise great-auntie "Ma," watching over all.

Home on Old Road is *mostly* sweet.
 But Papa stays out all night, then sleeps
 through church.
 And Mama's hard, and spells "man" D-O-G.
 Each sister has a private pain,
 And Ma can't ease them all.

Home in Liberia is sweet:
 Sweep of land between ocean and river,
 Candy-colored buildings in balcony necklaces
 Parading along the streets.
 Children ride home on a pretend bus, calling:
 "Bong County!" for the Kpelle;
 "Lofa!" for the Loma, Mandingo, too;
 "Bomi!" for the Gola,
 "Cape Mount!" for the Vai.

At night, Christians savor the Ramadan feast
 with friends.

Home in Liberia is *mostly* sweet.
 But Americo-Liberians, children of former
 slaves,
 And the Congo-people, Middle Passage
 escapees' sons,
 Teach the lessons they have learned:
 Humiliation.
 Segregation.
 Servitude.
 Their resentful pupils:
 Kpelle, Krahn, Kissi, Kru;
 Grebo, Gola, Gio;
 Gbandio, Bassa, Bella;
 Loma;
 Vai.
 Sadness simmers.
 Grief begins to boil.

Pause for the playing of a brief musical passage.

Chokla Song*

You come to my house, ^{angry clap} you break down my door. ^{angry clap}

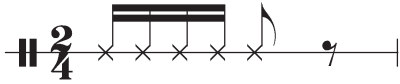
You take everything, ^{2 angry claps} you chokla everything. ^{2 angry claps}

Who run away? (*looking upward, as if following someone running away in the distance*)
 Who run away?
 Who run away?
 Who run away?

*Chokla means "smash" or "ransack"

Before the reading of “Ham Bone” begins, the instrumental players begin tapping their instruments in the rhythmic pattern given below. The tapping continues (to suggest urgency) through the end of the first stanza, ending with “A single bag of rice.”

Quickly



Ham Bone

No time to think what to pack.
 Pull open drawers
 Grab some things
 Throw them into bags:
 Toothbrush, comb, underwear.
 (Leave the boots; we'll be back.)
 From the pantry?
 A single bag of rice.

We come back, all right.
 To carpet stripped,
 beds smashed,
 cupboards empty

table-top gone.
 No place to eat a meal
 if there were one.

As we re-flee
 I see my Dexter boots again.
 On my neighbor's rushing feet.

I've moved so fast
 from innocence to pain
 the flesh of my heart got cut away
 like slices off a ham.
 There's nothing left but bone.

Chokla Song *reprise*

Repeat the reading of “Chokla Song,” fading out at the end.

—Players perform “Changes”—

Class Clown

Koffa, you always were a joker.
 Teasing Teacher, “Disco drink
 comes from Mrs. Jones!”

“Out!” she'd shout,
 And you'd just grin.

You'd flash that silly smile,
 and that sharply folded triangle—
 just as white,
 peeking from your pocket.
 Just as bright, below—
 your ever-polished shoes.

Those shoes now?
 Scuffed, for sure—
 On some other joker's feet.
 That white triangle?
 A blood-encrusted rag, perhaps,
 In some dusty street.
 About your smile
 I dare not think.

Sunday Best

A high, wood-covered ceiling.
 Arched windows, glass of red
 and pale blue.
 Usher-Mama, smiling in her
 green and black suit,
 Standing in the aisle;
 Neighbors and cousins, listening
 (some dozing)
 Under slowly spinning ceiling fans.

That's the memory I want:
 Of me, robed in white
 From my acolyte days.

The memory I have?

"Everybody downstairs! Everybody outside!"

Children tumbling,
 Children chanting,

"Jesus! Jesus! Satan, we rebuke you!"

God won't help you.

"Face the wall!"

"Jesus! Satan, we rebuke you!"

"Shut up!"

I'm not afraid now, only numb.

Stop. Go. Sit down.

We will never leave here. We are dead.

I pull my nephew on my lap.

His calves are warm against my bare legs.

Soldiers rape young girls.

I am outside my body, floating.

I watch them hit my mother. I wait to die.

Among the pews where we sang
 and prayed,

where husbands and children
 pinned flowers

on their mothers' clothes—

Raping.

Slashing.

Shooting.

Hacking.

Some inside push open doors to

Run out into gunfire.

Bodies on every street corner:

I see the body of a woman lying
 in the road.

She wears a blue dress and stockings
 as if she just
 came from church.

A dog is pulling one of her legs.

Eating her.

Every night, Mama, stone-faced,

Scrubs that green and black suit she wore
 when the soldiers came.

She says she will wear it

Till the end of the war.

Class Clown *reprise*

Koffa, you always were a joker...

(pause)

You'd flash that silly smile...

(pause)

About your smile...

(long pause)

I dare not think...

(reader shakes head sadly)

It is suggested that the following two poems be read by several readers, alternating verses between them

From Dusk to Dawn

“Gather the women to pray for peace!”
A voice directs me in the night.
I scoff. A summons from God? For *me*?
Sisters, believing, are sure the message is right.

In mosques on Fridays, after prayers,
On Saturdays, at markets in the streets,
On Sundays, from church to church,
We call, “Women, awake for peace!”

In white t-shirts, white hair-ties,
Dawn to dusk in the heat,
We kneel, we sing, we march—
Weary hearts, weary throats, weary feet.

“O Lord, we give our time to you.
You will not let our praying be in vain.”
Our banners fade in the sun.
Their calls for peace run in the rain.

Dawn to dusk in the heat, we sit.
We wait, we pray. For hours.
Relentless, the rain turns our field to mud.
Mighty be *our* powers?

Yes! *Mighty be our powers.*
Sisters: praying, singing, marching,
weeping, sweating. With God’s hands beneath us,
we are peace mothers. The victory is ours.

The Peace Mothers’ Blessing

For the Lord has called thee
as a woman forsaken
and grieved in spirit

You come to my house, ^{angry clap} *you break down my door.* ^{angry clap}

You take everything, ^{2 angry claps} *you chokla everything.* ^{2 angry claps}

Behold!

I will lay thy stones with fair colors,
and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

And I will make thy windows of agates,
and thy gates of garnets,

and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord,
and great shall be thy peace...

and great shall be thy peace. (*read by everyone*)

The Peacemakers

for Clarinet, Violin, Viola, and Violoncello,
with optional Readers*

Gwyneth Walker

1. A Time of Innocence

The playing of this movement follows the reading of "The World's Her Gift" and "Father Love."

Moderate tempo ♩ = 112

Clar. in A ***a touch of youthful energy

The musical score is written for four instruments: Clarinet (Cl.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vlc.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Moderate tempo' with a quarter note equal to 112 beats per minute. The Clarinet part starts with a dynamic of *mf* and includes a performance instruction: '***a touch of youthful energy'. The Violin, Viola, and Violoncello parts are marked 'non vib.' and 'p in the background'. The Viola and Violoncello parts also include 'arco' markings. The score includes several performance instructions: '****Tap instrument' (indicated by a diamond symbol) and 'poco' (indicated by a double-headed arrow) in the Violin, Viola, and Violoncello parts. The Clarinet part has a 'Tap (roll)' instruction. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 6.

- * Readers read from the front matter contained within the Full Score.
- ** The 1st and 4th movements are played on Clarinet in A, the 2nd and 3rd on B \flat Clarinet. A transposed part is provided.
- *** Grace notes precede the beat.
- **** Tap instrument body with fingers (roll) as a hint of drumming.

A With youthful energy

11

Cl. *p*

Vln. *pizz.* *mf* *arco* *p*

Vla. *pizz.* *mf* *arco* *p*

Vlc. *mf* *p*

14

Cl. *mf*

Vln. *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vlc. *mf*

B Joyfully

17

Cl. *mf*

Vln. *(mf)*

Vla. *(mf)*

Vlc. *(mf)*

20

Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vlc.

This system contains measures 20, 21, and 22. The Clarinet (Cl.) part starts with a whole rest in measure 20, followed by a melodic line in measures 21 and 22. The Violin (Vln.) part features a rhythmic eighth-note pattern with accents. The Viola (Vla.) part has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The Violoncello (Vlc.) part plays a similar eighth-note pattern with accents.

23

Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vlc.

This system contains measures 23, 24, and 25. The Clarinet (Cl.) part has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Violin (Vln.) part continues with a rhythmic eighth-note pattern. The Viola (Vla.) part has a steady eighth-note accompaniment with some slurs. The Violoncello (Vlc.) part plays a similar eighth-note pattern with accents.

26

Cl.
Vln.
Vla.
Vlc.

This system contains measures 26, 27, and 28. The Clarinet (Cl.) part has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Violin (Vln.) part continues with a rhythmic eighth-note pattern. The Viola (Vla.) part has a steady eighth-note accompaniment with some slurs. The Violoncello (Vlc.) part plays a similar eighth-note pattern with accents.

29 C

32

35 D Same tempo (♩ = 112)

38

Cl. *p sub.* *pizz.* *arco* *f* *p sub.* *pizz.* *arco*

Vln. *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *pizz.* *arco*

Vla. *p sub.* *f* *p sub.* *pizz.* *arco*

Vlc. *p sub.* *f* *p sub.*

41

Cl. *f* *p sub.* *pizz.* *arco* *f*

Vln. *f* *p sub.* *pizz.* *arco* *f*

Vla. *f* *p sub.* *pizz.* *arco* *f*

Vlc. *f* *p sub.* *f*

44

Cl. *p* *f* *p sub.*

Vln. *p sub.* *f* *p sub.*

Vla. *p sub.* *f* *p sub.*

Vlc. *p sub.* *f* *p sub.*

47 **E** *rit.*

Cl. *mf*

Vln. *f* *mf*

Vla. *f* *mf*

Vlc. *f* *mf*

50

Cl. *p*

Vln. *p* Tap (roll)

Vla. *p* Tap (roll)

Vlc. *p* Tap (roll)

F Slowly, freely

53 "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

Cl. *mf* *p*

Vln. *pp* *p* arco

Vla. *pp* *p* arco

Vlc. *pp* *p*

55

Cl. *mf* *p*

Vln. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 55 and 56. The Clarinet (Cl.) part starts with a half note G4 (mf) and a half note A4 (p) tied across the bar line. The Violin (Vln.) part has a whole note G4 (p) in measure 55 and a half note G4 in measure 56. The Viola (Vla.) part has a whole note G4 in measure 55 and a half note G4 in measure 56. The Violoncello (Vlc.) part has a whole note G4 in measure 55 and a half note G4 in measure 56. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. A large watermark is visible across the page.

57

Cl. *p*

Vln. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *mf* *p*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 57 and 58. The Clarinet (Cl.) part has a whole note G4 (p) in measure 57 and a half note G4 in measure 58. The Violin (Vln.) part has a whole note G4 in measure 57 and a half note G4 in measure 58. The Viola (Vla.) part has a whole note G4 in measure 57 and a half note G4 in measure 58. The Violoncello (Vlc.) part has a half note G4 in measure 57, followed by a triplet of eighth notes (A4, B4, C5) in measure 57, and a half note G4 in measure 58. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. A large watermark is visible across the page.

59

Cl. *p*

Vln. *p*

Vla. *mf* *p*

Vlc. *mf* *p*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 59 and 60. The Clarinet (Cl.) part has a whole note G4 in measure 59 and a half note G4 in measure 60. The Violin (Vln.) part has a whole note G4 in measure 59 and a half note G4 in measure 60. The Viola (Vla.) part has a half note G4 in measure 59, followed by a half note A4 in measure 59, and a half note G4 in measure 60. The Violoncello (Vlc.) part has a half note G4 in measure 59, followed by a half note A4 in measure 59, and a half note G4 in measure 60. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. A large watermark is visible across the page.

61 **G** With slight motion ♩ = 88

Cl. *(p)* *mf*

Vln. *(p)*

Vla. *p gentle background* *mf* *p*

Vlc. *mf* *p gentle background*

64 *poco rit.* **Slower** ♩ = 72, *deliberately* *rit.*
("A Mighty Fortress" recap)

Cl. *f*

Vln. *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f* *pizz.* *arco*

67 **H** Tempo I (♩ = 112)

Cl. *mf*

Vln. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*