

JS 018
8 minutes, 40 seconds

peace

for TTBB Choir and Piano

Text by
Members of the
commissioning
ensemble

Music by
Joshua Shank

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

Note from the composer

In the summer of 2014, I received an email from the director of the Boston Gay Men's Chorus asking me if I would be interested in writing something for their upcoming tour of Israel and Turkey (the first gay chorus to do so!). Specifically, he was interested in a work about the concept of "peace." This was a huge ask because that region of the world has been fraught with ethnic and religious conflict for centuries, and I thought it might be seen as rude to travel to these communities and ask why everyone couldn't simply just get along. The concept I eventually landed on was that peace wasn't just the absence of war but also the moments in our lives when we feel at peace. No matter where a given person is from or what ideology they espouse we could all relate to that.

The only problem was finding a text that was about something that specific. In order to solve this problem, I went to the chorus members themselves and had them anonymously complete the phrase "I was at peace when..." as many times as they wanted. They responded with an honesty that was at times brutal but gracious at the same time, and the work we took to the Middle East is made up entirely of their beautiful life stories.

peace was commissioned by the Boston Gay Men's Chorus for their historic 2015 tour of Israel and Turkey. It is dedicated to their fearless conductor, Reuben M. Reynolds III, and the men of the chorus themselves with gratitude for the incredible work they do in their community and the broader world. It is the first movement in what eventually became a four-movement cycle about their experiences on the tour (which included the passage of nation-wide marriage equality while they were touring the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul), titled *capable of anything*.

Performance note

The pedaling indications in the score as well as some dynamics are occasionally written so that the piano creates a wash of harmonies. Please follow them accordingly.

The Text

Adapted from anonymous responses by members of the Boston Gay Men's Chorus

I was at peace when I looked in your eyes.
I was at peace when I left a bad job.
I was at peace when I didn't feel guilty
I was at peace only when I wasn't sober.
I was at peace when I was in nature.
I was at peace when I beheld the stars.
I was at peace when I crossed the Charles and the view is the one thing that never gets old.
I was at peace when I finished college.
I was at peace when I stood up for what was right.
I was at peace when I got sober the second time.
I was at peace when you were born.
I was at peace when I first held our baby girl.
I was at peace when I saw myself through my son's eyes.
I was at peace when the nurse told me he's breathing on his own.
I was at peace when I kissed him for the first time.
I was at peace when I held my son's hand in the incubator before he died.
I was at peace when I could finally let go.

I was at peace when I had faith.
I was at peace after fasting and prayer
I was at peace when I felt God's answer.
I was at peace when I chanted the Torah.
I was at peace when I prayed to Jesus.
I was at peace when I chanted the Quran
I was at peace when I learned my truth.
I was at peace when I told my mom that I was an atheist.
I was at peace when she told me she loved me.
I was at peace when she passed as I sang to her.
I was at peace when I finished her eulogy.
I was at peace when I finally let go.

I was at peace when I found others like me.
I was at peace when they helped me to see.
I was at peace when I realized it wasn't my fault.
When I looked in the mirror and finally liked who I saw, I was at peace.

I was at peace when I didn't burn dinner and you asked for seconds.
I was at peace when we watched movies together.
I was at peace when I realized how much my family loves you.
I was at peace when I heard your laugh.
I was at peace when you read aloud to me every night.
I was at peace even though we had that fight.
I was at peace when I slept in your arms.
I was at peace when I woke up next to you.
I was at peace when I knew he could never hit me again.
I was at peace when I found the courage to walk away.
I was at peace when you decided not to leave.
I was at peace when you asked me to stay.
I was at peace when I let go of the past.
I was at peace when I forgave myself.
I was at peace when I realized I mattered.
I was at peace when realized I didn't have to be anything more than who I am.

I was at peace when I realized we are all more alike than different.
I was at peace.

“This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...”

Commissioned by the Boston Gay Men's Chorus (Reuben M. Reynolds III, Music Director)
for their tour of Israel and Turkey

peace

Text by
Members of the
commissioning
ensemble

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Joshua Shank

Slow (♩ = 55)

Piano

ff *p* *lunga*



The piano introduction is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 55 beats per minute. It features a right hand with flowing eighth-note patterns and a left hand with sustained chords. Dynamics range from fortissimo (ff) to piano (p), ending with a *lunga* (long) note.

♩ = 40

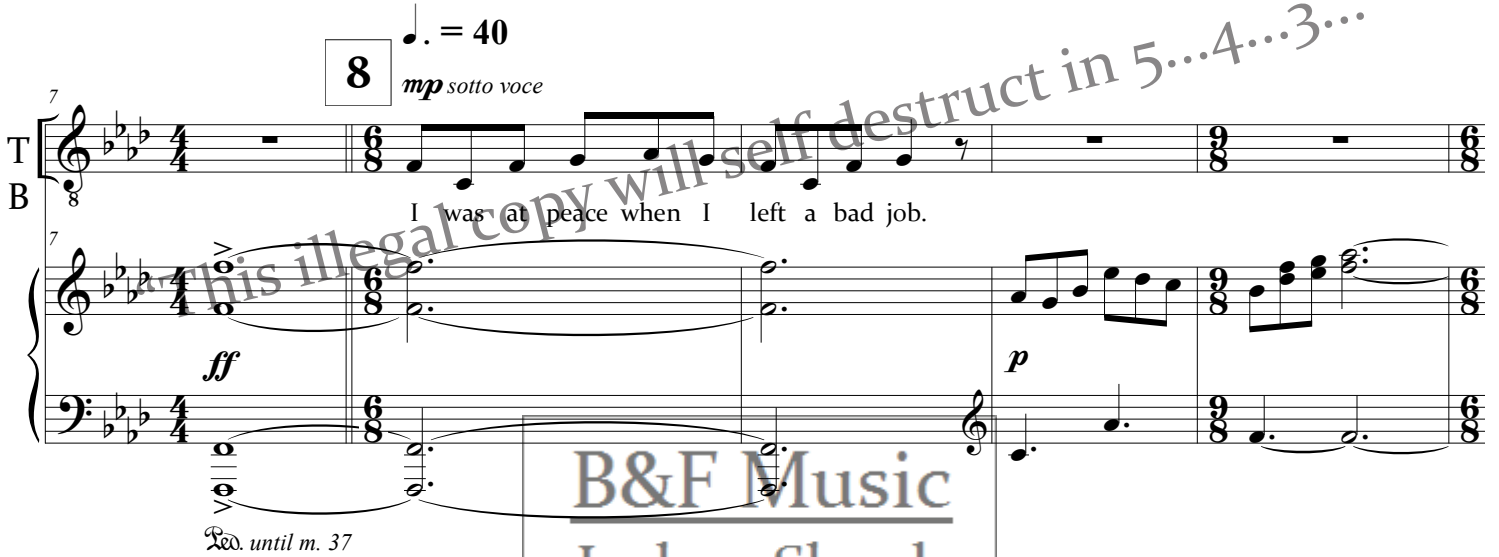
8 *mp* *sotto voce*

T
B

I was at peace when I left a bad job.

ff *p*

leg. until m. 37

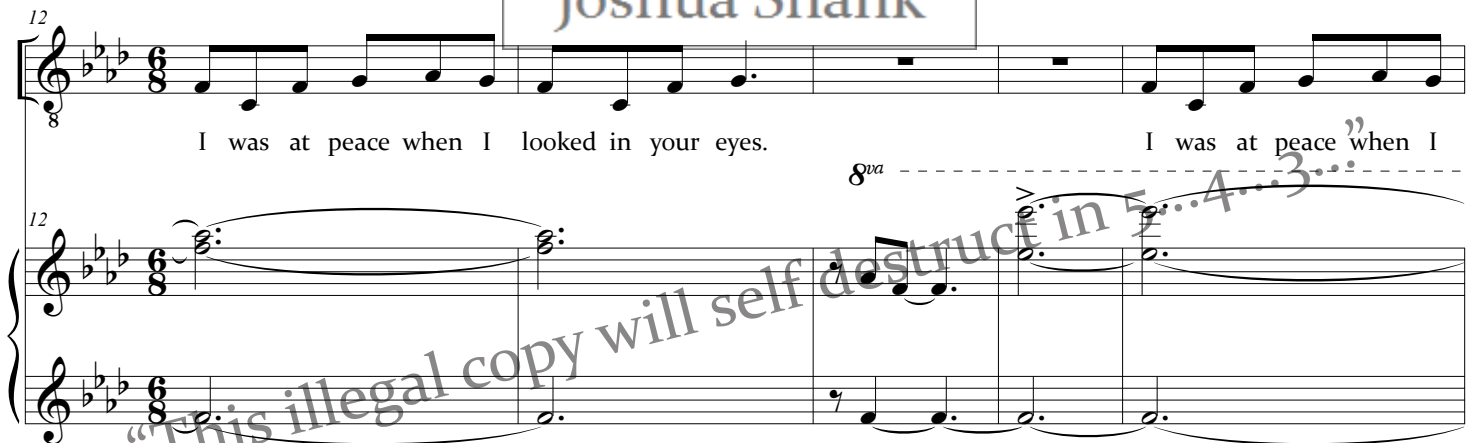


The vocal part begins at measure 7 with a tempo of 40. The lyrics are "I was at peace when I left a bad job." The piano accompaniment features a right hand with chords and a left hand with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include fortissimo (ff) and piano (p).

12

I was at peace when I looked in your eyes. I was at peace when I

8va



The vocal part continues at measure 12 with the lyrics "I was at peace when I looked in your eyes. I was at peace when I". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar texture. A *8va* (octave up) marking is present for the piano part.

17

8

did - n't feel guil - ty. I was at peace on - ly

17

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21

8

T when I was - n't so - ber. I was at peace when I

B when I was - n't so - ber. I was at peace when I be - held the stars.

21

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26

8

was in na - ture. I was at peace when the train crossed the Charles and the

26

was in na - ture. I was at peace when the train crossed the Charles and the

31

view is the one thing that ne-ver gets old.

view is the one thing that ne-ver gets old.

f

f

31

8va

f

39

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37

molto rit. *mp*

I was at peace when I fin-ished col - lege.

molto rit. *mp*

37

I was at peace when I fin-ished col - lege.

mp *f* *mp*

molto rit.

Red. *Red. until m. 51*

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42

mp

I was at peace when I stood up for what was right. I was at

mp

42

I was at peace when I stood up for what was right. I was at

mf

(♩ = ♩)

47

mf

peace when I got so - ber the se - cond time.

peace when I got so - ber the se - cond time.

47

mf *f*

mf *f*

ped.

53 A bit faster (♩. = 45)

poco rit. *mf* *mf*

poco rit. *mf* *mf*

I was at peace when I

I was at peace when you were born.

mf stagger breathe

poco rit. *mf*

poco rit. *mf*

ped. *sub* until m. 100 *ped.*

"This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3..."

56

first held our ba-by girl.

mf

I was at peace when I saw my - self through my son's _____ eyes.

at

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56

Leg.

60

mf

I was at peace when the nurse told me he's breath-ing on his own.

mf

I was at peace when I

peace _____

when _____

60

Leg.

Leg.

64

I was at peace when I held my son's hand in the in-cu - ba -
 kissed him for the first time.

64

I, when,

68

for be-fore he died. I was at peace when I could fin - al-ly let go.

68

when I could fin - al-ly let go.

mf

was at

mf I was at peace when I had faith. — I was at peace af - ter

mf I was

74

mf

Leg.

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79

poco stringendo — *a tempo*

peace when I felt God's an - swer. I was at peace when I

poco stringendo — *a tempo*

fast - ing and pray - er. I was at peace when I chant - ed the Tor - ah.

poco stringendo — *a tempo*

at peace when

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79

poco stringendo — *a tempo*

Leg.

"This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3..."

T1
83
prayed to Jes - us, when I found my truth, I was at peace when

T2
83
when I read the Qu - ran. I was at peace when

B1
I was at peace.
mf stagger breathe

B2
I

83
mf

83
Ped.

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mf bring out

5...4...3...2...1

T
87
I told my mom that I was an ath - e - ist. I was at peace when she told me she loved me.

B1
I was at peace.

B2
was

87
Ped.

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mf simile

5...4...3...2...1

91

T1
I was at peace when she passed as I sang to her I was at

T2
I was at peace when she passed as I sang to her. I was at peace when I

B1
I was at peace. I was at peace.

B2
at peace

91

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Leo.

95

peace when I fin-ished her eu-lo-gy. I was at peace when I could fin-al-ly let

fin - ished her eu-lo-gy. I was at peace when I could fin-al-ly let

I was at peace when I could fin-al-ly let

when I could fin-al-ly let

95

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poco rit.

102 Cantabile (♩. = 40)

100

mp

go. I was at peace when I found o-thers like me.

mp

go. I was at peace when I found o-thers like me.

mp

go. I was at peace when I found o-thers like me.

mp

go. I was at peace when I found o-thers like me.

100

mp

Leo. (no longer 8^{vb}) Leo. Leo. Leo.

105

T 8 I was at peace when they helped me to see. I was at peace when I

B I was at peace when they helped me to see. I was at peace when I

105

Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo.

109 *mf*
 real-ized it was-n't my fault. When I looked in the mir-ror and fin-al-ly liked who I
mf
 real-ized it was-n't my fault. When I looked in the mir-ror and fin-al-ly liked who I

109
 Ped. B&F Music Joshua Shaak Ped.

117 Building (♩ = 50)

113 *mp* Tacit
 saw, I was at peace.
mp Tacit
 saw, I was at peace.
mp *p* stagger breathe
 saw, I was at peace. (m)
mp *p*
 saw, I was at peace. I was at peace when I did - n't burn
 113 *p*
mf *different dynamics for each hand
 Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. until m. 138.

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* Bring the right hand out a bit; sort of like stars twinkling (sorry for the cliché...it's all I could think of). The left hand dynamics are designed so those notes ring while the right hand twinkles.

118

This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...

din-ner and you asked for se-conds. I was at peace when we watched mo-vies to-ge-ther.

118

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121

This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...

I was at peace when I rea - lized how much my fam-'ly love you.

121

125

123

T2

8

B1

123

B2

123

This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...

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was at peace when you read out

I was at peace when I heard your laugh. I was at peace when you read out

126

8

3

3

loud to me e - 'vry night. I was at peace e - ven though we had that fight.

126

8

3

3

loud to me e - 'vry night. I was at peace e - ven though we had that fight.

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130

8

3

I was at peace when I slept in your arms. — I was at peace when I

130

8

3

I was at peace when I slept in your arms. — I was at peace when I

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133
8

mp

woke up next to you. _____ I was at peace when I knew he could

mp

oh _____

mp

woke up next to you. _____ was at peace when I knew he could

133

mp fluttering

135
8

ne-ver hit me a - gain. _____ I was at peace when I found the

mp

ne-ver hit me a - gain. _____ I was at peace when I found „the

135

137

8

cou-rage to walk a - way. was at peace when you de -

cou-rage to walk a - way. I was at peace when you de -

137

mp

ped. per measure

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“This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...”

139

8

ci - ded not to leave I was at peace when you

ci - ded not to leave I was at peace when you

139

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“This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...”

This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...

T1 *mf* oh

T2 *mf* asked me to stay. I was at peace when I let

B1 *mf* was at peace when I let

B2 *mf* asked me to stay. *peace...

141 *mf*

* Repeat the word at various speeds ranging from a moderate pace to as fast as you can. Breathe when necessary but never when the ensemble has a rest. The effect should just be like a fluttering happening behind the foreground. You're just sort of agitating the pitch in order to make the musical frieze shake a little bit. In other words, stay out of the way but make it sound cool.

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This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...

8

go of the past. I was at peace when I for -

go of the past. I was at peace when I for -

peace... peace...

143

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8

gave my - self. I was at peace when I

gave my self. I was at peace when I

peace... peace...

145

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mf

p

147

real - ized I mat - tered.

real - ized I mat - tered.

147

peace...

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148

I was at peace when I rea - lized I did - n't have to be a - ny - thing

I was at peace when I rea - lized I did - n't have to be a - ny - thing

148

peace...

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"This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3..."

149

more than who I am.

more than who I am.

peace...

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Joshua Shank

f

149

f

Ped.

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"This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3..."

“This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...”

152 Maestoso (♩ = 55)

151

ff

oh _____ I was at

ff

ff

oh _____ I was at peace. _____

ff

oh _____ I was at peace. _____

151

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

Reo.

Reo.

"This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3..."

154

peace. _____ I was at peace.

I was at peace. I was at

I was at peace. I was at

I was at peace. I was at

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal score for the first system. It features four staves: two vocal staves (Soprano and Alto) and two piano accompaniment staves. The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are "peace. _____ I was at peace." and "I was at peace. I was at". There are various musical notations including eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests. A watermark "B&F Music Joshua Shank" is visible in the center.

"This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3..."

154

8^{va}

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Red.

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment for the first system. It features two staves: a right-hand staff and a left-hand staff. The music is in a key with three sharps and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand plays a melody with triplets and eighth notes. The left hand provides harmonic support with chords and triplets. A watermark "B&F Music Joshua Shank" is visible in the center. The word "Red." appears at the bottom of the page.

"This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3..."

157

T1 I was at peace.

T2 peace. I was at peace.

B peace. I was at peace.

157

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161 As the beginning (♩ = 55)

ff *p*

167 ♩. = 45

mp sotto voce *lunga*

T When I rea-lized we are all more a-likethan dif-frent I was at peace.

B When I rea-lized we are all more a-likethan dif-frent I was at peace.

ff *lunga*

al Fine