

The Last Invocation  
GP - M001.3  
voice, piano

Norman Mathews

\$3.50

# Norman Mathews

## The Last Invocation

for voice and piano

from *Songs of the Poet*



## Performance notes:

*Songs of the Poet* is a song cycle, not in the sense of telling a narrative, but rather in depicting some of the major themes set forth by Walt Whitman – albeit set with a dramatic arc. The composer chose a rather traditional tonal framework for the songs because he felt that this best conveyed the intense passions portrayed in the poetry. The cycle begins on an ambiguous D-major-minor tonal center but ends triumphantly in D major. In all of Mathews's songs the piano plays an equal role with the singer. His grouping of Whitman poems deals with the essentiality of love to the human spirit and its redeeming qualities, even when unrequited; the enormous importance of music and nature to Whitman's writing; how the artist's work mirrors the essence of his being; and the transcendence of the soul. The title for the cycle was chosen because of the inordinate number of instances in which Whitman refers to his poems as songs.

*The Last Invocation* evokes through sumptuous melody the transcendence of the soul as it frees itself from its bodily prison. This song won Mathews the Recognition of Excellence award at the Fifth Diana Barnhart American Art Song Competition in 2003 (adjudicators were John Harbison, composer of the opera *The Great Gatsby*; and tenor Paul Sperry.) The song is suitable in both secular contexts and as part of a sacred service.

## Text:

### The Last Invocation

At the last, tenderly,  
From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,  
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the  
    well-closed doors,  
Let me be wafted.  
Let me glide noiselessly forth;  
With the key of softness unlock the locks – with a whisper,  
Set ope the doors O soul.  
Tenderly – be not impatient,  
(Strong is your hold O mortal flesh,  
Strong is your hold O love.)

- Walt Whitman

# The Last Invocation

from *Songs of the Poet*

Voice and piano

Walt Whitman

Norman Mathews

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*Sostenuto e cantando* ♩ = 52

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7 *mp*  
At the last, □

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10 *dolce*  
ten - der - ly, From the walls □ of the pow - er - ful for - tress'd

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13 *poco cresc.*  
house, From the clasp of the knit - ted locks, from the

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16 keep of the well - closed doors, ————— Let me be

19 waft - ed. Let me glide noise-less - ly

22 forth; ————— With the key of soft - ness

25 *espr.* *subito p*

un - lock the locks— with a whis - per,

*Red.* \* *Red.* \* *Red.* \*

28 *più f*

Set ope the doors O

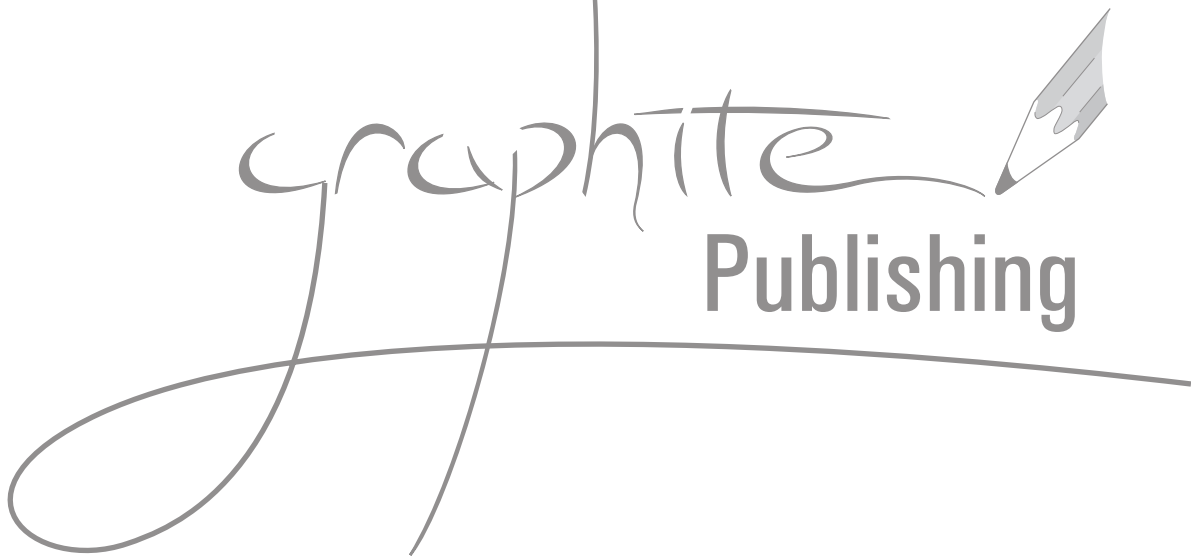
31 *f* *molto espr.* *subito p* *slightly slower*

soul. Ten - der ly—

*allarg. molto* *subito p* *subito p* *molto espr.*



Musical score for 'The Last Inovation' by Norman Mathews. The score is for voice and piano. The voice part (top staff) begins at measure 42 with the lyrics 'O love.)'. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) features a 'fff' (fortissimo) dynamic marking. The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A large watermark 'For perusal purposes only. Do not copy.' is overlaid on the score.



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## Norman Mathews



Norman Mathews' art songs were performed at The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, in 2003. His song cycle *Songs of the Poet* set to Walt Whitman poems, has been recorded by Munich Opera tenor Gregory Wiest on Capstone Records (CPS 8646) and has been performed around the world. The cycle was also featured in a program entitled *Whitman and Music* presented by The American Composers Orchestra. His song *The Last Invocation* received the Recognition of Excellence Award at the 2003 Diana Barnhart American Art Song Competition.

*You Might As Well Live*, Mathews's one-person musical play starring Karen Mason and based on the writings of Dorothy Parker, has been performed at the Harris Theatre of Music and Dance as part of the Chicago Humanities Festival and was seen at The New York Musical Theatre Festival. The play was awarded a grant from the Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation. *Somebody Write Me a Song*, his cabaret review written with lyricist Patty Seyburn was performed by Debbie Gravitte, Liz Callaway, and Peter Samuel. *Lost Empires*, a new musical based on the J. B. Priestley novel, written with co-book writer Todd Lehman and lyricist Patty Seyburn, is slated for a reading at The York Theatre in New York City in 2006.

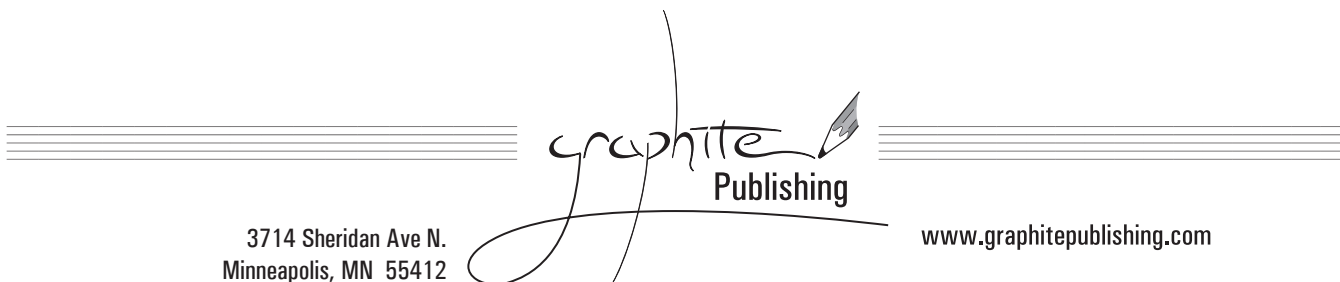
Mathews holds a BA in music from Hunter College and an MA in music from New York University. His composition teachers have included Richard Hundley, Richard Danielpour, and Charles Turner. He has won several ASCAP awards.

### Other vocal works from Graphite Publishing:

Abbie Betinis	GP - B005	The Clan of the Lichens (cycle)	soprano, piano
Abbie Betinis	GP - B005.1	The Prayer Wind (from <i>The Clan...</i> )	soprano, piano
Christopher Gable	GP - G001	December Carol	voice, piano
Christopher Gable	GP - G002	Solstice Lullaby	voice, piano
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H002	Hope (cycle)	soprano, piano
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H002.1	Heart, we will forget him (from <i>Hope</i> )	soprano, piano
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H007	Songs of Fields and Prairies (cycle)	soprano, piano
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H007.1	The Flower of the Field (from <i>Songs of Fields...</i> )	high voice, piano
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H008	The Sweetness of My Dreams (cycle)	mezzo-soprano, piano
Norman Mathews	GP - M001	Songs of the Poet (cycle)	voice, piano
Norman Mathews	GP - M001.1	Sometimes with One I Love (from <i>Songs of the Poet</i> )	voice, piano
Norman Mathews	GP - M001.2	Here the Frailest Leaves of Me (from <i>Songs of the Poet</i> )	voice, piano
Norman Mathews	GP - M001.3	The Last Invocation (from <i>Songs of the Poet</i> )	voice, piano
Norman Mathews	GP - M002	Velvet Shoes	voice, piano
Norman Mathews	GP - M003	Fancy	voice, piano
Scott Robinson	GP - R002	Song of Hannah	med./high voice, vln., vc., 1-3 opt. perc.

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