

Songs of the Poet
GP - M001
voice, piano

Norman Mathews

\$18.00

Norman Mathews

Songs of the Poet

for voice and piano

- I. Sometimes with One I Love
- II. That Music Always Round Me
- III. Here the Frailest Leaves of Me
- IV. Tears
- V. As the Time Draws Nigh
- VI. Grand is the Seen
- VII. The Last Invocation



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.

In *Sometimes With One I Love*, Whitman expresses his belief that love, even when "unreturn'd," is of imminent value. Mathews expresses the rejection with great passion, which then serves as the catalyst of artistic creation. In Ned Rorem's fascinating but divergent approach to this same poem, he seemingly treated the rejection with resignation.

That Music Always Round Me is Whitman's paean to music—not only performed music, but the music in nature and in everyday events. Mathews treats the various performers referred to in the poem as a full orchestra with vocal soloists, whose musical lines are suspended above the impressionistic arpeggio figures of the accompaniment.

Here The Frailest Leaves of Me is the simplest and most melodically accessible song in the cycle. Harmonically and melodically, here Mathews summons the hues and contours of the great French melodist, Francis Poulenc.

Tears is the most tragic, and, consequently, the most dissonant song in the cycle. Mathews uses polychordal harmonies (e.g., a B-minor chord superimposed over a C-minor chord) to convey the overwhelming force of tragic loss. The powerful *agitato* section requires the performer to impart a dark descent almost into madness, before coming to a more reflective calm.

As the Time Draws Nigh is one Whitman's many poems contemplating the soul and the preparations for an impending death. Mathews uses the second mode of the A melodic minor scale (i.e., B, C, D, E, F-Sharp, G-Sharp, A, B), juxtaposed with the second mode of the C melodic minor scale (i.e., D, E-Flat, F, G, A, B,

C, D) to create an unworldly sound. The scales commingle and eventually evolve into a B-major scale as death is accepted as a natural part of life. Though not specifically religious in nature, the song is suitable for certain religious services.

Grand Is The Seen is the most overtly joyous piece in the cycle, celebrating the individual and his or her place in the universe. The song is set to an almost virtuosic accompaniment.

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.

Songs of the Poet - Texts

poems by Walt Whitman

Sometimes with One I Love

Sometimes with one I love I fill myself with rage for fear I
effuse unreturn'd love,
But now I think there is no unreturn'd love, the pay is
certain one way or another,
(I loved a certain person ardently and my love was not
return'd,
Yet out of that I have written these songs.)

That Music Always Round Me

That music always round me, unceasing, unbeginning, yet
long untaught I did not hear,
But now the chorus I hear and am elated,
A tenor, strong, ascending with power and health, with glad
notes of daybreak I hear,
A soprano at intervals sailing buoyantly over the tops of
immense waves,
A transparent base shuddering lusciously under and through
the universe,
The triumphant tutti, the funeral wailings with sweet flutes
and violins, all these I fill myself with,
I hear not the volumes of sound merely, I am moved by the
exquisite meanings,
I listen to the different voices winding in and out, striving,
contending with fiery vehemence to excel each other in
emotion;
I do not think the performers know themselves—but now I
think I begin to know them.

Here the Frailest Leaves of Me

Here the frailest leaves of me and yet my strongest lasting,
Here I shade and hide my thoughts, I myself do not expose
them,
And yet they expose me more than all my other poems.

Tears

Tears! tears! tears!
In the night, in solitude, tears,
On the white shore dripping, dripping, suck'd in by the
sand,
Tears, not a star shining, all dark and desolate,
Moist tears from the eyes of a muffled head;
O who is that ghost? that form in the dark, with tears?
What shapeless lump is that, bent, crouch'd there on the
sand?
Streaming tears, sobbing tears, throes, choked with wild
cries;
O storm, embodied, rising, careering with swift steps along
the beach!
O wild and dismal night storm with wind—O belching and
desperate!

O shade so sedate and decorous by day, with calm
countenance and regulated pace,
But away at night as you fly, none looking—O then the
unloosen'd ocean,
Of tears! tears! tears!

As the Time Draws Nigh

As the time draws nigh glooming a cloud,
A dread beyond of I know not what darkens me.
I shall go forth,
I shall traverse the States awhile, but I cannot tell whither or
how long,
Perhaps soon some day or night while I am singing my voice
will suddenly cease.
O book, O chants! must all then amount to but this?
Must we barely arrive at this beginning of us?— and yet it is
enough, O soul;
O soul, we have positively appear'd—that is enough.

Grand Is the Seen

Grand is the seen, the light, to me— grand are the sky and
stars,
Grand is the earth, and grand are lasting time and space,
And grand their laws, so multiform, puzzling,
evolutionary;
But grander far the unseen soul of me, comprehending,
endowing all those,
Lighting the light, the sky and stars, delving the earth,
sailing the sea,
(What were all those, indeed, without thee, unseen soul? of
what amount without thee?)
More evolutionary, vast, puzzling, O my soul!
More mutliiform far—more lasting thou than they.

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.)

Songs of the Poet

I. Sometimes With One I Love

Walt Whitman

Voice and Piano

Norman Mathews

Passionately ♩ = 84

mf

Some-times with one I

mf legato

con pedale

love I fill my-self with rage for fear I ef - fuse un - return'd

bring out melody

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9

love, _____ But now I think there is no un - return'd love, _____

bring out melody

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notable. elevated.

13

mp

the pay is cer - tain — one way — or a - no - ther, _____

rit. a tempo

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16

f meno mosso e molto espress.

(I loved a cer - tain per - son ar - dent-ly — and my

deliberately

bring out melody

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19 *mf*

love was not re - turn'd, Yet out of that

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notable. elevated.

rit.

23 *mp*

I have writ - ten these songs.)

a tempo. *rit.* *a tempo*

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II. That Music Always Round Me

Walt Whitman

Norman Mathews

Allegro, leggermente ♩ = 120

p legato

That

legatissimo

pp

con pedale

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mu - sic al - ways round me, un - ceas - ing, un-be-gin - ning, _____

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5 *cresc. poco a poco* *poco ritenuto* *a tempo*

yet long un - taught I did not hear,

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7 *mf*

But

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9 *cresc. poco a poco* *poco ritenuto* *a tempo*

now the chor - us I hear and am e - lat - ed,

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11

f

A ten - or, strong, as -

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mf

l.h. *r.h.*

13

3

cend - ing with pow - er and health, with

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15

glad notes of day - break I hear,

8va

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17

f *sfz* *subito p*

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20

mf *grazioso*

As - o - pran - - o at in - ter - vals

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22

cresc.

sail - ing buoy - ant - ly o - ver the tops of im -

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24 mense waves, 8^{va} rit.

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26 *misterioso* *p a tempo* *f* 3 A trans -

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28 par - ent bass — shud - der - ing — lus - cious - ly un -

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30 3 3 3

der and through the un - i - verse.

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32

The tri - umph - - - ant tut - ti,

cresc. poco a poco

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34

the

sfz

36 *p*

fu - ner - al wail - - - - - ings - - - - - with

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38 *dolce* *cresc. poco a poco*

sweet flutes - - - - - and vi - o - lins, - - - - - all

subito p *cresc. poco a poco*

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40 *f*

these I fill my - self with, - - - - -

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42

8va

sempre

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44

Adagio ♩ = 76

Recit., senza misura

freely

mf

ff

8va

l.h.

I hear not the vol-umes of sound mere-ly,— I am moved by the ex-quis-ite mean-ings,—

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45

Tempo I

p

I lis - ten to the dif - ferent voic - es

pp

48 *mf*

wind - ing in and out, _____ striv - ing, _____ con -

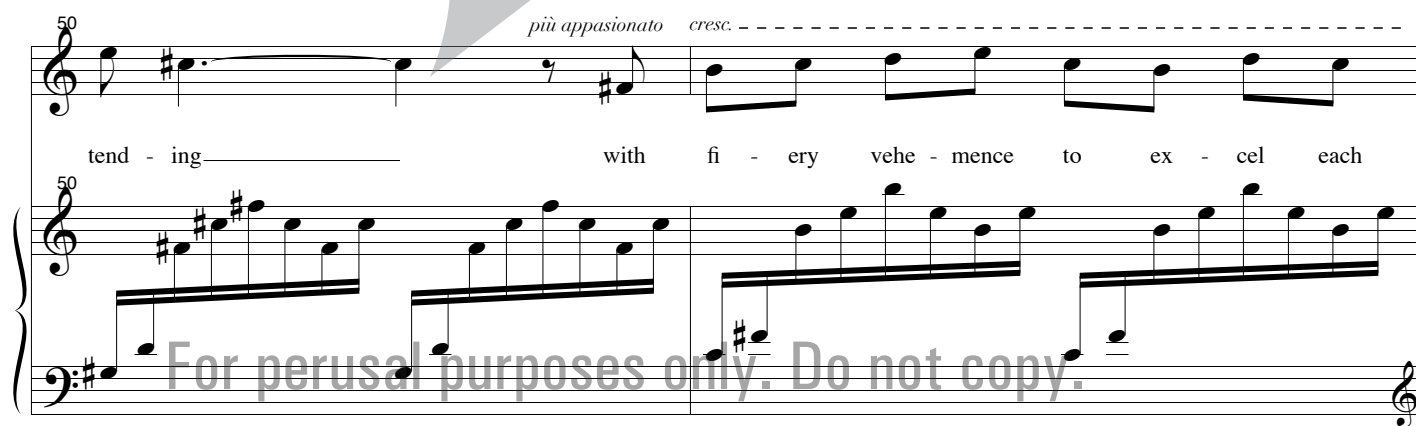
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50 *più appassionato cresc.*

tend - ing _____ with fi - ery vehe - mence to ex - cel each

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52 *f*

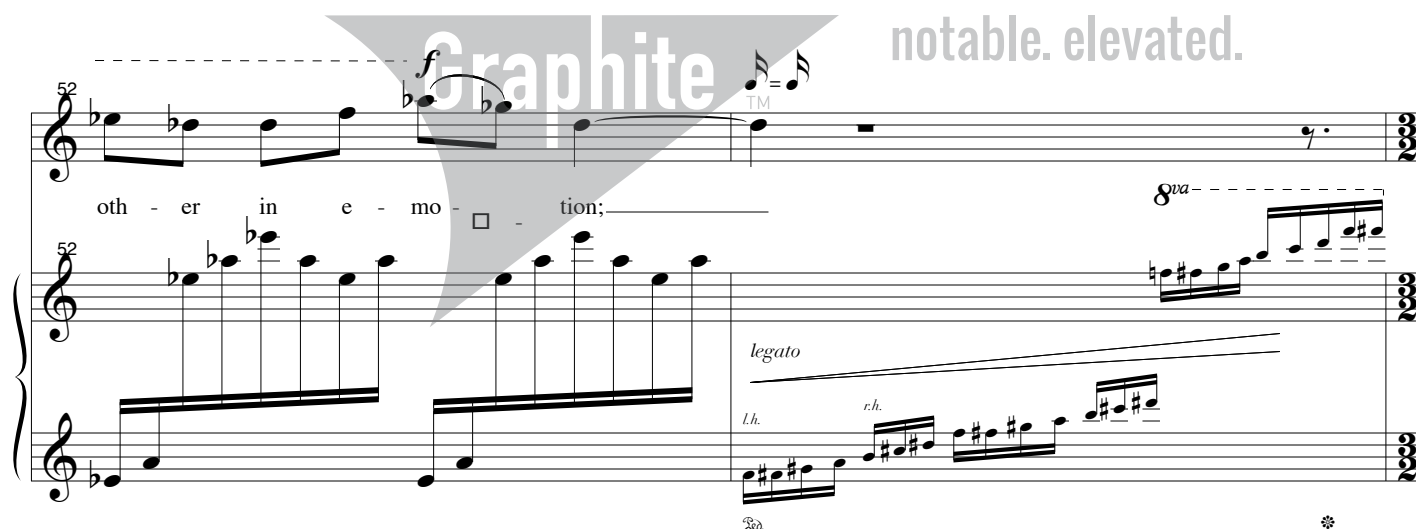
oth - er in e - mo - tion; _____

8va -

legato

L.h. *r.h.*

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54

8va (both hands)

decresc.

con pedale

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56

poco ritenuto

I do not think the per -

a tempo

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58

form - ers know them - selves— but now I think I be -

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notable. elevated.

60

gin to know them.

strictly in tempo

*sempre **f***

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62

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III. Here the Frailest Leaves of Me

Walt Whitman

Norman Mathews

1 *Andante* ♩ = 72

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mf

con pedale

4 *mf*

Here the frail - est leaves of me and

senza rit.

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7
yet my strong - est last - ing, Here I shade and

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10
hide my thoughts, I my - self do not ex - pose them, And

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13 *espr.*
yet they ex - pose me more than all my o - - - ther

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16

po - ems. _____

a tempo

subito p

allargando

delicatissimo

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19

a tempo

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IV. Tears

Walt Whitman

Norman Mathews

Lamentoso ♩ = 44

mf

Tears! _____ tears! _____ tears! _____

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mp in exact rhythm

In the night, _____ in sol - i - tude, _____

rit.

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Poco più mosso ♩ = 56

mf

tears, — On the

legatissimo

3

3

1 1 3 2 1 3 2 3 1

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notable. elevated.

8

white shore drip - ping, — drip - ping.

8

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10

suck'd in by the sand, Tears, — not a

10

rit.

3

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12 *misterioso*

star shin - ing, all dark and des - o - late, Moist tears from the

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subito p

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15

eyes of a muf - fled head; O

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cresc.

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17 *f*

who is that ghost? that form in the dark, with tears? What

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f

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20 *with intensifying paranoia* *più animando e più appassionato*

shape-less lump is that, bent, crouch'd there on the sand?

cresc. *più mosso*

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24 *mf*

Stream - ing tears, — sob - bing tears, — throes,

cresc. *f* *8va* *r.h.* *l.h.*

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27 *ff*

choked with wild cries; —

ff *accelerando*

15

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29 *Agitato* ♩ = 100 *sempre cresc.*

O storm, _____ em - bod - ied, _____

29 *legato*

33 *ff*

ris - ing, _____ ca - reer - ing with swift steps a - long _____ the beach! _____ O

37 *sempre cresc. e agitato*

wild _____ and dis - mal night storm, _____ with _____

37 *pp*, but rumbling *non cresc.*

22

39

wind _____ O belch - ing and des - per - ate! _____

39

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41

41

fff

cresc. molto

legato

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43

43

calmando e poco a poco diminuendo

tranquillo

pp ♩ = 56

O

pp

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45

shade ————— so se - date — and dec - - - o - rous by

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47

day, with calm coun - te - nance and

slightly slower

47

legato

lunga

8^{va}

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49

still slower, but deliberate

Tempo I°

reg - u - lat - ed pace, But a -

49

52

way _____ at night as you fly, _____ none

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54

look - ing _____ O then _____ the un-loos-en'd o - cean, Of

freely; but slower

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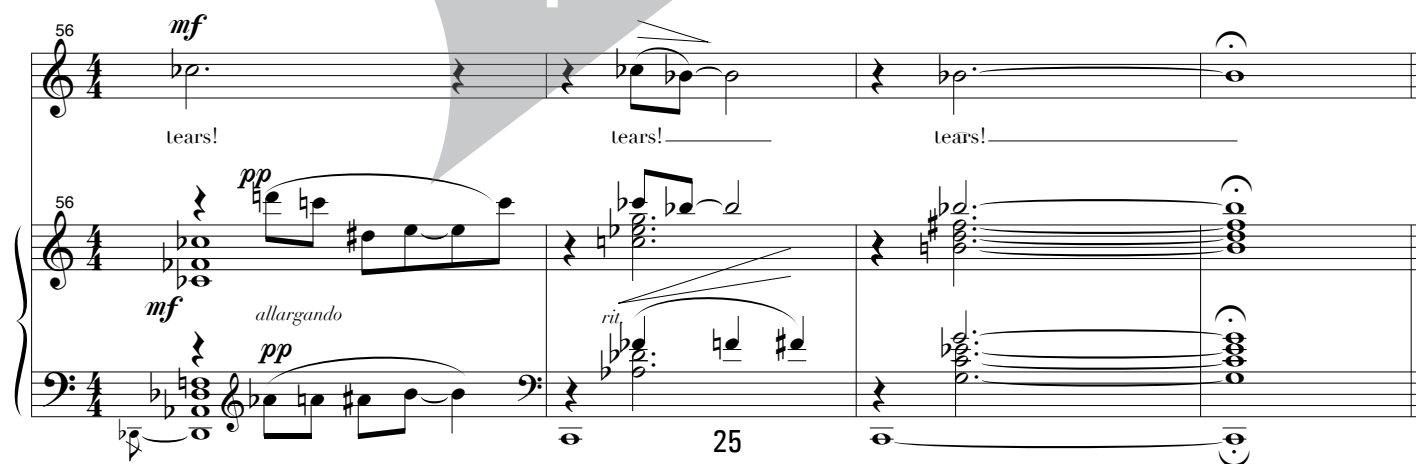


56

mf tears! _____ tears! _____ tears! _____

pp *mf* *allargando* *pp* *rit.*

25



V. As the Time Draws Nigh

Walt Whitman

Norman Mathews

1 *Broad & Sustained* ♩ = 60

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mp *sonoro*

bring out melody

l.h.

notable. elevated.

8vb

5

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l.h.

poco rit.

notable. elevated.

8vb



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The image displays a musical score for 'The Swan' by Camille Saint-Saëns. The score is written for piano and includes a tempo marking of 'Poco meno mosso' with a quarter note equal to 56 beats. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two main sections: a piano introduction and a waltz section. The piano introduction features a waltz melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The waltz section begins with a 'ritenuto' marking and a 'pp' (pianissimo) dynamic. The score is presented in a clear, professional layout with standard musical notation, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'For perusal purposes only. Do not copy' is overlaid across the center of the page. The Graphite logo is visible in the bottom right corner.

12

mp con riposo

As the time draws

12

Red. simile

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14

nigh

gloom - ing a

14

16
cloud, A dread be - yond of I

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18 *molto espress.*
know not what dark - ens me.

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p cresc. poco a poco

20 *mf*
I shall go forth,

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22 *f*

I shall tra - verse the States a - while, but I

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24 *poco allargando*

can-not tell whith-er or how long,

24 *poco allargando*

pp a tempo

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26 *cresc. poco a poco*

Per-haps soon some

26 *cresc. poco a poco*

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28

day or night while I am sing - ing my voice ————— will sud-den - ly

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30

ff *lunga* Tempo I° *mf*

cease. O

ff *mp*

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35

book, ————— O chants! ————— must all then a - mount to but this? Must we

poco piu mosso

legato

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39

bare-ly ar-rive — at this be - ginning of us? and yet it is e -

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42

nough, O soul; O soul, we have

cresc. poco a poco

piu sostenuto

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45

pos - i - tive - ly ap - pear'd

non pressante e legato

molto rit.

48 *p* *molto rit. e espress.* Adagio ♩ = 56

that is e - nough.

ff *p* *legato*

50

allargando *arpeggio lentamente* *p morendo* *pp*

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Red. * Red. *

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VI. Grand Is the Seen

Walt Whitman

Norman Mathews

1 *Gioioso* ♩ = 60

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legato

mf

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con pedale

3 *mf*

Grand is the seen, the light to me

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retain 6/8 meter, not 2/4

simile

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5 grand are the sky and stars,

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7 Grand is the earth, and grand are last - - - ing

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9 time and space, And grand their

broadly *f* *rit.*

notable. elevated.

12

laws so mul - ti - form, puz - zling, ev - o - lu -

p

a tempo *cresc.* *subito p*

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15

tion - ar y; But grand - er far the

broadly f

rit. *f*

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18

un - seen soul of me, com - pre - hend - ing, en -

a tempo *subito p* *cresc. poco a poco*

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21

dow - ing all those, _____

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24

Light - ing the light, the sky and stars,

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26

delv - ing the earth, sail - ing the sea, _____

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f

cresc.

29 *cantando*

(What were all those, in - deed, with-out thee, un - seen

29 *subito p* *cresc. poco a poco*

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32 soul? of what a - mount with-out thee?)

32 *sempre cresc.*

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35 More ev - o - lu - tion - ar - y, vast, puz - zling, O my

35

37 *ff*

soul! More mul - ti - form

ff bring out counterpoint

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39 far more

subito p *cresc. poco a poco*

ff

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41 last - ing thou than they.

f *sempre cresc.*

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43

Musical score for measures 43-44. The score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. Measure 43 begins with a quarter rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure 44 contains a half note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. A large, light gray watermark with the word "Graphite" and a trademark symbol is overlaid on the score.

45

Musical score for measures 45-46. The score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. Measure 45 begins with a quarter rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure 46 contains a half note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. A large, light gray watermark with the word "Graphite" and a trademark symbol is overlaid on the score.

45

Musical score for measures 45-46. The score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. Measure 45 begins with a quarter rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure 46 contains a half note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. A large, light gray watermark with the word "Graphite" and a trademark symbol is overlaid on the score.

VII. The Last Invocation

Walt Whitman

Norman Mathews

1 *Sostenuto e cantando* ♩ = 52

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mp

con pedale

ten.

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4

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plaintively

ten.

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7 *mp*

At the last, □

poco rit. *a tempo*

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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

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mf

3

19

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

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notable. elevated.

p

3

5/4

19

decresc.

ten.

cantando

p

5/4

Red.

*

22

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

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p

5/4

3/4

5/4

Red.

*

Red.

*

25

espr. *subito p*

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

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notable. elevated.

28

più f

Set ope the doors O

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31

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

soul. Ten - - - der ly—

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

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33

be not im - pa - - - - - tient,

33

ten.

cresc.

rit. molto

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f *Maestoso—triumphantly* ♩ = 60

(Strong) is your hold O mor - tal flesh,

f

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39

ff

is your hold

39

ff

senza rit.

Ad. *

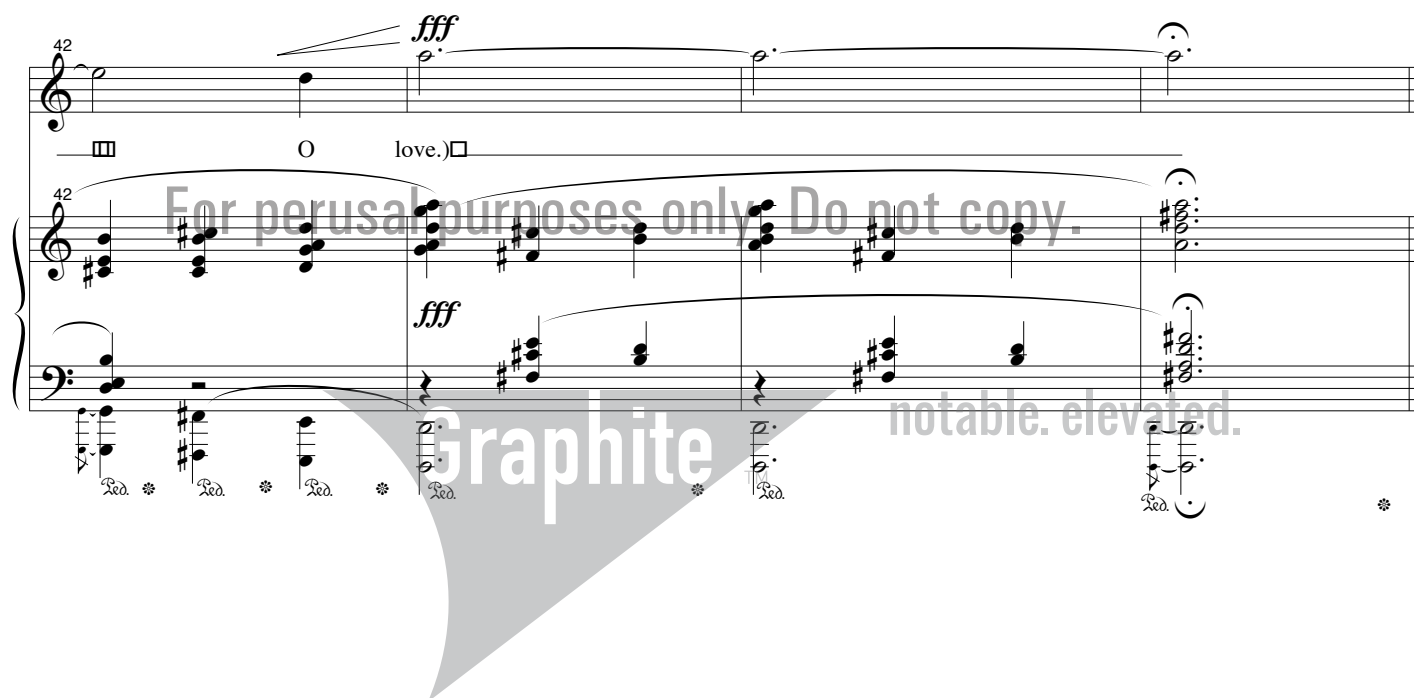
42 *fff*

O love.)

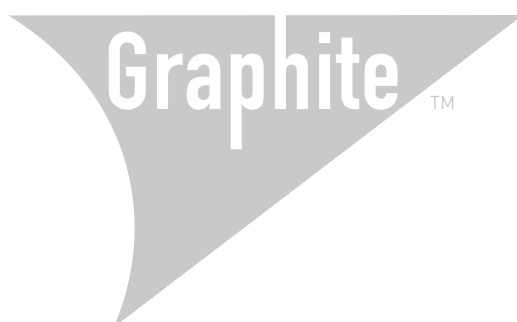
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Norman Mathews



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 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, was read 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:

Eric William Barnum	GP - B003	The Frozen Grail (cycle)	soprano, piano
Eric William Barnum	GP - B007	Lucy (cycle)	soprano, piano
Abbie Betinis	GP - B005	The Clan of the Lichens (cycle)	soprano, piano
Jenni Brandon	GP - B001	Imperceptible	soprano, piano
Jenni Brandon	GP - B002	Dog Tales (cycle)	soprano, flute, clarinet, piano
Matthew Culloton	GP - C003	That Shadow My Likeness (collection)	voice, piano
Martha Hill Duncan	GP - D017	Singing in the Northland, Vol. 1 (collection)	voice, piano
Martha Hill Duncan	GP - D018	Singing in the Northland, Vol. 2 (collection)	voice, 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 - H005	love. songs (cycle)	baritone, piano
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H005.1	love. songs (cycle)	soprano, piano
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H007	Songs of Fields and Prairies (cycle)	soprano, piano
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H008	The Sweetness of My Dreams (cycle)	mezzo-soprano, piano
Jocelyn Hagen	GP - H010	The Time of Singing Has Come (cycle)	soprano, tenor, piano
Norman Mathews	GP - M001	Songs of the Poet (cycle)	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.
Paul J. Rudoi	GP - R008	Child of the Heartless Wind (cycle)	high voice, piano
Timothy C. Takach	GP - T008	Departure (cycle)	high voice, piano

Graphite Publishing sells digital scores (via pdf documents) at www.graphitepublishing.com. The music published by Graphite includes quality compositions where excellence and accessibility meet: unique yet emotional; challenging yet appealing; innovative and enjoyable to experience.