

Score

Three Whitman Songs

Joelle Wallach

medium voice, clarinet in B-flat, horn, and bassoon or 'cello



COMPOSER FACSIMILE EDITION
Program note and Composer Bio on last page

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Three Whitman Songs

medium voice, clarinet in B-flat, horn, and bassoon or 'cello

I

Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun

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Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling,
 Give me autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard,
 Give me a field where the unmow'd grass grows,
 Give me an arbor, give me the trellis'd grape,
 ...odorous at sunrise
 ...a sweet-breath'd woman
 ...a perfect child... away aside from the noise of the world...
 Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse by myself, for my own ears only,
 Give me O Nature your primal sanities!
 Yet ...I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing my cries,
 see my own soul trampling down what it ask'd for.)

II

A Noiseless Patient Spider

Page 8

A noiseless patient spider,
 ...
 It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
 Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

 And you O my soul where you stand,
 Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
 Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,
 ...
 Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

III

Reconciliation

Page 12

Word over all, beautiful as the sky!
 Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage, must in time be utterly lost;
 That the hands of the sisters Death and Night, incessantly softly
 wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world:
 ... For my enemy is dead--a man divine as myself is dead;
 I look where he lies, white-faced and still, in the coffin--I draw near;
 I bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

This score is "in C," with all pitches in all instruments sounding as written.

Three Whitman Songs

I

Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun

Walt Whitman (1865)

Joelle Wallach

$\text{♩} = 88-92$

Clarinet

Horn

'Cello
or
Bassoon

mp *mf*

Give me the splen - did, si - lent sun, all of its beams full daz - ling;

All instruments sounding as written.

5 *mf* *p*

give me the jui - -cy au-tum-nal fruit, a field where un - -mow'd grass grows;

7 *mf* *mp*

9 *mf* *poco* *mp*

give me an ar - bor _____ of trel-lis'd grapes,

11
 od - 'rous at sun - rise;

mp

mp

mp

13
 a sweet breath'd wo-man, a per-fect

p

f ma dolce

mf

mp

15
 child, a - way, a - side from the noise of the world.

mf

17 *mf* *poco*

Give me to war - ble spon - ta - ne - ous songs, re - liev'd, re - cluse by my - self,

19

for my ears on - ly, on - ly; give me na - ture's pri - mal sa - ni -

21 *subito meno mosso* *poch. poco misterioso* *non troppo*

ties. Yet I see what I sought to es - cape and I see my own soul, my

subito meno mosso

24 *f*

own soul tram-ple-ing down, tram-ple-ing down, tram-ple-ing down

mf

26 *mp*

what it ask'd for.

p

mp

29

p

pp

A Noiseless, Patient Spider

II

♩ = 84

mp

A noise-less, pa - tient

mp

spi - - der, it launched forth fi - la - ment, fi - la - ment, fi - la - ment, out ³of its -

poco

mp

6

self, e - ver un - reel - ing tire - less - ly speed - ing them.

mf

8

mp *poco*

And you, O my soul,

mp *poco* *f* *poco*

10

poco *f* *mf*

where you stand sur - round - ed, sur - round - ed in

mf

13 *mf*

mean - ing - less o - ceans of space, cease - less - ly mus - ing, ven - tur - ing, throw - ing;

poco f *mp*

15 *mp* *poco f*

you, O my soul, seek - ing the spheres, seek - ing the

mp

18 *a tempo dolce mp*

spheres to con - nect them; Till the

a tempo dolce mp

pp cantab. lontano

sub. pp

low C for cello version only

21

gos-sa-mer thread you fling catch some-where, my soul, — O my soul! —

cantabile
p

mp

25

Rit.

Rit.

lontano
pp

legato

low C held as double stop for cello version only

III Reconciliation

$\text{♩} = 66$

mp

Word o - ver all, beau - ti - ful as the sky!

Clarinet tacet

mp

mp

5 Beau-ti-ful that war must in time be ut-ter-ly lost;

mf

p

mf

9 That the hands of Death and

mp

mf

poco

cantab. mf

12 night in-ces-sant-ly soft-ly wash a - gain, and e - ver a - gain this soil'd world.

mp

p

mp cantab.

15 *mp*

My e-ne-my is dead a

mp

sempre mp cantab.

19

man as di-vine as my-self; he lies, white-faced and still... I draw near

mp

22

bend down and light-ly touch his face with my lips.

cantab.

26 *mf*

Word o-ver all, beau-ti-ful as the sky! Beau-ti-ful

poco f

cantab.

poco

mp

30

that war must in time be ut-ter-ly lost; that the hands of Death

mf *mp* *piu f*

33

and Night in - ces-sant-ly soft-ly wash a - gain, and e - ver a - gain this

poco *p*

double stops for cello version only

36

soil'd world.

rit. *pp* *rit.* *rit.*

small notes for bassoon version

Three Whitman Songs

Like the Walt Whitman poems on which they are based, the *Three Whitman Songs* display Whitman's views, his idealism, exhilaration and disillusionment. The ascending triplet melodic motif of the first song, "Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun," reflects not only the natural rhythm of the text, but also Whitman's exuberant spirit. The song ends, as the poem ends, with the bitter suggestion of Whitman's post-Civil War despondency at mankind's cruelty. The second song, "A noiseless patient spider," compares the creativity of the soul's continual search to a spider's constant weaving. The instruments introduce a characteristic weaving figure which creeps into the vocal line as well as accompanying it. The clarinet does not play the last song. "Reconciliation," is both its subject and its title. As variants of the rhythmic and melodic patterns of the first two songs recur, recalling the work and worries of the soul, the singer heroically voices Whitman's resolution of his conflicting perspectives.

Joelle Wallach's *Three Whitman Songs* was composed during 1989. Like her other vocal chamber music it fuses Wallach's central ongoing concerns in chamber music with those in her vocal output. The voice is used in a natural, unforced way and explores the implicit rhythm and melody of the spoken word. As Whitman requests in the first song, the singer appears to warble "spontaneous" songs. The instruments take up the same musical ideas and in developing them, weave a context for the voice, all the while answering the voice and one another.

Joelle Wallach

Joelle Wallach, winner of a 2013 Copland Foundation Grant, composes music for orchestra, chamber ensembles, choruses and solo voice. Her String Quartet 1995 was the American Composers Alliance nominee for the 1997 Pulitzer Prize in Music. The New York Philharmonic Ensembles premiered her octet, *From the Forest of Chimneys*, written to celebrate their 10th anniversary; and the New York Choral Society commissioned her secular oratorio, *Toward a Time of Renewal*, for 200 voices and orchestra to commemorate their 35th Anniversary Season in Carnegie Hall.

A pre-concert lecturer for the New York Philharmonic and the Dallas Symphony, Dr. Wallach speaks on a broad range of musical subjects, bringing fresh insights to familiar works and opening doors to modern ones and to those more infrequently heard.

Wallach grew up in Morocco, but makes her home in the Bronx, where she was born and to which she has recently returned. For more information and to hear samples of more of Wallach's music, visit her website: www.joellewallach.com.