

That Music Always Round Me

Three Poems of Walt Whitman

for High Voice and Piano

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1984

This setting of three poems by Walt Whitman--my first song cycle--was written for tenor Darrell Lauer in 1984. Each of the poems evokes a different aspect of music, and the songs might accordingly be thought of as attempts to supply the music that Whitman, an ardent music lover, tells us he "hears."

"I Hear America Singing" is Whitman's vision of a world in which people are fulfilled, not alienated, by their work. But it belongs to a world that was perhaps already lost when the poem was written; the work Whitman describes is physical and most often artisanal, the work of a preindustrial America. The music expands with the text; as the song proceeds, its texture gradually grows richer; its pace quickens. "Dirge for Two Veterans" mourns the dead of the Civil War. The song is haunted by the drumbeats imagined by the text, which it tries, and ultimately fails, *not* to hear. A more welcome hearing returns with "That Music Always Round Me." The poem is at once a paean of praise for music and a vision of human community. The song responds with rich sonorities and a liquid vocal line. It aims at a tranquility that persists even at the most exalted moments.

Duration: 18 minutes. The text of the "Dirge" has been slightly modified.

1. I Hear America Singing

♩ = 88 *poco rubato*

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of three systems. The first system (measures 1-6) features a vocal line with rests and a piano accompaniment starting with a *p dolce* dynamic. The piano accompaniment includes a *poco cresc.* marking and a *tr* (trill) in the right hand. Pedal markings (Ped.) are present in both hands. The second system (measures 7-12) begins with a vocal line starting on measure 7 with the lyrics "I hear". The piano accompaniment features dynamics of *p*, *f*, *p*, *mp*, and *p*. The third system (measures 13-18) continues the vocal line with lyrics "A - mer-i - ca sing - ing," and "I hear A-mer-i - ca sing -". The piano accompaniment includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and dynamics of *mp* and *f*. The score concludes with a *cresc.* marking in the piano accompaniment.

That Music Always Round Me

18 *ten. p*
ing, sing - ing.

18 *f p f ff f 3 p*

sostenuto Pedal (SP) *8va* *SP*

21 *accel.*
The var - ied ca - rols I hear.

21 *8va loco 8va loco f LH LH*

*Red. ** *Red. **

♩ = 88
24 *f mf*
Those of me - cha - nics, each one sing - ing his, each one

24 *8va loco 3 3 mf*

*Red. ** *SP* *SP*

27 *cresc.*

sing - ing his _____ as it should _____ be,

27 *cresc.*

8va - - - simile

30 *ff*

blithe _____ and strong, the car-pen-ter

30 *ff*

p

8va - - -

34

sing - ing his _____ as he mea - sures his plank or beam,

34

p

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37 *mf*

the ma - son sing - ing his, sing - his

mf *p*

SP

40 *pp* *p*

as he makes rea - dy for work, or leaves

pp *p*

43

off work,

sf *f*

SP

46

the boat-man sing-ing _____ sing - ing what be - longs _____ to him in his

SP 3

49

boat, the deck-hand sing-ing _____ on the steam-boat deck, _____

ff f rit. mp

SP SP

52

the shoe-mak-er sing-ing _____ as he sits _____ at his bench,

a tempo p simile

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55 *pp* *rit.* *a tempo*

the hat-ter sing - ing as he stands,

55 *pp* *p* *8va*

58 *mf* *f*

the wood - cut - ters song,

58 *p* *sffz* *f* *mf* *sffz* *f* *3*

SP *SP*

61 *3*

the plough-boy's on his way in the morn - ing,

61 *3* *3* *3*

SP

64 *dim.* *p* *pp*

in the morn-ing or at noon in - ter-mis - sion, or at sun - down,

dim. *p* *pp*

SP *SP*

67 *mp*

the de - li - cious sing - ing

mp *p* *mp*

LH 5

70 *mf* *f*

of the mo - ther, or of the young wife at

mf *f*

3 5 *SP*

That Music Always Round Me

10

72 *p*

work, _____ or of the girl sew-ing or

72 *p*

SP

74 ♩ = 96 *f*

wash-ing, _____ each sing-ing, _____ each sing -

74 *f*

ped. * 5

77 *poco riten.* *ff* *a tempo* *f*

ing, _____ each sing-ing what be-longs to him or her, _____

77 *ff* *f*

80 *ff* *p*

and to none o - ther, none o - ther, —

80 *ff* *p* *sub.* *cresc. poco a poco*

SP *SP*

83 *mf* *f*

the day what be-longs to the day, —

83 *mf* *f* *RH*

*Red. * Red. * simile*

86 *mp*

at night the par - ty of young fel - lows,

86 *mp*

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12

88 *cresc.* *mf* *f*

ro - bust, friend - ly, sing - ing with o - pen

cresc. *mf* *f*

SP *simile* to end.

91

mouths their strong me - lo - dious songs.

94

espressivo, con licenza

96

ritenuto *tor-* *nan-* *do* *a tempo* *molto rall.*

3 3 3 5

99

tornando *a tempo* *molto rall.*

5 5 *ff*

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14

2. Dirge for Two Veterans

♩ = 54

102

pp *p* *pp*

rit. *a tempo*

SP

107

sf *p* *mp* *p*

Led. *

112

rit.

The

mf *p* *ff* *p*

Led. *

116 *a tempo*

last sun - beam light - ly falls on the fi - nish'd Sab - bath on the

119

pave - ment here, — and there be - yond, it is look - ing — down a

122 *molto rall.* *molto rall.* *a tempo* *mp*

new made dou - ble grave. Lo, the moon a - scend - ing,

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126 *poco cresc.*

up from the east the sil - ver - y round moon, — beau - ti - ful o - ver the

128 *long pp*

house - tops, gha - st - ly phan - tom moon, im - mense and si - lent moon.

131 *mp* *f*

I see a sad pro - ces - sion, and I

134 *f* *p* *non cresc.* *f*

hear the sound of com-ing full-key'd bu-gles, all the chan - nels of the ci-ty street they're

134 *p* *f*

* Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

136 *pp*

flood-ing — as with voi - ces and with tears.

136 *p* *pp* *p*

Ped. *

139 *p cresc. poco a poco*

I hear the

139 *f* *ff sempre*

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18

141 *f*

great drums pound - ing, and the small drums stead - y whir - ring, and eve - ry

143 *ff*

blow of the great con-vul-sive drums strikes me through and through!

146 *p* *pp*

For the son is brought with the fa - ther,

148 *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

in the fore - most ranks of the fierce as - sault they fell, ___

148 *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

150

two ve - terans son and fa - ther dropped to -

150

151 *ff*

ge - ther, ___ and the dou - - - - ble

151 *ff* *Ped.* *

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152

grave a - waits them. *espress.*

152

5

Red.

*

154

mp cresc.

Now near-er blow the bu-gles and the drums strike more con-

154

sf mp cresc. mp cresc.

Red.

*

157

f ff f decresc.

vul - sive, and the day - light o'er the pave-ment quite has fad - ed,

157

f f decresc.

159 *mf* *f* *cresc.*

and the strong ————— dead

mp *f* *cresc.*

160

march en-wraps me. o

ff *cresc.* *espress.*

mf *sub.* *p*

162 *accel.* *rit.* *a tempo*

fp

RH

Lead. *

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165 *p*

In the east - ern sky up - buoy-ing, the sor - row ful vast phan - tom moves il -

165 *molto espress.*

168 *pp*

lu - mined, — 'tis some mo - ther's large trans - pa - rent

168 *pp*
una corda

ped. *

170 *poco riten. a tempo f*

face, in the hea - vens bright - er grow-ing. O

170 *tre corde*
p *f*

173 *ff* *mf*

strong dead march, you please me. O moon im-mense,

176 *f* *p*

with your sil - very face you soothe me. O my sol - diers

178 *3*

twain, pas-sing to bur - i - al, what I have I al - so give you.

That Music Always Round Me

181 *pp*

The moon gives you light, and the bu-gles and the drums give you mus-ic,

181

pp *p* *pp*

185

and my heart, O my sol-diers son and fa-ther,

185

pp *p* *pp*

ped.

189

my heart, my heart gives you love.

189

pp *long ff* *pp*

SP

194

194

p *pp* *sf* *p*

Ped.

198 *accel.* *a tempo*

198

f *ff* *fff* *p*

That Music Always Round Me

26

3. That Music Always Round Me.

♩ = 66

202

202

pp p

8va

207

p

That mu-sic al-ways round me, un-ceas-ing,

207 (8va)

p RH LH *poco cresc.*

211

un-be-gin - ning, still un-taught I did not hear,

211

p *poco cresc.*

5

214 *mp cresc.* *f*

but now the chor - us I hear _____ and am e - la - ted. _____

mp cresc. *f*

217

A te - nor strong, _____ as - scend - ing with pow - er and health, _____

220

_____ with glad notes of day-break I hear, _____

subito p

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28

224 *p* *poco rit.* *a tempo*

a so-pra-no, — at in-ter-vals sail-ing o-ver the top of im-mense waves,

227 *mf* *f* *ff*

a trans-par-ent bass, — shud-der-ing lus-cious-ly

231 *f* *f sub.*

un-der and through the u-ni-verse, the tri-

235 *ff*

um - phant tut - ti, the fune - ral wail - ings with sweet flutes and vi - o - lins,

238 *rit.* *a tempo* *p*

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

241 *pp*

hear not the vol - umes of sound mere - ly, I am moved

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244 *rit.* *a tempo*

by the ex - qui - site mean - ings.

espress.

p

247 *mf cresc.* *f* *f* *ff*

I lis - ten to the dif - ferent voi - ces — wind - ing in — and out, striv -

mf *cresc.* *f* *ff*

8va

250 *rit.*

ing, con - tend - ing with fi - e - ry ve - he - mence to ex - cel each o - ther in e -

8va *loco* *sf*

253 *a tempo* *rit.* *a tempo* ***p*** *parlando*

mo - tion. I do not think the per-

257 *cantabile* *poco cresc.* ***p*** *parlando* *cantabile*

for - mers know them-selves, but now I think I be -

261 *rit.*

gin to know them.

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32

266 *a tempo* *rit.*

266 *ff* *subito p* *pp* *ppp*

And. *8va* ----- *