

ROGER SESSIONS
When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd

New World Records 80296

Roger Sessions
When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd

by Michael Steinberg

When Roger Sessions composed *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, he used a copy of *Leaves of Grass* that he had bought at the Harvard Coop in 1911. He was fourteen and a freshman at the college. Though born in Brooklyn, he is by heritage and temperament a New Englander who refers to Hadley, Massachusetts, as “my ancestral hangout.” He started studying piano with his mother at four and began composing at twelve, realizing as he was biking home one day that the music he heard in his head was his own. A year later he had written his first opera, *Lancelot and Elaine*. About then, he was also ready to admit his vocation to his parents:

I suppose they were a little anxious about such a decision, and so, surreptitiously, they asked the advice of a lot of musicians including Humperdinck, who was in New York at the time. My father was going to see Puccini, but he didn't succeed. I heard, years later in Italy, that Puccini had told a story of having been asked to see the music of a young boy in America and to advise his parents whether he ought to go on with it. He paced the floor all night and decided he couldn't take the responsibility, so he called off the appointment. I don't know whether it was I or not but I assume it was, because Puccini did call off the appointment.

The reports being “generally favorable,” Sessions did go on, first with Archibald Davison and Edward Burlingame Hill at Harvard, then, because outbreak of war interfered with a plan to go to Ravel in Paris, with Horatio Parker at Yale. As an instructor at Smith College, sure that he knew too little, he continued his education through books by Cherubini and D'Indy and after that, in a critical decision, by going to study with Ernest Bloch. He soon became Bloch's assistant at the Cleveland Institute of Music and eventually succeeded him as director.

In 1923 Sessions composed incidental music for Leonid Andreyev's Symbolist play *The Black Maskers*; the concert suite drawn from that work was the first score to make a reputation for him. From 1925 until 1933, thanks to a series of grants and prizes, he lived in Paris, Berlin, and Florence, composing, among other works, his First Symphony, which was given its premiere by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony in 1927. It was also in the mid-twenties that Sessions first conceived of composing *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*. He made voluminous sketches but decided he was not getting along terribly well with the project and resolved to wait until he felt ready to give the poem the setting he thought it deserved.

During a six-month visit to New York in 1928, Sessions became cofounder and co-director of the famous Copland-Sessions new music concerts. When he returned to the United States for good in 1933, he resumed his other career as a teacher of composition, the most important in America in the last forty years: Milton Babbitt, Edward T. Cone, David Del Tredici, David Diamond, Vivian Fine, John Harbison, Andrew Imbrie, Earl Kim, Leon Kirchner, Fred Lerdahl, and Hugo Weisgall are among his former pupils, and a diverse lot they are, too. Sessions worked briefly in New York, at the Malkin Conservatory in Boston (where Arnold Schoenberg found his first American teaching post at about the same time), and at Boston University; he joined the Princeton faculty in 1935, spent seven

years at the University of California at Berkeley, and eventually returned to Princeton, retiring in 1965. He wrote several books as well as countless articles and reviews. In 1968-69 he was Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard (his lectures are published as *Questions About Music*). He has received many prizes and honors. It is tempting to include having his work ignored by the Pulitzer committee among these, though that body did award him—and, for the same reason, Duke Ellington—a special citation in 1974. His published work, nearly half of it done after the age of sixty, includes eight symphonies, three concertos, two operas (*The Trial of Lucullus* and *Montezuma*), a large *scena* for soprano with orchestra (*The Idyll of Theocritus*), chamber music for various combinations, choral pieces, three piano sonatas along with smaller works for that instrument, and a sonata for violin. [A Sessions song, “On the Beach at Fontana,” appears on New World Records 80243-2, *But Yesterday Is Not Today*.]

In his early music, for example the Symphony No. 1, the surface, with its steady but irregularly accented eighth-notes, is Stravinskian. But even then Sessions was altogether his own man, writing a music stockier than Stravinsky's, richer in texture, and, as John Harbison has pointed out, with a “total lack of Stravinskian irony and distance.” And it is in the Largo of that symphony, its low pianissimo brass and bassoons and its much-divided strings making a glorious though somehow chaste sound, that he discovers the spacious sonorities that were to become so familiar in the music of Copland and which we would learn to identify as quintessentially “American.”

The Stravinskian surface soon disappeared from Sessions' music. What remained—and all this is present in the First Symphony—is the long-breathed melody, of which the most immediately beguiling example is the opening of the Piano Sonata No. 1 (1930), as well as an immense intellectual and physical energy. That energy produces a music dense and active, in which almost nothing is neutral, where even accompanying figures are apt to be so specific as to take on a vivid life of their own. It throws events at you at a tremendous rate, and it is, to quote Harbison again, all “abundance and sublime willfulness.” It is, moreover, profoundly traditional in rhythm and phrasing, in the tensions and releases of its arching melodies, in its commitment to what Sessions liked to call “the long line,” in its expressive and ethical intent.

The Piano Sonata No. 1, the Violin Concerto (1935), the String Quartet No. 1 (1936), *Pages from a Diary* (piano pieces of 1939-40, given the tacky title *From My Diary* by the publisher), Piano Sonata No. 2 and Symphony No.2 (both 1946), *The Trial of Lucullus* (1947), and the String Quartet No.2 (1951) are important way stations in the development of Sessions' language: the strands of polyphony become ever more independent, the bass becomes more bass-ic and the treble moves higher, the harmony becomes more chromatic. Looking at the Piano Sonata No. 2, Milton Babbitt asked Sessions, “Do you realize you're on the brink of the twelve-tone system?” Sessions was not so sure. As late as 1952 he said to Luigi Dallapiccola, “I doubt whether I will ever use it. After all, I'm fifty-five years old, and it's a little late in the day for me to turn around and adopt an entirely new technique.” Sessions' account continues:

Of course it was in the following winter that I wrote my Solo Violin Sonata! As a result of the fact that the opening theme contained twelve different tones, and seemed to go naturally on that basis, I caught myself using the twelve-tone system. I wasn't going to say anything about it to anybody. But when Andrew Imbrie saw it for the first time, he looked at it and counted, “One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven twelve.” Then he read it and he said, “But it's still your music.” I said, “Well, of course, it's still my music. If it weren't my music I wouldn't have any business to do that.”

The biggest project of those middle years, indeed the biggest of Sessions' life, was the opera *Montezuma* on a text by G. Antonio Borgese, novelist, Dante scholar, professor of German literature, aesthete, political historian and philosopher, and impassioned anti-fascist. Their conversations about *Montezuma* began in 1935, and Sessions made his first sketches at once, but the score was finished only in 1962 (it was produced by the Deutsche Oper in West Berlin two years later and received its American premiere by Sara Caldwell's Opera Company of Boston in March 1976). Work on *Montezuma* provided the occasion for learning still more about compression and variety and, perhaps most strikingly, for the cultivation of a newly brilliant sense of orchestral color. And after the completion of this magnum opus, new large-scale compositions, including four more symphonies, the Double Concerto for violin and cello, the Third Piano Sonata, the Concertino for chamber ensemble, psalm settings, and the Whitman cantata, came with great speed and with, if anything, greater richness than before in the unruffled flow of their polyphony and in that highly personal, instantly recognizable mix of passion and serenity.

The Whitman cantata continues a series of elegies begun with the Adagio of the Symphony No.2, during whose writing the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt occurred, and which includes the Piano Sonata No. 3, the composer's response to the death of President Kennedy; the Canons for String Quartet, "written on the high seas" in memoriam Igor Stravinsky; and the piano pieces dedicated to the memory of Luigi Dallapiccola.

The way into the music of *Lilacs* is through the poem, as the music is the way—or *a* way—into the text. The Civil War in which Whitman served in the offices of the Paymaster, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Attorney General, but also as a sort of nurse's aide and "consolant" in military hospitals, was a critical emotional experience in his life. He always wanted to put together a book in which he might gather that experience. It would be part mosaic, part history, he thought, but he never brought it about. (*Walt Whitman's Civil War*, using letters, lectures, journalistic reports, and poems, is something like a realization of the plan.) Abraham Lincoln was shot on April 14, 1865, and died early the next day. *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* was the forty-six-year-old Whitman's response to that death and to the progress of the funeral train across the country to Springfield, Illinois. The poem was published that fall in *Sequel to Drum-Taps* and was eventually incorporated in *Leaves of Grass*. (Sessions' cantata is based on the first version.) *Leaves of Grass* grew over a period of thirty-seven years from twelve poems to nearly four hundred. In 1865 Whitman was fired from his clerkship at the Department of the Interior because Secretary James Harlan thought *Leaves of Grass* indecent.

No American poet has been set to music more than Whitman: Ernst Bacon, Arthur Bliss, Ernest Bloch, Elliott Carter, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Frederick Delius, Norman Dello Joio, Howard Hanson, Roy Harris, Hans Werner Henze, Paul Hindemith, Gustav Holst, Charles Martin Loeffler, Franz Schreker, William Schuman, Fartein Valen, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Kurt Weill make a very incomplete list of composers who have tackled his texts (and have sometimes been undone by them). After his first *Lilacs* sketches in the twenties, Sessions came back to Whitman in 1944 when he set *Turn O Libertad* for mixed chorus with piano duet. The sonorous musicality of Whitman is seductive. The sometimes inflated rhetoric is a potential trap, and the recklessly large-breathed, quasi-Biblical rhythms and inversions can present grave difficulties. It is just there that Sessions succeeds especially. His own art combines severity and control with the "abundance, wilfulness, [and] Dionysian qualities" to which Harbison calls attention, and so, projecting the poetry now in simple chordal declamation, now in the long, high-arched melodies of which he is the master, he conveys

wonderfully the feel and variety of Whitman's lines. (Hindemith, in his setting of *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, completed in April, 1946, with Franklin D. Roosevelt in mind, rather straight-laces those lines, while Delius, in the lovely *Sea Drift*, delicately and tenderly responsive though he is to the poet's emotional world, tends to let everything run awfully liquid.)

Sessions divides the text into three parts. The first presents the symbols around which Whitman builds his poem—lilac, star, and thrush—and is introductory in character and very short. The second describes the progress of the funeral train: it is pageantry and catalogues, public poetry, though ending in the quiet of “Sing on! sing on, you gray-brown bird...” The third is Whitman's loving contemplation of Death. Its focal point—and that of the whole poem and the whole cantata—is the carol

Come, lovely and soothing Death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later, delicate Death.

For this moment the composer reserves the voice of the solo contralto, a sound he has let us hear just once, and briefly, in the second part, at the lines

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that is gone?
And what shall my perfume be, to adorn the grave of him I love?

Sessions made some cuts toward the end of the poem. Those parts of the poem recapitulate and summarize, and that expressive and structural task he has chosen to turn over to the music itself, which can accomplish it even more powerfully and evocatively. (A few discrepancies of detail—”and” in place of “with” for example—arose because Sessions was working from memory; some of these were caught and corrected, some were not.) From the beginning, Sessions establishes poetic and musical associations—of the figure that flute and clarinet play in the first measures, for example, with the lilacs or, more broadly, with April (“fourth-month” in Whitman's Quaker-borrowed language) and spring and renewal; of the phrases for flute and piccolo, sometimes with xylophone, accompanied always by the same harmony, that evoke the song of the hermit thrush.

Were there space for it, one could point to detail after detail in which that network of associations is elaborated—to the wonderfully fluid way the composer moves the text in and out among the voices of the chorus and the soloists, including the unexpected and touching assignment of some of the most personal lines to the chorus, so that it is all of us who mourn with the poet; to the special moments, like the undulating violin music for the “sea-winds, blown from east and west”; the vaulted melody with which the violins follow the phrase “Night and day journeys a coffin”; the train music; the “tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang”; the “glad serenades” and dances the poet proposes to Death, and the ecstasy in “I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O Death!”; the barely Pd palpable ghost of *Tristan* at the words “and for love, sweet love” in the carol; the field after the battle, and the obsessive, explosive returns to the word “suffer'd”; the mixture near the end, part doubling, part variant, of chorus and orchestra at “Yet each I keep, and all, retrievements out of the night”; the last cadence, for bass clarinet, alto flute, trombone, clarinet, with which the music does not so much cease as recede out of earshot.

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Whitman and Music

by Justin Kaplan

“But for the opera I could never have written *Leaves of Grass*,” Walt Whitman once said. Another time he described his “method” in the construction of poems as “strictly the method of the Italian Opera.” He had in mind not only the stage drama and vocal expressiveness of Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, and Verdi but also their overtures, which had suggested to him an organizing principle for a new sort of poetry, unconventional, spontaneous, cadenced, and unrhymed. Few American poets have been as consciously and deeply indebted to music as Whitman. No other American poet, in turn, has had his work set to music by so many different hands and to such good effect.

As a journalist in Brooklyn during the eighteen-forties, Whitman often crossed over to New York in the evening to listen appreciatively enough to Mendelssohn's oratorio *St. Paul* and to performances by Henri Vieuxtemps, Ole Bull, and other foreign virtuosos. But for a while his “musical passion,” as he called it, settled for homegrown and homelier manifestations: programs by itinerant family troupes—the Cheneys, the Hutchinsons, the Alleghanians, Amphions, Harmoneons, and the like—who for him exemplified “heart-singing” as opposed to “art-singing.” He was moved by their renditions of “The Soldier's Farewell,” “My Mother's Bible,” “Lament of the Irish Emigrant,” “The Old Granite State,” and such sentimental and topical ballads. At the outset he favored this sort of music over “the agonized squalls, the lackadaisical drawlings, the sharp ear-piercing shrieks, the gurgling death-rattles” that had shaped his first impressions of grand opera, the rage of New York during the decade. Opera companies and lead singers from Paris, Milan, London, Havana, and New Orleans performed almost nightly during the season at Niblo's, Palmo's, the Broadway Theatre, the Park, the Bowery, Castle Garden, and the elegant new Astor Place.

Originally a narrow cultural nativist in such matters, after about a year of opera-going Whitman came around to conceding that foreign composers and performers exercised an elevating influence on American musical taste. Soon his opera reviews moved from tolerance to sophisticated enjoyment and finally to “passion.” “Art-singing” and “heart-singing” were no longer opposed but had been made one and the same by the Italians. The music and drama of grand opera—rich, supple, expressive, liberating, and contemporary—had entered Whitman's sensibility and had begun to shape his poetic program. His conversion became complete during the 1852-53 season when he attended all the New York performances of the great Marietta Alboni. “I hear the trained soprano,” he was to write in *Song of Myself* in 1855, “she convulses me like the climax of my love-grip.” Music had become for him the supreme “combiner, nothing more spiritual, nothing more sensuous, a god, yet completely human.”

“I remember where I was stopping at the time,” he recalled of Lincoln's assassination on April 14, 1865, “the season being advanced, there were many lilacs in full bloom. By one of those caprices that enter and give tinge to events without being at all a part of them, I find myself reminded of the great tragedy of that day by the sight and odor of these blossoms. It never fails.” The President's coffin was banked with sprays of lilac. Written in intense emotion and with great speed during the weeks immediately following the tragedy (and first published that fall), *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* is one of the last of Whitman's major poems and among his fullest explorations in verse of the metaphors and formal latitudes of music. True, the death of Lincoln, an archangel in Whitman's

imagination (“the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands”), also evoked the conventional and thoroughly uncharacteristic *O Captain! My Captain!* To Whitman's disgust this became his most popular poem, a staple in recitations and school-readers. (“I say, Damn My Captain . . . I'm almost sorry I ever wrote the poem,” he remarked in 1888. “It had certain emotional immediate causes for being: that's the best I can say for it myself.”) But *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* did not lack fervent admirers from the start. “The most sweet and sonorous nocturne ever chanted,” Swinburne called it—the terms he used acknowledge the poem's fundamentally musical feeling and structure. There are three main symbols or motifs: the Star (the slain president), the Lilac (the poet's tribute), and the Bird (voice of reconciliation and acceptance of “sane and sacred death”). Like musical themes they are developed in a manner roughly analogous to the sonata form.

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When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd was dedicated by the composer “To the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy.” The cantata was commissioned by the University of California, Berkeley, in commemoration of the one-hundredth anniversary of its foundation, and was given its first performance at Berkeley on May 23, 1971, with the University Symphony Orchestra and Chorus conducted by James Cunningham. The soloists were Helene Joseph, soprano; Stephanie Friedman, contralto; and Allen Shearer, baritone.

Track 1

I

Soprano

When lilacs last in the door-yard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd—and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Baritone

O ever-returning spring! trinity sure to me you bring;
Lilac blooming perennial, and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

Chorus

O powerful, western, fallen star!
O shades of night! O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd! O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless! O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud, that will not free my soul!

Baritone

In the door-yard fronting an old farm-house, near the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac bush, tall-growing, with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom, rising, delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With ev'ry leaf a miracle . . . and from this bush
A sprig, with its flower, I break.

Soprano

In the swamp, in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird,
Solitary, the thrush,
The hermit,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat!
Death's outlet song of life— (for well, dear brother, I know,
If thou wast not gifted to sing, thou would'st surely die.)

Track 2

II

Chorus

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes, and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from the ground,
Amid the grass in the fields, passing the endless grass;
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards;
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night, with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of inloop'd flags, with the cities drap'd in black,
With the show of the States themselves, as of crape-veil'd women, standing,
With processions long and winding, and the flambeaus of the night,
With the silent sea of faces,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
And the dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn;
Pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs,

And the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang;

Baritone

Here! coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.
(Nor for you, for one, alone;
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring:
For fresh as the morning—thus will I carol a song for you, O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death! I cover you over with roses and early lilies;
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you, and the coffins all of you, O death.)

Chorus

O western orb, sailing the heav'n!
Now I know what you must have meant,
As we walk'd up and down in the dark blue so mystic,
As we walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell, as you bent to me night after night,
As you droop'd from the sky low down, as if to my side, (while the other stars all look'd on;)
As we wander'd together, I saw, ere you went, how full you were of woe;
As I stood in the cold, transparent night,
As I watch'd where you pass'd,
And my soul, in its trouble, sank.

Baritone

Sing on, there in the swamp!
O singer bashful and tender! I come—I understand you;
But a moment I linger—for the star, my departing comrade, holds me.

Mezzo-soprano

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that is gone?
And what shall my perfume be, to adorn the grave of him I love?

Chorus

Sea-winds, blown from east and west,

Blown from the eastern sea, and blown from the western sea,

Mezzo-soprano

With these will I perfume the grave of him I love.

Soprano

O what shall the pictures be that I hang on the chamber walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Chorus

Pictures of growing spring, and farms, and homes,
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright,
With floods of yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air;
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees;
In the distance the flowing glaze of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there;
With ranging hills on the bank, with many a line against the sky, and shadows;
And the city at hand, with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life, and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

Lo! body and soul! this land!

Mighty Manhattan, with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships;
This varied and ample land—the South and the North in the light—Ohio's shores, and flashing
Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies, cover'd with grass and corn.

Lo! the most excellent sun, so calm and haughty;
The violet and purple morn, with just-felt breezes;
The gentle, soft-born measureless light;
The miracle, spreading, bathing all—the fulfill'd noon;
The coming eve, delicious—the welcome night, and the stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

Baritone

Sing on! sing on, you gray-brown bird!
Sing from the swamps, the recesses—pour your chant
Limitless out of the cedars and pines.

Soprano

Sing on dearest brother—warble your

Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

Soprano, Baritone, and Chorus

O liquid, and free, and tender!

O wild and loose to my soul! O wondrous singer!

You only I hear . . . yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart;)

Yet the lilac, with its mastering odor, holds me.

III

Baritone

Now while I sat in the day, and look'd forth,

In the close of the day, with its light, and the fields of spring, and the farmer preparing his crops,

In the large unconscious scenery of my land, with its lakes and forests,

In the heavenly aerial beauty,

Under the arching heavens of the afternoon, and the voices of children and women,

The many-moving sea-tides, and ships how they sail'd,

And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,

And the infinite separate houses, each with its daily usages;

And the streets, how their throbbings throb'd, and the cities pent—lo!

Falling upon them all, and enveloping me with the rest,

Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black cloud

And I knew Death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Chorus

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,

And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,

And, as holding the hands of companions,

I fled forth to the hiding, receiving night,

Down to the shores of the water,

To the solemn shadowy cedars, and the ghostly pines so still.

Baritone

And the singer so shy, receiv'd us comrades three;

And he sang what seem'd the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

And my spirit tallied the song.

Mezzo-Soprano

Come, lovely and soothing Death,

Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,

In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later, delicate Death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe, For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious;
And for love, sweet love—But praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding Death.

Dark Mother, always gliding near, with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee—I glorify thee above all;
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach, strong Deliveress!
When it is so—when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving, floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O Death.

From me to thee glad serenades, Dances for thee I propose, saluting thee—adornments and feastings
for thee;
And the sights of the open landscape, and the high-spread sky, are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.
The night, in silence, under many a star;
The ocean shore, and the husky whispering wave, whose voice I know;
And the soul turneth to thee, O vast and well-veil'd Death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song!
Over the rising and falling waves—over the myriad fields, and the prairies wide;
Over the dense-pack'd cities all, and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O Death!

Soprano

To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure, deliberate notes, spreading, filling the night.

Chorus

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist, and the swamp-perfume;

And I with my comrades there in the night.

Baritone

While my sight unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

Soloists and Chorus

And I saw askant the armies
I saw, as in noiseless dreams, hundreds of battle-flags;
Borne through the smoke of the battle, and pierc'd with missiles, I saw them,
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody;
And at last for a few shreds left on the staffs, (and all in silence,)
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men—I saw them;
I saw the debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the war;
And we saw they were not as was thought;
They themselves were fully at rest—they suffer'd not;
The living remain'd and suffer'd—the mother suffer'd,
And the wife and the child, and the musing comrade suffer'd,
And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

Passing the visions, passing the night;
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands;
Passing the song of the hermit bird, and the tallying song of my soul,
Passing, I leave thee, lilac with heart-shaped leaves;
I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning with spring.
I cease from my song for thee;
From my gaze on thee in the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous. with silver face in the night.

Yet each I keep, and all, retrievements out of the night;
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands...
Lilac and star and bird, twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines, and the cedars dusk and dim.

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SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

LPs

- The Black Maskers Suite*. (Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, Howard Hanson conducting). Mercury 75049.
- Chorale Preludes for Organ (four). (Mark Andrews, org.). University of Oklahoma 2.
- Concertino for Chamber Orchestra. (University of Chicago Players). Desto 7155.
- Concerto for Violin. (French Radio Orchestra, Gunther Schuller conducting; Paul Zukovsky, vln). CRI S-220.
- Duo for Violin and Piano. (Travers, vln.; Herz, pf.). Columbia ML-2169.

From My Diary (Four Pieces for Piano). (Herbert Rogers, pf.). CRI S-281.
Idyll of Theocritus. (Louisville Orchestra, Robert Whitney conducting; Audrey Nossaman, s.). Louisville 57-4.
 Quartet No.2. (Kohon Quartet). Vox SVBX-5304.
 Rhapsody for Orchestra. (New Philharmonia Orchestra, Frederick Prausnitz conducting). Argo ZRG-702.
 Sonata No.1 for Piano. (Robert Helps, pf.). CRI S-198E.
 Sonata No.2 for Piano. (Beveridge Webster, pf.). Dover 7265.
 Sonata No.3 for Piano. (Abramowitsch, pf.). International Piano Library 5000.
 Sonata for Violin Solo. (Robert Gross, vln.). Orion 73110.
 Symphony No.1. (Japan Philharmonic, Akeo Watanabe conducting). CRI 131E.
 Symphony No.2. (New York Philharmonic, Dmitri Mitropoulos conducting). CRI S-278E.
 Symphony No.3. (Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Igor Buketoff conducting). RCA LSC-3095.
 Symphony No.8. (New Philharmonia Orchestra, Frederick Prausnitz conducting). Argo ZRG-702.

CDs

Concerto for Orchestra. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa conducting. Hyperion CDA 66050.
 Concerto for Piano and Orchestra. Robert Taub, piano; Westchester Philharmonic, Paul Lustig Dunkel conducting. New World 80443-2.
 Concerto for Violin and Orchestra. Paul Zukofsky; RTF Orchestra, Gunther Schuller conducting. CRI CD 676.
 Rhapsody for Orchestra. Columbus Symphony, Christian Badea conducting. New World 80345-2.
 On the Beach at Fontana. Bethany Beardslee, soprano; Robert Helps. piano. New World 80243-2.
 Sonata No.1. C. O'Reilly, piano. Albany TROY 038.
 Symphony No.1. Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, Akeo Watanabe conducting. CRI CD 573.
 Symphony No.2. New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting. CRI CD 573.
 Symphony No. 4. Columbus Symphony, Christian Badea conducting. New World 80345-2.
 Symphony No. 5. Columbus Symphony, Christian Badea conducting. New World 80345-2.
 The Black Maskers: Suite. Eastman Rochester Symphony Orchestra, Howard Hanson conducting. Mercury Living Presence 434310-2.

THE ARTISTS

Esther Hinds made her debut with the New York City Opera as the First Lady in *The Magic Flute*. She has sung with the Cincinnati, San Diego, Houston, and Phoenix opera companies as well as with Opera/South. Miss Hinds has appeared in concert and recital throughout the United States, Japan, and Korea and has performed at the Aspen Music Festival under Walter Susskind and James Levine. In July, 1975, she appeared at the Spoleto Festival. She also sang the role of Cleopatra at Juilliard's American Opera Center in the revised version of Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Florence Quivar is a member of both the Metropolitan Opera and the New York City Opera. She has sung with major American orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra under Mstislav Rostropovich, the Los Angeles Philharmonic under both Gennady Rozhdestvensky and Robert Shaw, and the Cleveland Orchestra under Lorin Maazel. In May, 1977, she made her Canadian debut with Andrew Davis and the Toronto Symphony in Berlioz' *Roméo et Juliette*. Miss Quivar sang the role

of Serena in *Porgy and Bess* at the 1976 Cincinnati May Festival and has recorded the work. She has also recorded Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with Thomas Schippers and the Cincinnati Symphony.

Dominic Cossa made his European debut as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* at the Teatro Nuovo in Milan. He then returned to the United States, where he appeared with the Cincinnati Summer Opera, the San Francisco Spring Opera, and the Fort Worth Opera. Mr. Cossa's Metropolitan Opera debut took place in 1970. He has also appeared with the Strasbourg Opera du Rhin, the Opera Company of Philadelphia, the New Orleans and Vancouver operas, and the Greater Miami Opera Association.

Seiji Ozawa became music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the fall of 1973 and is the thirteenth conductor to head the orchestra since its founding in 1881. He was born in Hoten, Manchuria, in 1935, and graduated from the Toho School of Music in Tokyo with first prizes in composition and conducting. When he won first prize at the International Competition of Conducting at Besançon, France, shortly after his graduation, one of the judges of the competition was the late Charles Munch, then Music Director of the Boston Symphony, who invited him to study at Tanglewood during the following summer. Mr. Ozawa's association with the orchestra began as a student of conducting during that session of the Berkshire Music Center in 1960. Beginning with the summer of 1984, Mr. Ozawa was for five seasons Music Director of the Ravinia Festival, and at the beginning of the 1965-66 season he became Music Director of the Toronto Symphony, a post he relinquished after four seasons to devote his time to study and guest conducting. In 1970 Mr. Ozawa became Artistic Director of the Berkshire Music Festival, and in December of that year he began his inaugural season as Conductor and Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, titles he held concurrently with his position as Music Director of the Boston Symphony until he resigned them in the spring of 1976.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1881, has numbered among its permanent conductors such luminaries as Arthur Nikisch, Karl Muck, Pierre Monteux, Serge Koussevitzky, Charles Munch, Erich Leinsdorf, William Steinberg, and, currently, Seiji Ozawa. Throughout its history the orchestra has championed contemporary music. From the earliest days of electrical recording until the 1970s the orchestra made countless recordings for Victor; it now records for the Universal group, which includes Deutsche Grammophon and Philips. The Boston Symphony Orchestra, under its Music Director Seiji Ozawa may also be heard on New World Records 80273-2: *The Music of Charles Tomlinson Griffes*, and 80331-2: *The Music of Olly Wilson and John Harbison*.

The Tanglewood Festival Chorus was formed under the joint auspices of the Berkshire Music Center and Boston University in 1970 and made its debut at Symphony Hall that same year in a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The Chorus's first appearance on records, in the Boston Symphony's *Damnation of Faust*, conducted by Seiji Ozawa on the Deutsche Grammophon label, was nominated for a Grammy as the best choral recording of the year. They have also recorded *20th Century American Choral Music* for DGG with John Oliver conducting.

John Oliver has been the conductor of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus since its foundation, and he is also director of choral and vocal activities for Tanglewood. Mr. Oliver is Lecturer in Music at MIT and conductor of the MIT Choral Society as well as founder of the John Oliver Chorale, which can be heard in a performance of Donald Martino's *Seven Pious Pieces* on New World Records 80210-2.

80296-2

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd

Roger Sessions (1896-1985)
Poem by Walt Whitman
The Boston Symphony Orchestra
Seiji Ozawa, conductor

Esther Hinds, soprano
Florence Quivar, mezzo-soprano
Dominic Cossa, baritone
Tanglewood Festival Chorus; John Oliver, conductor

1 Part One . . . 5:37
2 Part Two . . . 16:05
3 Part Three . . . 20:26

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