



*Leaves of Grass*

*A Choral Symphony*

*By*

*Robert Strassburg*

*—1989—*

[VOCAL SCORE]

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Frontispiece engraving of Walt Whitman in the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1855)

Leaves  
*of*  
Grass.

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Brooklyn, New York:  
1855.

The title page of the first edition of Leaves Of Grass.

# WALT

# WHITMAN



1819 - 1892

**"CHEERFUL FOR FREEST ACTION  
FORM'D UNDER THE LAWS DIVINE."**

For over one hundred and fifty years, Walt Whitman has been the voice of joyous self-confidence, women's liberation, and religious tolerance. If any one person can be said to be the prophetic soul of what this nation can be, it is Walt Whitman.

Born on May 31, 1819, at West Hills, near Huntington, Long Island, New York, the poet began his professional life as an innovative public school teacher, and then turned to journalism.

In 1855, he published at his own expense, a collection of earthy and mystical poems called LEAVES OF GRASS. It was hailed by Ralph Waldo Emerson as "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed."

However, Whitman's free verse style of poetry was sharply denounced by many, particularly because of the poet's outspoken statements about womanhood, slavery, sexuality, and Democracy. Nevertheless, his fearless poetic visions, translated into almost every language, have become a source of inspiration and hope in the future.

Whitman was no ivory-tower poet. He knew the agony and anguish of war when he served as a volunteer male nurse, a "Wound-Dresser," as he called himself, on the battlefields of the Civil War and in the military hospitals of Washington D.C. His struggles to earn a livelihood and at the same time serve the wounded and dying, led to a paralytic stroke in 1873. He died, a controversial but highly esteemed personality, in Camden, New Jersey, on March 26, 1892.

My ten movement Choral Symphony LEAVES OF GRASS is inspired by nineteen of Whitman's poems. It opens with the Narrator reciting lines from his lengthy rhapsodic poem "Song of Myself," written in 1855. It acts as the unaccompanied prologue to the first movement, a setting for chorus and orchestra of "One's-Self I Sing", the opening poem of "Leaves". This poem contains the essence of the poet's output. It sings of the unique qualities of the individual, and the power of the Democratic idea. It advocates equality for the female as much as for the male, and its closing lines proclaim life to be

...immense in passion, pulse and power,  
Cheerful for freest action form'd under the laws divine.

Robert Strassburg, Dr.F.A.  
Professor Emeritus  
California State University, Los Angeles

# LEAVES OF GRASS

A CHORAL SYMPHONY

in

Ten Movements

by

ROBERT STRASSBURG

1. ONE'S-SELF I SING for Chorus and Orchestra... 6
2. YOUTH, DAY, OLD AGE, AND NIGHT for Tenor, Chorus and Orchestra ... 32 A
3. BEAUTIFUL WOMEN for Soprano and Orchestra... 48
4. I AM HE THAT ACHES WITH LOVE for Tenor, Male Chorus and Orchestra... 51
5. MOTHER AND BABE for Soprano, Women's Chorus and Orchestra... 59
6. COME SAID MY SOUL for Tenor and Orchestra... 73
7. O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN! and THE SOBBING OF THE BELLS for Narrator,  
Soprano, Tenor and Orchestra... 80
8. TEARS for Soprano, Tenor and A Capella Chorus... 110
9. INVOCATION AND SONG OF JOYS for Orchestra... 136
10. GLIDING O'ER ALL for Soprano, Tenor, Chorus and Orchestra ... 137

The Narrator is the voice of Walt Whitman heard at the outset, and links all movements. His voice is heard alone at times, but just as often accompanied by orchestra, especially in Whitman's famous Lincoln poem "O Captain! My Captain!"

The style is strongly melodic and accessible for college, high school, or community chorus of enthusiastic competence. The orchestral score affords no difficulty beyond that encountered in a Beethoven or Tchaikovsky symphony.

LEAVES OF GRASS is masterful...I don't know of anyone (me included) who is as close to Whitman's soul as you are. It must be heard...I believe in this piece!

LUKAS FOSS

"That is Walt Whitman all-right!!!"

NORMAN COUSINS

Choral score with piano. \$15.00, 174 pp. © ASCAP  
Orchestral score and parts in preparation. On rental.

Dr. Robert Strassburg  
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Laguna Hills, CA 92653

## I

*One's Self I Sing*  
 (for chorus and orchestra)

Narrator:

*I celebrate myself, and sing myself,  
 And what I assume you shall assume,  
 For every atom belonging to me as good belongs  
 to you.*

*I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,  
 Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son,  
 Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking  
 and breeding,  
 No sentimentalist, no stander above men and women  
 or apart from them,  
 No more modest than immodest.*

*I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet  
 of the Soul,  
 I am the poet of the woman, the same as the man.*

(ATTACCA)

*From "Song of Myself" (1855)  
 Sections: 1, 24, 21.*

Walt Whitman  
(MAJESTICALLY)

# One's Self I Sing

7

Robert Strassburg

S  
f ONE'S SELF I SING — A SIM- PLE SEP-AR-ATE PER- - SON —

A  
f ONE'S SELF I SING — A SIM- PLE SEP-AR-ATE PER- - SON —

T  
f ONE'S SELF I SING — A SIM- PLE SEP-AR-ATE PER- - SON —

B  
f

P I A N O

f (MAJESTICALLY) (REHEARSAL ONLY)

(5)

S  
mp CRESC. YET UT- TER THE WORD — DEM- O- CRA- TIC —

A  
mp CRESC. YET UT- TER THE WORD — DEM- O- CRA- TIC —

T  
mp CRESC. YET UT- TER THE WORD — DEM- O- CRA- TIC —

B  
mp

(5)

mp CRESC.

(10)

(ALLARG.)

(ANDANTE  $\text{♩} = 90$ )

S *f* THE WORD EN--- MASSE EN- MASSE *f* OF

A *f* THE WORD EN--- MASSE EN- MASSE *f* OF

T *f* THE WORD EN- MASSE EN- MASSE

B

(10)

(ALLARG.)

(ANDANTE  $\text{♩} = 90$ )

*f*

(15)

S PHY-SI- OL- O- GY FROM

A PHY- SI- OL- O- GY FROM

T

B

(15)



S (ESP.) **mf** TO TOE I SING NOT (20)

A (ESP.) **mf** TO TOE I SING NOT

T

B

(ESP.) (20)

**mf**

S PHY-SI-OG-NO-MY A-LONE NOR BRAIN DIM P BRAIN A-LONE IS

A PHY-SI-OG-NO-MY A-LONE NOR BRAIN DIM P BRAIN A-LONE IS

T

B

**f** DIM P

(25)

S  
WOR-CRESC---THY FOR THE MUSE IS WOR-P---THY

A  
CRESC f -3- P

T

B

(25)

*cresc...*

f P

(30)

S  
FOR THE MUSE IS WOR-THY IS

A  
P P P P

T

B

(30)

*P*

(35)

S *RIT.*  
WOR-THY FOR THE MUSE

A *RIT.*

T I SAY THE FORM

B

(35)

(40)

S

A

T COM- PLETE I SAY THE FORM

B

(40)

(45)

S  
A  
T  
B

COM- PLETE IS WDR- THI- ER FAR  
COM- PLETE IS WDR- THI- ER WDR- THI- ER

(45)

(LEGATO)

(50)

S  
A  
T  
B

AH THE FE- MALE E- QUAL- LY WITH THE MALE THE  
AH THE FE- MALE E- QUAL- LY WITH THE MALE THE  
AH AH FE- MALE E- QUAL- LY WITH THE MALE THE  
FAR

(UNIS.)

(50)

S  
f FE-MALE — E-QUAL-LY WITH THE MALE THE FE-MALE WITH THE

A  
f FE-MALE — E-QUAL-LY WITH THE MALE THE FE-MALE WITH THE

T  
f FE-MALE — E-QUAL-LY WITH THE MALE THE FE-MALE WITH THE

B  
f FE-MALE — E-QUAL-LY WITH THE MALE THE FE-MALE WITH THE

(55)

f P (55)

S  
MALE I SING —

A  
MALE I SING I SING —

T  
MALE I SING I SING —

B  
MALE I SING I SING —

(♩=110) (60)

CRES

f P CON MOTO

(♩=110) (60)

S  
A  
T  
B

LIFE IM-MENSE

P OF

POCO ACCEL

(65)  
S  
A  
T  
B

LIFE IM-MENSE

f

(65)

POCO ACCEL

(70)

S OF LIFE IM- - - - - MENSE

A OF LIFE IM- - - - - MENSE

T OF LIFE IM- - - - - MENSE

B OF LIFE IM- - - - - MENSE

(70)

(ACCEL. POCO A POCO)

(75)

S IM- MENSE IN

A IM- MENSE IN

T IM- MENSE IN

B IM- MENSE IN

(75)

(♩ = 120 PIU MOSSO)

dolce (PIANO SUBITO)

(80)

S  
PASS-ION PULSE AND POW-ER

A  
PASS-ION PULSE AND POW-ER

T  
PASS-ION PULSE AND POW-ER

B  
PASS-ION PULSE AND POW-ER

(80)

1  
POW-ER POW-ER ff POW-ER P IN

2  
POW-ER POW-ER ff POW-ER P IN

3  
POW-ER POW-ER ff POW-ER P IN



85

S PASS-ION PULSE AND POW-ER POW- ER *CRESC MOLTO*

A PASS-ION PULSE AND POW-ER POW- ER *CRESC MOLTO*

T PASS-ION PULSE AND POW-ER POW- ER *CRESC MOLTO*

B PASS-ION PULSE AND POW-ER POW- ER *CRESC MOLTO*

*CRESC MOLTO*

*Col 8va*

90

S *f* POW- ER *f* AH

A *f* POW- ER *f* AH

T *f* POW- ER *f* AH

B *f* POW- ER

*f*

90

*f*

*Col 8va* *Col 8va*

95

Musical score for measures 95-99. It consists of five staves. The top four staves are vocal lines with lyrics "AH" written below each staff. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with chords and some melodic lines. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

100

Musical score for measures 100-103. It consists of five staves. The top four staves are vocal lines with lyrics "POW-ER OF" written below. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with chords and a bass line. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). There are handwritten annotations: "Col 8va" above measure 100 and "Col 8va" below measure 103. Measure numbers 2, 3, and 4 are written below the piano staff.