

OLIVER KNUSSEN

---

---

*Whitman Settings*

*for soprano and orchestra*

*Op.25a*

(1991-2)

FABER *ff* MUSIC

*Whitman Settings* was commissioned by the Amphion Foundation

The first performance of *Whitman Settings* Op.25a was given  
at the Barbican Concert Hall, London, by Lucy Shelton with the BBC Symphony Orchestra  
conducted by the composer on 5 March 1992

Duration approximately 12 minutes

© 1995 by Faber Music Ltd  
First published in 1995 by Faber Music Ltd  
3 Queen Square London WC1N 3AU  
Music processed by Dennis Riley  
Cover design by S & M Tucker  
Printed in England by Halstan & Co Ltd  
All rights reserved

ISBN 0 571 51410 3

Permission to perform this work in public must be obtained from  
the Society controlling performing rights in the country of performance,  
unless the premises being used currently holds a general licence for public performance  
from the Society. Such permission must be obtained in the UK and Eire from the  
Performing Right Society Ltd, 29-33 Berners Street, London W1P 4AA



These efforts were commissioned by the National Foundation  
The first performance of this work was given at the  
at the Barbican Centre, London, by the BBC Symphony Orchestra  
conducted by the composer in 1972.

I	When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer	1
II	A Noiseless Patient Spider	12
III	The Dalliance of the Eagles	22
IV	The Voice of the Rain	30

### 1. When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,  
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,  
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,  
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the  
lecture-room,  
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,  
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,  
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,  
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

### 2. A Noiseless Patient Spider

A noiseless patient spider,  
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,  
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,  
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 bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,  
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

### 3. The Dalliance of the Eagles

Skirting the river road, (my forenoon walk, my rest,)  
Skyward in air a sudden muffled sound, the dalliance of the eagles,  
The rushing amorous contact high in space together,  
The clinching interlocking claws, a living, fierce, gyrating wheel,  
Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling mass tight grappling,  
In tumbling turning clustering loops, straight downward falling,  
Till o'er the river pois'd, the twain yet one, a moment's lull,  
A motionless still balance in the air, then parting, talons loosing,  
Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting, their separate diverse flight,  
She hers, he his, pursuing.

### 4. The Voice of the Rain

And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower,  
Which, strange to tell, gave me an answer, as here translated:  
I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain,  
Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land and the bottomless sea,  
Upward to heav'n, whence, vaguely form'd, altogether changed, and yet the same,  
I descend to lave the drouths, atomies, dust layers of the globe,  
And all that in them without me were seeds only, latent, unborn;  
And forever, by day and night, I give back life to my own origin, and make pure and  
beautify it:  
(For song, issuing from its birth-place, after fulfilment, wandering,  
Reck'd or unreck'd, duly with love returns.)

Walt Whitman (1819-92)

## ORCHESTRA

3 Flutes (3=Piccolo)

Oboe

Cor Anglais

2 Clarinets in B $\flat$

Contrabass Clarinet in B $\flat$

2 Bassoons


Contrabassoon

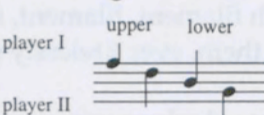
4 Horns in F


2 Trumpets in C

Percussion (4 players):

I Vibraphone, Bass drum (large), 2 Snare Drums\*

II Glockenspiel, Antique Cymbal in , 2 Snare Drums\*

\* relative pitches: 

III Tubular Bells, Triangle, Xylophone, Antique Cymbal in ,  
Suspended Cymbal (large)

IV 2 Tam-tams (I medium, II low), 2 Suspended Cymbals (high and medium), Whip, Vibraphone (shared with player I), Bass Drum

Celesta

Harp

12-14 Violins I

10-12 Violins II

8-10 Violas

6-8 Violoncelli

6-8 Doublebasses

All instruments written at sounding pitch (in C)

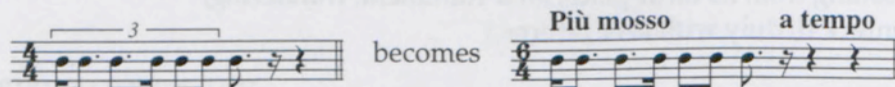
## NOTE FOR SINGERS

The published score of the original voice and piano version of *Whitman Settings* (Faber Music, 1993) should be used as a working vocal score for the present orchestral version.

The vocal line remains unchanged throughout, but the following should be noted concerning song III *The Dalliance of the Eagles*:

1. In bars 5-8 and 15-18 the 4/4 triplet crotchets in the piano score are notationally reinterpreted as 6/4 crotchets in the orchestral score – the actual rhythmic relationships between voice and accompaniment remain intact, however;

2. In bar 14 the rhythm of the voice part has been re-cast as follows:



together with slight modification of the rhythm in the accompaniment.

O.K.

# WHITMAN SETTINGS

I

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer

Oliver Knussen, op. 25a

$\text{♩} = 84c.$

1  $pp$   $f$   $p$   $f$   $p$   $mf$   $p$   $f$   $p$   $ff$   $pp$  sub.

2  $f$   $p$   $f$   $f$   $p$   $ff$   $pp$  sub.

3  $f$   $p$   $f$   $mf$   $f$   $p$   $ff$   $pp$

Oboe  $p < f$   $pp$   $f$   $mf$   $ff$   $mf$

Cor Anglais  $f$   $pp$   $f$   $mf$   $pp$   $f$

1  $mp$   $f$   $pp$   $f$   $mp$   $pp$   $f$   $pp$

2  $f$   $p$   $mf$   $f$   $mp$   $pp$   $f$   $pp$  sub.

1  $f$   $f$   $f$

2  $f$   $f$   $f$

Horns 1 3 2 4

Trumpets 1 2 Harmon mute  $mp$   $p$   $f$   $mp > p$   $f$

VIBRAPHONE  $mp$   $mf$   $mp$   $mp$

GLOCKENSPIEL  $mf$   $mp$

BELLS  $poco f$   $mp$   $mp$

Celesta  $ff$   $f$   $ff$   $f$

Harp  $ff$   $f$   $ff$   $f$

Voice  $f$   $f$  When ... When I ...

$\text{♩} = 84c.$

Violins I  $f$   $ff$   $p$   $f$   $ff$   $p$   $f$   $ff$   $p$   $f$   $ff$   $p$

Violins II  $f$   $f$   $f$   $f$   $f$   $f$   $f$   $f$   $f$   $f$   $f$   $f$

Violas div.  $pizz.$   $f$  vibr.  $ff$  arco  $f > p$   $mf$   $mf$

Violoncelli div.  $pizz.$   $ff$  vibr.  $ff$  arco  $f > p$   $mf$   $mf$

Doublebasses  $pizz.$   $ff$  vibr.  $ff$  arco  $f > p$   $mf$   $mf$

A

This page contains a detailed musical score for a symphony orchestra and a vocal soloist. The score is organized into systems, each with a label on the left side. The instruments and parts include:

- Flutes (Fl.):** Two parts, both starting with *pp* and featuring dynamic markings of *f*, *p*, and *mp*.
- Oboe (Ob.):** One part, starting with *poco f* and *sfpp*, with dynamics ranging from *f* to *mp*.
- Clarinet (Cl.):** Two parts, both starting with *pp* and *poco f*, with dynamics of *pp*, *f*, *mf*, and *p*.
- Bassoon (Bsn.):** Two parts, with dynamics of *f*, *mf*, and *f*. The first part includes a first ending marked *1.* and a second ending marked *a2*.
- Trumpets (Tr. muted):** Two parts, with dynamics of *mf*, *p*, and *f*.
- Percussion (Perc.):** Four parts: Vibraphone (Vibr.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Bells, and Tom-toms (IV). The Bells part includes time signature changes to 2/4, 3/4, 5/8, and 2/4+3/8.
- Cello (Cel.):** One part, with dynamics of *ff* and *f*, and time signature changes to 2/4, 3/4, 5/8, and 2/4+3/8.
- Harp:** One part, with dynamics of *ff* and *f*, and time signature changes to 2/4, 3/4, 5/8, and 2/4+3/8.
- Voice:** A single part with the lyrics "When I heard..." and "When I heard...".
- Violins (Vlns.):** First and Second parts, with dynamics of *f*, *mf*, and *ff*.
- Viola (Vcl. div.):** One part, with dynamics of *pp*, *mf*, and *ff*.
- Double Bass (Db. div.):** One part, with dynamics of *pp*, *mf*, and *ff*.

The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic hairpins. A section marker 'A' is located at the top center and bottom center of the page.

A