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STEVE DOBROGOSZ'S *WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D*:

A CONDUCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

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WILLIAM OMAR GEORGE-TWYMAN

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STEVE DOBROGOSZ'S *WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D:*  
*A CONDUCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE*

A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Richard Zielinski, Chair

Dr. Sarah Ellis

Dr. Eugene Enrico

Dr. Judith Pender

Dr. Jonathan Shames

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## DEDICATION

For my parents Barbara and Rogers Chenevert:

I told you when I was eight years old that I was going to grow up to be a doctor.  
I guess I should've been more specific.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of a doctorate in any field is a momentous achievement, and it cannot be done by one person. There are several people that have made it possible for me to get here, and I wish to express all of my gratitude to them.

Special thanks go to Dr. Richard Zielinski and Dr. David Howard for being helpful and gracious to me throughout coursework and never letting me get away with not being the very best at what I did.

My deepest thanks to Steve Dobrogosz for allowing me to pepper him with questions about his work and for being understanding when I just fell off of the map for two years in the middle of research. This piece is amazing and I'm glad I've gotten to study it so closely.

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## ABSTRACT

Swedish composer Steve Dobrogosz (b. 1956) is primarily known for his jazz piano and songwriting career, having been an influential figure in the Stockholm musical scene since the 1980's. Eventually he began to explore traditional notated composition and, following the international success of his *Mass* (1992) for choir, piano, and strings, Dobrogosz's compositional style became more refined while retaining its exploratory nature. His compositions currently number in the thousands, including significant choral/orchestral works like the *Requiem* (2001), *Christmas Cantata* (2003), *Stabat Mater* (2012), and *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* (2000). Dobrogosz is a master of creating full, luxuriant sonic textures that require careful treatment of text.

This document is an analysis of Steve Dobrogosz's choral/orchestral setting of Walt Whitman's pastoral elegy *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*. Contained within the paper are sections covering biographical information of both the composer and the poet Walt Whitman, Dobrogosz's compositional approach and style, and a detailed musical analysis of each of the six movements that dissects form/thematic structure, tonality, texture, thematic construction, meter/rhythm, and harmony. The analysis pays particular attention to the synthesis of Walt Whitman's unmetered free verse and Dobrogosz's lyrical melodic constructions, illustrating Dobrogosz's masterful handling of complicated poetic material.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION, STEVE DOBROGOSZ, AND *WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD*

#### *BLOOM'D*

This study is intended to be an analysis of the thematic, melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements of Steve Dobrogosz's *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*. By examining these musical elements and their relationships to one another, the author shows how Dobrogosz takes his unique perspective on tonal lyricism<sup>1</sup> and filters Whitman's poetry through it, creating a musical experience that is enjoyable for the audience, educational for the singers, and pedagogically vital to conductors.

The first chapter provides biographical information on the composer and the circumstances surrounding the premiere of this piece. One of the issues that affects the depth of the proposed study is the availability of information about the composer. Though Dobrogosz is fairly well-known in Europe, his biography is sparse when it comes to information directly pertaining to *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*. However, since a comprehensive biography is not strictly necessary for the purposes of this study, the author utilizes existing information from Dobrogosz's own writings and information from other scholars. Any biographical information that is directly related to inspiration or design of this piece comes from email correspondence with the composer. Transcripts of those email correspondences are included at the end of the document as supplemental material.

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<sup>1</sup> Sarin Peck, "Jazz elements in select Finnish and Swedish choral music." (University of Missouri - Kansas City, 2011), 210.

The second chapter provides background information on Walt Whitman, the poem *Lilacs*, and also gives context for his relationship with President Lincoln, the assassination, and the funeral procession that followed. Current research on both poet and poem will support the idea of Lincoln embodying the “Star of America” with which Whitman is enamored. Dobrogosz weaves thematic material together with the specter of this relationship in mind, and the result is a nuanced composition that captures Whitman’s wide range of emotions.

Chapters three through eight dissect each of the six movements, and they delve into the form/thematic structure, tonality, texture, thematic construction, meter/rhythm, and harmony present. Thematic construction is the most important feature in the work, and the analysis shows how each of the twelve significant themes are designed to communicate the beauty of Whitman’s poetry, while at the same time providing musical interest. Dobrogosz’s training in popular/jazz songwriting shines here, as the choir’s melodies are lush and complicated yet comfortably singable with regards to vocal and dynamic range. The table at the beginning of each chapter gives an overall view of the movement, presenting it as a timeline of important events as they occur. They are designed to help organize Dobrogosz’s musical ideas into smaller, more manageable sections. The score analysis, tables, and musical excerpts combine to form a roadmap for conductors to use in their own private study.

The concluding chapter summarizes pedagogical or performance issues that a conductor might encounter when performing this work and provides suggestions on how to mitigate those issues. It also offers recommendations for further research.

Steve Dobrogosz (b.1956) is an American pianist and composer based in Sweden whose career spans several decades. Raised in Raleigh, North Carolina, Dobrogosz was initially trained as a classical pianist, but he was more drawn to popular music. He studied at Berklee College of Music in Boston, completing the basic piano improvisation coursework and becoming involved with their songwriting and jazz arranging curriculum.<sup>2</sup> He left Berklee in 1978 and moved to Stockholm, forming the Steve Dobrogosz Trio in the process. He became a fixture in the Swedish jazz scene, and his collaborations as songwriter won many accolades, including two Swedish Grammi nominations with singer Anna Christofferson. He continues to be an influential figure in jazz and popular music, recording several rock piano albums, Irish jigs, romantic background music, and songs for Spanish guitar on his own label Sand Castle Music.<sup>3</sup>

Because he ‘learns faster on his own’,<sup>4</sup> Dobrogosz taught himself traditional composition in the mid-1990s. He has composed such diverse works as an oratorio based on Shakespearean sonnets, an oboe concerto, and several choral/orchestral works, notably his *Mass, Requiem*, and the focus of this study, *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d*.

Subtitled “A Song for choir and orchestra”, *Lilacs* is scored for choir, solo piano, and symphonic orchestra consisting of two flutes (+piccolo), oboe, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, six timpani (+cymbals),<sup>5</sup> solo piano,

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<sup>2</sup> Email from Steve Dobrogosz, May 12, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> A complete listing of recordings and compositions can be found on the composer’s website: <https://dobrogosz.com/CDpage.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Email from Steve Dobrogosz, May 12, 2020.

<sup>5</sup>Email from Steve Dobrogosz, July 18, 2018

Additionally, in the front of the score Dobrogosz writes, “Apart from the timpani and one cymbal crash near the end, the percussion part consists of cymbal rolls (swells) with soft mallets. A “sizzle” cymbal may be used on occasion for added vibrancy. Steve Dobrogosz, *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d* (Stockholm, Sweden: Sand Castle Music, 2000).

and strings. The choir is divided into four parts, with alto *divisi* in Parts One, Two, Three, and Five, and bass *divisi* in Part Five.<sup>6</sup> Dobrogosz through-composed the setting of Whitman's poem as originally written without repeats, edits, or omissions. The average performance time is eighty minutes.

*Lilacs* premiered in 2005, performed by the St. Jacob's Chamber Choir of Stockholm, Sweden, and the Uppsala Chamber Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Gary Graden, and Dobrogosz served as pianist. There are two recordings from that time period. The live concert was recorded first, and on the next weekend, the choir and orchestra traveled to Uppsala to make the final recording in the university auditorium.<sup>7</sup> That recording was released on the Nosag label in 2006, and the live recording can be found on Dobrogosz's YouTube channel.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, *Lilacs* has yet to be performed in North America. Dobrogosz and Graden had previously collaborated on recordings of *Mass* and *Requiem*, and *Lilacs* seemed logical to Graden as the next recording project for the choir.<sup>9</sup>

Dobrogosz's compositional style in *Lilacs* is focused on long melodies with asymmetrical phrase construction, motivated by the metric variations in Whitman's free verse. The melodies are mostly diatonic at their outset, but the longer they spin out, the more intricate and chromatic they become. This is one of the hallmarks of Dobrogosz's vocal writing, and he creates interest by bringing back these melodies with subtle variations in harmonization. Dobrogosz uses

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<sup>6</sup> Further discussion of the treatment of *divisi* sections occurs in Chapters Three and Seven.

<sup>7</sup> Email from Steve Dobrogosz, June 8, 2020

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8gmPqNh9pQ>

<sup>9</sup> Email from Steve Dobrogosz, May 12, 2020



skillful orchestration to create the landscape of Whitman’s post-Civil War America, portraying bustling cities, secluded swamps, the Western seascape, as well as a frantic battlefield.

Asked about his recollections about the compositional process of *Lilacs*, Dobrogosz answered:

“When I write, everything depends getting that first little seed, something, usually just a bar or two, that somehow feels like its own little world with potential to grow into a world of its own. Does that make sense? For *Lilacs*, after choosing the poem (I’d done some shorter songs with Whitman and found his rhythms extremely compatible [sic] with mine) I sat down and almost immediately (if I remember correctly after 18 years...) got the opening choral line down. I knew I had the whole piece then, so the next step was dividing the text into sections to see where each would go. Pretty soon I had around 10 of the major themes worth developing and interweaving. But from the start my goal was a large choral-orchestral piece of traditional Americana - I still think there is a huge void there needing to be filled - so to answer your question, I’d already decided on the tonal language, which informed the themes.”<sup>10</sup>

In this document, the word “theme” is intended to be a melody that is presented in its entirety at least once, then brought back either wholly or in fragments later in the piece. These themes often refer to a specific character or object mentioned in the poem (bird, coffin), but are sometimes designated by an abstract theme in the poem (woe). There are fourteen themes present in this piece and the abbreviations listed in Figure 1.1 are used in the charts at the beginning of each chapter to show their appearance in each section.

Theme Legend:
An – Anthem
B – Bird
C – Carol
Ch – Chamber Walls
Co – Coffin
F – Fanfare
L – Lilac
M – Mourner
Mo – Moon
Pr – Processional
S – Sea Winds
Ta – Tally
Tr – Train
W – Woe

Figure 1.1 A legend listing the fourteen themes present in Steve Dobrogosz’s *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d* along with their abbreviations.

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<sup>10</sup> Email from Steve Dobrogosz, July 18, 2018

Individual characteristics of each theme are discussed in the analysis, but in general the themes are sixteen to eighteen measures long with asymmetrical phrase construction. Themes usually have two phrases, but sometimes have three. The phrases are increasingly chromatic, and in three-phrase themes (bird, coffin) the third phrase can often sound like another key entirely. These themes act as motifs, bringing the idea or character to the forefront of the texture to establish relationships between musical and poetic ideas across the work. The manipulation and transformation of these themes is masterful, and the result is a multi-faceted and intricate exploration of Walt Whitman's poetry with unique compositional voice of Steve Dobrogosz.

## CHAPTER TWO

### WALT WHITMAN, THE POEM'S STRUCTURE, AND MEANING

Walter 'Walt' Whitman (1819-1892) was a noted essayist, journalist, and poet.

Considered by many to be the father of free verse,<sup>11</sup> Whitman's commitment to chronicling and preserving the authentic voice of America helped him produce some of the most essential poems of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Not one to shy away from aggressive imagery and unconventional themes, Whitman acted as one of the literary consciences of America through his observations on life, love, death, and government.

Born in Huntington on Long Island, Whitman embodied the essence of the American Renaissance man. He also worked in the federal government as a clerk, acted as his own publisher, and even served as a volunteer nurse during the Civil War. *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman's first collection of poems, was self-financed and published in 1855,<sup>12</sup> and Whitman would go on to revise and rework the collection until his death.<sup>13</sup> *Leaves of Grass* was praised and criticized in equal measure, with some of Whitman's contemporaries like Ralph Waldo Emerson writing to Whitman directly to express approval while others referred to it as "trashy, profane, and obscene."<sup>14</sup>

During the Civil War, Whitman's career was in turmoil, as he obtained and was dismissed from several government posts. In some instances, Whitman's firing was related to

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<sup>11</sup> David S. Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 314.

<sup>12</sup> Philip Callow, *From Noon to Starry Night: A Life of Walt Whitman* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1992), 226.

<sup>13</sup> Eventually, *Drum-Taps*, the 1865 collection from which *Lilacs* originates was absorbed into the 1867 edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

<sup>14</sup> Justin Kaplan, *Walt Whitman, A Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 211.

the uncertainty of the war, but it has been speculated that at least one of the firings was directly motivated by the perceived obscenity contained in *Leaves of Grass*.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the war served as the source of inspiration for some of the richest poetry that Whitman would ever pen – the poems on President Lincoln, of which *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* is Whitman's longest and arguably the most profound.

*Lilacs* is a long-form poem (206 lines in 16 Cantos or strophes) written in the style of an elegy intended to honor recently assassinated President Abraham Lincoln. Even though Lincoln's name or the circumstances surrounding the assassination are never mentioned, it is very clear that President Lincoln is the focus of *Lilacs*. As Jerome Loving, a leading Whitman biographer clarifies, “elegies do not mention the name of the deceased in order to allow the lament to have universal application.”<sup>16</sup> This universality of subject has allowed composers to set the *Lilacs* text for a multiple occasions, from Holst's use of the Death Carol<sup>17</sup> in his *Ode to Death* Op. 38 (1919) which honored the friends Holst lost in World War I, to the most famous setting of the poem by Paul Hindemith (1946) that was commissioned by Robert Shaw to commemorate the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Other composers who have used portions of this poem include Kurt Weill in *Street Scene* (1946), African American composer George T. Walker in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Lilacs* for voice and orchestra (1996), and Jennifer Higdon in *Dooryard Bloom* for baritone and orchestra (2005).

*When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* is written as a first-person monologue, and though it can be assumed that the speaker is Whitman himself, our understanding is that

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<sup>15</sup> Jerome Loving, *Walt Whitman: The Song of Himself* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1999), 291.

<sup>16</sup> Loving, 100.

<sup>17</sup> This is the widely used name for the second half of Canto XIV that was italicized and offset by Whitman.

Whitman is effectively speaking on behalf of all Americans who are also mourning. Kathy Rugoff writes:

“The speaker expresses his sorrow over the death of 'him I love' and reveals his growing consciousness of his own sense of the meaning of death and the consolation he paradoxically finds in death itself. The narrative action depicts the journey of Lincoln's coffin without mentioning the president by name and portrays visions of 'the slain soldiers of war' without mentioning either the Civil War or its causes. The identifications are assumed to be superfluous, even tactless; no American could fail to understand what war was meant. Finally, in the 'carol of the bird,' the speaker recounts the song in which death is invoked, personified and celebrated.”<sup>18</sup>

Over the course of the poem, Whitman describes three particular symbols at length: the lilacs, the western star (in this case Venus), and the hermit thrush. This set of symbols can be interpreted as being autobiographical from Whitman's standpoint,<sup>19</sup> as the lilacs embody his perennial love of the President, the fallen star in the West is Lincoln himself, and the solitary hermit thrush acts as either Death or its chant.<sup>20</sup>

When news of Lincoln's death reached Whitman at his mother's home, he was in shock. He wandered out into the yard where he was surrounded by lilacs in full bloom. Price and Folsom write that the sight of these flowers caused them to be “viscerally bound to the memory of Lincoln's death.”<sup>21</sup> Later, in *Specimen Days* Whitman writes of the weather on the day the President died saying,

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<sup>18</sup> Rugoff, Kathy. “Three American Requiems: Contemplating ‘When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd.’” In *Walt Whitman and Modern Music: War, Desire, and the Trials of Nationhood*, ed. Lawrence Kramer (New York: Routledge, 2000), 134-135.

<sup>19</sup> Reynolds, 250.

<sup>20</sup> Loving, 288.

<sup>21</sup> Ed Folsom and Kenneth Price, *Re-Scripting Walt Whitman: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 91.

“I remember where I was stopping at the time, 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 always reminded of great tragedy of that day by the sight and odor of these blossoms. It never fails.”<sup>22</sup>

The star imagery in the poem comes from Whitman’s writing about seeing Venus in the night sky during the weeks leading up to the President’s assassination. He writes,

"Nor earth nor sky ever knew spectacles of superber [sic] beauty than some of the nights lately here. The western star, Venus, in the earlier hours of evening, has never been so large, so clear; it seems as if it told something, as if it held rapport indulgent with humanity, with us Americans."<sup>23</sup>

The star stands as a symbolic representation of not only President Lincoln, but also America itself. Biographer Betsy Erkkila writes that Whitman’s description of Lincoln in these terms is an attempt to counteract the characterizations of Lincoln being a dictator “bent on abrogating rather than preserving basic American liberties”.<sup>24</sup>

The third character is the hermit thrush, a red-throated bird native to the part of Long Island where Whitman spent his childhood. John Burroughs, a friend of Whitman’s and a nature writer, described to Whitman his experience with the thrush after a long vacation in the woods. Burroughs writes that Whitman was incredibly interested in details about the bird and its song, and eventually used his ideas in what would become *Lilacs*.<sup>25</sup> Whitman describes the bird song at length, characterizing it as a hymn that is never sung near the farm houses; it is a rather solitary sound that carries with it the images of “Nature, pure, and holy.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Walt Whitman. *Specimen Days and Collect* (New York: Dover, 1995), 310.

<sup>23</sup> Whitman, 65.

<sup>24</sup> Betsy Erkkila. *Whitman the Political Poet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 228-229.

<sup>25</sup> Reynolds, 445

<sup>26</sup> Kaplan, 307-310

The final context that is needed for a deeper understanding of the poetry is the circumstances surrounding the funeral of President Lincoln. The funeral procession for Lincoln started by train in Washington D.C. on April 21, 1865, and ended in Springfield, Illinois on May 3. The route went North through Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York then moved West through Ohio and Indiana before arriving in Springfield by way of Chicago.<sup>27</sup> There were several stops along the route, and as the funeral train travelled through each town, residents would lay branches of various flowers on the cars of the train. Jerome Loving refutes assertions that Whitman attended any of the public ceremonies for Lincoln in Washington or in New York, suggesting that Whitman's recollections of the events in question were based on "second-hand information".<sup>28</sup>

Whatever the true nature of Whitman's involvement with the funeral procession, his poem fits all of the characteristics of a pastoral elegy. A pastoral elegy typically includes mourners in some sort of procession, the decoration of a hearse or gravesite, a list of flowers, a change of season, and the association of the dead person with some sort of permanent natural object such as a star.<sup>29</sup> These characteristics, along with Whitman's eventual acceptance of death's inevitability while at the same time working through grief and anger makes this poem the quintessence of elegiac writing.

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<sup>27</sup> A complete timeline of the funeral procession can be found at <http://rogerjnorton.com/Lincoln51.html>

<sup>28</sup> Loving, 289.

<sup>29</sup> Cuddon, J. A. "Elegy." In *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory: Fifth Edition*, edited by David Scott Kastan, 5th ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 229-231.

CHAPTER THREE  
ANALYSIS OF PART ONE

Part One

Measure Number	1	9	41	65	77	101	128	145	193-231
Form	Intro	A	A'	Int.		B	Trans.	C	Recap
Canto		I	II			III		IV	
Tonality	E				D $\flat$	c $\sharp$		f	E
Meter	4/4			4/4, 6/4		6/4, 4/4		3/4	4/4
Tempo	Q = 76				Q = 88	Q = 80	Q = 92	Q = 60	Q = 88
Themes	Tr	M		Tr, W		L		B	M/Tr
Phraseology	8 (4+4) :	32 (13+8 +6+5)	24 (11+7+6)	36 (12+14+10)		27 (10+12+2+3)	17 (6+6 +5)	48 (11+13+20+4)	39 (8+13+16+2)

Figure 3.1 A chart showing a plan for Part One of Steve Dobrogosz’s *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d*.

Steve Dobrogosz’s *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d* contains thirteen distinct melodic themes that occur throughout the piece, and each theme is associated with either a character in the poem or an event being described. The first such theme is presented in measure one of the first movement. This theme will hereafter be referred to as the “train” theme, and it is an eight-measure phrase in E major. Since the Lincoln funeral procession was carried out via train, Dobrogosz creates the feeling of the gentle motion of the train’s progress with a cello part that alternates back and forth between scale degrees five and six. The resulting harmonization has a serene rocking motion between the I and IV chords that give an illusion of progression while maintaining the constancy of the E tonic.<sup>30</sup> The *appoggiatura* in the viola part is essential, as the resolution of scale degree four down to three is a figure that is presented throughout the work in various ways, both orchestrally and vocally.

<sup>30</sup> It is important to note that the score is written in concert pitch, but the parts are not. Analysis is a bit easier, but there are occasions in the piece where the transpositions get very complex.



The train theme evokes a feeling of quiet contemplation due to the suspended progression of harmony, especially since the writing is fully diatonic.

Figure 3.2 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 1-8, string parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

When coupled with the rocking motion of the string writing, the overall effect is very much like a train idling at a stop. Dobrogosz brings this theme back several times throughout this work, either in the middle of a movement as transitional material to bridge between two subsections, or at the end of a movement to imply passage of time when traveling from one stop on the funeral procession to another. The train theme is grouped into identical four-measure phrases, and the phrasing decisions for the orchestra will inform those same decisions for chorus. Though played by strings alone at the beginning of the movement, the clarinets are added in the repeat, mirroring the inner voices in the strings. Dobrogosz uses this technique throughout the work – often an orchestral section will provide support to the inner voices in the choral parts when the texture gets large and complex. It makes compositional sense to do so, especially when the tenor and alto sections get into the extreme highs and lows of their range.

After the train motive's introduction, the soprano and alto section enters at measure 10 with the main theme (hereafter referred to as the "mourner" theme) in unison.<sup>31</sup> The melody of the mourner theme is lush and long, though asymmetrical in its overall construction. The antecedent phrase is five measures long, while the consequent phrase extends to eight measures. Dobrogosz uses these uneven phrase lengths to account for the free, unmetered verse that Whitman provides.



Figure 3.3 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 10-18, soprano/alto line. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The upper voices complete the first Canto of the poem, splitting into three parts for brief periods before coming to an essential cadence point at measure 34. When the SAA trio occurs at measure 22, it is the first occurrence of accidentals in the work. The overall character of the melody gets more restless here as well, with increased eighth-note motion. It also should be noted that the instrumental accompaniment here is also in three parts, ensuring that all harmonic material is heard clearly and without obstruction.

The cadential figure at measure 34 will become another recurring element in the overall piece. Melodically, the tonic chord is approached by a lowered 3→2→1, with E being the destination. It's clear that the penultimate chord in the cadential figure is D major (bVII), but the chord approaching D major requires more investigation. With the first beat of measure 34 empty except for the sopranos and altos on the E, the second violin gives the most insight into the

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<sup>31</sup> Dobrogosz uses this technique in various places throughout the work: melodic material stated in unison, then restated by full chorus, fully harmonized.

cadential figure, as C major → D major → E major is a very clear  $\flat VI \rightarrow \flat VII \rightarrow I$  progression.

This use of borrowed chords is natural for Dobrogosz.

The image shows a musical score for measures 34-36 of 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd, Part One'. It features a vocal line (soprano/alto) and a string ensemble. The vocal line has the lyrics 'thought of him I love' with a long note on 'love'. The string ensemble consists of five staves (Violins I, Violins II, Violas, Cellos, and Double Basses). The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The vocal line is in treble clef, and the string ensemble is in bass clef. The score includes dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*, and Roman numerals (V) indicating chord functions.

Figure 3.4 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 34-36, soprano/alto and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

One of the main characteristics of the train motive is the emphasis on the suspended fourth scale degree and its downward resolution to scale degree three. In the train motive, when realized in four or more parts, there is always one voice that has a pedal point fourth scale degree that resolves downward, or an adjacent part moves upward to cover the third scale degree (usually to maintain first or second inversion voicing).

The first statement of the mourner theme and its subsequent restatement are treated in a nearly identical manner with regards to harmony. However, Dobrogosz orchestrates the second statement with full orchestra, giving the statement much more power and importance. The poetry supports this, as “O powerful western fallen star!” is the first we hear of the individual

Whitman is mourning, the deceased President Lincoln. The bombastic nature of the orchestration is fitting for a head of state, with the horns playing a chorale-like statement of the train theme under a unison vocal line in the choir. The overall effect here gives a sense of large-scale community singing, as in an anthem or congregational hymn singing. The phrase opens in E major and remains in E major, then shifts to a  $b$ III for a brief moment. After moving to another borrowed chord ( $b$ VI), the cadential figure returns to close out the phrases. After the second statement of the phrase, however, there is a short extension of the material to allow for a second cadence, but more practically, to account for the shortened length of Canto II.

The train theme returns again at measure 65, still in E major, but Dobrogosz gives a glimpse of new melodic material that will be fully realized in later movements. This strong, lyrical material allows Dobrogosz to push against the confines of E major and moves into Db major by reversing the function of the cadential figure.



Figure 3.5 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 73-78, string parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The bass line at m. 74 outlines a sequence of thirds that leads to Db as tonic in measure 77. The train theme is heard in this new key, before the exact same technique is used to briefly re-tonicize E major until it spins itself back out into Db major again. Dobrogosz seems to

employ this chromatic mediant shift in order to prepare the ear for the eventual transition into C# minor at measure 101. It is interesting that the train theme is a type of closed loop, and the way that Dobrogosz chooses to get out of it is to take another theme (in this case a variation on the mourner theme, played by double bass and oboe) and state it in the new destination key, in this case the aforementioned C# minor.



Figure 3.6 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 94-100, string parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

A minimally accompanied quasi-*recitative* section follows, sung by the altos in unison. The meter begins in 6/4 with a shift to 4/4. There are two different treatments of the phrasing at work here, the almost rigid four-measure phrases that the music implies struggling against the more uneven, free flowing cadence of the poetry. This mid-range melody for the altos is *legato* and marked “very sensitive”, and the vocal line expands into three parts both at measures 104-105 and 109.<sup>32</sup> There is an interesting bit of text painting at these moments as well: At measure 105, on the phrase “lilac bush tall growing” the chord is spaced out in a quartal fashion with lots

<sup>32</sup> In the score, it is designated that the three-part *divisi* should be voiced SAA. However, I feel that this *divisi* should be balanced equally with regards to number of voices. This general rule applies for any other three-part *divisi* in the work, whether in the treble or tenor/bass choir.

of space between chord members<sup>33</sup> while at measure 109, the soprano line (doubled by oboe) rises out of the texture as they sing “many a pointed blossom rising”.

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "With ma-ny a point-ed blos-som ris-ing de-li-cate, \_". The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with lyrics: "de-li-cate, \_". The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. The lyrics are "With ma-ny a point-ed blos-som ris-ing de-li-cate, \_" on the top line and "de-li-cate, \_" on the bottom line. The piano part has a "pp" dynamic marking.

Figure 3.7 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 108-110, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

In this next highly chromatic section, there is a phrase that is passed between tenor and alto in measures 115-118, with the tenor part singing in the upper part of their range. The altos answer with a variation on the melodic gesture that was previously associated with the word “lilac” in measures 9-10. Just as before, the inner voices of the choir are doubled by another instrument to provide clarity, but this time, Dobrogosz doubles the tenors with the oboe and the altos with bassoon, which seems counterintuitive. However, it can be assumed that by linking the inner parts to an instrument with opposite range and timbre, Dobrogosz is guiding the ear to what is considered important.

<sup>33</sup> The visual effect in the score at this moment is not unlike a stalk of corn growing through the grand staff.

Figure 3.8 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 115-118, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The poetry leading up to the cadence at measure 123 is identical to what occurred before the extension at measure 109, this time up a major second, and the section cadences with  $\flat VI \rightarrow \flat VII \rightarrow I$  in what looks to be B major, but really feels like the dominant in the overall key center of E. The harmonic velocity of this section is temporarily suspended at measure 125 with three  $B\sharp$  bell tones from the piano.

A short orchestral transitional interlude follows, with strings shifting out of the sharp key center of the previous section into implied  $D\flat$  major, but the  $G\flat$ 's are left out of the key signature. This will become more common as Dobrogosz introduces more modal intentions in later movements. Here, the woodwinds introduce a theme that will be explored in movement two, while the *pizzicato* bass soloist outlines what sounds like it could be the cadential motive from earlier, however this time the destination is a  $G\flat$  Maj<sup>7</sup> chord. This surprising arrival allows the strings to extend the phrase with sequential restatement of the descending melody that began this transition, this time a whole step<sup>34</sup> higher. At measure 140, Dobrogosz pulls the tempo back

<sup>34</sup> In this case, it's written as a  $B\sharp$  at the beginning of the section, and  $D\flat$  here.

abruptly, placing particular emphasis on outlining the C minor arpeggio as it resolves into a D $\flat$

→ Fadd4 → B $\flat$  cadence with a 4-3 suspension.<sup>35</sup>

The image shows a musical score for string parts, consisting of five staves. The top two staves are for Violins I and II, and the bottom three are for Violas, Cellos, and Double Basses. The music is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line in the upper strings and a more rhythmic, arpeggiated line in the lower strings. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *arco (tutti)*. The score is divided into measures 140-145, with a 4-3 suspension in measure 145.

Figure 3.9 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 140-145, string parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Mirroring the alto line from earlier, the soprano section sings a melody that introduces the third and final major character in the poem, the bird that sings in the swamp. The characteristics of this melody are slightly different than the other two themes in that it's the first triple meter melody, and the overall contour of the melody is ascending. Here, the sopranos (later joined by the altos) are accompanied by piano and the tenors and basses. The overall effect of the other choral parts is strictly textural; except for briefly singing the word, "song", at measure 152, all other sound is sung on a neutral syllable, "ooh".

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<sup>35</sup> To the previous argument, D $\flat$  major is implied as the key center of this section, but if the suspension at measure 145 is a B $\flat$  dominant chord, then the assumption is that it is a secondary dominant of E $\flat$ . That lends more credence to the idea that key signature of A $\flat$  is correct but the continuous G $\flat$ 's are for a Mixolydian feel, which fits.



*mp*  
In the swamp in se-c-lud-ed re-cess-es, A  
*mp*  
ATB: ooh

//

A: "song"....  
shy and hid-den bird is warb-ling a song.  
TB: "song"....

Figure 3.10 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 145-152, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The piano is true to Dobrogosz's jazz roots, shifting between key centers of A $\flat$  major and B major on its way to a low E $\flat$ . Nevertheless, the piano and English horn repeats the previous phrase in its entirety, this time with the English horn singing the bird's song that the sopranos introduced. The piano part is nearly identical,<sup>36</sup> and then when the chorus reenters at measure 189 with "song of the bleeding throat," the return to E major feels strong and permanent.

<sup>36</sup> A slight difference is that in m. 181, where the sopranos previously sang "hermit withdrawn to itself", the melody was spelled with B $\flat$ s and F $\sharp$ s. Here, the piano melody is spelled with C $\flat$  and G $\flat$ , before shifting back into sharp keys again. As Dobrogosz improvised much of the piano part in rehearsal, the difference in the transcription here might have carried over from a previous version.

The image displays a musical score for measures 189-192. It features a vocal line and a string ensemble. The vocal line starts with the lyrics "p Song of the bleed-ing throat,". The string ensemble is composed of six staves, with dynamics marked "p" (piano) and a "V" (crescendo) symbol.

Figure 3.11 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 189-192, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The recap begins with the piano playing a variation on the mourner theme, ending with the same repeated B $\flat$ s, but this time with increasing intensity as it leads into the final lines of Canto IV. As the text is shorter here, Dobrogosz uses the second half of the second statement of the theme. The melody is doubled in soprano and the woodwinds, while the choir and strings fill out the texture. Timpani also reenters here, supporting the long crescendo and expansion of the line, but then the texture immediately contracts as the chorus leaves the antecedent phrase, “if thou wast not granted to sing,” hanging in the air.



Figure 3.12 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 204-209, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

A short two-measure phrase sets up the final cadential figure for the chorus, with the tenor part holding the suspended fourth that returns in this piece.

This musical score is divided into two systems. The top system shows the vocal parts (tenor and bass) and the beginning of the string accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'thou would'st sure-ly die.' The music is marked with a mezzo-forte 'mf' dynamic. The bottom system shows the full string ensemble (Violins I, Violins II, Violas, Cellos, and Double Basses) with figured bass notation (V) above the staves. The strings play a rhythmic accompaniment that supports the vocal line.

Figure 3.13 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part One, measures 212-217 chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

This extended cadence becomes a part of the train motive that serves as the coda to this movement. The train motive repeats four times, with the final two measures of the E major chord with the fourth added in viola and horn 3 bringing the movement to a close. The gradual decrescendo from measure 222 to the end of the movement gives the impression of the train that

is the center of the funeral cortege slowly moving off into the distance to the next stop on the journey, or in this case, the next movement of the piece.

Conductors need to be clear about phrase length and cutoffs, prepping the choir to breathe at natural pauses in the poetry and/or the completion of a poetic idea. The train and mourner themes should be conducted in four even though it feels comfortable in two. The danger of conducting in two is that the tempo will usually speed up, making the poetry feel rushed and preventing the melodic lines from having the space they need to grow. Due to the expansive nature of Dobrogosz's melodies, it is easy to allow the gesture to get too broad and look too homogenous while searching for the right feeling of *sostenuto* from the orchestra and choir. The conductor must have a clear idea of what each theme should sound like and how the different orchestrations of that theme will affect its presentation.

CHAPTER FOUR  
ANALYSIS OF PART TWO

Part Two

Measure Number	1	30	44	96	146	180	213	246	279	301	317-331
Form	Recit	A		Int.	B	Intro	V. 1	V. 2	Bridge	Trans.	Coda
Canto	V	VI			VII		VIII				
Tonality	a		B	F#	e				c		Eb
Meter	4/4, 3/4, 6/4	3/4, 4/4		4/4, 3/4	6/4, 5/4, 4/4	3/4					
Tempo	Q = 84	Q = 92		Q = 112	Q = 92	Q = 120					
Themes		Co	Tr	Ch. Mo	Ta	Mo					
Phraseology	29 (10+13+6)	66 (10+12+12+10+12+10)		50 (12+10+12+8)	34 (13+12+9)	33 (10+8+7+8)	33 (10+8+7+8)	33 (10+8+7+8)	22 (6+7+9)	16 (6+8+2)	15 (12+3)

Figure 4.1 A chart showing a plan for Part Two of Steve Dobrogosz's *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*

This movement begins with a recitative, sung by sopranos in unison, and accompanied by cellos, violas, and solo B $\flat$  clarinet. Although the line sounds like e minor at first, the overall tonality shifts down to eb minor in measure 13. The chords are rich in implied minor seventh sonorities that Dobrogosz uses as the basis of an almost *ritornello*-like theme in Part Three. When the full choir enters at measure 24, we hear this new theme in four parts, and the cadential figure follows in A major.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> It is easier to think of the Eb minor chord in measure 25, beat 3 spelled using sharps (D#, F#, A#) and this whole introduction in F# major.

Car - ry - ing a corpse to where it shall rest ATB: ah in the grave.

Car - ry - ing a corpse to where

*mp*

*mp*

V

Figure 4.2 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 24-27, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

At measure 30, the choir presents a new theme – the coffin theme – a 3/4 melody with a slow, dirge-like quality, mimicking the footsteps of a funeral procession. Like most of the themes in the work, the coffin theme starts in one tonality and switches to a distant key by switching from flats to sharps midway through. This iteration of the coffin theme starts in G minor, then combines flats and sharps in the chord at m 36, allowing the A# to serve as leading tone to the upcoming B major section at 44.



Figure 4.3 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 33-37, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Editorial markings at 39 and 40 give a hint that the work is about to take a more Romantic turn, with the orchestration subtly beginning to expand. The overall texture and mood of this phrase group still carries the recitative-like quality of the introduction, with the treble voices driving the narrative action while the lower voices provide harmonic support, usually on a neutral syllable. At measure 44, the choir comes together for a homophonic statement that represents the crowds of people who came together for the funeral as it passed through their town. This long choral statement mirrors the text's idea of "processions long and winding", with the citizens of America united in their grief. One of the most effective statements is the heartbeat-like "flambeaus of the night" on the G# minor triad.

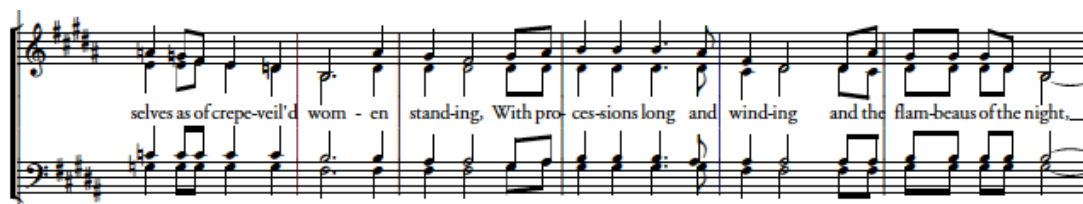


Figure 4.4 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 45-50, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The next phrase stays in that same tonal area, again reinforcing the G# minor triad in the choir on another homophonic statement at measure 52. However, there's an awkward setting of

“silent sea of faces” where the soprano/alto is left exposed with an implied phrase break that does not make particular sense at measure 55.



Figure 4.5 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom 'd*, Part Two, measures 51-57, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Dobrogosz moves out of B into E to let the train motive return. This thematic return is important as the poetry describes the arrival of the funeral train (carrying the coffin) in another city, where it is met again with the populace singing a homophonic funeral dirge in greeting.

“With the thousand voices rising strong and solemn” temporarily diverts into Db major, but quickly returns to a big cadence on C# minor at m. 72. Dobrogosz again sets the transition somewhat awkwardly as the treble voices move onto restate the coffin theme (this time accompanied by a solo pizzicato bass line).

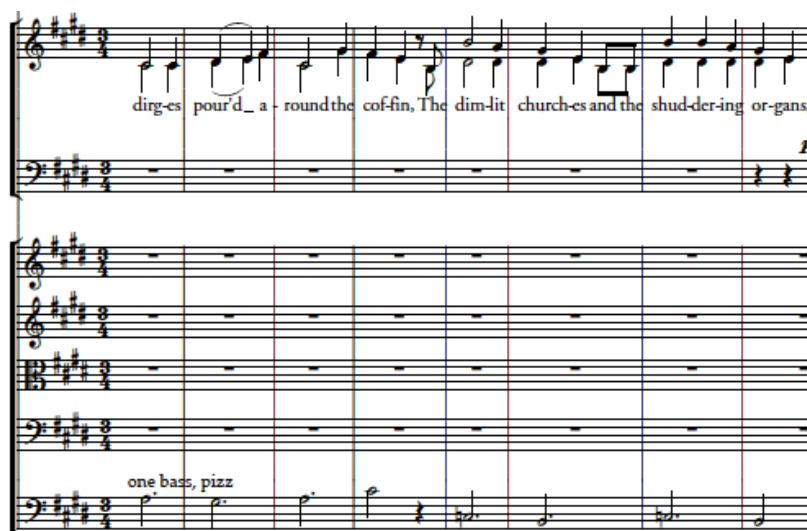


Figure 4.6 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom 'd*, Part Two, measures 74-81, chorus and string bass. Reprinted with permission from the composer.



This treble statement of the coffin theme slows down both the narrative and harmonic motion of the movement for a while, which is appropriate considering the poetry's shift into a more reflective mood. When the tenors and basses reenter the texture at measure 82, the time signature moves to 4/4 and the tempo slows even further, setting up the alto section's recitative at measure 85. Here, the section is unaccompanied until the lower string voices in the same major seconds from the introduction. The altos give us one of the more powerful images in the work: A citizen (the author believes that Whitman imagines himself here) breaking away from the assembled funeral masses to lay a sprig of lilac on the coffin as it passes.

Figure 4.7 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 84-96, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

With the cadence in m. 95, the A section ends and transitions into an orchestral section in F# minor.

The orchestral interlude here is solo piano providing rhythmic drive but playing basic accompaniment for the solo English horn line. Strings are providing simple harmonic support. The F# minor melody in the English horn at measure 96 will be expanded upon in Part Three as the “chamber walls” theme. The second statement of the theme only has the first four measures

then a skillful transition to D minor by way of an implied E minor 9 chord ( $\flat$ VII in F# minor acting as ii in D minor).

The image displays a musical score for piano and strings, measures 104-110. The score is written in F# minor (three sharps) and 3/4 time. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the piano solo part in the right hand (treble clef) and the string accompaniment in the left hand (bass clef). The piano part begins with a melodic line that transitions from F# minor to D minor. The second system shows the piano solo part in the right hand (treble clef) and the string accompaniment in the left hand (bass clef). The piano part continues with a melodic line that transitions from D minor to D minor. The third system shows the piano solo part in the right hand (treble clef) and the string accompaniment in the left hand (bass clef). The piano part concludes with a melodic line that transitions from D minor to D minor. The string accompaniment provides harmonic support throughout the piece.

Figure 4.8 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 104-110, solo piano and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

From there, the piano moves into a lilting melody that will become the basis for the “Song of the Moon” that concludes Part Two.

As is the trend, the chamber walls theme is then repeated, this time in the new key of D minor. The original orchestration holds, but this time the melody does not begin with an anacrusis, and the clarinets and other woodwinds join in both melodic and harmonic support. The piano part contains more intricate rhythms and increased depth in the right-hand melody.

Figure 4.9 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 115-126, flute, clarinet, and solo piano. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The addition of both bassoons gives the overall sound more depth and continuity, as the double bass line is playing a more pizzicato soloistic pattern. The cello part benefits from the added support.

The phrase lengths are the same as they were in the first statement; one 8 measure phrase (4+4) then the antecedent phrase only (4) with the three-measure piano solo (this time adding oboe, English horn, and horn 1). Here, the III chord in D minor serves as the pivot into what

looks like Bb major but ends up in G minor for the tenor recitative at measure 146. The piano melody from measure 111 returns at measure 136, this time orchestrated for woodwinds and horns – the piano does not participate.

The sparse *pizzicato* bass accompaniment of the tenor recitative reflects the contemplative nature of the poetry. Here, the speaker brings various flowers and greenery to coffinside to commemorate the life of the deceased. The melody at measure 148 notably returns as the opening fanfare (the “tally” theme) of Part Six.



Figure 4.10 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 146-149, tenor line only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The chorus rejoins after the short fermata at 151 with the sopranos' tricky ascending major 7<sup>th</sup> leap to an E, in the middle of a D→E→F cluster with the tenors/basses.



Figure 4.11 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 150-155, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The accompaniment here is brass choir (trumpets, 3 trombones, and tuba) with the overall tonality at 152 being Bb major 7 with an added raised 4 (E). Immediately following, a unison T/B statement accompanied by horns, cello, and bass drives the narrative forward at measure 156, and again the upper voices join to fill out the texture. This time, the soprano line approaches the E $\sharp$  from above, and the harmonization remains the same as it was earlier.

The tempo pulls back significantly, and Dobrogosz places emphasis on the word “lilac” by having the soprano sing their highest note in this section.

Figure 4.12 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 157-164, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The tenors reintroduce their recitative material again at measure 167, moving the tempo up to where it was previously. The Eb tonality is the same at 172, but revoiced higher for accompanimental figures, including a soaring first violin line that matches the soprano.

Figure 4.13 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 171-172, chorus and violin 1. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The narrative here is very personal (this Canto is marked in the poem in parentheses, so it can be read as an aside) and it tells of the mourner approaching the coffin with arms full of the flowers of grief: roses, early lilies, and, most importantly, the lilac. This B section ends with an open fifth (G-D) between the chorus and cello, with the ever-present suspended fourth (C in

violin 2) that resolves down to B $\sharp$ , but then slides down to B $\flat$  to set up the G minor tonality for the “Song of the Moon” section.

The piano opens this section playing the theme as a solo, with strings providing harmonic support with other solo instruments (horn 1, English horn, flutes) joining in to support the piano in the third phrase onward. The phrase structure of the entire introduction is primarily four bar phrases, but the second and fifth phrases are 6 and 7 measures (respectively). The melody/harmonization is diatonic until the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> phrase where b $\flat$ 4 shows up, allowing harmonic motion like A $\flat$ →B $\flat$ →C minor to reference the cadential figure in a subtle way. F $\sharp$  as the leading tone does not appear until measure 212, but it leads right into the soprano entrance at 213, back in G minor (or G Dorian, functionally).

Figure 4.14 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd, Part Two*, measures 211-220, solo piano, chorus, and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Dobrogosz makes use of *tenuto* marks throughout this Song, ensuring that the dance-like nature of the melody remains appropriately grounded. The most important characteristic of this melody is the forward movement caused by the strong quarter notes and overlapping cadences. The poetry in Canto VIII is all about the mourner's relationship with the moon. The implication here is that the moon is a stand-in for the dead President, and Whitman's relationship with the figure had somehow changed as he observed a difference in the President.

When the sopranos enter after the instrumental introduction, the melody is doubled by clarinets, while piano and strings accompany. The string figure is undulating eighth notes in the violins and easy diatonic fourths and fifths in the cellos and basses. The other voice parts join on neutral syllable "ah" or "ooh". The uneven phrase structure from the introduction makes more sense with text overlay, as Whitman's free verse requires some variance. The choir sings homophonically at measure 225, giving an effect of walking easily and contemplating the surroundings. The bass and cello lines here are long and sweeping, providing contrast from the *pizzicatos* from earlier, and the addition of the horns gives the section a grounded feel.

The accompaniment gets very sparse in the measure 238, when the strings all drop out except viola, and the piano and middle woodwinds carry the choir to the phrase's end. The violins return for a brief moment, supporting the sopranos alongside horn 1 and piano, while the choir returns to the neutral syllable. The last two measures "while the other stars all look'd on" is barred in the choral part as a hemiola which serves as an opportunity to pull the tempo back slightly to move into the next section, which is a repeat of the moon theme from the introduction of this section.

Figure 4.15 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 239-246, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

A main difference here is that, while the bulk of the phrase structure is identical, where the last 8 measures of the theme used the A $\flat$  to provide a way back to the beginning of the theme, this time Dobrogosz uses the tenors and basses to modulate to E $\flat$  (C Dorian, functionally), but does use the D $\flat$  to obscure this. The tenor/bass melodic content is new, though the contour is identical to the overall melody this far. The soprano/alto duet at measure 275 brings the ear back to E $\flat$ / C Dorian, and does not disrupt the overall phrase lengths up to this point.

Dobrogosz takes the six-measure phrase that is in the middle of the theme and begins to spin this out in various lengths starting at measure 279. The first statement, “as the night advanced...” is the expected length, with the apex of the phrase being the high E $\flat$  in the soprano.

Figure 4.16 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 274-282, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The next statement is extended by one measure, with the apex of the phrase at the F in the soprano at measure 289.



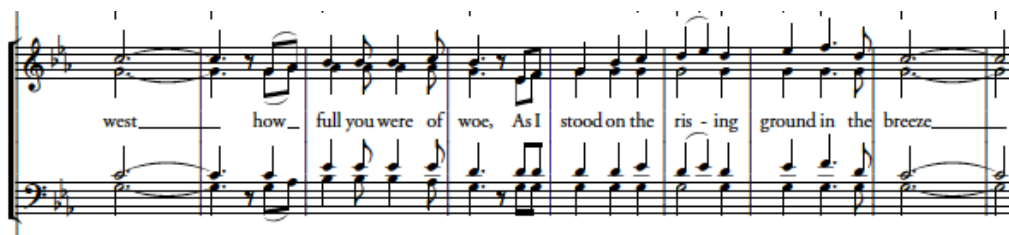


Figure 4.17 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 283-292, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The last statement in the phrase group is nine measures, with an extension of melodic material at measure 294 that accommodates the extended meter of the poetry here. These repeated phrases contribute to the natural buildup of tension at this point, and the full orchestration adds to the sonic importance of this section.

Dobrogosz introduces a syncopated rhythm at measures 285 (Fig 4.17) and 292 that fits the natural flow of the poetry by placing stress on the appropriate syllables (cool transparent night at 292). The rhythm itself has a jaunty nature to it which is at odds with the solemnity of the poetry, but what Dobrogosz does here is provide variety in what has been a movement dominated by straight quarter notes with the occasional dotted quarter/eighth note combination.

The crescendo that happens throughout this section comes to an abrupt halt when the altos take over the melodic and narrative responsibility at measure 301, as the orchestration thins out to strings oscillating between A $\flat$  major and G minor. The alto melody is an inverse of the normal ascending melodic contour sung previously, this time distinctly in E $\flat$  major. Solo oboe answers with material that allows the first violin and solo piano to reintroduce the chromatic D $\flat$  for the D $\flat$ →E $\flat$ →F sequence at measure 307. The final choral statement begins with soprano and alto in unison, then splitting into two parts before the tenors and basses join with harmonic support on neutral syllable, “ah”.

The image shows a musical score for the chorus and strings of 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd, Part Two, measures 312-321. The score is written for voice and instruments. The vocal line includes the lyrics 'clu-ded, dropt in the night, and was gone.' and 'ah'. The instrumental parts include strings and woodwinds. Dynamics are marked as *mp* and *mf*. The score is in 3/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns and melodic lines.

Figure 4.18 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Two, measures 312-321, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The movement ends with a short Coda where the opening four measures of the theme (“O Western Orb...”) being passed from solo trombone in an implied  $A\flat$  Dorian tonality, to the trumpets and violin 1 responding in  $E\flat$  Dorian with a phrase extension of one measure. At measure 325, the melody from the end of the mourner theme from movement one (“hands that hold me powerless”) adapted to work in the triple meter of this song. The final cadential figure is the same as it was previously, with the  $C\flat \rightarrow D\flat \rightarrow E\flat$  motion being spelled with  $B\sharp$  in the first chord of measure 329. The suspended fourth scale degree is in the bass, cello, tuba, and bassoon, giving the final chord a more unsettled quality than before.

The choral recitative at the beginning of Part Two is one of the more challenging sections of this work. Though it could effectively be sung by a soloist, having unison sopranos sing with their most mystical tone allows for greater dramatic effect. Later, in the “Song of the Moon”, the movement challenges conductors to find a 3/4 pattern that allows freedom of motion in the inner beats but also maintains strong control of the downbeat. There needs to be a strong

understanding of tempo between conductor and pianist, as most of the orchestral interludes feature the piano soloist.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> To fully understand the articulations needed, conductors should listen to Dobrogosz's piano solo arrangement of "Song of the Moon." His phrasing is exquisite, and though the tempo in *Lilacs* is much faster, it is invaluable to hear the composer's intentions as a performer. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcXN2owq2Oo>

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF PART THREE

Part Three

Measure Number	1	35	94	110	127	190	226	247-282
Form	Intro	A	B		Int.	C	Recit	Coda
Canto		IX	X			XI		
Tonality	F#	a	F# (Gb)		D Phr	G	b	
Meter	4/4					4/4, 3/4	4/4, 3/4	4/4
Tempo	Q = 92, 112			Q = 96				Q = 76
Themes	An			S	An	Ch, Mo	Mo, S	Pr
Phraseology	34 (4+14+16)	59 (14+8+10+8+16+3)	33 (6+11+8+8)		63 (7x9)	57 (8x5+11)		36 (6x6)

Figure 5.1 A chart showing a plan for Part Three of Steve Dobrogosz’s *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d*

This movement starts with a four-measure instrumental introduction that will serve as a recurring theme throughout. Dobrogosz introduced the overall harmonic language of this theme in the soprano/alto recitative at the start of Part Two. The theme is angular, with regularly shifting harmonies that do not follow a discernable harmonic progression, other than outlining a sequence of descending fifths in the first two measures. The F# major key signature makes it more difficult, yet this introduction negates most of those accidentals.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> This is also a point where some editing should be done in the original score and parts. This score is in concert key all the way through, but the individual instruments within the score have differing accidentals (Gb in one part and F double sharp in another). There are sections in this movement where the key signature should be changed to make the shift from written sharp key to written flat key easier to navigate.

soberly  $\text{♩} = 92$

1

flutes 1-2 *mf*

oboe *mf*

Eng. horn *mf*

Bb clar. 1-2 *mf*

bass clar. *mf*

bassoons 1-2 *mf* *al*

horns 1-4 *mf* *al*

Bb trumpets 1-2 *mp* *al*

*poco rit.*

Figure 5.2 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Three, measures 1-5, wind parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The piano theme at measure 4, hereafter referred to as the “anthem” theme,<sup>40</sup> is a straightforward major melody in F# major, split into two unequal phrases of 4 and 3 measures respectively. The use of “anthem” is deliberate, as it carries with it connotations of reverence and honor across time, and that the words being sung are vital to the country’s overall culture.

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<sup>40</sup> When this melody occurs in Part Four, Dobrogosz’s editorial marking is “like an anthem”, hence the naming of the theme here.



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Figure 5.3 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Three, measures 5-13, solo piano. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The first half of the melody ends with a tonicization of IV, but there is not a clear cadence to end the melody overall. The next entrance of this melody overlaps at measure 12, with solo oboe, first horn, and cello joining the piano. The oboe carries the melody here, with the horn playing a countermelody in opposite contour. The piano part has moving eighth notes that will become the inner parts for the reharmonization of this melody that will occur later in the movement. At measure 19, it seems as though the theme will start again, but instead, Dobrogosz repeats the beginning of melody twice, with the oboe and piano trading the same melodic gesture back and forth. After a surprising upward gesture in the oboe line at measure 23, the cello and horn return to a B major chord with the added C#, which was heard previously in the middle of the anthem theme. An eight-measure version of the introduction is played by the winds, and this time the harmonic motion is clearer, emphasizing F and C as roots, with the most used chord being the half-diminished seventh chord. However, closer comparison between these interjections shows that Dobrogosz does not use the same harmonies each time. For instance, in

measures 3-4, the progression is  $C^{\circ} \rightarrow D^{\#^{\circ}} \rightarrow B^7 \rightarrow F^{\#}$ . Here at measures 33-34, the progression is  $D^{\#^{\circ}} \rightarrow F^{\#} \rightarrow Esus4 \rightarrow A$ . These subtle changes in harmonization keep the material from becoming stagnant, especially in a piece that relies so heavily on recurring themes.

Tenors and basses enter at m. 35 with the first line of Canto IX, which brings the character of the bird back into the forefront after the “Song of the Moon” from the previous movement.

The image shows a musical score for measures 35-42. The top staff is a vocal line in bass clef with lyrics: "Sing on there in the swamp, O singer bash-ful and ten-der I hear your notes,". Below it are four staves for strings: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Double Bass. The Double Bass staff has a "pizz" marking. The Violin I staff has a "V" marking. The music is in A minor and 4/4 time.

Figure 5.4 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Three, measures 35-42, tenor/bass and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The melody here has a predominately descending contour, which matches the contour of the introductory statement. The key center of the section is A minor, though there is an inspired moment at measure 45 where the tenor/bass duet, strings, and brass hold an  $A\flat^{Maj7}$  chord, then the T/B duet sing a passage that is a slightly altered version of the introduction.

The image shows a musical score for measures 44-48. The top staff is a vocal line in bass clef with lyrics: "call I hear, I come pre-sent-ly, I und-er-stand you". The dynamic marking *mp* is placed above the vocal line. Below the vocal line are four staves for strings: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The bottom-most string staff has a *pizz. (one bass)* instruction and a *mf* dynamic marking.

Figure 5.5 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Three, measures 44-48, tenor/bass and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

This sets the listener up to hear the eight-measure interlude as a more natural source for the melodic content than it was at the beginning. The interjection of the anthem theme after the initial four measures serves as a foreshadowing of the theme returning later in the movement.

An A major cadence occurs at measures 55-56, with the cadential figure is present in the flutes and trumpet with quicker rhythmic velocity this time.

Tonality immediately shifts back to A minor when the tenors and basses rejoin, though this time there is a two-measure trumpet solo after the first unison phrase. The second half of the phrase is important, for the poetry here “The star my departing comrade holds and detains me” shifts the focus away from the song of the bird back to Whitman’s stand-in for President Lincoln. Dobrogosz emphasizes this by using the cadential figure in a very high tenor part, supported by brass, bassoons, and strings. Sonically, the high G $\flat$  in the tenor part is much like a cry of grief, and the trumpet, having played a more secondary role in the piece up to this point, shines in this emotional moment.



The image shows a musical score for a vocal and string ensemble. The top staff is a tenor/bass vocal line with lyrics: "The star my de-part-ing com-rade holds and de-tains me". The bottom staves represent the string ensemble, including violin I, violin II, viola, cello, and double bass. The music is in a minor key and features a mezzo piano dynamic. The score is divided into measures 62-66.

Figure 5.6 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom 'd*, Part Three, measures 62-66, tenor/bass and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The introductory material is played again, this time referencing the departing star in a musical way. As each two-measure mini-phrase goes by, the material gets progressively lower in the woodwind registers, then by measure 71 the harmonic supportive material is in the trombones and viola, with the melody played by solo violin. Horns join for the cadence in A major, and this sparse instrumentation and *mezzo piano* overall dynamic provides a sense of pause.

An interlude occurs next that is based on smaller parts of the introductory material. Again, the key signature is ignored almost immediately. It's written as if it were A minor or C major. The cadential figure at 77-78 supports an F minor analysis. However, at measure 79, there is a shift from flats to sharps, ending on a G# minor chord at measure 80, implying E major.

The staccato mark on beat one of measure 86 makes that cadential moment surprisingly playful, considering the previous poetic material.

The image shows a musical score for measures 83-87 of 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd', Part Three. The score is for solo trumpet and solo piano. The trumpet part is marked 'al solo, dolce' and 'mf'. The piano part is marked 'mp'. The score shows five measures of music with a staccato mark on the first beat of the fifth measure.

Figure 5.7 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Three, measures 83-87, solo trumpet and solo piano. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

This poetry for the next major section is Canto X. The Canto itself is divided into two parts: the first part is about the narrator wondering how to express their grief outwardly, and the second is the narrator deciding to honor the departed with words and the winds from the Eastern and Western Seas. Dobrogosz sets the two sections with completely different characters.

The tenors and basses enter with another high tenor tessitura, and the basses hold the pedal B $\sharp$  underneath. The tonality undulates between B minor and B major, and the texture begins to thicken as the woodwinds and brass start to come in. The altos and sopranos also enter for the first time in the movement, and the rhythmic and harmonic velocity starts to move faster. There are fragments of other themes spread out in the texture, like the melodic gesture at 103 from the “lilac blooming perennial” line first heard in Part One. There is a seven-measure phrase that begins at measure 104 in which the instrumentation thins out to almost nothing as the choir approaches the cadential figure at 108 and 109 in D $\sharp$  minor with the suspended fourth.

The second part of this section is written in all flats, which is a significant shift in both sound and look from the first part. The cadence on the D $\sharp$  minor chord in 109 “resolves” to a G $\sharp$ maj<sup>7</sup> chord in the third inversion, which, seeing the way that the next measures are written, can be analyzed as an A $\flat$ maj<sup>7</sup> chord for ease. It is not unreasonable then to look at the rest of the movement as generally being in G $\flat$ .

109 rit. a tempo ♩ = 96

love? Sea-winds blown from east and west from east and west

Figure 5.8 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Three, measures 109-112, full orchestra and chorus. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Dobrogosz's weakest transition is the one before the statement of the "sea winds" theme at measure 110. The theme itself shares rhythmic elements with the previous material, but the feel is completely at odds with every theme we've heard before. The harmonies at 111 and 112 are G minor, B $\flat$  minor, and F minor, then Dobrogosz shifts back to sharp key harmonies to get back into F $\sharp$  major by way of G $\sharp$  minor and D $\sharp$  minor in measure 114. A unison statement by the sopranos and altos in 117 is another quotation from Part One, as before, then the tonality shifts again, this time to D major. As the poetry from Canto X comes to a close, this section slows and stops as well, ending with the sopranos and altos finding their way back to unison as the pianist plays a figure at 126 that can only be described as flirty.

The image shows a musical score for measures 124-126. It consists of two systems. The first system is a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass staff. The second system is a vocal line with a single staff. The lyrics are "grave of him I love." followed by a long horizontal line. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Figure 5.9 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Three, measures 124-126, soprano/alto and solo piano. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The violins and brass hold the listener in a sort of suspense with the dominant chord on D setting up the next section, which seems to be leaning towards G minor.

What follows is an instrumental development of the anthem theme from earlier in the movement. The melody is unchanged, and the phrase length is still seven measures long. With each statement of the anthem theme in the first violins, another instrument joins the texture to harmonize. The theme is stated a total of nine times. The entire section is in g minor this time, and Dobrogosz keeps the harmonization diatonic.

The image shows a musical score for piano and violin 1, measures 134-143. The piano part is in the upper system, starting at measure 134 with a 'piano' dynamic marking. The violin 1 part is in the lower system, starting at measure 134 with a 'v1' marking. The score is in G minor, indicated by two flats in the key signature. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The violin 1 part plays a melodic line that harmonizes with the piano's melody. The dynamic marking 'mf' (mezzo-forte) is present at the end of the section.

Figure 5.10 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Three, measures 134-143, solo piano and violin 1. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

There should be a slow, gradual buildup, both in volume and intensity. It feels better in two rather than in four. The eighth and ninth statements are the fullest in terms of sonic texture, and the high register for the melody and the combination of instruments creates a truly dramatic and significant moment. The anthem theme has swelled to the point where it really seems as though the Eastern and Western winds have joined in the tribute to the departed hero.

Tenors and basses sing the chamber walls theme that was introduced in Part Two.

The image shows a musical score for measures 187-193. The top staff is for the tenor/bass voice, with lyrics: "O what shall I hang on the cham-berwalls? And what shall the pic-tures be?". The score includes five staves for the string ensemble: piano (pizz.), violin I, violin II, viola, and cello/bass. Dynamics include mezzo-forte (mf) and piano (pizz.).

Figure 5.11 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom 'd*, Part Three, measures 187-193, tenor/bass and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

This G minor melody has the expected high tenor tessitura, and they are joined by soprano and alto. The driving eighth notes in the piano give a sense of urgency as the narrator contemplates what imagery should be used to decorate the grave or mausoleum of the deceased. The soprano line at 195 is from the English horn line at measure 75, and the tenor matches for a while until holding the harmonic motion back with longer note values. The walking descending bass part here is doubled by the trumpet and cellos. The second phrase transitions into F# major by way of an F<sup>o7</sup> chord at 203.<sup>41</sup> The moon theme returns at 205, and the lighter 3/4 time signature gives space for the texture to expand. Dobrogosz depicts Whitman's imagery of the "gorgeous, indolent sinking sun" with an eight-measure choral phrase and rich major seventh chord harmonies.

<sup>41</sup> The B# should be read as a Cb. The section from 204-221 should be in written/analyzed in Gb major.

bright, With floods of the yel-low gold of the gor-geous, in-do-lent,

text

//

sink - ing sun,

ATB:  
ooh,

*mp*

Figure 5.12 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Three, measures 204-213, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

A choral recitative follows at measure 226, with the tenors and basses leading. The tone shifts here as the narrator, still describing the images that will line the burial chamber walls, returns to the solitude of the forest. Reminiscent of the texture of the bird theme in Part One, the sopranos and altos sing a duet with the piano in measure 234. Full chorus and strings return at 241 with the sea winds theme, in a more organic transition.

This final section is very similar to the opening of the second movement of the Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem*. Both feature unison choral singing low in the register, expressive strings, and an insistent timpani part.

The image shows a page of musical notation for measures 259-264. It features a vocal line with lyrics: "ci-ty at hand with dwell-ings so dense, and stacks of chim-neys, And all the scenes of life and the work-shops, and the". Below the vocal line are staves for piano, timpani, and strings. The piano part has a repeating rhythmic motif. The timpani part has a steady, insistent pattern. The string part provides a harmonic and rhythmic foundation.

Figure 5.13 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Three, measures 259-264, timpani, solo piano, chorus, and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The tempo is marked at 76 bpm, but a slower tempo could work as well. At the end of the first movement, the tenors sing the suspended fourth resolving downward to the third and then downward again to the second. This two-measure phrase is repeated three times in



descending octaves in the strings. The choral melody is actually in four measure phrases.

Though these phrase endings do not exactly line up with the strings, the melody is constructed in such a way that dissonance is avoided. The tonality of this section is D major overall, but the melody sounds more modal, specifically A Mixolydian. It is interesting that the poetry is about images of the city, which one would think would be set in a more vibrant and busy way is instead this solemn funeral march. By setting it this way, Dobrogosz is showing that the death of the President has cast a pall over the entire country, and the workmen who are returning home are occupied with their grief. In the final chord, the suspended fourth is in the second violins, and this quiet ending leaves the listener in a sense of contemplation.

This movement is the most harmonically difficult for the singers. Finding the opening pitches for each phrase from the somewhat unrelated material that precedes it is complicated, especially considering key signatures and accidentals that are in conflict with each other. Conductors should spend time going over the seams of those phrases so that all parts are comfortable finding the relationships between their lines and the other instrumental lines. The tenor part is consistently high throughout. The instrumental interlude beginning at measure 127 is an opportunity to build intensity in both sheer volume of sound and uniformity of articulations. The ending of this movement needs to be dark and insistent, with a restrained tempo and hushed accents in the timpani and strings. Conductors should strive for seamless internal phrasing by staggering singer breaths and softening final consonants to help with unified cutoffs.

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSIS OF PART FOUR

Part Four

Measure Number	1	22	67	82	101	131	163	180	197	221	262	306	341	350-381
Form	Intro	A	Trans.	B		A'	V. 1	V. 2	Trans.	V. 3	V. 4		V. 5	Recit
Canto		XII			XIII		XIV							
Tonality	D		c#	E	C#	D $\flat$				C	D	g	F#	e
Meter	5/4, 6/4		6/4	3/4	4/4, 3/4	4/4	4/4, 3/4					3/4	4/4	4/4, 6/4
Tempo	Q = 88		Q = 92		Q = 84		Q = 100						Q = 92	Q = 72
Themes	F	F		B, S	B, Mo	F	An			Mo		Mo, S	M	
Phraseology	21 (9+7+5)	45 (9+7+5 +8+11+5)	15 (3+8+4)	39 (8+7+7+10+10+7)		32 (9+7+3 +8+5)	34 (6+7+4)x2		24 (10+10 +4)	41 (8+8+7+10 +8)	79 (9+8+6+7+9+11 +8+8+7+6)		9 (7+2)	31 (7+8+10+7)

Figure 6.1 A chart showing a plan for Part Four of Steve Dobrogosz’s *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d*

This movement opens with an orchestral fanfare. The phrase lengths are uneven, with time signatures that shift from 5/4 to 6/4 depending on the melody. Harmonically, the overall pattern seems to function in D $\flat$ , despite the opening chord being D major<sup>42</sup>. In the consequent half of the introduction, the melody is reharmonized with a new root of B, however the following harmonies are identical. The solo piano, after an unassuming entrance at measure 8, suddenly plays a stunningly fast D $\flat$  Lydian passage at measure 13, forcing the quarter note triplets to pull the overall velocity back. There is an increase in density of orchestral texture in measure 17 starting in the low strings, and when the trumpet declares its final statement at measure 19, the resultant C<sup>Maj7</sup> chord urgently seeks resolution. The theme itself strives to capture “Whitman’s panoramic landscape here, with a bit of Gershwin-esque coloring.”<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> In early 2020, Dobrogosz took the material from Part Four and set it for solo tenor and piano. The chord realization in that score shows an abundance of pivot chord modulations, something that Dobrogosz employs often in his solo playing. The score for this version is included in the Appendix.

<sup>43</sup> E-mail from Steve Dobrogosz, April 1, 2020.

When the choir enters, the words of Canto XII ring out in a celebration of the country that the singer cherishes. The fanfare-like nature of this opening becomes clearer; just as Whitman implores the reader to consider the majesty of the countryside, so does Dobrogosz motivate the listener to experience the fullest sound of orchestra and chorus. This choral statement is identical in harmonization and phrase length as the orchestral introduction, though the basses do not double the bass and cello line here. Instead, Dobrogosz doubles the voices in the brass and viola, allowing the low strings to continue with their own melody. The texture is still very dense, and the alto and tenor parts are very close to one another which requires close listening for balance. Whitman's poetry is also difficult here, but Dobrogosz uses the shifting time signatures to allow the natural accents of the free verse to fall in musically appropriate places.

The image shows a musical score for the chorus and strings of the piece "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd", Part Four, measures 22-25. The score is written for a vocal line and a string ensemble. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Lo, bo-dy and soul, this land, My own Man-hat-tan with". The music is in 6/4 time and includes dynamic markings like "f" and triplet markings. The string ensemble consists of six staves, including two bass staves and four upper staves. The score is printed with permission from the composer.

Figure 6.2 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Four, measures 22-25, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

When the tenor section and solo trumpet are featured at measure 39, the basses hold a pedal point underneath them, interestingly the seventh of the  $C^{\text{Maj}7}$  chord from the introduction.

Instead of D major, this time we begin in E major, with the descending  $3 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 1$  figure high in the soprano part<sup>44</sup>. The resolution to major I is substituted for minor, as the tonality almost immediately shifts away from E through  $E_b$  in measure 47, eventually settling into what can only be heard as  $F\sharp$  major. This section climaxes at measure 57 with an embellished V – I progression, this time in B major. Dobrogosz creates maximum drama here with a soaring soprano part on “fulfilled noon”, requiring them to hold a suspended  $F\sharp5$  on thirteen slow beats. The choir and orchestra provide support with a held B major chord with  $C\sharp$  added.

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<sup>44</sup> This harmonization is very similar to the first time we see the cadential figure in part one, measure 34.

The image shows a page of a musical score, measures 56-61. It features multiple staves for a full orchestra and a chorus. The score includes woodwinds (flutes, oboes, bassoons, clarinets), strings (violins, violas, cellos, double basses), piano, and vocal soloists. The tempo is marked 'rit.' and the metronome is set at 76. The key signature is B minor. The lyrics for the vocal soloists are: 'the ful-filled noon.' The score includes various dynamic markings such as *ff*, *f*, *mf*, and *mp*. The music is in 3/4 time and includes a mode shift into B minor at measure 60.

Figure 6.3 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Four, measures 56-61, full orchestra and chorus. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

A mode shift into B minor at measure 60 leads to a thinning out of the texture reflecting the tonal change in the poetry from noon to “the welcome night and the stars”, and the turbulence of the previous harmonic motion cools significantly. The alternating time signatures from the beginning of the movement return in the choir with the quarter note triplet doubled in the woodwinds.

The final line of Canto XII is sung in unison by the sopranos and altos, accompanied by strings and piano. The tonality undulates between A<sup>Maj7</sup> and G<sup>#7</sup>, providing a solid accompaniment for a haunting melody from the solo piano. After the uncertain, yet oddly calm cadence at measures 76-77, the flutes and clarinets enter in 3/4 with a descending eighth note line, leading directly into the violin melody that signals the start of the next section.

At the beginning of the second section, the first violins play an extended version of the “song of the bleeding throat” portion of the bird theme from Part One, accompanied by a challenging eighth note triplet figure in the second violins.

The image shows a musical score for string parts, measures 84-90. It consists of five staves. The top staff is the first violin, the second staff is the second violin, the third staff is the viola, the fourth staff is the first cello, and the fifth staff is the first bass. The key signature is A major (two sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The first violin part features a melodic line with slurs and a final measure with a fermata. The second violin part features a challenging eighth-note triplet figure. The viola, first cello, and first bass parts provide harmonic support with various rhythmic patterns and slurs. The dynamic marking *mf* is present in the final measure of each staff.

Figure 6.4 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Four, measures 84-90, string parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The harmonic motion is serene, with the overall feel being A major carried over from the transitional material. The flute and violin move seamlessly into the sea winds theme from Part Three via the *glissando* in measure 90. The tempo also pulls back very slightly as the time signature changes to 4/4. As the orchestral texture thickens in measure 93, Dobrogosz suddenly halts the forward momentum with an ascending eighth note figure in the flute and first violin and a sudden tempo designation of 60bpm. Previous interpretation of this figure suggests dictating

each eighth note and reclaiming tempo from all other parts at the downbeat of measure 97. This will allow for the conductor and tenor/bass sections to connect visually for the choral entrance at 101. The A dominant chord with the suspended fourth is right in line with the other cadential treatments that Dobrogosz uses throughout, and the tenor/bass section enters with the first words of Canto XIII.

All of the bombast in the introductory material of this movement is stripped away here as the voice of the poet retreats from the grandeur of America back to the privacy and solitude of the woods and swamp. Dobrogosz brings back a shortened fragment from the bird theme in Part Two, as well as a brief melody from the middle of Part Two, all accompanied by hushed strings. Tenors and basses continue after the fermata at 113 with a quotation right out of the “Song of the Moon”, but this time the resolution is not nearly as gentle. The sopranos and altos enter at 120 with slightly altered material from climactic part of the introduction, with the same 3→2→1 figure in the soprano part leading somewhat abruptly into the embellished V-I progression, this time in G $\flat$  major. After the fermata, the choir sings “with voice of uttermost woe” *subito piano* and cadences into a heart-wrenching G $\flat$ <sup>Maj7</sup> chord.

The image shows a musical score for voice and strings. The top staff is for the voice, with lyrics "voice of ut-ter-most woe." written below it. The bottom staff is for the strings, with a dynamic marking "P" and "(text)" below it. Both staves show a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with a fermata over the final note of each line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major) and the time signature is 3/4.

Figure 6.5 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Four, measures 22-25, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The last four lines of Canto XIII signal a return to Whitman's more oratory tone, and Dobrogosz fittingly brings back the musical material from the beginning of the movement. The quarter note triplet returns, as does the angular nature of the melody. The piano reenters at 138 to drive the orchestra's rhythm forward, and when the choir sings, "yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart,)"<sup>45</sup> the nod to Gerswhin is undeniable.

Figure 6.6 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Four, measures 140-144, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The 3→2→1 gesture in the soprano part (this time resolving to E minor) has a very bluesy feel here that it lacks in other iterations, and the solo pianist's improvisatory flourishes at 142-147 show Dobrogosz's roots as a jazz pianist. The choir maintains an E minor choral pedal point held over five measures, eventually setting up the tenors and basses to sing, "Yet the lilac with its mastering odor holds me." At this point in the poetry, the speaker has been trying to master his grief, but something has prevented that from happening. Both the star (Lincoln) and the lilac scent (the funeral cortege) are preventing him from moving on.

<sup>45</sup> Parentheses are Whitman's.



The solo piano at measure 149 plays the train theme in E major as we have experienced it before, but then it abruptly shifts to C# minor and the motive extends for longer than it usually does. The piano ends on an A<sup>Maj7</sup> to close out the section.

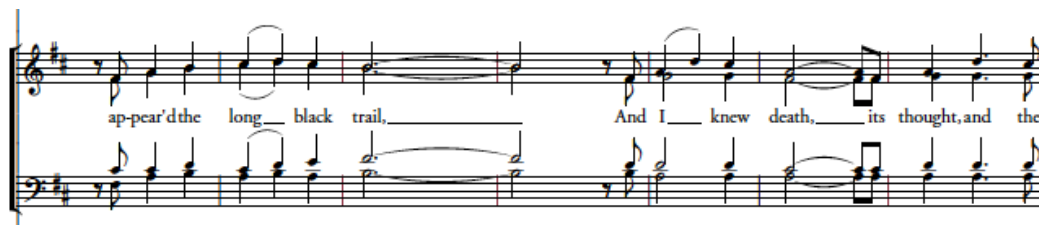
The fully realized anthem theme from Part Three returns in a striking tonal shift from E to Db, and the altos change the whole mood of the movement. They sing of fields and light, accompanied only by piano and timpani. The strings enter at 168 and accompany the singers at “farmers preparing their crops”<sup>46</sup> and shortly after, a solo trumpet plays an ascending scalar passage reinforcing the key center of Db. An instrumental statement of the anthem occurs at measure 180, identical in phrase structure and treatment of melodic material. Dobrogosz’s treatment of this material implies that the opening notes of the anthem theme will signal a new section or verse.

The sopranos and altos have an interesting bit of text at measure 197. “After the perturb’d winds and the storms” is actually the second half of that line, and Whitman places it in parentheses as a descriptor for the first part of that line. Dobrogosz choosing to lead this transition with that line puts undue emphasis on that phrase and can cause misunderstanding of the poetry. However, the choral material finds firm footing at measure 203 with a strong, accented melody in the upper three voices while the basses provide a steady pedal point. The addition of timpani here emphasizing C major coupled with a sweeping melody in the sopranos drives the movement forward to the familiar trumpet flourish and four-measure phrase in 3/4 that brings each “verse” to a close.

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<sup>46</sup> This is the second overt reference to the Brahms *Requiem* that Dobrogosz has made in this piece. When asked about the connection to Brahms, Dobrogosz writes that he had listened to the *Requiem* but not strictly as inspiration for this piece. While the influences are clear, there was no intentional “borrowing” of any material. Email from Steve Dobrogosz, April 1, 2020.

Verse three starts with the anthem material, though this time in the upper voices. The altos have a lovely low passage on the text “each with its meals and minutia of daily usages”, contributing to the scene that Whitman has been describing. Whitman, as the speaker, is observing and contemplating how in all of the business that goes on in daily life, death is an inevitability and must be addressed. The speaker’s, and in a broader sense, America’s daily routine has been upended by the death of the President, and that grief changes everything. The oboe comes in at measure 229 in G major with the first phrase of the anthem theme, and the choir answers with a unison statement depicting the “throbbings” of the city streets. Suddenly, Whitman describes a cloud appearing and enveloping the entire scene, himself included. At that moment, Whitman says he knew/understood death, and Dobrogosz supports this by using fragments of the moon theme, specifically the variable length phrase that ends each melodic statement.



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Figure 6.7 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Four, measures 250-261, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The opening of verse four is very similar to verse two, though this time in D major. When the choir enters at 279, accompanied by piano and strings, the lilting Song of the Moon theme continues, with sopranos and altos accompanied by the lower voices on a neutral syllable. Dobrogosz’s choral writing here is very lyrical, with all parts being in the middle of their respective ranges. A challenge here is the varying phrase lengths, with some as short as two measures and some as long as seven. The long, unbroken nature of the poetry requires careful preparation of cutoffs, and singers cannot go on autopilot here with regards to breathing.

The texture changes with the addition of flutes 1 and 2 at measure 302 playing a triplet pattern that passes back and forth between them. Second violins join that pattern at 306, and this undulating rhythm presses against the duples in the other parts.

Figure 6.8 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Four, measures 305-311, flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, horns. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The orchestral texture is dense here, and it can very easily cause balance issues with the choir, if not managed carefully.<sup>47</sup> After a cadence in g minor at 326, the choir continues *a*

<sup>47</sup> In the St. Jacob’s recording, the choir is completely obscured by the orchestra. It is unclear whether the problem lies in the orchestration or the performance circumstances. Dobrogosz writes that he definitely “wanted a

*cappella*, telling of how the speaker has come back to the swamp, and the bird welcomes him where it had shunned others. The orchestra responds with a quotation of the sea winds theme<sup>48</sup> that pivots to F# major to set up the beginning of an abbreviated verse five.



Figure 6.9 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Four, measures 331-336, string parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Tenors and basses have the first phrase of the anthem theme, and the unison melody that follows is much shorter this time. After the fermata on “carol of death”<sup>49</sup>, there is an awkwardly abrupt statement of the cadential figure in F# major, ending on a B major chord with an added C#.

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bigger choir” to help address balance issues, but it wasn’t possible due to space constraints. Email from Steve Dobrogosz, April 1, 2020.

<sup>48</sup> Though not marked in the score, it is assumed that the *glissando* into beat one of 335 should be performed as it was previously.

<sup>49</sup> Dobrogosz writes this as unison tenor/bass choir accompanied by trombones 1-3. A more effective strategy here would have been to write it as three-part TBB with unison trombone and horn.

The image shows a musical score for measures 345-349. It features vocal lines for soprano and alto, and string parts for violin, viola, and cello/bass. The lyrics are: "sang the car-ol of death, and a verse for him I love. oh". Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, and *p arco*. The score is in E major and 3/4 time.

Figure 6.10 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Four, measures 345-349, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The B major chord at measure 349 functions as dominant leading into the closing section of the movement which is ostensibly in E major, but the addition of the soprano and alto in 348 is too low in the range for good production, and the basses have no part doubling them at all throughout this section.<sup>50</sup>

The English horn plays the mourner theme in the original key of E major, with some slight changes in the melody at the end. A unison soprano/alto choral recitative follows, loosely based on material we heard from the tenors in Part Three. The text here is private and somewhat

<sup>50</sup> In the final B major chord, the basses and violas are the only third in the chord. Rebalancing this chord would not be out of order.

mystical as the speaker approaches the solitude of the cedar forest that has become his refuge, listening to the song of the bird that has provided comfort thus far. Dobrogosz's writing reflects this mood well, with the opening theme from Part Three set much more intimately for upper woodwinds and solo horn at measure 370. Tonality is much clearer here, as the soprano/alto line is firmly in E minor throughout, with occasional brushes with G minor. The final piano solo implies a sort of plagal cadence, with the A minor seventh moving into E minor as outlined by the alto line at in the final measure.<sup>51</sup>

The image shows a musical score for measures 376-381. It consists of three systems of staves. The top system is for piano, starting at measure 376 with a 'piano' dynamic. It includes a 'solo, semi-rubato' section and a 'molto rit.' section. The middle system is for solo piano, with lyrics 'tall-iced the song' and 'of the bird'. The bottom system is for strings, marked 'p'.

Figure 6.11 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Four, measures 376-381, solo piano, chorus, and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Part Four is the longest and most taxing movement for both choir and orchestra. The orchestration is the fullest it has been, and the poetry is wordy and dense. Conductors should

<sup>51</sup> The alto line is also outlining the 3→2→1 cadential figure.

take special care with the vocal health of the singers, as this is the movement with the widest vocal range *and* the highest tessitura. The tendency will be to have the singers go full out in order to maintain balance, but doing so will cause undue fatigue. An open and healthy tone will mitigate this. Articulations are key throughout the movement, and strong, determined accents on key words will keep the narrative flow moving. Capturing the correct mood for the anthem theme is difficult, mainly because Dobrogosz's insertion of a defiantly major theme feels abrupt after the density of the movement's opening material. If possible, Part Four should move into Part Five *attacca*.

CHAPTER SEVEN  
ANALYSIS OF PART FIVE

Part Five

Measure Number	1	17	44	79	106	129	160	198	225-256
Form	Intro	V. 1	V. 2	V. 3	Int.	V. 4	Recit	V. 5	Outro
Canto	XIV								
Tonality	E				e	E	c#	E	
Meter	4/4	4/4, 3/4					4/4, 3/4		
Tempo	Q = 80	Q = 112					Q = 104	Q = 118	Q = 76
Themes	Tr	C	C, Tr	C, Tr		C, Tr	Mo, W	C	Tr
Phraseology	16 (4+4)	27 (8+11+8)	35 (8+11+8+8)	27 (8+11+8)	23 (8+7+8)	31 (8+11+8+4)	38 (7+10+7+10+4)	27 (8+11+8)	32 (8x4)

Figure 7.1 A chart showing a plan for Part Five of Steve Dobrogosz’s *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d*

Part Five, titled “Song of the Bird” begins as Part One did, both in E major and with the train theme presented in the strings only. As before, the woodwinds and solo horn enter in the second statement of the theme, setting up the choir’s entrance at measure 17.

The text for this movement is the remaining part of Canto XIV. In this section, Whitman’s bird sings a song praising the idea of Death approaching not as enemy, but as friend who should approach with unerring speed, and full confidence that she will be met with welcome. Whitman uses imagery of “strong deliveress” and “dark mother” which is at odds with the typical idea of death being masculine and to be feared. Dobrogosz’s writing in this movement supports this inversion, with broad, sweeping vocal lines and a defiantly bright E major key that reinforces the idea that the listener should greet Death’s arrival as Whitman did. The necessity of death as the natural ending of life’s progression should not be feared, but we



should take the time, as Whitman suggests, to remove ourselves to a quiet place and reflect on life. That way, we might meet Death gladly, as equals, and depart this life together.<sup>52</sup>

The sopranos and altos enter with a melody that is related to the mourner theme from Part One, but with more symmetrical construction. Here, the antecedent phrase is split into four equal divisions of four measures each, and the consequent phrase is three measures followed by eight, also divided equally.

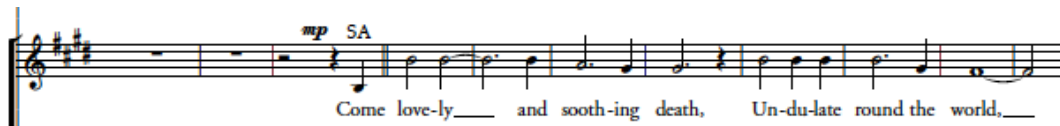


Figure 7.2 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Five, measures 14-24, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Every verse has a passage sung by tenors and basses on neutral syllable “oh”. After this, each verse closes with either tenors/basses or soprano/alto with descending melodic contour on long note values.

Harmonically, the structure of each of the verses is the most straightforward of any of the melodies Dobrogosz has presented thus far. Dobrogosz avoids any altered notes, keeping the overall sound of this melody in E major, but uses an interesting set of chords at the end of each verse. At measure 36, D $\sharp$  appears, hinting at more modal activity, but what Dobrogosz does instead is use the C minor chord at the end of each phrase to trick the ear into thinking that D major is the goal via the bVII – I progression that’s been used before. Instead, Dobrogosz resolves back to E major for the beginning of the next verse.

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<sup>52</sup> Whitman’s trinity of lilac, star, and bird evoke imagery of the stone, wand, and cloak from *The Tale of the Three Brothers*. That story’s realizations about humanity’s relationship with Death align with the narrator’s journey in *Lilacs*. Rowling, J. K. *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* (New York: Children’s High-Level Group in association with Arthur A. Levine Books, 2008), 93.

From a textural standpoint, this first verse is sparse, with the strings accompanying the sopranos/altos with long chords. The character of the strings changes at measure 29, with the cellos and basses taking a more martial tone with staccato eighth notes leading into beat three.

The image shows a musical score for a chorus. The top staff is the vocal line with lyrics: "ene-ly ar-riv-ing, ar-riv-ing, In the day, in the night, to all, to each, Soon-er or lat-er". The bottom staves show the string accompaniment. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes dynamics like *mf* and *arco*, and articulation marks like accents and staccato.

Figure 7.3 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Five, measures 25-34, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The woodwinds and piano join to double the tenors and basses in the last part of the verse, and duet horns help to bring out a somewhat obscured viola part at measure 41.

The soprano melody is stated at measure 44, harmonized in three parts with alto and tenor. This hymn-like statement, with block chords moving homorhythmically, has a thicker texture this time, with woodwinds and horns being present from the outset.

The image shows a musical score for the chorus of 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd', Part Five, measures 44-51. It features vocal parts for Tenor (T: text) and Bass (B: text), and a string ensemble. The vocal parts are in E major and feature lyrics: 'Praise'd beth e fath-om-less un - i - verse For life and joy, death.' The string ensemble includes Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. Dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to piano (p).

Figure 7.4 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Five, measures 44-51, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

A notable addition to this and all subsequent verses is a timpani part that helps the low strings drive the motion forward and reinforces the tonic/dominant relationship in E major. The upper woodwinds also have a new sixteenth-note triplet flourish in measure 57, and the ending of the second verse outlines that same C minor chord on “enfolding death” at measure 70. This time, instead of the next verse starting right away, there is an eight-measure statement of the train theme with strings and woodwinds. Flute 1 and oboe has the melody that violin 1 usually has, and the piano part adds in a quarter-note triplet figure at measure 73 that slows the rhythmic velocity down as the train theme concludes and verse three approaches.

Figure 7.5 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Five, measures 68-76, flute, oboe, clarinet, trumpet, and solo piano. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

This verse begins with another homophonic statement of the melody, this time fully harmonized in four parts. Special care should be taken during this section to let the natural flow of the text determine the accents of the repeated quarter notes. Another addition to this verse that has not appeared previously is a suspended cymbal roll at measure 85, and an overall increased brass presence leading into the end of the verse. At measure 102, the sopranos and altos double the solo trumpet line, and Dobrogosz moves the tonality from major to minor as an orchestral interlude begins.

This orchestral interlude is a collection of melodic fragments referencing other parts of the piece dealing with the bird as a character and its relationship to the funeral procession. The solo violin line at the *molto espressivo* at measure 114 hearkens back to the tenors in Part Three. This melody is immediately answered by oboe, horn, and violin 2 with the tenor/bass material from the middle of Part Two. The solo violin restates the first part of its melody before time essentially stops at measure 124 with an ascending eighth-note figure that, due to the immediate change in tempo, should be dictated for accuracy and timing. The interlude ends with an open fifth between B and F# with an added E, implying the dominant leading back to tonic in E for the fourth verse.

Back in E major, this verse opens with three-part treble choir<sup>53</sup>, accompanied by strings *sans* first violin and bass.



Figure 7.6 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Five, measures 129-136, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Tenors and basses enter shortly after on a neutral syllable before joining the trebles on the text at measure 136. Dobrogosz changes the rhythms in the second half of the verse to allow more space in the line and to keep the repetition from becoming stale. At the end of the verse, the trumpet solo occurs again, this time without any choral participation. The choir returns at

<sup>53</sup> The score has no clear editorial indication on whether or not this is divided sopranos or altos, though stem direction seems to indicate divided altos. As previously stated in Chapter Three, an equal three-part division with some first altos and second sopranos singing the middle part would work best here.

measure 154 to slow the momentum down, coming to rest on a diminished chord that requires the sopranos to make a descending leap of an octave and a third to get back into E major. The train theme returns in the strings at measure 156, but this time only four measures long instead of the usual eight.

Dobrogosz changes the mood in this short section, stripping the orchestration down to strings only for what is essentially a choral recitative. The meter here changes frequently, with 7/4 and 5/4 allowing for the poetry to flow in a natural cadence. The tenors and basses start this section, appropriately marked “with narrative motion”, in three parts.

The image shows a musical score for measures 160-164. It features SATB voices and strings. The tempo is marked "with narrative motion" and "♩ ≈ 104". The key signature is E major. The lyrics are: "me to thee glad se-re-nades, Danc-es for thee I pro - pose sa - lut - ing thee, ad." The score includes parts for SATB, v1, v2, viola, and cello. The dynamics are marked "mf" and "SA".

Figure 7.7 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Five, measures 160-164, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Throughout this section, trebles and basses alternate with each other, completing the idea that the other parts begin. There are thematic fragments from other movements, the most effective being the quotation of the moon theme from the latter half of movement two at measure 171. An interesting transformation occurs in the second part of this quotation. At measure 177, treble voices sing material originally presented in the tenor/bass parts before the climax of

movement two, requiring the tenor part to take over the alto parts answering melody at measure 180. This line is at the very top of the tenor range, including a brief high A.

173 <sup>ff</sup>  
huge\_ and thought-ful night\_ The nightun-der sil-enceun-der ma-ny a star,  
TB: ooh B: oh  
Theoc-can shore and the

182 SATB  
hus - ky whis-per-ing wave\_  
strings  
V V

Figure 7.8 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Five, measures 173-184, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The other three parts harmonize on a neutral syllable<sup>54</sup>, and the orchestration is nearly identical. By using this material, identical except for the transposition from E $\flat$  to E, the strong thematic through-line is reinforced, and the cohesiveness of the entire work is strengthened. Dobrogosz ends this section with the tenors and basses singing a descending line in unison on “body gratefully nestling” setting up a fermata on a B dominant chord with a C $\sharp$  suspended, allowing the final verse to land firmly in E major once again.

The image shows a musical score for measures 189-196. It features five staves: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and strings. The key signature is E major (one sharp). The tempo is marked 'molto rit.' and the dynamics are 'p'. The lyrics are: 'vast and well - veil - death, close to thee. And the bo-dy grate-ful-ly nest-ling close to thee.' The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fermatas.

Figure 7.9 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Five, measures 189-196, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Sopranos open this last verse, accompanied by clarinet, second violin, and viola. After the rest of the choir joins in the second phrase, the texture starts to thicken, mirroring Whitman’s description of the bird’s song rising over the “dense-packed cities”. The choir’s unison melody at 210 is strong and rhythmic, and the first violin plays up an octave from where it was in the

<sup>54</sup> The bass part has “oh” while the sopranos/altos are holding an “ah” vowel in “star”. Changing the bass vowel is the best course of action.



other verses, giving this last verse a freshness that finally confirms the inherent joyfulness in the bird's carol.<sup>55</sup> Sopranos and altos end this verse with the low "O death" that carries over through the beginning of the final section of this movement.

The image shows a musical score for the chorus of 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd', Part Five, measures 221-228. It includes vocal parts for Soprano and Alto, and a string section. The lyrics are: 'joy, with joy to thee O death.' and 'with joy to thee'. The music features dynamic markings such as mp, mf, and p, and includes a 'V' marking for a woodwind instrument.

Figure 7.10 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Five, measures 221-228, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

As he does in Parts One, Three, and Six, Dobrogosz ends with repeated statements of the train theme. Here, we hear the eight-measure theme four times, with each iteration adding a new section to the texture. Starting with oboe and clarinets accompanied by solo cello, the strings and English horn join at measure 233. Low brass, bass, and bass clarinet come in on the third statement, and all other parts enter at measure 249. The texture here is lush, with particular emphasis being placed on the sighing motion of the 4-3 suspension in the viola and clarinets. As a solo trumpet announces the arrival of the funeral train at the next stop, the orchestra comes to a gentle halt on the unresolved chord that ends the movement.

<sup>55</sup> A slightly faster tempo than the suggested quarter note = 118 is suggested as well.

Part Five is the most straightforward of the piece, both in terms of tonality and form. The structure of the movement lends itself to fast teaching, since each verse is so similar to the others. The first part of the Carol melody is *legato* like the mourner theme it is based on, but the martial characteristic of the second part allows for a different gesture vocabulary. The orchestration in this movement is light throughout, allowing for the motifs to shine through the texture. The most important concern is to prevent the movement from being too slow or becoming sad in affect. Whitman does not fear Death and encourages us to do the same. It is important then, to keep the Carol theme buoyant and moving. Conductors should consider taking a faster tempo than the 80 bpm that is suggested and conduct this movement in two rather than in four. This will allow the inner pulse of the phrase to have forward motion and the singers to stress the correct syllables in a more organic way. However, the statement of the train theme at the close of the movement should be taken at the suggested slower tempo of 76 bpm so that the sighing 4-3 suspension has more time to resolve and the fermata on the last chord feels final.

CHAPTER EIGHT  
ANALYSIS OF PART SIX

Part Six

Measure Number	1	29	61	141	199	280	357-370
Form	Intro	A	B	Transition	C	Recap	Coda
Canto		XV			XVI		
Tonality	d		fs	D Lydian	D	E	
Meter	4/4, 6/4			4/4, 3/4	3/4	4/4	
Tempo	Q = 108				Q = 92	Q = 72	Q = 66
Themes	W	W	W	Mo. An. Co. B	Co. B. An	M. Tr	Tr
Phraseology	28 (10+9+9)	31 (9+10+8+5)	80 (8+10)x3+8+8+11)	58 (8+8+14+8+6+14)	81 (6+12+9+8+8+6+14+12)	77 (5+8+3+8+9+8+10+6+11)	14 (12+2)

Figure 8.1 A chart showing a plan for Part Six of Steve Dobrogosz’s *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d*.

The sixth movement has a completely different character from the previous ones.

Dobrogosz begins with an orchestral statement of a theme that had been alluded to incompletely by the tenors and basses in both movements two and five. The theme is in D minor and is essentially an inversion of the eighth note passage sung on “ever-returning spring” from Part One. Though not as chromatic as some of the other themes heard, the driving nature of the eighth notes coupled with the forward momentum of the quarter note triplets throughout gives a clearly martial tone to the melody. The instrumentation bears that out, with the trombone section dominating the fanfare-like theme. Another feature of this introduction is the insistent and violent timpani part that threads through the texture of the introduction and subsequent A section.

Giving the impression of the scores of booted feet that marched through the countryside during the unspecified war, the overall feeling of this introduction is much more intense in its depth of feeling than the more lyrical nature of the other movements. It should be noted that the

first measure does not start the phrase; it is a pickup to the second,<sup>56</sup> which can have an effect on phrase lengths during analysis. Using the notated measure one as the beginning of the phrase, the introduction goes from measure one to the middle of measure 28, where the tenors and basses use the eighth notes as pick up into the A section of this movement. The introductory material is stated in three equal sets of nine measure phrases with an extra measure at the outset.

The image shows a page of a musical score for an orchestra. At the top, it is marked "strong, chant-like" and "1" with a tempo indication "♩ = 108". The score includes parts for various instruments: Flutes 1-2, Oboe, English Horns, Clarinet 1-2, Bass Clarinet, Bassoons 1-2, Horns 1-4, Trumpets 1-2, Trombones 1-3, Tuba, Timpani/Drum, Piano, SATB, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Cello, and Bass. The first measure is marked with a dynamic of *f*. The score shows the first seven measures of the piece, with various dynamics like *f* and *pizz* indicated.

Figure 8.2 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 1-7, full orchestra. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

<sup>56</sup> It is unclear at first as to why Dobrogosz did not write this measure as an incomplete pick up measure. Upon further analysis, the eighth notes that serve as the anacrusis to the phrase are written in 6/4 later in the movement. It makes sense, then, that those previous two beats are not included at the beginning.

When the tenors and basses enter in measure 28, the tenors sing the tally theme supported by the trombone and violins while the bass part provides a drone sung on the same rhythms as the tenor part. The basses never cross above the tenors in voicing, and they follow the tenor's melodic contour when the melody moves lower into the baritone range. Again, the overall tessitura of the tenor part is high, with the entire section singing full voice G's as upper neighbor tones.

(SA out)

To the tal-ly of my soul, Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,

Figure 8.3 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 28-32, tenor/bass and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The phrase lengths are slightly different here than from the introduction, as the poetry requires the second and third phrase groups to be divided in an alternate way. The same number of measures is present (twenty-seven), but instead of three equal phrases of 9, we have the  $9 + (4 + 3) + (4 + 3) + 4$ . The orchestral accompaniment during this section is very straightforward, with instruments finding partners playing the same material across sections (violin 2 with upper woodwinds, etc.). What is most active here is the piano part. In other choral sections with full orchestral backing, the piano spends its time reinforcing the choral sections so that the singers can maintain a sense of pulse. Here, the right hand of the piano reinforces the melodic line, but not always. Often, the pianist plays virtuosic sixteenth note runs in the extreme upper range of

the instrument in order to cut through the texture, and possibly to portray the frantic flight of the hermit bird as it flies above the battlefield singing its commentary.

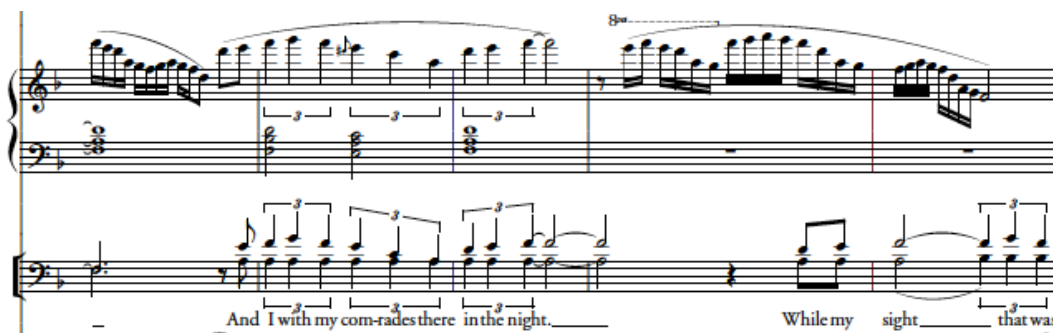


Figure 8.4 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 44-48, solo piano and tenor/bass. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Whatever the extramusical reason, the overall textural effect is one of a chaotic pitched battle that the narrator is approaching.

The tenors and basses close this section with an extended phrase on the word “woe”. This “woe” theme will return several times throughout the movement as the end of a phrase group. A notable item about this theme is that the word “woe” is not contained in Canto XV at all,<sup>57</sup> so Dobrogosz has, perhaps unintentionally, added a level of meaning onto the text that Whitman did not intend. Harmonically, the woe motive (Fig 8.5) is more chromatic than any other theme in the work, moving through chords whose roots are separated by minor thirds a half step apart, resulting in a cadence point on an F# major chord, a major third away from the overall key of D minor.

<sup>57</sup> Whitman does not use it until Canto XVI, and only then in passing: “With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe.”



Figure 8.5 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 55-60, tenor/bass and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The A section closes at measure 59 with the tenors and basses on a unison F# before the sopranos and altos join for the first time, opening the new section.

The B section starts at measure 60 and lasts until measure 140. During this section, the bulk of the narrative is shifted to the sopranos and altos, who describe the chaotic aftermath of the great war that had occurred. The tenors and basses support the upper voices with a vocal line on a neutral vowel throughout, not the open “o” sound of woe, but an “ah” vowel. The lower parts close each phrase out with an arpeggiation of an a minor chord down to a unison D $\flat$  at the cadence point.<sup>58</sup> The phrase structure here is similar to the structure in the introduction and A sections in that it is a phrase group made of three equal parts (length), and the fourth phrase is a full statement of the woe motive. This phrasing, 4 + 4 + 4 + 6, repeats three times before an 8-measure interjection of different material, then the full phrase returns to close out the section, only this time the full SATB sings the woe motive. Interestingly, when that final statement of

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<sup>58</sup> The resulting harmonic motion at each of these cadence points is B $\flat$  → C → D major, another occurrence of the  $\flat$ VI →  $\flat$ VII → I motive. The key signature of this section is A major, but it seems that D is the implied key signature, with the G# indicating a Lydian mode sound.

that motive is heard, the overall effect is not four parts, but more like three since the tenors and sopranos are in unison, separated by an octave with bass and alto providing harmonic texture.

Whitman's poetry in this section is very wordy and active, evoking images of a countryside in ruins due to the violence of the war. The sopranos and altos sing in the lower part of their registers, which, with the full orchestration throughout, can cause difficulties with diction and clarity. The harmonic language in this section is consistent due to the phrase structure, since each phrase is identical to the last. Dobrogosz uses intermediary cadence points of B $\flat$  (approached by F $\sharp$  minor, no less) and A major before the woe motive moves into F $\sharp$  major.

At measure 114, Dobrogosz changes the texture entirely, reducing the performing forces to strings, piano, and sopranos/altos only, motivated by a change in the tone of the poetry.

The image shows a musical score for measures 114-121. It consists of a vocal line and a string/piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "But I saw they were not as was thought, They them-selves were fully at rest, they suf-fer'd not,—". The accompaniment includes dynamic markings like *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. There is a "text" label under the vocal line. The score is in 4/4 time and F# major.

Figure 8.6 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 114-121, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Here, the narrator is taken by surprise as they realize that the feeling they have about chaos that they have witnessed due to the war is misplaced. The corpses that were described were not the ones still affected by the turmoil of war; they had already transcended those



feelings. The realization that the sufferings of war have no bearing on the dead is a sobering one, and we hear this in the change of texture. For a brief moment, the tenors and basses, who arguably have acted as representations of the soldiers in the war up to this point, join the ranks of the mourners to sing a hymn-like statement on “they suffer’d not” at measure 118. The A major chord with the added B at the fermata in measure 121 does not feel like tonic, since D has been emphasized so much through this section. It sounds like the dominant here in the choir, and the piano reinforces that when it adds in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> to the chord leading into the last statement of the primary theme at measure 122. There is an interesting addition to this final statement. At measure 131, the tenors and basses join the sopranos and altos on “the armies that remained suffer’d.” Dobrogosz is calling back to the idea that the grief felt by survivors of the war is what endures and that all people who must carry on after war is over will carry that burden with them.

The decrescendo leading into that fermata in 134 is quite deceptive, owing to the fact that the dominant chord on B implies that perhaps a return to the home key center of E is imminent, but Dobrogosz subverts that, using the woe motive to lead into an extended orchestral interlude for it is clear that neither Whitman nor Dobrogosz desires that woe and death to be the final word.

Figure 8.7 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 137-142, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

With the entirety of Canto XV sung in the opening half of the movement, Dobrogosz takes time to reintroduce orchestral snippets of earlier themes. For instance, solo oboe has a quotation from the first phrase of “Song of the Moon”, though it is covered by moving triplets in the violin and viola.



Figure 8.8 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 143-148, flute, oboe and English horn. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Immediately thereafter, we hear the English horn play the opening of the anthem from Part Three and the cellos answer with that same theme played in the same range the tenors have spent so much time in up to now.<sup>59</sup> The coffin theme from Part Two forcefully makes itself known, with a unison statement from violin 1, cellos, and horns. The strings play a melody that whose relationship to the theme is not readily apparent, but the accompanying harmonic movement is reminiscent of the series of half-diminished chords that serve as the opening of movement three. There is a clever shift out of the previous key center of D Lydian into an E $\flat$  key center that moves freely between Mixolydian (consistent D $\flat$  throughout) and natural minor (G $\flat$  on occasion). The trumpets reintroduce a secondary melody that we heard in Part Two on

<sup>59</sup> Prior to this, the cellos and basses played the train motive as an accompaniment figure.

“flambeaus of the night”. The interlude ends on an Eb minor chord with strings and horn, though there is a cross-related Bb between horn 4 and cello and bass.<sup>60</sup>

The coffin theme returns at measure 171, continuing in Eb minor. Solo violin and solo bass join and form an intimate trio at measure 179, setting up a return to the train theme, this time in Eb major. A solo oboe plays an ascending melody that is reminiscent of the *ländler* in the anthem of Part Three, and the flutes answer with the descending eighth-note motive that the piano had in Part One on “solitary”. Strings close out this section with “song of the bleeding throat” also from Part One, which leads into the next section of the movement and the final Canto of the poem.

The image shows a musical score for measures 185-198. It features five staves: flutes, oboe, Bb clarinet, piano, and strings. The tempo is marked 'al' and 'slowly'. Dynamics include 'p', 'mp', and 'pp'. The key signature is Eb major and the time signature is 3/4.

Figure 8.9 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 185-198, flute, oboe, clarinet, solo piano, and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

<sup>60</sup> It is assumed that this is an editorial mistake and that the cello and bass part should be Bb as well.

This section begins with a six-measure introduction in which the altos sing unaccompanied before being joined by the rest of the choir and piano.

Figure 8.10 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 199-204, chorus parts only. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The tenors have another high floating melody, evoking the bird imagery from earlier in the work. After the sopranos and altos complete the rising sequence at measure 213, Dobrogosz brings the strings back in to accompany the choir and begins to lengthen and expand the theme from *Song to the Moon* in Part Two. The poetry is very evocative here, describing the song of hermit thrush as the essential expression of Death itself and its omnipresent reach over the earth. Interestingly, Dobrogosz chooses to set this poetry to the *Moon* melody and not the *Bird* melody from Part Five. By setting the text in this manner, Dobrogosz links President Lincoln (personified by the Moon) and Death (the bird's song), confirming that these two are the companions previously referred to in Part Four. As this statement of the melody spins out beginning in measure 217, the woodwinds and horns join in a grand, upward-sweeping gesture. The flute and oboe, two instruments that have represented birds most often through the work, have a sustained trill figure that moves up and down between G and A, following the rocking harmonic movement between III and IV. These two chords dominate through measure 238, where we hear another cadential figure stretched over two measures, and though the arrival at 240 is E minor instead of E major, the  $\flat VI \rightarrow \flat VII \rightarrow I$  is still very clear.

The sopranos and altos finish this choral section by singing the first phrase of the Moon theme and holding out a long unison E. Underneath them, the piano, viola, and English horn play a passage of undulating eighth notes that support the violins playing a passage with opposite contour. All of these melodic lines are based on different sections of the Moon theme, and this whole orchestral interlude is very firmly in B minor. This key center subtly urges the ear back towards the starting key of E major, and Dobrogosz fulfills this when the sopranos and altos return at measure 280 with the main mourner theme from Part One.

The image shows a musical score for measures 280-287. The top staff is for the soprano/alto voice, with lyrics: "power-fulpsalm in the night I heard from re-cess-es, Pass-ing, I leave thee li-lac with heart-shaped leaves,". Below the vocal line are five staves for the string section: Violin (V), Viola (V), Violoncello (C), Double Bass (B), and Double Bass (arco). The key signature is B minor (two sharps). Dynamics include *mf* and *arco*.

Figure 8.11 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 280-287, soprano/alto and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Dobrogosz presents the mourner theme again, but slightly shortened in the second phrase. The poetry is different here as well, with the accents in the text not exactly lining up with what the natural accents of 4/4 time. Where the first statement in movement one was 5 + 8 + 8 + 6, this statement is 5 + 8 + 3, followed by an eight-measure phrase (divided 2 + 6) and a nine-measure phrase to close out that group. The alteration of the phrase makes the arrival at “returning with spring” in measure 293 feel abrupt at first because we have not spent enough time in E major for the key to feel completely at home. This is masked somewhat by the two

similar ascending passages from strings and winds in measures 291 and 292 which draw the ear directly to the harmonization we recall from movement one on that text. The violins finish the echo heard previously, before the sopranos and altos sing “I cease from my song for thee” in a half cadence where the V chord has an added tone. The strings interject the same transitional material from Part One, slightly re-orchestrated for a fuller sound, adding a second viola part and including the cellos where they were absent before. The choir returns with material that sounds as if it will follow the original structure, but then at measure 304, the whole texture and mood changes, mirroring a shift in poetic voice and focus.

Whitman lauds the moon in the West and characterizes it as having command over all that its light touches. As we know that the Moon is a symbol for President Lincoln, it fits that the musical material here has the grand sense of scale worthy of a head of state. This direct quotation from the opening of Part Four strengthens the link between President, Country, and Moon as a symbol of the power present in those roles. We hear the second version of the cadential figure in the choir at measure 313, this time in E minor, signifying that there’s still more to be said musically with the text that remains. The choir’s material at measures 316-321 is a faster, more urgent version of, “O cruel hands that hold me powerless,” from earlier, but it does not resolve with the cadential figure like expected. Instead, the tenors have one last exposed melody, this one sung with choral support and minimal string accompaniment and a high trill in the flutes.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> This passage would benefit from rebalancing the voice parts so as not to unduly tax the tenors’ voices. Robert Shaw’s work with the Brahms *Requiem* can serve as a model here. Shaw was known for having singers from an adjacent voice part swing down or up to cover exposed passages to achieve healthier tone and more appropriate balance. Don Lee, “Robert Shaw and the Brahms *Requiem*,” *Chorus America*, August 5, 2016, <https://www.chorusamerica.org/conducting-performing/robert-shaw-and-brahms-requiem>.

The image shows a musical score for the chorus and strings of 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd', Part Six, measures 318-324. The score is written for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'the won-drous chant\_of the gray-brown bird, SAB: oh The tal - ly-ing chant, the'. Dynamics include *mp*, *f*, and *mf*. The piano accompaniment features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes.

Figure 8.12 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 318-324, chorus and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The tenors represent the speaker experiencing the intense emotions that have been aroused in them by the solitary song of the hermit thrush in the night. This visceral cry in the height of their register sets up the increasing narrative and harmonic velocity Dobrogosz creates.

When all other voices rejoin the tenors on text in measure 330, the overall tonality shifts to unsteady ground, moving through  $D\flat$  major for a short while, then returns to E major with the inclusion of  $C\sharp$ ,  $G\sharp$ , and  $D\sharp$ , but keeps the key signature as G major/E minor so that when the choir sings the triumphant main theme in unison at measure 340 it does not require accidentals and also allows the main theme's return to feel significant but not final. The last phrase group for the choir has a structure of 2 + 4 + 7, and this return to the "home" tonality of E major is approached out of a  $C\sharp$  half-diminished chord from the soprano line and its accompaniment. The three symbols are mentioned in one breath here – lilac, star, and bird – and are harmonized with the  $\flat VII$  chord of D major. The altos set the scene for the final cadential figure, ending their line

on a diminished triad leading to  $bVI - bVII - I$  on “cedars dusk and dim.” Even this cadence contains A as a suspended note, and it transitions seamlessly into the final orchestral statement of the train theme.

This musical score shows the vocal and piano parts for measures 346-361. The vocal line is written for an alto and includes the lyrics: "Li-lac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul, There in the frag-rant pines and the ced-ars dusk and dim." The piano accompaniment includes a bass line with a "pizz (one bass)" instruction and a string section with "arco" and "mf" markings. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of two sharps (D major).

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This musical score shows the piano and string parts for measures 346-361. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The string section includes a bass line and a string ensemble with "arco" and "mp" markings. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of two sharps (D major).

Figure 8.13 *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Part Six, measures 346-361, solo piano, chorus, and strings. Reprinted with permission from the composer.



This time, the piano plays throughout this passage, and the sighing figure in the first violins is traded all over the orchestra in various registers. The train theme is played a total of three times, and the final chord of the work is the E major chord with the suspended fourth. The gradual *ritardando* and the gentle arrival of the last chord brings the funeral procession to an end, but this unresolved chord leaves a feeling of work yet to be done. The grief that has been explored throughout the work exists well past the funerary rites, and the understanding of grief can only be attained after the passage of time.

This final movement is challenging due to the intensity of the poetry and the chaotic scene that Dobrogosz presents in the orchestra. The pitched battle that rages in the introduction continues underneath the narration for a full 140 measures without letting up while the choir describes the shocking truths of war. The tenor section is put to the test throughout the movement, singing full voice at the top of their range. It is vital to have the tenors only sing as loudly as the section collectively can while maintaining beautiful and unified choral tone. If adjustments need to be made due to balance, then it would be helpful to have some altos sing with the tenors. As the end of the piece approaches, it is easy to let tempos speed up as the momentum of the poetry gets quicker, but at points like the Song of the Moon quotation at measure 217 the conductor must follow Dobrogosz's markings and ramp up the tempo evenly over that long 24-measure phrase. The varying phrase lengths in that section require the space to expand and build on the previous statements of the theme. A similar methodology should be applied to the return fanfare theme in measure 304 and the final return of the train theme at 353. Dobrogosz intends this piece to have a cyclic construction, and conductors can accomplish that by taking specific care to keep consistent tempo and articulations across all statements of each individual theme throughout the entirety of the performance.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CONCLUSION

*When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* is one of the most intricate compositions in Steve Dobrogosz's considerable compositional library. Dobrogosz, through careful treatment of Whitman's sweeping poetry and the crafting of poignant melodic themes, creates a sonic portrait that transcends the boundaries of time. Just as Whitman was careful not to give a specific name to the figure he is mourning, so does Dobrogosz commit to creating a musical work with a broad audience in mind. Both the instrumental and choral writing are captivating and challenging, and Dobrogosz's strength as a composer is displayed in his treatment of form and structure.

Chorally, *Lilacs* offers opportunities for singers to develop a warm and unified choral tone through Dobrogosz's long melodic lines generally set in the mid to upper vocal ranges. There are some passages where the overall tessitura of unison lines sits low, requiring the altos and basses to take the lead to maintain appropriate tone color and balance. On the opposite end, the tenor section has the highest tessitura of all of the parts, frequently singing high G's and A's with sparse accompaniment. This issue can be solved by some part redistribution at critical points.

Taking into account the difficulty of the orchestra parts combined with the length of the piece and its orchestration, this piece is appropriate for college and/or advanced community choruses. Certain advanced high schools might choose this over doing other masterworks because of the literature and history, but such a project would require months of intense preparation. The most challenging task is finding a pianist who can handle the constant switching between the *quasi*-improvisatory jazz riffs and more classical passages in the work.

As can be heard on the St. Jacob's recording, the correct balance between choir and orchestra is crucial. Dobrogosz's vision for the piece is one that honors the vast panorama of America, and at its fullest points it is easy for the choir to be overwhelmed by the orchestral sound. A large, festival-style choir such as an All-State or All-Collegiate model would be ideal for this work, and this piece would not be out of place in a symphonic choir's repertoire. In fact, Dobrogosz's piece is an entry point to further explorations of choral/orchestral settings of Whitman's other poetry such as *A Sea Symphony* by Vaughan Williams. It would also be an effective preparation for Hindemith's 1946 setting of *Lilacs* which is starkly different.

For the conductor, this piece provides ample opportunities to refine gesture and improve the connection between conductor and ensemble. Careful consideration of phrase lengths, breath marks and end consonants are always required, but here especially so. As Whitman's verse gets more rhapsodic, phrases get longer and more irregular. As a result, what looks like a simple sixteen-measure phrase might actually be divided (3 + 7 + 4 + 2). Combined with changes in meter, these passages can be tricky for conductor and choir alike. There are also extended passages where the orchestra takes the lead while the choir rests. Sit/stand cues should be added throughout and would not detract from the performance.

Although this study focused solely on *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, Steve Dobrogosz's other choral/orchestral works such as *Mass* and *Stabat Mater* are equally worthy to be studied. The diversity in Dobrogosz's output is staggering, and his compositional style is rich and complex.

Further opportunities for research include re-engraving *Lilacs* into a new edition. Dobrogosz composed this piece using a program that is no longer supported, so any of the editorial mistakes that were noted or changes that were suggested in this study cannot be

integrated into the existing score. This would provide an opportunity to clear up the contradictory key signatures, as well as allow for a piano reduction to be included in the choral octavos. Additionally, “Song of the Moon” could be excerpted out as a standalone piece for choir with piano accompaniment.

As times change, there is a need for increased diversity and representation in the performing arts in general, but more specifically in choral music. Audiences should be exposed to quality music from all time periods and styles, which includes music from living composers. Though the idea of “new music” can cause apprehension, hearing from different voices is vital to the enjoyment of art. Steve Dobrogrosz’s voice is unique, and this analysis shows that he – and his music – deserves to be heard.

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APPENDIX A

THIS LAND FOR TENOR AND PIANO

# This Land

Americana, very strong

music: Steve Dobrogosz  
text: Walt Whitman

♩ ≈ 88

D Dm/F B<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F C D<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> Fm F<sup>#</sup>m<sup>7</sup> G<sup>#</sup>m/B E<sup>7</sup> Cmaj<sup>7</sup> Gmaj<sup>7</sup>

*f* Lo, bo-dy and soul, this land, My own Man-hat-tan with spires, and the spark-ling and hur-ry-ing

7 Cmaj<sup>7</sup> D E<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> Gm G<sup>#</sup>m<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>m/D<sup>b</sup> F<sup>#</sup>7 Bm(Δ) Bm<sup>7</sup> Bm<sup>6</sup> Fmaj<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

tide, and the ships, the var-ied and am-ple

12 F Cm<sup>7</sup>/F F<sup>7</sup>(9) D<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> Fm F<sup>#</sup>m<sup>7</sup> G<sup>#</sup>m/B E<sup>7</sup> Cmaj<sup>7</sup> Bm<sup>7</sup>

land, the South and the North in the light, O-hi-o's shores and flash-ing Mis

16 Am<sup>7</sup>/G Bm<sup>7</sup> Em<sup>7</sup> Cmaj<sup>7</sup> Bm/D Cmaj<sup>7</sup>

sou - ri, and ev - er the far spread - ing prair - ies cov - er'd with grass and corn,

21 E/B E F#<sup>7</sup> B<sup>7(b9)</sup> Em/D G<sup>7</sup> Cmaj<sup>7</sup>

Lo, the most ex - cel - lent sun so calm and haugh - ty,

26 Fm<sup>7</sup> Gm/Bb Am<sup>7(b5)</sup> G#m<sup>7</sup> Gmaj<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> Cm/Bb Eb<sup>7</sup> A<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>

The vio - let and pur - ple morn with just felt breez - es, the

30 Abm<sup>6</sup> Abm<sup>7</sup> Bm<sup>6</sup> Bm/D<sup>b</sup> F#<sup>9</sup> Bmaj<sup>7</sup> G#m<sup>7</sup> A<sup>o7</sup> F#<sup>b</sup>/A#

gen - tle soft - born mea - sure - less light, The mi - ra - cle spread - ing bath - ing



34 *Bm*<sup>7</sup> *Bm/A* *G#m*<sup>7(b9)</sup> *F#m/C#* *D*<sup>7</sup> *B*(add9) *Bm* *ff* *gently* *Dm/F* *C*<sup>7</sup>

all the ful - filled noon *p* The com - ing

*poco rit.....*

41 *A*<sup>7</sup>/*C* *C*<sup>7</sup> *F*<sup>7(b9)</sup> *D*<sup>7</sup> *F#m*<sup>7</sup> *G#m/B* *F#m*<sup>7/E</sup>

eve de - li - cious, the wel - come night and the stars, Ov - er my cit - ies

46 *G#m*<sup>7</sup> *F#m*<sup>7/E</sup> *G#m*<sup>7</sup> *F#m*<sup>7/E</sup> *A*<sup>7</sup> *G#m/B*

shin - ing all, en - ve - lop - ing man and land

50 *A*<sup>7</sup> *G#m/B* *A*<sup>7</sup> *poco rit.....*

## APPENDIX B

### EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH STEVE DOBROGOSZ

From: George-Twyman, William O WIGEORGE@\*\*\*\*\*.org  
Subject: When Lilacs Last... - Introduction to Research  
Date: July 12, 2018 at 12:02 PM  
To: stevedobro@\*\*\*\*\*.com

Good afternoon Mr. Dobrogosz,  
My name is William George-Twyman, and I am a doctoral candidate in Choral Conducting at the University of Oklahoma.

I am currently writing my dissertation on your work “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d” and I had a couple of questions for you that would really help my research. The piece is fantastic, and I’d love to maybe converse over email about some of the overall themes and gestures you’re using. I know you have an incredibly busy schedule, but if you are willing and available, I would love to talk to you.

Thank you so much, and I look forward to hearing from you.

All best,

WGT

William George-Twyman  
Head of Choral Studies  
Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts  
2501 Flora Street  
Dallas, TX 75201  
wigeorge@\*\*\*\*\*.org

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From: Steve Dobrogosz [stevedobro@\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*.com](mailto:stevedobro@*****.com)  
Subject: Re: When Lilacs Last... - Introduction to Research  
Date: July 13, 2018 at 2:49 AM  
To: George-Twyman, William O WIGEORGE@\*\*\*\*\*.org

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter. I'm honored that you've chosen my piece for your dissertation.

Yes, of course I'd be happy to answer any questions you have, so just email and I'll do my best. I assume you have the score?

I'm very curious as to how you came across Lilacs.

A few weeks ago I posted the audio of the premier concert at YouTube, which perhaps you've heard?

Best wishes, Steve

Steve Dobrogosz  
[dobrogosz.com](http://dobrogosz.com)

From: George-Twyman, William O WIGEORGE@\*\*\*\*\*.org  
Subject: Re: When Lilacs Last... - Introduction to Research  
Date: July 16, 2018 at 3:19 PM  
To: Steve Dobrogosz stevedobro@\*\*\*\*\*.com

Steve,

My doctoral advisor is good friends with Gary Graden. When the topic of my dissertation came up, my advisor suggested that I listen to Gary's recording of the piece and I fell in love with it. I'm a huge fan of Whitman, and I'm always intrigued by new takes on Whitman's poetry. My eventual goal with your piece is, once I finish this writing project on it (hopefully sooner rather than later) to perform the work at my school with the help of the dance department, eventually turning it into a ballet. Big plans, but I think it would be a vital and interesting project.

My first few questions are mostly logistical.

1) I own the score, obviously, but what kind of edition do the singers read from if the piece is performed? Is there a vocal reduction for rehearsals?

2) I like that the parts are in concert pitch in the score. I've been noticing as I do the analysis that there are moments where flats and sharps occur simultaneously...Does that have to do with transpositions in the individual parts? Part Three for instance has that complicated sequence of half-diminished chords that serves as a sort of ritornello. With the already intense key of F# major, there are double sharps and naturals that look different but sound the same...what was your motivation behind this? Was it a quirk of the composition software you use?

3) The piano part is a monster. Do you suggest that the pianist be more of a jazz improv type or a classical concerto type?

From a musical standpoint:

4) There are several distinct themes present in the work, each relating to a specific "character" in the poetry. The Moon theme for President Lincoln, the opening theme as a stand-in for both "lilacs" and the mourner, the development of that theme in Part Five to represent the bird, etc. Where did each of the themes come from? Did they all come from separate inspirations, or did one theme beget another?

5) From an analysis standpoint, traditional Roman numeral analysis doesn't necessarily work due to the complexity of your harmonic language. There are also times when the notated key signature doesn't match up with the tonality being expressed. I've been assuming that in some cases, you're using modal collections instead of scales and you're just using whatever key signature matches it closest? For example, in Part Six, when the sopranos and altos carry the theme after the T/B introduction, I analyzed it as actually being in D lydian, and the A major key signature is a shortcut to save time? Is that close?

6) The most important cadential figure in the work is the flat-3, 2, 1 melodic contour (part 1, measure 34). The conclusion I came to is that the overall harmonic motion is bVI -> bVII - I,

with the A being an 4-3 suspension. That motion is explored in both significant cadential figures, this one and the much higher version of it in Part Four. Is that an accurate analysis of that figure, or did I misread it?

7) That tenor part gets SUPER high at times. Were you writing for St. Jacob's tenor section specifically or is that just what you heard in your mind?

Last question, for now:

8) Six timpani in the last movement? I think I counted that right.

Thank you so much for your help. I promise I won't bother you all the time.

Best,  
WGT

William George-Twyman  
Head of Choral Studies  
Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts  
2501 Flora Street  
Dallas, TX 75201  
wigeorge@\*\*\*\*\*.org

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From: Steve Dobrogosz stevedobro@\*\*\*\*\*.com  
Subject: Re: When Lilacs Last... - Introduction to Research  
Date: July 18, 2018 at 5:25 AM  
To: George-Twyman, William O WIGEORGE@\*\*\*\*\*.org

My doctoral advisor is good friends with Gary Graden. When the topic of my dissertation came up, my advisor suggested that I listen to Gary's recording of the piece and I fell in love with it. I'm a huge fan of Whitman, and I'm always intrigued by new takes on Whitman's poetry. My eventual goal with your piece is, once I finish this writing project on it (hopefully sooner rather than later) to perform the work at my school with the help of the dance department, eventually turning it into a ballet. Big plans, but I think it would be a vital and interesting project.

*Sounds great!*

1) I own the score, obviously, but what kind of edition do the singers read from if the piece is performed? Is there a vocal reduction for rehearsals?

*There is an SATB part for the singers, unfortunately no vocal score. I notated Lilacs with a program that went out of date 1998 and is now entirely unusable, so my only access to the score and parts now is via the pdfs I saved.*

2) I like that the parts are in concert pitch in the score. I've been noticing as I do the analysis that there are moments where flats and sharps occur simultaneously...Does that have to do with transpositions in the individual parts? Part Three for instance has that complicated sequence of half-diminished chords that serves as a sort of ritornello. With the already intense key of F# major, there are double sharps and naturals that look different but sound the same...what was your motivation behind this? Was it a quirk of the the composition software you use?

*Well, you're dealing with an autodidact here, with an idiosyncratic (= incomplete) understanding of "correct" notation rules. As a pianist I tend to view harmonies visually (like synesthesia) so if a note or chord in a certain context feels like a darker color to me I'll notate it as Bb and not A#, etc. Some players have complained about this, so I'm aware, but I usually end up going with what looks, to me, most reasonable. My chord/key changes can end up (on purpose) in ambiguous areas, but I'll notate what seems, to me, easiest to play. So it's my quirk, not the software.*

3) The piano part is a monster. Do you suggest that the pianist be more of a jazz improv type or a classical concerto type?

*Someone with both sides is ideal, but I'd probably lean more on the classical side, as there's no improv or jazz swing in Lilacs.*

4) There are several distinct themes present in the work, each relating to a specific "character" in the poetry. The Moon theme for President Lincoln, the opening theme as a stand-in for both "lilacs" and the mourner, the development of that theme in Part Five to represent the bird, etc.

Where did each of the themes come from? Did they all come from separate inspirations, or did one theme beget another?

*When I write, everything depends getting that first little seed, something, usually just a bar or two, that somehow feels like its own little world with potential to grow into a world of its own. Does that make sense? For Lilacs, after choosing the poem (I'd done some shorter songs with Whitman and found his rhythms extremely compatible with mine) I sat down and almost immediately (if I remember correctly after 18 years...) got the opening choral line down. I knew I had the whole piece then, so the next step was dividing the text into sections to see where each would go. Pretty soon I had around 10 of the major themes worth developing and interweaving. But from the start my goal was a large choral-orchestral piece of traditional Americana - I still think there is a huge void there needing to be filled - so to answer your question, I'd already decided on the tonal language, which informed the themes.*

5) From an analysis standpoint, traditional Roman numeral analysis doesn't necessarily work due to the complexity of your harmonic language. There are also times when the notated key signature doesn't match up with the tonality being expressed. I've been assuming that in some cases, you're using modal collections instead of scales and you're just using whatever key signature matches it closest? For example, in Part Six, when the sopranos and altos carry the theme after the T/B introduction, I analyzed it as actually being in D Lydian, and the A major key signature is a shortcut to save time? Is that close?

*Where I change key a lot, key signature need not be taken literally. I think what happened was I felt bars 60-61 as A major, and let it go at that instead of changing signature back and forth so many times. There are probably quite a few places like that.*

6) The most important cadential figure in the work is the flat-3, 2, 1 melodic contour (part 1, measure 34). The conclusion I came to is that the overall harmonic motion is  $bVI \rightarrow bVII - I$ , with the A being an 4-3 suspension. That motion is explored in both significant cadential figures, this one and the much higher version of it in Part Four. Is that an accurate analysis of that figure, or did I misread it?

*Yes, it's one of the key figures, but I'm not sure I understand what you are asking? Could you explain again?*

7) That tenor part gets SUPER high at times. Were you writing for St. Jacob's tenor section specifically or is that just what you heard in your mind?

*It's what I heard, but I'm sure I ran the more challenging parts by the choir first to make sure they could handle it.*

8) Six timpani in the last movement? I think I counted that right.

*Yes, I remember it not being easy puzzling that together...  
FYI about the CD: the choir was intended to be more front and center than the situation allowed. I wanted the narration, the story in the text, to always be the centerpiece, but in the recording*

*that is often overpowered by the orchestra. I don't know if you thought of this? For example, one of my favorite parts compositionally is the first 4 minutes of part 4, but on the CD that text is barely audible. Perhaps a much larger choir is required...*

Thank you so much for your help. I promise I won't bother you all the time.

*Really, I'm very impressed with your thinking about the music and it will be my pleasure to help out if I can.*

- Steve



From: George-Twyman, William O WIGEORGE@\*\*\*\*\*.org  
Subject: Re: When Lilacs Last... - Introduction to Research  
Date: March 31, 2020 at 12:59 PM  
To: Steve Dobrogosz stevedobro@\*\*\*\*\*.com

Good afternoon Steve!

I hope you are handling these tumultuous times well.

I'm sorry it's been almost two years since I last wrote to you. Life took a few unexpected turns, but I'm back to it, writing and finishing up my work on your piece for my dissertation. I had a couple more questions, if you're not too busy.

1) In part IV, the introductory material is much bigger than previous themes, and certainly more harmonically complex. What was your motivation behind this big material and the shifting tonality underneath?

2) Did you use Brahms Requiem as inspirational material for this work? The reason I ask is that there are two distinct moments in this piece where the overall feel is very similar. The low unison theme at the end of part three sounds like the funeral march from the opening of Mvt II of the Brahms, and the anthem in part four is like the gentle *ländler* that follows. Is that coincidence? I ask because I find it a particularly masterful call back to Brahms, intentional or not.

Thanks again,  
WGT

William George-Twyman  
Head of Choral Studies  
Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts  
2501 Flora Street  
Dallas, TX 75201  
wigeorge@\*\*\*\*\*.org

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From: Steve Dobrogosz stevedobro@\*\*\*\*\*.com  
Subject: Re: When Lilacs Last... - Introduction to Research  
Date: April 1, 2020 at 9:51 AM  
To: George-Twyman, William O WIGEORGE@\*\*\*\*\*.org

Dear William,

Thanks for your update and kind words.

To answer your second question first - I remember going back and listening to Brahms Requiem as a reference, but honestly can't remember if it was in connection to Lilacs or my own Requiem (2001). In any case, I knew and appreciated it before writing Lilacs, so your observation is astute in that something may have indeed rubbed off, though not in the sense of intentionally "borrowing" any theme or mood. The part of Brahms Requiem that sticks with me most is actually the opening.

The opening theme of Lilacs part IV is one of my favourite parts in the whole composition, though I doubt what I wanted was ever really conveyed properly on the recordings (and whether that lies in orchestration or performance, though definitely the choir is drowned out). I'm trying to paint Whitman's panoramic American landscape here, with a bit of Gershwin-esque coloring. The chord progression became what it became in length, and there was no reason to shorten it. I love working with unexpected pivot-chord modulations, and this was a section where everything came together in that regard.

Coincidentally, I just finished an arrangement of it for tenor and piano. You can have the score here.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_O3yNNTEDv0&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_O3yNNTEDv0&feature=emb_title)

I hope this answers your questions.

Best wishes for your dissertation, William!  
- Steve

From: George-Twyman, William O WIGEORGE@\*\*\*\*\*.org  
Subject: More questions!  
Date: May 11, 2020 at 9:56 AM  
To: Steve Dobrogosz stevedobro@\*\*\*\*\*.com

Steve,

I'm sorry to keep bugging you, but I have some questions that aren't strictly about the music this time.

- 1) What were the circumstances that brought Gary Graden and you together, specifically for this piece?
- 2) How long was the overall process, from commission to performance?
- 3) Were there any changes that you and Gary made to piece together during the rehearsal/commission process?
- 4) As far as I can find, this piece hasn't been performed on this side of the Atlantic. Am I correct in that?

Biographical questions:

- 5) How did you like studying at Berklee? What did you learn there that influences this piece, if anything?
- 6) What prompted the move to Sweden?
- 7) When you look back at the compositional process surrounding "Lilacs" what moment(s) stick(s) out for you?

And one question that's more procedural:

I had planned on using scans of the score as my musical examples instead of re-engraving the sections that I want to feature. As you are the artist/publisher, do I have your permission to scan those examples and include them in my document? I will send you a list of the examples I want to use, if that is helpful.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'm about six weeks out from my defense, so the end is in sight!

Best,  
WGT

William George-Twyman  
Head of Choral Studies

Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts  
2501 Flora Street  
Dallas, TX 75201  
wigeorge@\*\*\*\*\*.org

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From: Steve Dobrogosz stevedobro@\*\*\*\*\*.com  
Subject: Re: More questions!  
Date: May 12, 2020 at 4:51 AM  
To: George-Twyman, William O WIGEORGE@\*\*\*\*\*.org

*Hello William,*

*I'm happy to answer your questions -*

1) What were the circumstances that brought Gary Graden and you together, specifically for this piece?

*We'd done two big recordings together, my Mass and Requiem, and I gave him a copy of Lilacs when it was completed. Gary thought it would be another good recording project for his choir.*

2) How long was the overall process, from commission to performance?

*It wasn't a commission (very few of my pieces are). Lilacs was my idea.*

*The composing process - I don't remember exactly how long it took, but generally once I get the initial "hook" or angle into a new piece, the flow into the rest, the main themes and rough sketch of the whole, usually comes very fast for me. Mass was sketched in 2 weeks, I remember, Requiem in a week, Christmas Cantata in an afternoon, all of My Rose in 4 days - but Lilacs, I'm guessing it was probably a couple weeks before I had the main themes and overall form in place. Anyway, after that there's months of detail work and nitty gritty arranging/voicing toil to plow through. For Lilacs I'm sure that was about 4 additional months before the score (+ demo) was completed.*

3) Were there any changes that you and Gary made to piece together during the rehearsal/commission process?

*Not that I recall, no. That said, we didn't always agree on tempos, and there are places on the recordings I'd "adjust" if given the chance ; ) I do recall that I wanted a bigger choir that wouldn't risk getting drowned out (which it occasionally does), but that wasn't possible.*

4) As far as I can find, this piece hasn't been performed on this side of the Atlantic. Am I correct in that?

*Correct.*

Biographical questions:

5) How did you like studying at Berklee? What did you learn there that influences this piece, if anything?

*I was just there 3 terms, but that was enough. Mainly I went through their piano improvisation basics, which I needed, and some jazz songwriting/arranging 101 classes. I tend to learn better and faster on my own, so I've never regretted having to leave Berklee...*

6) What prompted the move to Sweden?

*...to move to Stockholm, where Katarina, a Swedish flautist I met there, was living. We've been here ever since, and our 5th grandchild is due next week.*

7) When you look back at the compositional process surrounding "Lilacs" what moment(s) stick(s) out for you?

*The moments I could feel text totally gelling with melody - which is most of Lilacs : ) Like the first few lines that are sung, which came immediately and wrote themselves the first time I sat down with it. The "songs" of the moon and bird that felt so natural even though set to free verse*

*It sticks out for me that throughout the piece I kept thinking "Walt would really like this!"*

*I remember the only time I had to struggle a bit to fit the music comfortably into the text was the "battle scene", the opening of Part 6. I think I managed, but the solutions didn't present themselves as easily like in the rest.*

As you are the artist/publisher, do I have your permission to scan those examples and include them in my document?

*Sure, no problem.*

Best wishes,  
Steve

From: George-Twyman, William O WIGEORGE@\*\*\*\*\*.org  
Subject: Re: More questions!  
Date: May 22, 2020 at 2:00 PM  
To: Steve Dobrogosz stevedobro@\*\*\*\*\*.com

Hi Steve,

Shot in the dark type of question: Do you happen to have the score of Lilacs in a PDF format? I'm working on scanning in the examples I need from the score, but maybe if you had that I could purchase from you it would make my life a little easier.

I understand if you are hesitant about such a request, and I fully understand if you do not wish to share that with me.

Best,  
WGT

William George-Twyman  
Head of Choral Studies  
Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts  
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From: Steve Dobrogosz stevedobro@\*\*\*\*\*.com  
Subject: Re: More questions!  
Date: May 23, 2020 at 2:07 AM  
To: George-Twyman, William O WIGEORGE@\*\*\*\*\*.org

Here is the pdf, William. Just don't post it online... ; )  
- Steve

Steve Dobrogosz  
dobrogosz.com



From: Steve Dobrogosz stevedobro@\*\*\*\*\*.com  
Subject: Re: Document Draft  
Date: June 8, 2020 at 3:08 AM  
To: George-Twyman, William O WIGEORGE@\*\*\*\*\*.org

Dear William,

Congratulations on your excellent work. I am honored that you have found the music worth such an in-depth analysis, and was constantly amazed at how well you've understood my composing process. Now I appreciate Lilacs even more than before!

One example of many, on pages 65-74 your insights into the enigmatic "Song of the Bird" text and my chording structure - this is spot-on as to how I was dealing with, and attempting to musically solve, the most problematic (for me) section of the entire poem. Bravo, and thank you for "getting it".

One note for your introduction: there are in fact 2 different recordings - The Nosag CD, and the live premier performance (which is up at YouTube in 3 sections). If I remember correctly, we did the concert first (in Jacob's church, Stockholm) then the next weekend took the group to Uppsala to make the record (in the university auditorium). They both sound very similar, so it's easy to mix them up.

I'll be interested to hear how it goes when your dissertation is submitted. You've certainly earned your degree with flying colors.

Best wishes,  
Steve

## BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

William George-Twyman was born in Okinawa, Japan and moved to the United States at the age of two. He is a product of the Catholic school system, graduating from Bishop Lynch High School (Dallas, TX) in 1998. His love of music education and choral music is a direct result of the opportunities given to him by his choir and band directors who pushed him towards making a career out of teaching others how to make music. Mr. George-Twyman has earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education from Transylvania University in Lexington, KY, a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Butler University in Indianapolis, IN, and a Master of Sacred Music degree with an emphasis in Choral Conducting from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. He is a candidate the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting at the University of Oklahoma.

Over his career, Mr. George-Twyman has conducted ensembles of all types and levels, including 5<sup>th</sup> grade handbell choir, high school band, volunteer adult church choir, community orchestra, early music, and various others. At time of publishing, he is the Head of Choral Studies at Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas, TX. He is active in many music education organizations and will/has serve(d) as the 2020-2022 High School Mixed Repertoire and Resources Chair for Southwest ACDA.

Any further inquiries about this document or requests for additional materials can be sent to [williamgeorgetwyman@gmail.com](mailto:williamgeorgetwyman@gmail.com).

It should be noted that this document was completed and defended during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. The author offers this only as historical perspective, not as commentary on the document itself.