

Alex Temple

Two Whitman Songs

(2006, revised 2014)

for amplified voice (A3–F5) and piano

Performance Notes

These songs should be sung without vibrato, with the exception of three words marked “*vib.*” in the score. The vibrato on these words should be light and subtle, more like jazz or musical-theater vibrato than operatic or “art song” vibrato. In general, the ideal vocal style is the flat, informal sound of an indie-pop or bossa-nova singer. The text should always be clearly understood, and should be pronounced with the natural sounds of the English language as spoken by the singer. (American singers: please don’t try to sound British for the sake of “good diction”!) The singer should be amplified.

Song Texts

1. Locations and Times

Locations and times— what is it in me that meets them all, whenever and wherever, and makes me at home?

Forms, colors, densities, odors— what is it in me that corresponds with them?

2. When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer

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

1. Locations and Times

$\text{♩} = 48$ *mf* *mp* *mf* *p*
 NO VIBRATO except where indicated!

Voice: Lo - ca - tions and times; lo - ca - tions and times— What is it

Piano: *f* *mp* *f* *p* *mf*

6 *mf* *p*

Voice: in me that meets them all, when - ev - er and wher - ev - er,

Piano: *p* *p* *mf* *p*

Reo. _____ Reo. _____

11 *pp* *mf* *f*

Voice: and makes me at home? Forms, col - ors,

Piano: *pp* (release notes in precise rhythm) *mf* *f*

Reo. _____

17

den - si-ties, o - dors— What is it in me that cor-re - sponds with them?

mp *p*

mf *p* *mp* *p*

2. When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer

$\text{♩} = 44$ *p* NO VIBRATO except where indicated!

When I heard the learn'd as-tron-o-mer; when the proofs, the fig-ures, were

ranged in col-umns be-fore me; when I was shown the charts and di-a-grams, to

add, di-vide, and mea-sure them; When I, sit-ting, heard the as-tron-o-mer,

mp *mf* *p*

Detailed description: This is a musical score for the song 'When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer'. It consists of three systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 44. The dynamics range from piano (p) to mezzo-forte (mf). The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings. The lyrics are: 'When I heard the learn'd as-tron-o-mer; when the proofs, the fig-ures, were ranged in col-umns be-fore me; when I was shown the charts and di-a-grams, to add, di-vide, and mea-sure them; When I, sit-ting, heard the as-tron-o-mer,'.

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer

11 *f* *p* *mp* *mf* *vib.*

where he lec-tured with much ap-plause in the lec-ture room, how soon, un-account-able,

11 *f* *p* *mp* *mf*

15 *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

I be-came tired and sick; till ri-sing and gli-ding out, I

15 *p* *mp*

18 *f*

wan-der'd off by my-self, in the mys-ti-cal moist night

18 *f*

fade to vib.

21 *f* > *mp* *pp* Rall. *p*

air, and from time to time, look'd up in per-fect si-lence at the stars.

mp *p* *pp* *mf* *p*

R.H.

L.H.

The image shows a musical score for the poem 'When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer'. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts at measure 21 with a dynamic of *f* (forte) and a fermata, then moves to *mp* (mezzo-piano) for the lyrics 'air, and from time to time, look'd up in per-fect si-lence at the stars.' The piano accompaniment features a variety of time signatures: 4/4, 2/4, 3/8, 5/8, and 4/4. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *mf*, and *p*. The score includes performance instructions such as 'fade to vib.', 'Rall.', and '8va' (octave up). The right hand (R.H.) and left hand (L.H.) parts are clearly delineated.