

On the Beach at Night Alone

Commissioned by Vox Humana Chamber choir in April 2020; Brian Wismath, director

Walt Whitman

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Performance Notes

This piece consists of music written for two choirs, one Chamber choir, and one of collected voices. The singers of the Collected Voices group, singing the music below, are imitating the sound of waves washing up on the shore at night.

There's no need to worry about how to sync up with other singers; the desired effect is to have each singer be rhythmically disjunct from one another to create the illusion of a blurry line that washes over the music sung by the other choir parts.

Though the rhythm is very free, accurate pitch is extra important. Singers are encouraged to take time during fermatas to mark a pitch with the voice and sound a nearby instrument as an aid. There's no need to stop recording as it will be edited together afterwards.

The rhythm is simplified into long notes and short notes. As a general guide, the music should be sung in rhythm that matches the natural rhythm of the words. The composer suggests speaking through the text once or twice to find a natural rhythm that suits your taste. That being said, singers are encouraged to exaggerate the length of long notes. The composer suggests that they could be as short as double, to six or seven times, the length of short notes.

Breaths can be taken wherever it feels most natural to do so.

Like rolling waves, at a very moderate tempo

p *mf* *p*

All spheres, grown, un - grown, small, large, suns, moons, plan-ets,

6 *p* *mf* *p*

All dis-tan ces of place, All dis-tan-ces of place how-ev-er wide, how-ev-er wide,

12 *p* *mf* *p* *hold as long as possible*

All dis-tan-ces of time, all in-an-i-mate forms, all dis-tan-ces of time(mm)
(closing immediately to "mm")

At this point in the music, don't stop recording, but take a moment to do what you need to do to reset your tonal center to the key of E flat. Urgency isn't necessary.

Like rolling waves, at a very moderate tempo

17 *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Though they be ev - er so dif-ferent or in dif-ferent worlds,

21 *p* *mf* *mf*

All wat - er - y, min-er-al pro - ces-ses, the fish-es, the brutes,

26 *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

All lives and deaths, all of the past, pres-ent, fu-ture, All i-den-ti - ties

31 *p sempre* *hold as long as possible*

that have ex - is - ted, or may ex-ist, on this globe or an - y globe.