

Commissioned by the Toledo Choral Society
Richard Napierala, Artistic Director
for premiere June 26, 2022
Toledo, Ohio

PROGRAM NOTES

By Blue Ontario's Shore (A Vision of Democracy) is less focused on Lake Ontario than it is on the musings of poet Walt Whitman's fertile imagination (!). Sitting by the lake, the poet imagines a "Phantom large and superb" who asks him to "sing the song of the birth of Democracy." And thus begins a recitation of names of cities by the lake, as a "nation announcing itself." The stern Phantom (vocal soloists), the city names (all chorus, whispering) and the triumph of Democracy (chorus, full voice) are the ingredients of this song.

This choral setting is part of the cantata *The Great Lakes*, a musical journey across the magnificent five lakes bordering the Eastern US and Canada. Texts by American and Canadian poets have been selected as lyrics for this cantata. The journey moves from East (Lake Ontario) to West (Lake Superior), stopping to explore the unique character of each lake en route.

Although the preliminary form of the cantata was scored for chorus with piano accompaniment, the final version is now orchestrated. Therefore, the composer has enjoyed exploring orchestral colors inspired by the personalities of the lakes.

TEXT

By blue Ontario's shore,
As I mused on these troubled days,
and of peace returned,
a Phantom large and superb, with stern appearance,
came to me...
"Oh, sing me a song, a song that comes from the soul of America.
Sing me the carol of victory.
And sing me the song of the birth of Democracy."

Rochester...Niagara...Syracuse...Oswego...

A nation announcing itself – we are the most beautiful to ourselves, and in ourselves.

Democracy, I saw you serenely give birth to immortal children, saw in dreams your
fullness form, saw you with spreading mantle covering the world.

Rochester...Niagara...Syracuse...Oswego...

I stand for those who walk with the whole earth,
who celebrate one to celebrate all.

Thus, by blue Ontario's shore,
While the winds whipped and the waves came trooping toward me,
I thrilled with the song of liberty, and the charm of my theme was upon me...

I saw the free souls of poets,
the loftiest bards of ages past strode before me,

Poets of vision, messengers of peace,
Bards with songs from burning coals or the lightning's forked stripes!
Voices of water... Ontario's bards...
You by my charm I invoke.

Rochester...Niagara...Syracuse...Oswego...

By blue Ontario's shore

—Walt Whitman (1819–1892), from *Leaves of Grass*,
adapted by Gwyneth Walker

By Blue Ontario's Shore

[A Vision of Democracy]

from *The Great Lakes*

Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Baritone Soli, SATB Chorus (divisi), and Piano or Orchestra

"By Blue Ontario's Shore" by
Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892)
G. W., alt.

Gwyneth Walker

Moderate tempo ♩ = 112

Alto Solo *quasi recitative,*
as if telling a story *mf*

Alto Solo

Moderate tempo ♩ = 112
with strength and substance, as a shore line

Piano

f

By

Rec.

5 **A**

Alto Solo

blue On - tar - i - o's shore, As I mused on these trou - bled days, and of peace re -

A

mf

8^{va}

loco

9

Alto Solo

turned, a Phan - tom large and su - perb, with stern ap - pear - ance, came to

8^{va}

loco

Rec.

*These high patterns represent the wonder and mystery of the "Vision of Democracy."

13 **B**

Alto Solo me.

Bar. Solo *mf cantabile, inspired*

"Oh, sing me a song, _____ a song that comes from the

B *very gentle tremolo, the magic of music*

17

Bar. Solo soul of A-mer-i-ca. _____ Sing me the car - ol of

8^{va} loco

20

Bar. Solo vic - to - ry. And sing me the song of the birth of Dem - oc - ra - cy." _____

*These high patterns represent the wonder and mystery of the "Vision of Democracy."

C *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

All Women *unis.*

, *p* *whispered reverently, with affection*

23 *rit.*

Soprano (S) *rit.*
 Roch - es - ter... Ni - a - gara...

Alto (A) *rit.*
 Roch - es - ter... Ni - a - gara...

All Men *unis.*

, *p* *whispered reverently, with affection*

Tenor (T) (Bar. Solo) *rit.*
 Roch - es - ter... Ni - a - gara...

Bass (B) *rit.*
 Roch - es - ter... Ni - a - gara...

C *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

rit. *dim.* *p* *8va* *8va* *

Piano accompaniment with *rit.*, *dim.*, *p*, and *8va* markings.

26

Soprano (S) Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go... Ten. Solo *mf* proudly

Alto (A) Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go... *8* A

Tenor (T) Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go... *8*

Bass (B) Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go... *8*

8va *loco*

Piano accompaniment with *8va* and *loco* markings.

D More relaxed tempo

29 Ten. Solo *8*

na - tion an - nounc - ing it - self - we are the most beau - ti - ful to our -

D More relaxed tempo

mf

Piano accompaniment with *mf* marking.

*These high patterns represent the wonder and mystery of the "Vision of Democracy."
Walker | By Blue Ontario's Shore

E *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

All Women *unis.*

p whispered reverently, with affection

41 *rit.*

Soprano: Roch - es - ter... Ni -

Tenor: man - tle cov - er - ing the world. Roch - es - ter... Ni -

All Men *unis.*

p whispered reverently, with affection

(Bar. Solo)

Tenor: man - tle cov - er - ing the world. Roch - es - ter... Ni -

E *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

rit. *dim.* *p*

8^{va} * 8^{va}

Sop. Solo, *mf*

44

Soprano: a - gara... Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go... I

Tenor: a - gara... Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go...

8^{va}

F More relaxed tempo

47

Sop. Solo: stand for those who walk with the whole

F More relaxed tempo

loco *mf*

*These high patterns represent the wonder and mystery of the "Vision of Democracy."
Walker | By Blue Ontario's Shore

49 *f*

Sop. Solo earth,

Alto Solo *mf*

who cel - e - brate one to cel - e - brate all.

f *mf*

G *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

All Women *div.*
f with enthusiasm and excitement

52 (Alto Solo)

S A Thus, by blue On - tar - i - o's shore *f* with . . .

T B All Men *div.*

while the

G *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

f

55

S A enthusiasm and excitement

T B I

winds whipped and the waves come troop - ing to - ward me,

f

58

S
A

thrilled with the song of lib - er - ty, All Bases
mf

B

and the charm of my theme was up -

61

rit. Bar. Solo **H** *a tempo*
(*mf*)

B

on me. I saw the free souls of po - ets, the

rit. *mf* *dim.* *p* **H** *a tempo*
8^{va} * *8^{va}*

64

Bar. Solo

loft - iest bards of a - ges past strode be - fore me,

8^{va} *(8^{va})*

*These high patterns represent the wonder and mystery of the "Vision of Democracy."
Walker | By Blue Ontario's Shore

I Grandly, celebratory

67 *p* *f*

S A Ah Po - ets of vis - ion,

(Bar. Solo)

T B

I Grandly, celebratory

loco *f*

Reo. *Reo.*

70

S A All Men *div.* Bards with songs from

T B mes - sen - gers of peace,

f

Reo. *Reo.*

73 *rit.*

S A burn - ing coals

T B or the light - ning's fork - éd stripes!

rit.

J Slightly slower

76 *(f)*

S Voi - ces of wa - ter... On - tar - i - o's bards...

A *(f)* Voi - ces of wa - ter... On - tar - i - o's bards...

T *(f)* Voi - ces of wa - ter... On - tar - i - o's bards...

B *(f)* Voi - ces of wa - ter... On - tar - i - o's bards...

J Slightly slower

77

rit. *Slowly*

79

S *rit.* *Slowly*

A *rit.* *Slowly*

T *rit.* *Slowly*

B *mf* *p*

You by my charm I in - voke.

rit. *Slowly* *8va*

mf *dim.*

Leo.

88 *(accel.)*
(cresc.) **L** *Faster, with excitement*

S
Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go... Roch-es - ter... Ni -

A
(cresc.)
Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go... Roch-es - ter...

T
(cresc.)
Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go... Roch-es - ter...

B
(cresc.)
Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go... Roch-es - ter...

(accel.) **L** *Faster, with excitement*

(cresc.)

Red. *Red.* *Red.*

91 *(cresc.)*

S
a - gara... Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go...

A
(cresc.)
Ni - a - gara... Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go...

T
(cresc.)
Ni - a - gara... Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go...

B
(cresc.)
Ni - a - gara... Syr - a - cuse... Os - we - go...

(cresc.)

Red. *Red.* *Red.*

rit. to end

f grandly full sonorities of conviction

S
by blue On - tar - io's shore.

A
by blue On - tar - io's shore.

T
by blue On - tar - io's shore.

B
by blue On - tar - io's shore.

f grandly

rit. to end

3:20
January 7, 2018
New Canaan, Connecticut