

PROGRAM NOTE:

I never really appreciated Walt Whitman's poetry – too much O this and O that. And yet, I am occasionally captivated by its evocative, incantatory quality, and in 1997 found myself setting a rather large chunk of *The Mystic Trumpeter*, happy to find so many opportunities for word painting, which I love to do. More than that, I tried to capture the poetic spirit of Whitman himself: a big, bold American Romantic who loved the voluptuous sound of words and whose poetry rumbles on at length through whole lists of subjects. Consequently, the music is not all that refined; it takes what it needs from various styles and tosses them all together, going from one to another quickly, without graceful transitions. It is not only a setting of the poetry, but a portrait of the poet.