

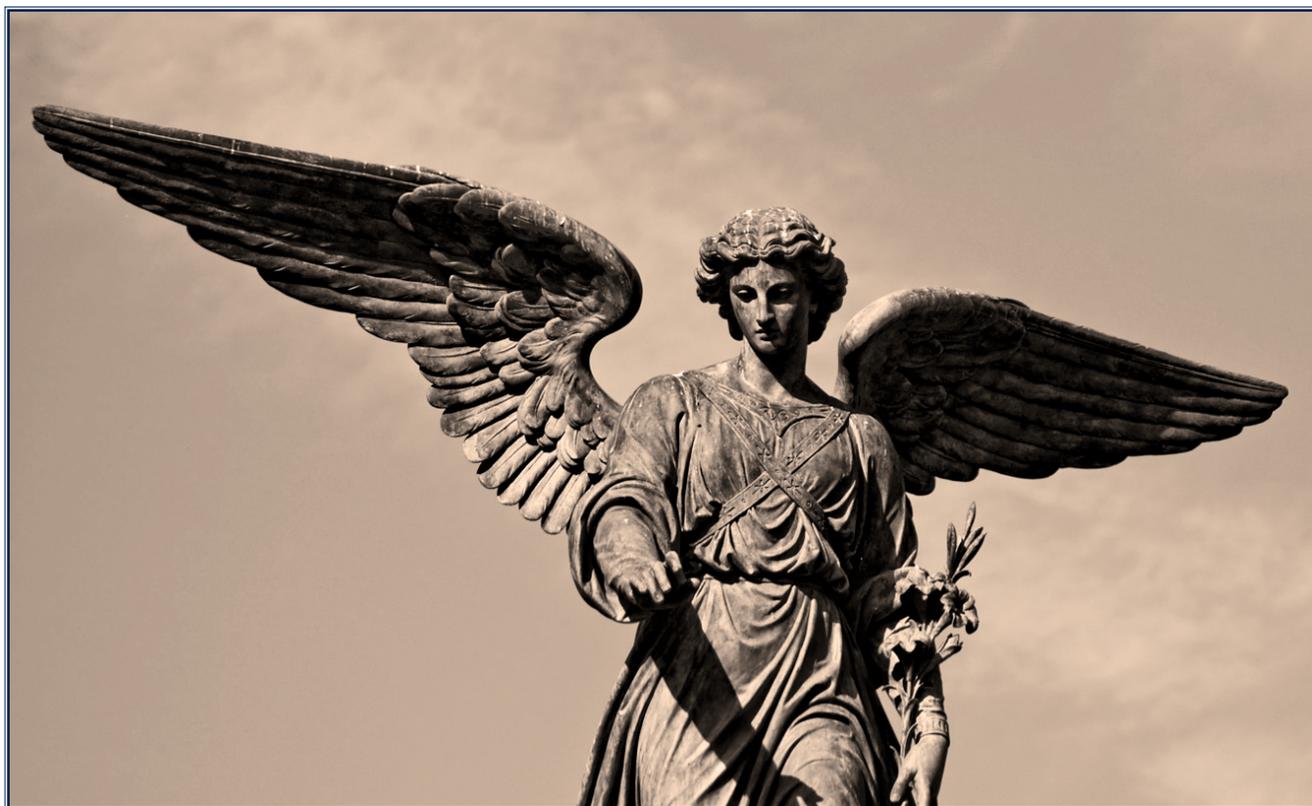


RICHARD DANIELPOUR

Songs of Solitude • War Songs

Thomas Hampson, Baritone

Nashville Symphony • Giancarlo Guerrero



Richard Danielpour (b. 1956)

Songs of Solitude • War Songs • Toward the Splendid City

Songs of Solitude was composed in the days shortly after September 11, 2001, in the house that once belonged to Aaron Copland in Peekskill, N.Y. The house had been converted into a one-composer-at-a-time retreat, and the two projects that I had planned to work on were (1) the final edit of *An American Requiem*, a 60-minute oratorio for chorus, soloists, and orchestra, and (2) a new work for Thomas Hampson and The Philadelphia Orchestra. I arrived on the evening of September 10 at the Copland House and laid my *Requiem* score out on the table. Composed between September 2000 and June 2001, the work was born out of a number of interviews I had conducted with more than 60 American veterans who had fought in different wars throughout the 20th century.

On the morning of September 11, I called Deborah Horne at my Manhattan-based publisher, G. Schirmer, to find out when I would have to turn in the proofed, engraved score of my *Requiem*. Of course, I never received an answer to that question, as Deborah, looking out her office window, proceeded to relate the events that immediately followed after two planes had hit the World Trade Center.

After checking to make sure that all my family was alive and well, I focused on the work at hand, which was to edit the score of my *Requiem*. The editing took about a week. Around September 18, I began looking once again at the poetry of William Butler Yeats, which I thought would be suitable for the cycle that I would set for Thomas Hampson. I realized that, strangely enough, many of the poems I had brought with me also included images of war; in particular, *The Second Coming* was frequently being read on National Public Radio in the weeks following 9/11. I decided that, if I had written a Requiem that unconsciously anticipated the events of 9/11, I should at least write another work that would respond to the events of that horrible day. The plainness of the Copland House inspired a new sense of economy and sparseness in my own composition, as did Yeats' poetry.

Thomas Hampson, who is just as much a scholar as he is an artist, was most helpful to me about many issues, including the ordering of the poems. Of the poems that had received first-draft settings, there were two that never made it into the final set of six orchestral songs. The first draft of the work was composed rather quickly, and the final orchestral score was completed a few months later, in January 2002. (It was the last work I completed before beginning work on the opera *Margaret Garner* with the Nobel laureate Toni Morrison.) Hampson gave the première in Philadelphia on October 22, 2004, with David Robertson conducting The Philadelphia Orchestra. He performed it again in March 2015, with the Nashville Symphony and Giancarlo Guerrero. It is from those performances in Nashville that this recording was made.

Written nearly seven years later, *War Songs* traveled a rather circuitous route to its final realization. I had received a commission from Thomas Hampson's Hampson Foundation in September 2008 to compose a series of songs for baritone and piano — a new undertaking for me, even though I had written several orchestral song cycles for other voice types. I chose seven of Walt Whitman's Civil War poems, from the section of *Leaves of Grass* titled "Drum Taps." As with many of the poems that I set to music, I had held onto these for many years, waiting until the appropriate time to meet these monumental works.

At the same time that I was writing this cycle, I had another commission from the Curtis Institute to write a piece for baritone, viola, and piano. I had chosen the Whitman text *Come Up From the Fields Father* for this work, and I had both commissions completed by late October of 2008. *Come Up From the Fields Father* was premiered in May 2009, in Philadelphia, but as I awaited the première of the other cycle, I had the idea of orchestrating four of the original seven voice-and-piano songs and merging them with a version of *Come Up From the Fields Father*, this time involving a cello *obbligato*.

Come Up From the Fields Father would be the culminating song in the cycle, which followed the other songs: *Hush'd Be the Camps To-day*, *Look Down, Fair Moon*, *Reconciliation*, and *Year That Trembled and Reel'd Beneath Me*. The structural idea behind pairing the songs was that the first four would be roughly equal in length to the last movement.

The Manhattan School of Music Orchestra, led by George Manahan, gave the first performance of the orchestrated version of *Come Up From the Fields Father* on March 1, 2012, in New York, with Thomas Hampson and cellist David Geber. The full cycle of *War Songs* was premiered in March 2015, with Giancarlo Guerrero conducting the Nashville Symphony with Thomas Hampson.

The motivating force for this cycle and in particular for *Come Up From the Fields Father* originated from seeing a series of photographs printed in *The New York Times* of all the young men and women who had been killed in the Iraq War. The subject matter of the poem pertains to a family that has received a letter informing them that their son has been killed in the war. The nucleus of the poem is centered around the mother's grief.

Nowadays, we understand war basically through motion pictures and mass media, and we're shielded from truly understanding the hellish reality of war. *War Songs* is my effort to shine a light on the real brutality of war and the effect it has on those surviving the loss of loved ones.

While *Toward the Splendid City* was composed as a portrait of New York, the city in which I live, it was written almost entirely away from home. Work on the piece began in Seattle in the spring of 1992 and was completed in mid-August of that year in Taos, New Mexico. At the time I was nearing the end of a yearlong residency with the Seattle Symphony and had serious second thoughts about returning to New York. Life was always complicated in the city and easier, it seemed, everywhere else. I was, however, not without a certain pang of nostalgia for my hometown, and as a result *Toward the Splendid City* was driven by my love-hate relationship with New York. It was, needless to say, a relationship badly in need of resolution. Eventually, upon returning to Manhattan, I began to understand that the humanity and the difficulty of New York were inseparable — and that if in the difficulties of urban life humanity is to be embraced, then the inconveniences must also be accepted.

The work's title comes from the heading of Pablo Neruda's 1974 Nobel Prize address, in which he included the following: "We must pass through solitude and difficulty, isolation and silence, to reach forth to the enchanted place where we can dance our clumsy dance and sing our sorrowful song — but in this dance or in this song there are fulfilled the most ancient rites of our conscience in the awareness of being human."

Toward the Splendid City is, in addition to being a portrait of New York, a tribute to its Philharmonic Orchestra.

Richard Danielpour

Songs of Solitude

Texts by William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

1 I. Prologue (A Meditation in Time of War)

For one throb of the artery,
While on that old grey stone I sat
Under the old wind-broken tree,
I knew that One is animate,
Mankind inanimate phantasy.

2 II. Blood and the Moon

Blessed be this place,
More blessed still this tower;
A bloody, arrogant power
Rose out of the race
Uttering, mastering it,
Rose like these walls from these
Storm-beaten cottages –
In mockery I have set
A powerful emblem up,
And sing it rhyme upon rhyme in mockery or a time
Half dead at the top.

3 III. Drinking Song

The purity of the unclouded moon
Has flung its arrowy shaft upon the floor.
Seven centuries have passed and it is pure;
The blood of innocence has left no stain.
There, on blood-saturated ground, have stood
Soldier, assassin, executioner,
Whether for daily pittance or in blind fear
Or out of abstract hatred, and shed blood,
But could not cast a single jet thereon.
Odour of blood on the ancestral stair!
And we that have shed none must gather there
And clamour in drunken frenzy for the moon.

Upon the dusty, glittering windows cling,
And seem to cling upon the moonlit skies,
Tortoiseshell butterflies, peacock butterflies.
A couple of night-moths are on the wing.
Is every modern nation like the tower,
Half dead at the top? No matter what I said,
For wisdom is the property of the dead,
A something incompatible with life; and power,
Like everything that has the stain of blood,
A property of the living; but no stain
Can come upon the visage of the moon
When it has looked in glory from a cloud.

4 IV. These are the Clouds

These are the clouds about the fallen sun,
The majesty that shuts his burning eye:
The weak lay hand on what the strong has done,
Till that be tumbled that was lifted high
And discord follow upon unison,
And all things at one common level lie.
And therefore, friend, if your great race were run
And these things came, so much the more thereby
Have you made greatness your companion,
Although it be for children that you sigh:
These are the clouds about the fallen sun,
The majesty that shuts his burning eye.

5 V. The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

6 VI. Epilogue (Vacillation)

Between extremities
Man runs his course;
A brand, or flaming breath,
Comes to destroy
All those antinomies
Of day and night;
The body calls it death,
The heart remorse.
But if these be right
What is joy?

War Songs

Texts by Walt Whitman (1819-92)

7 1. Hush'd be the Camps To-day

Hush'd be the camps to-day,
And soldiers, let us drape our war-worn weapons;
And each, with musing soul retire, to celebrate,
Our dear commander's death.

No more for him life's stormy conflicts;
Nor victory, nor defeat — No more time's dark events,
Charging like ceaseless clouds across the sky.

But Sing, poet, in our name;
Sing of the love we bore him — because you,
dweller in camps, know it truly

Sing, to the lower'd coffin there;
Sing with the shovel'd clods that fill the grave — a verse,
For the heavy hearts of soldiers.

8 2. Look Down, Fair Moon

Look down, fair moon, and bathe this scene;
Pour softly down night's nimbus floods, on faces ghastly,
swollen, purple;
On the dead, on their backs, with their arms toss'd wide,
Pour down your unstinted nimbus, sacred moon.

9 3. Reconciliation

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage
must in time be utterly lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly
softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin
— I draw near,
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face
in the coffin.

iv 4. Year that Trembled and Reel'd Beneath Me

Year that trembled and reel'd beneath me!
Your summer wind was warm enough
— yet the air I breathed froze me;
A thick gloom fell through the sunshine and darken'd me;
Must I change my triumphant songs? Said I to myself;
Must I indeed learn to chant the cold dirges
of the baffled?
And sullen hymns of defeat?

iv 5. Come Up From the Fields Father

Come up from the fields father, here's a letter from our Pete,
And come to the front door mother,
here's a letter from thy dear son.

Down in the fields all prospers well,
But now from the fields come father,
come at the daughter's call,
And come to the entry mother,
to the front door come right away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous,
her steps trembling,
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,
O *this* is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son,
O stricken mother's soul!
All swims before her eyes, flashes with black,
she catches the main words only,
Sentences broken, *gunshot wound in the breast,*
cavalry skirmish, taken to hospital,
At present low, but will soon be better.

Grieve not so, dear mother,
(the just-grown daughter speaks through her sobs)
See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete
will soon be better.

Alas poor boy, he will never be better, (nor may-be
needs to be better, that brave and simple soul.)
While they stand at home at the door he is dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,
She with thin form presently drest in black,
By day her meals untouched, then at night fitfully sleeping,
often waking,
In the midnight waking, weeping,
longing with one deep longing,
O that she might withdraw unnoticed,
silent from life escape and withdraw,
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

Richard Danielpour



Margaret Garner, his first opera, which had a second production at New York City Opera. He has received the American Academy Charles Ives Fellowship, a Guggenheim Award, Bears Prize from Columbia University, and numerous grants and residencies. A devoted mentor and educator who has had a significant impact on the younger generation of composers, he is on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music and Curtis Institute.

Thomas Hampson



Photo: Kristin Hoeberrmann

Thomas Hampson, America's foremost baritone, hails from Spokane, Washington. He enjoys a singular international career as an opera singer, recording artist, and "ambassador of song", and has received many honours and awards for his probing artistry and cultural leadership. Comprising more than 170 albums, his discography includes winners of a GRAMMY® Award, five Edison Awards, and the Grand Prix du Disque. He was recently inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and honoured as a Metropolitan Opera Guild "Met Mastersinger". He received the 2009 Distinguished Artistic Leadership Award from the Atlantic Council in Washington, DC, and was appointed the New York Philharmonic's first Artist-in-Residence. In 2010 he was honoured with a Living Legend Award by the Library of Congress, where he serves as Special Advisor to the Study and Performance of Music in America. Furthermore, he received the famed Concertgebouw Prize, and was named ECHO Klassik's "Singer of the Year" in 2011 for the fourth time in twenty years. Hampson was made honorary professor at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Heidelberg and holds honorary doctorates from Manhattan School of Music, New England Conservatory, Whitworth College, and San Francisco Conservatory, as well as being an honorary member of London's Royal Academy of Music. He carries the titles of Kammersänger of the Vienna State Opera and Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of the Republic of France, and was awarded the Austrian Medal of Honour in Arts and Sciences.

Nashville Symphony



Led by Music Director Giancarlo Guerrero and President and CEO Alan D. Valentine, the Nashville Symphony has established an international profile with its innovative programming and expanding discography. Founded in 1946, the orchestra is one of Tennessee's largest and longest-running nonprofit performing arts organizations. With 140 performances annually, the Symphony's concert schedule encompasses a diverse mix of classical, pops, jazz, and family performances, along with extensive education and engagement programs. One of the most active recording orchestras in the country, the Nashville Symphony has released more than 30 recordings, including 25 on Naxos. These recordings have received a total of 17 GRAMMY® nominations and eight GRAMMY® wins, including two for Best Orchestral Performance. Throughout its

history, the Nashville Symphony has maintained a commitment to championing the music of America's leading composers, which has resulted in a series of innovative commissions featuring Nashville-based artists, including bassist Edgar Meyer, banjoist Béla Fleck, and singer Ben Folds. Located in the heart of Nashville's thriving downtown, Schermerhorn Symphony Center is home to the Nashville Symphony.

Giancarlo Guerrero



Giancarlo Guerrero is Music Director of the Nashville Symphony and Principal Guest Conductor of The Cleveland Orchestra's Miami Residency. Maestro Guerrero has led the Nashville Symphony to several GRAMMY® wins in recent years, including the category of Best Orchestral Performance in 2011. He has appeared with many of the prominent North American orchestras, including those of Boston, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Montreal, Philadelphia, and Toronto, among others. He has also conducted major summer festivals including the Hollywood Bowl and Blossom Music Festival. Guerrero has developed an active and visible profile in Europe and has worked with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Brussels Philharmonic, DSO-Berlin, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. An advocate of new music and contemporary composers, he has collaborated with and championed the works of John Adams, John Corigliano, Osvaldo Golijov, Jennifer Higdon, Michael Daugherty, Roberto Sierra, and Richard Danielpour. His recordings with the Nashville Symphony include releases of music by Danielpour and Sierra on the Naxos label, and Béla Fleck's *Banjo Concerto* on Deutsche Grammophon. Guerrero, together with composer Aaron Jay Kernis, developed Nashville Symphony's Composer Lab & Workshop initiative to foster and promote new American orchestral music.

Richard DANIELPOUR

(b. 1956)

- Songs of Solitude (2002)*†** **28:40**
- 1 I. Prologue **3:28**
 - 2 II. Blood and the Moon **2:50**
 - 3 III. Drinking Song **5:36**
 - 4 IV. These are the Clouds **3:34**
 - 5 V. The Second Coming **9:07**
 - 6 VI. Epilogue **4:05**
- War Songs (2008)*†** **23:37**
- 7 No. 1. Hush'd Be the Camps To-day **3:50**
 - 8 No. 2. Look Down, Fair Moon **1:31**
 - 9 No. 3. Reconciliation **4:25**
 - 10 No. 4. Year That Trembled and Reel'd Beneath Me **2:36**
 - 11 No. 5. Come Up From the Fields Father **11:15**
- Anthony LaMarchina, Cello obbligato
- 12 **Toward the Splendid City (1992)** **8:32**

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING†

Thomas Hampson, Baritone*

Nashville Symphony

Giancarlo Guerrero

Recorded live at Laura Turner Concert Hall, Schermerhorn
Symphony Center, Nashville, USA, from 12th to 14th March, 2015
(tracks 1-11), and on 20th and 21st November, 2015 (track 12)
Producer: Tim Handley (tracks 1-11) • Co-producers: Gary Call
and Vinay Parameswaran (track 12) • Engineer: Gary Call
Editors: Tim Handley (tracks 1-11); Gary Call (track 12)
Publishers: G. Schirmer, Inc. (tracks 1-6); Lean Kat Music
(tracks 7-11); Associated Music Publishers, Inc. (track 12)
Booklet notes: Richard Danielpour • Cover: *Bethesda Fountain,
Central Park, New York* by jBurdiMages (iStockphoto.com)



AMERICAN CLASSICS

Acclaimed as one of America's leading contemporary composers, Richard Danielpour wrote *Songs of Solitude* as a response to the events of 9/11. Drawing on the poems of W.B. Yeats, the work enshrines a sense of economy and sparseness, formed of a set of six powerful orchestral songs. The motivating force for *War Songs* was a series of photographs of the young men and women killed in the Iraq War. The song cycle, with its texts by Walt Whitman, was written for the Nashville Symphony to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War. *Toward the Splendid City* is a portrait of New York City driven by Danielpour's love-hate relationship with his hometown.

The sung texts can be found inside the
booklet, and may also be accessed at
www.naxos.com/libretti/559792.htm

www.naxos.com

Playing
Time:
60:48