



# ***The World Below the Brine***

*from Deep Sea Songs (2012)*

*For Large Chorus (SATB)*

*Words by Walt Whitman*

*Music by Nigel Morgan*

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### **About the music**

Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) was a poet whose words about the natural world have continued to enjoy new and novel settings by composers today. No doubt influenced by the descriptive writing of his almost exact contemporary Herman Melville, Whitman's descriptions of the sea contain a richness and wonder. *The World Below the Brine* is no exception containing extravagant lists of fish, mammal and plant life below the waves.

*The World Below the Brine* is the first of three *Deep Sea Songs* that take their cue from the composer's immersion in the world of the deep oceans during the composition of *Migrations* for orchestra, *Sounding the Deep* for bass voice and orchestra, and *Shoals* for chamber ensembles and electronics. The setting, for a large chorus of at least eighty voices, has been composed for the National Youth Choir of Great Britain and their new music director Ben Parry.

In this setting there is a simplicity of texture combined with a looser approach to word setting than is usually found in Nigel Morgan's choral works, most of which are for smaller forces.

Words by Walt Whitman feature prominently in Nigel Morgan's *Schizophonia*, a work for three ensembles, a co-commission between BBC Wales and the Ilios Festival Norway. Two pieces for large chorus and keyboard under the title *Vocalism* are available as standalone works in the composer's catalogue.

*The World Below the Brine*

Walt Whitman

The world below the brine,  
Forests at the bottom of the sea, the branches and leaves,  
Sea-lettuce, vast lichens, strange flowers and seeds, the thick  
tangle openings, and pink turf,  
Different colors, pale gray and green, purple, white, and gold, the  
play of light through the water,  
Dumb swimmers there among the rocks, coral, gluten, grass, rushes,  
and the aliment of the swimmers,  
Sluggish existences grazing there suspended, or slowly crawling  
close to the bottom,  
The sperm-whale at the surface blowing air and spray, or disporting  
with his flukes,  
The leaden-eyed shark, the walrus, the turtle, the hairy  
sea-leopard, and the sting-ray,  
Passions there, wars, pursuits, tribes, sight in those ocean-depths,  
breathing that thick-breathing air, as so many do,  
The change thence to the sight here, and to the subtle air breathed  
by beings like us who walk this sphere,  
The change onward from ours to that of beings who walk other spheres.

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# I. The World Below the Brine

*serento* ♩ = 70

*mf*

Soprano  
the bran - ches and leaves

Alto  
*mf*  
Fo - rests at the bo-ttom of the sea Sea

Tenor  
*mf*  
the bran - ches and leaves

Bass  
*mf*  
Fo- rests at the bo-ttom of the sea

4

S.  
*p* vast *mf* li-chens *f* Strange *mp*

A.  
le - ttuce *mp* vast *mf* li - - chens *f*

T.  
*mp* vast *mf* li - chens *f* Strange *mp*

B.  
*mf* Sea le-ttuce *mp* vast *f* li - chens

7

S.  
*mf* flo wers and seeds *mp*

A.  
*mp* Strange *mf* flo wers and seeds *mp*

T.  
*mf* flo wers and seeds *mp*

B.  
*mp* Strange *mf* flo wers and seeds

9 *poco allargando* ♩ = 65

*mp* *mf* *f*

S. the thick thick tan-gle thick tan-gle o - pe - nings

A. the thick thick tan-gle thick tan-gle o - - pe - nings

T. the thick thick tan-gle thick tan-gle o - pe - nings

B. the thick thick tan-gle thick tan-gle o - - pe - nings

13 *mf* *p* **A** *risonare e serio* ♩ = 70 *f*

S. and pink turf the world the world be - low the world be - low

A. and pink turf the world the world be - low the world be - low

T. and pink turf the world the world be - low the world be - low

B. and pink turf the world the world be - low the world be - low

17 *sereno* *mp*

S. the brine the brine grey and green

A. the brine pale grey pale grey and green

T. the brine pale grey pale grey and green

B. the brine

20

*f* *mf* *f* *mp*

S. pur - ple white gold the play of light through the wa - ter

A. pur - ple white gold the play of light through the wa - ter

T. *mf* *f* *mp*  
8 pur - ple white and gold the play of light through the

B. *mf* *f* *mp*  
8 pur - ple white and gold the play of light through the

23

*f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

S. di - ffe - rent di - ffe - rent co - lours di - ffe - rent

A. *f* *mp* *mf* *mp*  
8 di - ffe - rent di - ffe - rent co - lours di - ffe - rent

T. *f* *p* *mf* *p*  
8 wa - ter di - ffe - rent di - ffe - rent co - lours di - ffe - rent

B. *f* *p* *mf* *p*  
8 wa - ter di - ffe - rent di - ffe - rent co - lours di - ffe - rent

26 *f* *deliberamente* **B** *mf*

S. di - ffe - rent co - lours There a - mong the rocks

A. *f* *mp*  
8 di - ffe - rent co - lours there

T. *f* *mp*  
8 di - ffe - rent co - lours there

B. *f* *mf*  
8 di - ffe - rent co - lours There a - mong the rocks

29

S. *mf* glu - ten ru - shes *mf* Dumb swi-mmers

A. *mf* co - ral *mp* the a - li-ment of the *mf* swi-mmers dumb swi-mmers

T. *mf* co - ral *mp* and the a - li-ment of the swi - mmers gra -

B. *mp* grass and the a - li-ment of the swi - mmers gra -

32

S. *mp sub.* dumb swi-mmers slu - ggish e - xi - sten - ces *mp sub.* su - spen - ded

A. *mp sub.* slu - ggish e - xi - sten - ces *mp sub.* su - spen - ded

T. *poco a poco cresc.* - zing gra - zing *mf* gra - - zing *f mp sub.* there su - spen - ded

B. *poco a poco cresc.* - zing gra - zing *mf* gra - - zing *f mp sub.* there su - spen - ded

*♩ = 65*

35

S. *mf* there su - spen - ded slow - ly *calando p* craw - ling close to the bot-tom *p*

A. *mf* there su - spen - ded slow - ly *calando p* craw - ling close to the bot-tom *p*

T. *mf* there su - spen - ded slow - ly craw - ling close to the bo - ttom *p*

B. *mf* there su - spen - ded or slow - ly *calando p* craw - ling close to the bot-tom *p*

*♩ = 60*

39 **C** *animato* ♩ = 60

S. *mf* *f*  
the sperm whale the sperm whale

A. *mf* *f*  
at the sur-face blowing air and spray dispor-ting his flukes

T. *mf* *f*  
at the sur-face blow ing air and spray dis-por-ting his flukes

B. *mf* *f*  
the sperm whale the sperm whale

43 *mp*

S. *mp*  
at the sur - - face blow - - ing blow - ing

A. *mf*  
thelea-deneyed shark, the wal - - rus, the hai - ry sea leo-pard

T. *mf*  
the lea - den eyed shark, the tur - tle, the hai - ry sea

B. *mp*  
blow - ing blow - ing blow - ing

47 *mf* *f*

S. *mf* *f*  
air and spray the sperm whale the

A. *mf* *mf*  
the sting ray at the surface blowing air and spray dis -

T. *mf* *mf*  
leo-pard, the sting ray at the sur-face blowing air and spray dis -

B. *mf* *f*  
air and spray the sperm whale the

51 *ff*

S. sperm whale Pa - ssions, pa - ssions, wars,

A. - por-ting his flukes *f* pa - ssions, *ff* pa - ssions, wars,

T. - por-ting his flukes *f* pa - ssions, *ff* pa - ssions, wars,

B. sperm whale *ff* pa - - - ssions, pa - - ssions, wars,

55 *sotto voce subito p*

S. pur-suits, tribes, sight in those o - cean depths brea - thing

A. pur - suits, tribes, sight in those o - cean depths brea - thing

T. pur - suits, tribes, sight in those o - cean depths brea - thing

B. pur - suits, tribes, sight in those o - cean depths brea - thing

60 **D** ♩ = 110 *normale mf*

S. that thick brea - thing air The

A. that thick brea - thing air, as so ma - ny do, The

T. that thick brea - thing air

B. that thick brea - thing air

(v.s.)

64 *semplice* ♩ = 100

S. change thence to the sight here

A. change thence to the sight here

T. *normale mf* and to the sub - tle air brea -

B. *normale mf* and to the sub - tle air brea -

69 *mf*

S. The change

A. *mf* The change

T. *mf* - thed by be-ings like us who walk this sphere The change

B. - thed by be-ings like us who walk this sphere

S. on-ward to that of be-ings who walk o - ther spheres.

A. on-ward from ours to that of be-ings who walk o - ther spheres.

T. on-ward from ours to that of be-ings who walk o - - ther spheres.

B. *mf* The change on-ward to that of be-ings who walk o - - ther spheres.

8