

Desiderata
for Cello, Timpani, Harp and String Orchestra

by

Michael-Thomas Alexander Foumai

A composition submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
(Music: Composition)
in the University of Michigan
2014

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Bright Sheng, Chair
Professor John Whittier-Ferguson
Associate Professor Mark Clague
Associate Professor Wayne Petty
Associate Professor Erik Santos

© Michael-Thomas Alexander Foumai 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the faculty at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance with whom I have been privileged to work, including Bright Sheng, Michael Daugherty, Erik Santos, Paul Schoenfeld, Evan Chambers, Kristin Kuster, Mark Clague, Christopher Lees, Karen Fournier, Ramon Satyendra, Wayne Petty and Judith Petty.

I am also profoundly grateful to my family, friends, colleagues and mentors who have inspired, challenged, encouraged and supported me throughout my studies, including Elim Chan, Roger Zare, Paul Dooley, David Biedenbender, Bret Bohman, Patrick Harlin, Evan Ware, Ming-Hsiu Yen, Ching-Mei Lin, Hyukjin Shin, Jeremy Crosmer, Jarita Ng, Daniel Poceta, Yaniv Segal, Thomas Osborne, Donald Reid Womack, Sydney Hodkinson, Daniel Mew, Craig Young and Henry Miyamura.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	ii
Abstract	iv
Instrumentation	v
Desiderata for Cello, Timpani, Harp and String Orchestra	1

ABSTRACT

Desiderata is a composition written for chamber orchestra with an instrumentation of solo cello, timpani, harp and strings. The piece is twenty minutes in duration and was premiered April 6, 2014 at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, performed by cellist Daniel Poceta and conducted by Elim Chan.

The music of *Desiderata* expresses the soul-searching journey for purpose and tranquility that is often the subject of religious homily. The title is taken from the poem *Desiderata* (1927) by American poet Max Ehrmann and refers to things desired for happiness. The inspiration behind the work comes from the poem's didactic and devotional principles that confront personal and interpersonal struggle. *Desiderata* is a musical representation of the poem, using directional harmonic relationships to express challenges in life and a recurring developing motif to symbolize positive affirmations that can lead towards harmony.

There is one primary musical motif, a four-note arc consisting of an ascending and descending contour that signify musical sighs and desires. The figure begins the piece, which is consistently repeated in the solo and orchestral music representing the poem's constant reminder to remain positive. After an extensive rumination in the opening cadenza, the solo cello weaves the figure as a head motif to different strands of melodic material that progress from the lyrical, assertive, anxious to serene qualities. A brief cadenza (m.163) in rapturous energy leads into an extended orchestral interlude reprising transformed materials heard earlier.

The harmonic progression is directional to reflect a transcendent journey filled with challenges. The orchestral music is rooted in B-Aeolian (m.2) as a modal key area and journeys through pitch centers of D (m.37), G (m.64) to C (m.164). The initial B area and B \flat of the opening cadenza gradually hint towards upward resolution to C (m.164, 215, 236) to signify an optimistic trajectory with the high point of the orchestral interlude centered on the dominant G (m.193). The piece concludes ambiguously on the dominant sonority in C (m.257), with a swaying motion between C \flat and B \flat in the violas symbolizing the freedom to choose a pursuit of happiness.

INSTRUMENTATION

Timpani
Harp

Solo Cello

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Bass

(Minimum String Count: 5.5.4.4.2)

Duration: *ca.* 20:00

Desiderata

for Cello, Timpani, Harp and String Orchestra

Andante - senza misura, ♩=96

MICHAEL-THOMAS ALEXANDER FOUMAI

Score for Harp, Timpani, and Solo Cello. The Harp and Timpani parts consist of sustained notes. The Solo Cello part features a complex melodic line with trills and dynamic markings: *ff*, *sfp*, *sfp*, *fp*, *f*, *p*, *f*, and *p*.

Score for Solo Violoncello. The part begins with trills (*tr*) and includes a section marked *sul C*. Dynamic markings include *sub.sf*, *sf*, *sf*, *sf*, *sfp*, *mf*, *f*, *mp*, and *sub.p*.

Score for Solo Violoncello. The part features a melodic line with dynamic markings: *f*.

Score for Solo Violoncello. The part includes a section marked "(fast trill)" and ends with a "lunga" marking. Dynamic markings include *ff*, *sfp*, *fp*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, and *p*.

Solo Vc. *with increasing intensity...*

p *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

Solo Vc.

mf *p*

Solo Vc. *with more urgency...*

mf *p cresc.*

Solo Vc. *pushing forward...*

sempre ff *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

Solo Vc.

p sotto voce *sub. ff* *p dolce*

Solo Vc.

f *mf* *f* *p* *sub. f*

② ♩=76

poco rit. 3

2

Hp. *mf* *mf*

Solo Vc. *p*

Vln. 1 *p* con sord. *mf*

Vln. 2 *p* *mf*

Vla. *p* *mf*

accel. ⑪ Più mosso ♩=52 (♩=104)

8

Hp. *mf* *p* *f* *mf*

Timp. *mf*

Solo Vc. *mf cresc.* *f* *più f*

Vln. 1 *p* *p* *mf* *p*

Vln. 2 *p* *p* *mf* *p*

Vla. *p* *p* *mf* *p*

Vc. *p* *p* *mf* *p*

Db. *p* *f*

14

Musical score for measures 14-19. The score includes parts for Harp (Hp.), Solo Violoncello (Solo Vc.), Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.).

- Hp.:** Starts with a whole rest, then plays a melodic line starting at measure 15 with a *p* dynamic.
- Solo Vc.:** Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 14, followed by a melodic line that reaches *ff* in measure 16.
- Vln. 1:** Plays a melodic line with *mf* dynamics, ending with a *p* dynamic in measure 19.
- Vln. 2:** Plays a melodic line with *mf* dynamics, ending with a *p* dynamic in measure 19.
- Vla.:** Plays a melodic line with *mf* dynamics, ending with a *p* dynamic in measure 19.
- Vc.:** Plays a melodic line with *mf* dynamics, ending with a *p* dynamic in measure 19.
- Db.:** Plays a melodic line with *mf* dynamics, ending with a *p* dynamic in measure 19.

Measure 14 includes a triplet of eighth notes in the Solo Vc. part. Measure 15 has a *p* dynamic in the Hp. part. Measure 16 has a *ff* dynamic in the Solo Vc. part. Measure 17 has an *arco* marking in the Db. part. Measure 18 has a *f* dynamic in the Solo Vc. part. Measure 19 has a *mf* dynamic in the Solo Vc. part.



20

Musical score for measures 20-24. The score includes parts for Solo Violoncello (Solo Vc.), Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

- Solo Vc.:** Features a melodic line with a *f* dynamic in measure 20.
- Vln. 1:** Plays a melodic line with *f* dynamics, reaching *più f* in measure 21 and *p* in measure 22.
- Vln. 2:** Plays a melodic line with *f* dynamics, reaching *più f* in measure 21 and *p* in measure 22.
- Vla.:** Plays a melodic line with *f* dynamics, reaching *più f* in measure 21 and *p* in measure 22.
- Vc.:** Plays a melodic line with *f* dynamics, reaching *più f* in measure 21 and *p* in measure 22.

Measure 20 has a *f* dynamic in the Solo Vc. part. Measure 21 has *più f* dynamics in the Solo Vc., Vln. 1, Vln. 2, and Vla. parts. Measure 22 has *p* dynamics in the Solo Vc., Vln. 1, Vln. 2, and Vla. parts. Measure 23 has *p* dynamics in the Solo Vc., Vln. 1, Vln. 2, and Vla. parts. Measure 24 has *mp* dynamics in the Solo Vc., Vln. 1, Vln. 2, and Vla. parts.

25

Hp. *f* *mf*

Solo Vc. *più f*

Vln. 1 *p* *f* *sub.p* *p* *mf*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p* *mf* *mp*

Vc. *p* *f* *sub.p* *fp*

Db. *f* *sub.p* *fp*

29

Hp. *mf*

Solo Vc.

Vln. 1 *p* *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf* *p* *mf* *mf*

Vla. *mf* *p* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *p* *mf* *f* *p*

Db. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *f* *p*

36

Hp. *mf*

Solo Vc. *p* *tenderly* *p* *mf* *ord.*

Vln. 1 *pp* *mf* *p*

Vln. 2 *pp* *mp > p* *sim.* *tr* *mf*

Vla. *pp* *mf* *pizz.* *arco* *sim.* *p < mp*

Vc. *pp*

Db. *pp*

41

Hp. *p* *mp > p* *pp* *mf* *p*

Solo Vc. *fp* *fp* *f* *3* *fp* *fp* *3*

Vln. 1 *mf > p* *3* *mf* *tr*

Vln. 2 *div.* *p* *mf > p* *3* *un. pizz.* *3* *p* *mf*

Vla. *pizz.* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *5* *5* *5* *p* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *p* *3* *3* *mf* *arco* *p* *mf*

Db. *mf*

B \flat
F \sharp

45

Hp. *mp* *mf*

Solo Vc. *f* *più f*

Vln. 1 *p* *mf*

Vln. 2 *p* *mf*

Vla. *p* *mf*

Vc. *p* *mf*

Db. *mf*

49 (49)

Hp. *f*

Solo Vc. *ff* *più ff*

Vln. 1 *ff marcato* *fp*

Vln. 2 *ff marcato*

Vla. *ff marcato* *fp*

Vc. *ff marcato* *fp*

Db. *ff marcato* *fp*

53

Hp. *mf*

Solo Vc.

Vln. 1 *pp* *sul tasto*

Vln. 2 *pp* *mf* *f* *pizz.*

Vla. *pp* *sul tasto* *ord.* *pizz.*

Vc. *pp* *f*



56

Hp. *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*

Solo Vc. *warmly* *ord.* *tr* *f* *3* *ff*

Vln. 1 *p* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *ord.* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*

Vc. *pp* *mf*

Db. *pp* *mf*

poco rit. . . . (64) L'istesso tempo, ♩=52

61

leggiere

f³ p

arco₃ f p

f p mf p unis. pizz. mf unis. pizz. mf pizz.



67

+++|+++

3

mf f

mf f

mf p

pp sul tasto pp sul tasto div. div. sul tasto arco p

74

Hp. *mf* *f* *p*

Solo Vc. *mf* *cresc.*

Vln. 1 *mf* *p*

Vln. 2 *mf* *p* *pp* *cresc.*

Vla. *mf* *p* *pp* *cresc.*

gliss.

un.

78

Hp. *f* *mf* *C₄* *poco rit.*

Solo Vc. *più ff* *mf dolce*

Vln. 2 *ord.* *f* *p*

Vla. *ord.* *f* *p*

Vc. *arco* *pp* *f* *p* *div. pizz.*

Db. *arco* *pp* *f* *p*

82 **Meno mosso** ♩=98

Musical score for measures 82-85. The score includes parts for Harp (Hp.), Solo Violin (Solo Vc.), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.).

- Hp.:** Measure 82 is silent. Measures 83-85 feature a sequence of chords: $\sharp_1 \sharp_1 \sharp_1 \sharp_1$ (pp), $\sharp_1 \sharp_1 \sharp_1 \sharp_1$ (pp), and $\sharp_1 \sharp_1 \sharp_1 \sharp_1$ (pp).
- Solo Vc.:** Starts at *p*, moves to *mf* (triplets), *f* (sextuplet), and *sf* (triplets).
- Vln. 2:** *senza sord.* *pp* (triplets), *pp* (triplets), and *pp* (triplets).
- Vla.:** *pp* (triplets), *pp* (triplets), and *pp* (triplets).
- Vc.:** *pp* (triplets), *pp* (triplets), and *pp* (triplets).
- Db.:** *pp* (triplets), *pp* (triplets), and *pp* (triplets).



Musical score for measures 86-89. The score includes parts for Harp (Hp.), Solo Violin (Solo Vc.), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.).

- Hp.:** Measures 86-89 feature a melodic line with dynamics *mf*, *mf*, *mf*, and *mf*.
- Solo Vc.:** Features a melodic line with dynamics *mf*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, and *f*.
- Vln. 2:** Features a melodic line with dynamics *fp*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, and *f*.
- Vla.:** Features a melodic line with dynamics *fp*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, and *f*.
- Vc.:** Features a melodic line with dynamics *fp*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, and *f*.
- Db.:** Features a melodic line with dynamics *fp*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, and *f*.

92 Più mosso ♩=104

+++++

Hp. *p* \leftarrow *f*

Timp. *f*

Solo Vc. *fff*

Vln. 1 *p* ord. senza sord. unis. *f* marcato

Vln. 2 *p* *mf* *f* marcato

Vla. *p* *mf* *f* marcato

Vc. *p* *mf* *f* marcato arco

Db. *p* *mf* *f* marcato arco



Hp.

Solo Vc. *ff* marcato *più f*

Vln. 1 *mf* pizz.

Vln. 2 *mf* pizz.

Vla. *mf* pizz.

Vc. *mf* *f* *mf* pizz.

Db. *mf* *f* *mf* pizz.

97

Hp.

Solo Vc.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

pp *p*

f legato

arco *f* *p* *mp* *p*

arco *f* *pizz.* *div.*

arco *f* *p* *div. pizz.*

arco *f* *p*

arco *f* *p*

sim. tr.

div.

pizz. *p*

p

101

Hp.

Solo Vc.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

tr.

(unis.) *div.* *unis.* *mf*

pizz. *p* *unis.*

p

105

Hp.

Timp.

Solo Vc.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

mp > p

p

mf

p

sim.

tr

tr

tr

ff

f marcato

arco

f marcato

arco

f

f marcato

arco

f marcato

pizz.

p

pizz.

f marcato

arco

f marcato



110

Hp.

Solo Vc.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

f

f

più f

marcato

++++

114 G#

Hp. *mf*

Solo Vc. *poco f sfz sfz*

Vln. 1 *mf p f mf*

Vln. 2 *mf p f p < f*

Vla. *mf p f p < f*

Vc. *mf p pizz. arco mf*

Db. *mf p mf*

119 G#

Hp. *f* *poco rit.*

Solo Vc. *3*

Vln. 1 *pizz. arco mf p mf f*

Vln. 2 *div. unis. p < mf > p f*

Vla. *3 mf p < mf > p arco f*

Vc. *p mf p < mf > p pizz. arco*

Db. *mf p arco*

125

Timp. *ff*
 Solo Vc. *ff*
 Vln. 1 *f*
 Vln. 2 *f*
 Vla. *f*
 Vc. *f*
 Db. *f*



128

Hp. *p* \rightarrow *f*
 Timp. *p* \leftarrow *f*
 Solo Vc. *f* \rightarrow *sf*
 Vln. 1 *p* \rightarrow *f* *sfz* *pizz.* *mf*
 Vln. 2 *p* \rightarrow *f* *sfz*
 Vla. *pizz.* *arco* *sfz* *mf*
 Vc. *sfz*
 Db. *sfz*

132

Hp. *f* *mf*

Solo Vc. *ff* *f* 3 3

Vln. 1 arco *sfz* *sfz* *f* *fp*

Vln. 2 *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *p* *fp*

Vla. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *p* *pizz.* *fp* arco

Vc. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *fp* *mf* *fp* arco

Db. *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *fp* *mf* *fp*

136

Hp. *f* G# A#

Timp. *ff*

Solo Vc. *ff* *sfz*

Vln. 1 *p* *mf* *p* *f*

Vln. 2 *fp* *fp*

Vla. *fp* *fp*

Vc. *fp* *fp*

Db. *fp* *fp*

139

Hp. *f*

Timp.

Solo Vc. *più ff*

Vln. 1 *f*, *fp*, *sfz p*, *sfz p*

Vln. 2 *f*, *fp*, *sfz*, *sfz*

Vla. *f*, *fp*, *sfz*, *sfz*

Vc. *fp*, *fp*, *ff*, *sfz*, *sfz*

Db. *fp*, *fp*, *ff*, *sfz*, *sfz*



143

Hp. *f*, *stacc.*

Timp.

Solo Vc. *ff*

Vln. 1 *ff*, *sfz p*, *sfz*, *ff*

Vln. 2 *ff*, *sfz*, *sfz*

Vla. *ff*, *sfz*, *sfz*

Vc. *ff*, *sfz*, *sfz*

Db. *sfz*, *sfz*

146

Hp. *ff* *f*

Timp.

Solo Vc. *ff* *f* *ff*

Vln. 1 *sfz* *p* *f*

Vln. 2 *sfz* *p* *f*

Vla. *sfz* *mf* pizz.

Vc. *sfz* *f* *ffp*

Db. *sfz* *f* *ffp*



149

Hp. *f*

Solo Vc. *ff* *f* *ff* *f*

Vln. 1 *mf* *f*

Vln. 2 *mf* *f*

Vla. arco *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Vc. *f* *ffp* *f*

Db. *f* *ffp* *f*

E_b F_# A_b
B_b

153

Hp. *mf* *f*

Timp. *f*

Solo Vc. *ff* *ffp* *f*

Vln. 1 *fp* *f* *pù f*

Vln. 2 *f* *fp* *fp* *f*

Vla. *pizz.* *mf* *f* *pù f*

Vc. *sf* *f* *f* *sf*

Db. *sf* *f* *f* *sf*



Tempo rubato

156

Hp. *f* *f*

Timp. *f* *f*

Solo Vc. *f*

Vln. 1 *fp* *fp* *ffp*

Vln. 2 *pù f*

Vla. *pù f*

Vc. *pù f* *ffp* *pizz.* *fp*

Db. *pù f* *ffp* *fp*

160

Hp. *mf*

Solo Vc. *ff* *più ff*

Vln. 1 *p* *f*

Vln. 2 *p* *f*

Vla. *p* arco *f*

Vc. *p* pizz. *f*

Db. *mf*



163 **senza misura**

Solo Vc.



Solo Vc. *molto*

164

Hp. *ff* *f*

Timp. *ff* *p* *ff*

Solo Vc.

Vln. 1 *ff* *più ff* *div. 8^{va}* *fp* *fp* *loco*

Vln. 2 *ff* *più ff* *fp* *fp* *loco*

Vla. *ff* *più ff* *fp* *fp*

Vc. *arco* *ff* *più ff*

Db. *ff* *più ff*



169

Hp. *ff*

Timp. *p* *ff* *mf* *ff*

Vln. 1 *fp* *fp* *ff* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *ff* *f*

Vln. 2 *fp* *fp* *ff* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *ff* *f* *unis. (non dbl.)*

Vla. *fp* *fp* *ff* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *ff* *f*

Vc. *f*

Db. *f*

173 23

Hp. *f* — *ff*

Timp. *f*³

Vln. 1 *ff*

Vln. 2 *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. (non dbl.) *ff*

Db. *ff*

177

Hp. *ff*

Timp. *fp*

Vln. 1 *sf* *fp* — *sf* *fp* — *sf*

Vln. 2 *ffp* — *ffp* — *sf*

Vla. *sf* *fp* — *sf* *fp* — *sf*

Vc. *ffp* — *ffp* — *sf*

Db. *sf* — *sf* — *sf*

181 ♩=104 (♩=52)

181 *più ff*

Hp.

ff *p* *ff* ³

Vln. 1 *più ff*

Vln. 2 *più ff*

Vla. *più ff*

Vc. *più ff*

Db. *più ff*



186

Vln. 1 *mf* *mf* *p cresc.*

Vln. 2 *mf* *mf* *p cresc.*

Vla. *mf* *mf* *f* *sub. p*

Vc. *mf* *mf* *f* *sub. p*

Db. *mf* *mf* *f* *sub. p*

191

Hp. *fff*

Timp. *p* *fff*

Vln. 1 *ff*

Vln. 2 *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *mf cresc.* *ff*

Db. *mf cresc.* *ff*

194

Hp.

Timp.

Vln. 1 (8) *fff* (non trem.)

Vln. 2 *fff* (non trem.)

Vla. *fff* div.

Vc. *fff*

Db. *fff*

197

Hp. *f* *gliss.* *ff* *f* *ff* *f*

Timp. *ffp* *ff* *ff* *fp* *ff* *fp* *ff*

Vln. 1 *loco* *fff* *ff* *fff*

Vln. 2 *fff* *ff* *fff*

Vla. *unis.* *div.* *fff* *ff* *fff*

Vc. *fff* *ff* *fff*

Db. *fff* *ff* *fff*

201

Hp. *ff* *f* *rit.*

Timp. *ffp* *ff*

Vln. 1 *più fff* *loco* *f*

Vln. 2 *più fff*

Vla. *div.* *più fff* *div.* *unis.*

Vc. *più fff*

Db. *più fff*

205 Lento, ♩=68

205

Solo Vc. *espress.*

Vln. 1 *mf* *p* *pp*

Vln. 2 *mf* *p* *pp*

Vla. *mf* unis.

Vc. *mf* *p* *pp*

Db. *mf* *p* *pp*

poco rit. . . . 215 Adagio, ♩=60

210

Hp. *p*

Solo Vc. *p dolce*

Vln. 1 *ppp* *pp* non vib.

Vln. 2 *pp* non vib.

Vla. *pp* *mf* *pp* *p* *pp* *pp* non vib.

Vc. *pp* non vib.

Db. *pp* non vib.

217

poco rit. . . .

Hp.

Solo Vc.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.



225 L'istesso tempo, ♩=60

Hp.

Solo Vc.

pp

pp

legato

p



231

poco rit. . . .

Hp.

Solo Vc.

F#

F# Gb

3

3

236 L'istesso tempo ♩=60

236

Hp.

Solo Vc.

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

con sord. ord.

pp

con sord. div.

pp

pp

dim.

con sord. div.

pp

rit. 246 Lento, ♩=76

243

Hp.

Solo Vc.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Db.

sempre p

pp

f

con sord. div.

pp

div.

30

251

Hp. *dim.* *ppp*

Solo Vc. *ppp* *dim.* *p*

Vln. 1 *ppp* *ppp*

Vln. 2 *ppp* *ppp*

Vla. *ppp* *ppp*

257

257

Hp. *mp* *p* *pp*

Timp. *p*

Solo Vc. *ppp*

Vln. 1 *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp*
senza sord. unis.

Vln. 2 *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp*
senza sord. non div.

Vla. *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp*
senza sord. unis.

Vc. *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp*
senza sord.

Db. *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp*
unis.