ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Eighteen Sonnets by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow for Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, and Baritone Solo Voices and Orchestra.

STUDENT: Eric Charles Edward Wilson

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This dissertation is a tonal modular work for soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, and baritone solo voices and large orchestra (3343, 4331, Timp.+4, Hp., Pno., Strings) with an accompanying narrative. The text is drawn from eighteen of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s sonnets. This work consists of four interlocking song cycles, one for each solo voice, and two added songs for the combination of two or more of the solo voices. There are shared tonal and thematic relationships across the work as a whole as well as within and among the individual song cycles. The unique modular nature of the work allows for performance of the whole, but also allows for extracting the individual song cycles—or even individual sonnets from the work as free-standing pieces, complete in themselves. The modular nature of this work makes it attractive as a programming option for orchestras and choirs with featured guest soloists, and also as an addition to singers’ repertoires.

Chapters 3–7 of the narrative address the songs in each individual module or cycle, thus providing a useful reference for a singer wishing to program one or more of the songs for her or his voice classification. The complete transposed orchestral score follows the conclusion of the narrative. This dissertation holds potentially helpful information for research on the topics of contemporary classical music, Indiana composers, and/or orchestral song cycles.