

***Song's Eternity* (2002) An anthem for choir (SATB) and organ**

*Song's Eternity* was commissioned by the Musicians' Benevolent Fund in the name of Sir Thomas Armstrong and first performed in Westminster Cathedral on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2002 by the combined choirs of Westminster Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral, conducted by Martin Baker. The work is seven minutes in duration.

*Song's Eternity* sets a searching poem by John Clare, which meditates on the eternal mystery of music and its place in nature. Thus the music builds in a slow arc from the Clare's opening questions through to an exultant final affirmation, scored for full choir and organ. Along the way, an episode scored for high solo voices with arabesque organ figuration, paints a vivid picture of Clare's natural world, teeming with the sound of every "bird and bee".

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Preview File Only

# SONG'S ETERNITY

What is song's eternity?  
Come and see.  
Can it noise and bustle be?  
Come and see.  
Praises sung or praises said  
Can it be?  
Wait awhile and these are dead –  
Sigh, sigh;  
Be they high or lowly bred  
They die.

What is song's eternity?  
Come and see.  
Melodies of earth and sky,  
Here they be.  
Song once sung to Adam's ears  
Can it be?  
Ballads of six thousand years  
Thrive, thrive;  
Songs awakened with the spheres  
Alive.

Mighty songs that miss decay,  
What are they?  
Crowds and cities pass away  
Like a day.  
Books are writ and books are read;  
What are they?  
Years will lay them with the dead –  
Sigh, sigh;  
Trifles unto nothing wed,  
They die.

Dreamers, list the honey-bee;  
Mark the tree  
Where the bluecap, 'tootle tee,'  
Sings a glee  
Sung to Adam and to Eve –  
Here they be.  
When floods covered every bough,  
Noah's ark  
Heard that ballad singing now;  
Hark, hark,

'Tootle, tootle tootle tee' –  
Can it be  
Pride and fame must shadows be?  
Come and see –  
Every season owns her own;  
Bird and bee  
Sing creation's music on;  
Nature's glee  
Is in every mood and tone  
Eternity.

The eternity of song  
Liveth here;  
Nature's universal tongue  
Singeth here  
Songs I've heard and felt and seen  
Everywhere;  
Songs like the grass are evergreen:  
The giver  
Said 'Live and be' – and they have been,  
For ever.

**JOHN CLARE (1793-1864)**

# Song's Eternity

Text: John Clare (1793-1864)

Music: Julian Philips (2002)

Slow and serene q = 44

Musical score for the first system of 'Song's Eternity'. It features five vocal parts: Treble 1, Treble 2, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, along with an Organ part. The tempo is 'Slow and serene' with a quarter note equal to 44 (q = 44). The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: 'pp What is song's e - ter - ni - ty? p Can it noise and bu - stle be?'. The Alto part has the lyrics 'p Come and see.'. The Organ part is marked 'pp soft, blending with voices' and 'p'.

Musical score for the second system of 'Song's Eternity', starting at measure 5. It features six parts: Tr.1, Tr.2, A., T., B., and Org. The lyrics for Tr.1, Tr.2, and B. are: 'mp Prai - ses sung or prai - ses said Wait a - p while and these are dead'. The lyrics for A. are: 'mp Come and see. Prai - ses sung or prai - ses said p a - while and these are dead'. The lyrics for T. are: 'mp Prai - ses sung or prai - ses mf Can it be? Wait a - p while and these are dead'. The Organ part is marked 'mp' and 'p reedier'. The Pedal part is marked 'p'.



**A** A little more movement q = 50

15

Tr.1 *p* What is song's e - ter - ni - ty? *mp* Me - lo - dies of earth and sky, *mf* Song

Tr.2 *p* What is song's e - ter - ni - ty? *mp* Me - lo - dies of earth and sky, *mf* Song

A. *mp* Come and see. *mf* Here they be.

T. *p* What is song's e - ter - ni - ty? *mp* Me - lo - dies of earth and sky, *mf* Song

B. *p* What is song's e - ter - ni - ty? *mp* Me - lo - dies of earth and sky, *mf* Song

Org. *p* soft, blending with voices *mp* *mf*

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19

Tr.1 once sung to A - dam's ears *mp* Bal - lads of six thou - sand years

Tr.2 once sung to A - dam's ears *mp* Bal - lads of six thou - sand years

A. once sung to A - dam Can it be? *mp* Bal - lads of six thou - sand years

T. once sung to A - dam's ears *mp* Bal - lads of six thou - sand years

B. once sung to A - dam's ears *mp* Bal - lads of six thou - sand years

Org. *mp* *mp*

22 *poco a poco cresc*

T. *p* Thrive, thri - ve; *mp* Thrive, thri - ve; *mf* thri - ve;

B. *p* Thrive, thri - ve; *mp* Thrive, thri - ve; *mf* thri - ve;

B. *p* Thrive, thri - ve; *mp* Thrive, thri - ve; *mf* thri - ve;

Org. *p darker, poco a poco cresc* *mp*

Ped. *p* *mp*

**B** Fast and rhythmic  $\text{♩} = 132$

25 *f* Songs a - wa - kened with the spheres A - live.

T. *f* Songs a - wa - kened with the spheres A - live.

B. *f* Songs a - wa - kened with the spheres A - live.

B. *f* Songs a - wa - kened with the spheres A - live.

Org. *f richer* *mf crisp*

Ped. *mf*

29 *mf* Migh - ty songs that miss de - cay, What are they? Crowds and ci - ties pass a - way

T. *mf* Migh - ty songs that miss de - cay, What are they? Crowds and ci - ties pass a - way

B. *mf* Migh - ty songs that miss de - cay, What are they? Crowds and ci - ties pass a - way

Org.

Ped.

33

T. Like a day. *mf* Books are writ and books are read;

B. Like a day. *mf* Books are writ and books are read;

Org. *mf*

Ped.



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37

T. What are they? Years will lay them. Years will lay *f* Years will lay them

B. Years will lay them lay them *f* Years will lay them

B. What are they? Years will lay lay them *f* Years will lay them

Org. *gradually build* *f*

Ped. *f*

\* ossia: high baritones can join the tenors, basses just sing "years"

(<q. = e>)

Slow and serene q = 44

41

Tr. Solo 2

Tr. Solo 3

T.

B.

B.

Org.

Ped.

mp Sigh, sigh; p

mp Sigh, sigh; p

*subito diminuendo*  
with the dead pp

with the, with the, with the dead pp

with the, with the, with the dead pp

*darkening*  
mp

*soft strings*  
p

p

p



(<e = q.>)

Fast and rhythmic q = 132

(<q. = e>)

Slow and serene q = 44

44

Tr. Solo 1

Tr. Solo 2

Tr. Solo 3

T.

B.

Org.

Ped.

p die.

p die.

p die. pp

mp Tri - fles un - to no - thing wed, They p die.

mp Tri - fles un - to no - thing wed, They p die.

mp *crisp*

*soft strings*  
pp

pp

pp



(<Kx = x>)

**C** Light and playful

e = 132

47

Tr. Solo 1 *pp*

Tr. Solo 2 *pp*

Tr. Solo 3

Org. *brightening* *mf warm and sweet*

Ped.

50

Tr. Solo 1 *mf* Drea - mers, list the ho - ney - bee; —

Tr. Solo 2

Tr. Solo 3

Org. *spikey*

(q = 66)

52

Tr. Solo 1 *mf* 'too - tle tee,' —

Tr. Solo 2 *mp* Where\_ the blue - cap

Tr. Solo 3 *p* Mark\_ the tree\_

Org. *softer strings* *p build, poco a poco* *mp gradually brightening* *mf*