

JULIAN PHILIPS

Fern Hill

for Baritone & Piano

Poem: Dylan Thomas

Preview File Only

© JULIAN PHILIPS
March 1996

to Leonard Hill,
a token of gratitude and affection.

Preview File Only

Commissioned by Jeremy Huw Williams,
with funds made available by the Arts Council of Wales.

First performed by Jeremy Huw Williams and Iwan Llewellyn-Jones
at the Joseph Parry Hall, Aberystwyth,
on the 18th March 1996.

Commercially recorded by Jeremy Huw Williams
and Nigel Foster (piano) on SAIN Records (SAIN SCD 2266)

Duration: 14 minutes

JULIAN PHILIPS *Fern Hill* (for Baritone and piano)

Commissioned by Jeremy Huw-Williams with funds made available by the Arts Council of Wales.

Text: Dylan Thomas

Fern Hill was commissioned by baritone Jeremy Huw-Williams, with funds from the Arts Council of Wales. It received its premiere at the Joseph Parry Hall, Aberystwyth in March 1996, with pianist Iwan Llewellyn-Jones.

It was not only the extraordinary flexibility and syntactical variety that drew me to *Fern Hill*, but also its wonderful range of images that speak of a rich lifetime of experience. My setting treats the poem in the form a free cantata, where transformations of the opening, muscular theme - evoking the poem's earthy qualities - are interspersed with two more reflective episodes. The first, a gentle nocturne, describes sleep descending on the farm *under the simple stars*, and the second, the act of creation itself, with

*the spellbound horses walking warm
Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise.*

The final stanza of the poem is treated in a dramatic recitativo epilogue, where the main theme becomes slower, more dramatic and impassioned, carrying the work towards its telling final image:

*Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.*

FERN HILL

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the liting house and happy as the grass was green,
The night above the dingle starry,
Time let me hail and climb
Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
Trail with daisies and barley
Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns,
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
In the sun that is young once only,
Time let me play and be
Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
And the sabbath rang slowly
In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
Fields high as a house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
And playing, lovely and watery
And fire green as grass.
And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars
Flying with the ricks, and the horses
Flashing into dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
The sky gathered again
And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm
Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,
My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep
I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.
Oh I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

Dylan Thomas (1914 - 1953)

Fern Hill

Dylan Thomas

Julian Philips

Medium fast $\text{♩} = 65 / \text{♩} = 130$

Baritone

Piano *f heavy and earthy*

p light

p legato

p legato

poco rit

f Now as

1 in tempo

f I was young and ea - sy un - - der the ap - ple - - boughs

light

p A - bout the lil - ting house — and hap - py as the grass was

p light

2

green, *mp* The night a - bove the din - gle star - ry, *mf* Time let me hail and

P legato *mf* *mp*

5:3 5:4 6:4

climb Gol - den in the hey - days of his eyes, *mf* And

mf

hon - our'd 'mong wa gons I was prince of the ap - ple towns *f* and

mf heavy

once be-low a time *mp* I lor-dly had the trees and leaves *P* Trail with

The first system of the musical score features a vocal line in bass clef and a piano accompaniment in bass and treble clefs. The vocal line begins with the lyrics 'once be-low a time' followed by 'I lor-dly had the trees and leaves' and 'Trail with'. The piano accompaniment includes a bass line with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a treble line with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. A piano (*p*) dynamic is also indicated for the piano accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, trills, and dynamic markings.

dai - sies and bar - ley *mp* Down the ri - vers of the

(8)

The second system of the musical score continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics 'dai - sies and bar - ley' followed by 'Down the ri - vers of the'. A measure rest of 8 measures is indicated by '(8)'. The piano accompaniment continues with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, trills, and dynamic markings.

wind - - - fall _____ *f* light _____ *f* And as

The third system of the musical score features a vocal line in bass clef and a piano accompaniment in bass and treble clefs. The vocal line includes the lyrics 'wind - - - fall' followed by 'light' and 'And as'. The piano accompaniment includes a forte (*f*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, trills, and dynamic markings.

I was green _____ and care - free, fa - - - mous a -

The fourth system of the musical score features a vocal line in bass clef and a piano accompaniment in bass and treble clefs. The vocal line includes the lyrics 'I was green' followed by 'and care - free,' and 'fa - - - mous a -'. The piano accompaniment includes a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, trills, and dynamic markings.

mong the barns, *mf* Ab-out the hap-py yard and sin-ging as the farm was

5

home, *p* In the sun

pp shimmering

6 in tempo ♩ = 130

that is young once on-ly,

pp *f marcato* *mp*

accel

mp Ti-me let me play and be Gol-den in the mer-cy of his means,

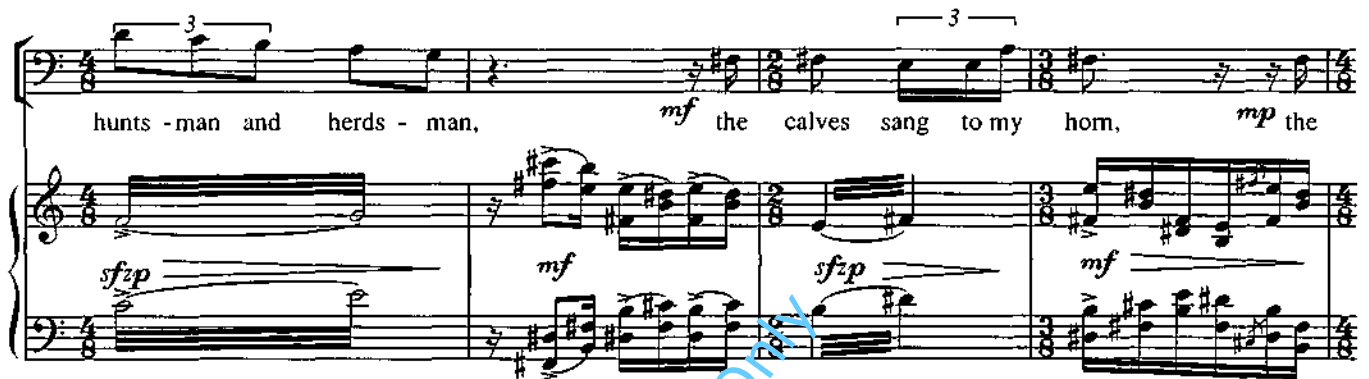
f marcato *mf* *f*

7

f And green and gol - den I was



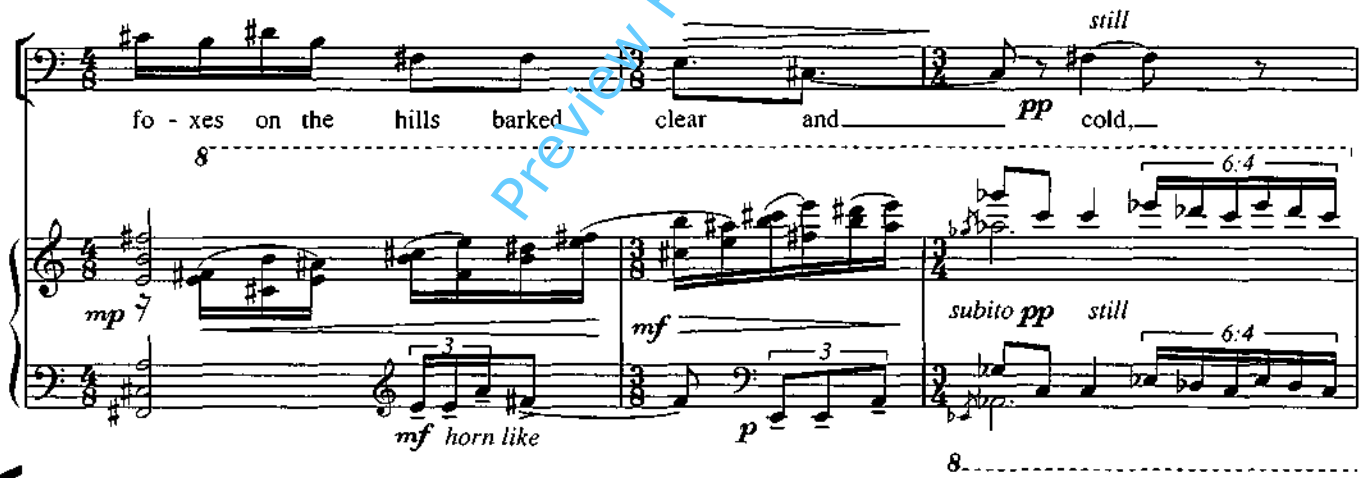
hunts - man and herds - man, *mf* the calves sang to my horn, *mp* the



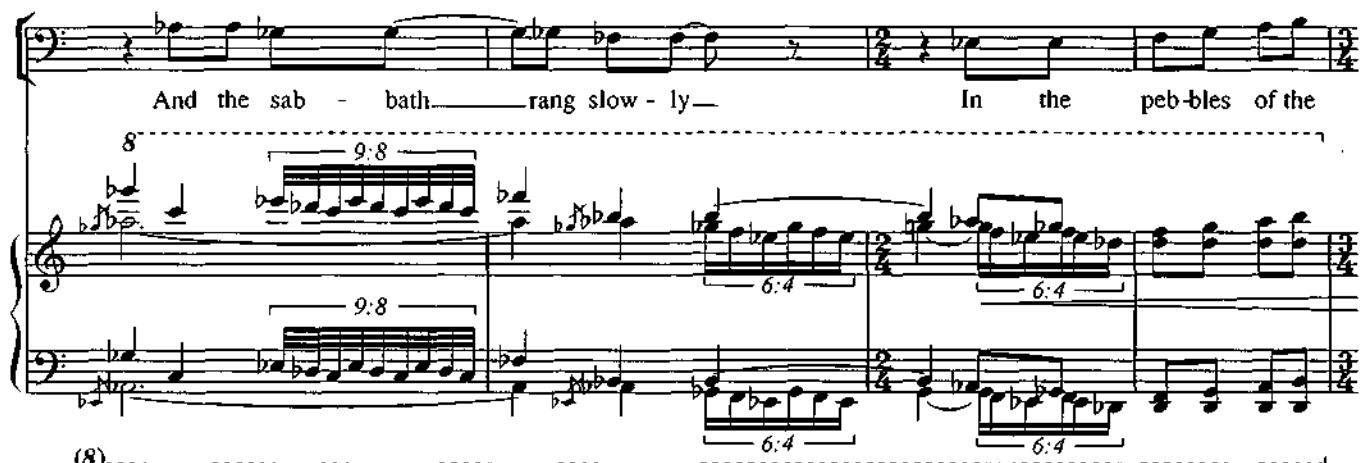
8 Slow ♩ = 45

fo - xes on the hills barked clear and *pp* cold, still

mf horn like *p* *subito pp* still



And the sab - bath rang slow - ly In the peb - bles of the



poco rit

9 Medium fast ♩ = 130

ho - ly *pp* streams.

p All the sun long — it was run - ning, *mp* it was love - ly,

p the hay fields high as a house, the tunes from the chim - neys,

10

p it was air _____ *mp* air _____ And pla - ying.

mf love - ly love - ly and wa - te ry _____ love - ly and wa - te ry And

11

fire green as grass _____

p poco a poco cresc

subito pp

f

f marcato

12 poco a poco rit

dreamy

mp And night - tly.

ff

mf

Medium slow (♩ = 55)

un - der the sim - ple stars P As I rode to sleep the

mf

mp

P tilting

Preview File Only

owls were bea-ring the farm a - way, P All the moon long I heard,

mp

blessed a - mong sta - bles, the night - jars fly - ing with the

mp

14

ricks, *mp* All the moon long I heard *mf* blessed a - mong sta - bles, *mf* the

poco rit **15** in tempo

night - jars fly - ing with the ricks, night - ly

un - der the sim - ple stars

poco rit **16** in tempo

p All the moon long I heard,