## **JUMP INTO MY SACK**

Musical fable in one act

Dedication: in memory of my father, Emile

## Music by JULIAN GRANT Libretto by MEREDITH OAKES

based on a Corsican folk-tale told by **Madame Marini**, collected by **J.B. Frédéric Ortoli** in *Les Contes Populaires de l'île de Corse* (Paris 1883) and included in **Italo Calvino's** *Fiabe Italiane* (1956)

### Characters

Francis baritone Fairy/Boy soprano

Old Woman/ Young Man/ Death mezzo-soprano

Father/ Devil/ Doctor tenor

also: Brothers, Gamblers, Chorus, Narrators, all performed by the above four singers

### Instrumentation

Clarinet in Bb
Clarinet in Bb (+ bass clarinet in Bb)
Guitar
Violin
Cello
Double-bass

### **Duration**

42 minutes

**Jump Into My Sack** was premiered by Mecklenburgh Opera at the MacRobert Centre, Stirling, on May 30 1996.

London premiere: Covent Garden Festival, Cochrane Theatre, 4 June 1996

Francis - Wyn Pencarrig
Fairy/Boy - Adey Grummet
Old Woman/Young Man/Death - Rebecca du Pont-Davies
Father/Devil/Doctor- Niall Morris
Music Director - Paul McGrath
Designer - Agnes Treplin
Director - John Abulafia

Jump Into My Sack was commissioned by Mecklenburgh Opera with funds from the Arts Council of England

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[1] Prelude

[2] ALL: Many years ago, in the barren mountains of Niolo, lived a father

with twelve sons.

FATHER: Sons, I have no more bread. Go into the world. Leave me.

ALL: The youngest son was lame. He started weeping.

FRANCIS: How can I leave you, father? How can I earn my bread?

FATHER: Don't cry. Go with your brothers. What they earn will be yours as

well. Go!

[3] ALL: They walked a whole day. Then another. And the little lame boy

kept falling behind. On the third day, the brothers said:

BROTHERS: Our little brother Francis is nothing but a nuisance. Let's leave

him in the road. That will be best, for him as well, for some kind-

hearted soul will come along and pity him.

FRANCIS: Brothers! Wait!

BROTHERS: They stopped no more to wait for him, but walked to Bonifacio

where they took a boat.

FRANCIS: Brothers! Wait!

BROTHERS: There was a huge storm.

FRANCIS: Brothers! Wait!

BROTHERS: The boat was dashed to pieces. All the brothers drowned.

FRANCIS: Brothers! Wait!

[4] TWO WOMEN: Meanwhile the fairy of Lake Creno, watching from a treetop by

the road, cast a spell to put Francis to sleep.

FRANCIS: (asleep) mmmmmmm....

TWO WOMEN: Then she came down from the tree, picked certain special herbs,

and prepared a plaster which she smoothed on the lame leg.

FRANCIS: (asleep) mmmmmmm....

TWO WOMEN: Then she disguised herself as a poor little old woman and sat

down on a bundle of firewood.

FRANCIS:(restless, waking up) mmmmmmmm....

(He prepares to limp off and finds he can walk, and run, and jump)

Madam, have you seen a doctor round here?

OLD WOMAN: What would you want with a doctor?

FRANCIS: I want to thank him. A great doctor must have come by and

cured my lame leg.

OLD WOMAN: I cured your lame leg!

FRANCIS: How can I thank you, ma'am? (He kisses her.) Let me carry your

bundle of wood.

ALL: He went to pick up the bundle, but, [5] when he stood up, he

faced, not the old woman, but the most beautiful maiden, with diamonds, blonde hair, a blue dress embroidered with gold, and

two stars on her boots.

[6] FAIRY: Ah! It was a trick to test you, Francis. Make two wishes and I will

grant them. Ask!

FRANCIS: I would like a sack that will pull in whatever I name.

FAIRY: A sack? You'd like a sack? Very well, such a sack you will have.

Anything else? Ask!

FRANCIS: I desire a stick that will do whatever I say.

FAIRY: A stick? You'd like a stick? Very well, such a stick you will

have!

ALL: The fairy vanished.

[7] FRANCIS: A loaf of bread into my sack!

OTHERS: Zoom! A loaf of bread came sailing into the sack.

FRANCIS: And a bottle of wine.

OTHERS: Zoom! There was the bottle of wine.

FRANCIS: A roasted partridge into my sack!

OTHERS: Zoom! A partridge fully roasted flew into the sack.

FRANCIS: With pastries!

OTHERS: Zoom!

FRANCIS: Oysters!

OTHERS: Zoom!

FRANCIS: And apricots!

OTHERS: Zoom!

ALL: Francis ate a first rate meal. Then he set out again, limping no

longer, and next day found himself in Mariana.

[8] DEVIL: At that particular time the Devil was particularly fond of

Mariana.

ALL: Disguised as a handsome young man the Devil beat everyone at

cards, and when they ran out of money.

DEVIL: He purchased their souls.

FRANCIS: Francis went to the casino.

ALL: There was great turmoil, with all the people crowded round

one spot.

FRANCIS: Who's this?

DEVIL: He was a gambler who lost his entire fortune and thrust a dagger

into his heart not a minute ago.

ALL: All the gamblers were sad-faced.

FRANCIS: Francis saw one who stood in their midst laughing up his

sleeve. Francis saw one negligently stretch out his leg and

show a cloven hoof.

DEVIL: It was the Devil.

FRANCIS: Very well. He will meet his match.

DEVIL: Quick, take this unfortunate man out and let's get on with

the game.

FRANCIS: Francis who didn't even know how to hold the cards in his

hands...

ALL: Lost everything that day.

FRANCIS: By the second day he knew a bit about the game.

ALL: And lost even more.

FRANCIS: Losing did not trouble him in the least. He had his sack.

Zoom!

OTHERS: Zoom!

FRANCIS: By the third day he was an expert...

ALL: And lost so much that the Devil was sure he was ruined.

[9] DEVIL: Noble prince, I can't tell you how sorry I am at your misfortune.

But I can help you recover everything.

FRANCIS: How?

DEVIL: Sell me your soul.

FRANCIS: So that's your advice to me, Satan! Jump into my sack!

DEVIL: Ah! It was a trick to test you, Francis!

FRANCIS: Stick, beat him!

DEVIL: Ow! Stop, let me out! Oo! Ah!

FRANCIS: Bring back to life all those poor gamblers who killed themselves

because of you.

DEVIL: It's a bargain!

[10] DEAD YOUNG MEN: Aoo!!

DEVIL: Can you hear me?

YOUNG MAN: It's dark!

DEVIL: Is it hot in there?

YOUNG MAN: It's hot!

DEAD YOUNG MEN: (howling in torment) Aoo!!

DEVIL: Up from under the ground!

DEAD YOUNG MEN:(chanting) Up from under the ground! (etc)

YOUNG MAN: I'm burning!

ALL: Up from under the ground came a throng of young men, pale of

face and with feverish eyes.

FRANCIS: My friends you were ruined gambling and killed yourselves.

Promise to gamble no more.

GAMBLERS: Yes, yes, we promise!

FRANCIS: Here are a thousand crowns for each of you.

[11] YOUNG MAN: (with GAMBLERS:) I must go home to my father and brothers who've given

me up for dead.

FRANCIS: Father! Brothers! Home!

[12] OTHERS: In the road stood a boy wringing his hands in despair.

FRANCIS: How now, young man. What's the matter?

BOY: *(sobbing)* My father's a woodcutter. This morning he fell from a chestnut

tree and broke his arm. I ran into town to fetch the doctor, but the

doctor won't come.

FRANCIS: What is the doctor's name?

BOY: Doctor Pancrazio.

FRANCIS: Doctor Pancrazio, jump into my sack!

ALL: Zoom! Into the sack, head first, went a doctor with all his

instruments.

FRANCIS: Doctor Pancrazio!

DOCTOR: Shh! There's a blackness before my eyes!

FRANCIS: Doctor Pancrazio!

DOCTOR: Fetch a doctor, I'm ill!

FRANCIS: Why won't you cure the woodcutter?

DOCTOR: Because he's too poor.

FRANCIS: Stick, pound him for all your worth.

DOCTOR: Help! Mercy!

FRANCIS: Promise to cure the woodcutter free of charge!

DOCTOR: I promise whatever you ask!

ALL: The doctor ran to the woodcutter's bedside and treated him,

while the woodcutter's wife and children stared in amazement.

[13] FRANCIS: How solemn the little children look. How close they sit. How

much they love their father.

[14] ALL: Francis came home to his village. His father was dead.

[15] FRANCIS: Ah! How bitter is all my good fortune. Brothers, where are you?

I've long since forgiven you for running off and leaving me. [16]

Brother John! Jump into my sack!

OTHERS: Zoom!

FRANCIS: (recoiling) Ah!

OTHERS: It was a heap of bones!

FRANCIS: Brother Paul. Jump into my sack!

OTHERS: Zoom! Another heap of bones.

FRANCIS: Brother Peter! Into my sack!

OTHERS: Heap of bones!

FRANCIS: Brother Mark! Into my sack!

OTHERS: Bones!

FRANCIS: Brother Albert!

OTHERS: Bones!

FRANCIS: Brother Charles!

OTHERS: Bones!

FRANCIS: Brother Matthew!

OTHERS: Bones! FRANCIS: Anthony!

OTHERS: Bones!

FRANCIS: Edward!

OTHERS: Bones!

FRANCIS: Luke!

OTHERS: Bones!

FRANCIS: Brother Aloysius! Jump into my sack!

OTHERS: Bones!

FRANCIS: (like a groan) Ah!

[17] OTHERS: Meanwhile the hunger in the village....

FRANCIS: Ah!

OTHERS: Was even greater than before.

[18] FRANCIS: Ah! I shall provision an inn where all can eat their fill without

paying a penny. Into my sack a roasted chicken! Into my sack a

bottle of wine!

OTHERS: He did this for as long as the famine lasted, but he stopped once

times of plenty returned so as not to encourage laziness. Ah!

FRANCIS: And so he lived on in prosperity and doing good.

[19] ALL: Do you think he was happy? Of course not!

FRANCIS: I am old and alone. I have seen enough of the world. my last

remaining desire is to see again the fairy of Lake Creno.

ALL: He set out and reached the place at nightfall. He waited and

waited, but the fairy did not come.

[20] TWO WOMEN: Instead here came Death down the road. In one hand she held a

skull and in the other she held a scythe.

[21] DEATH: Well, well old man, are you not yet weary of life? Isn't it time

you did as everyone else and came along with me.

FRANCIS: Oh, Death, bless you! Yes, I have had my fill of everything. But I

must bid someone farewell. Allow me one more day.

DEATH: Say your prayers or you'll die like a heathen, and hurry after

me.

FRANCIS: Wait until the cock crows in the morning.

DEATH: No!

FRANCIS: Just one more hour?

DEATH: Not even one minute more.

FRANCIS: Since you are so cruel, jump into my sack!

[22] FAIRY/DEVIL: Death shuddered, all her bones rattled, but she had no

choice!

FRANCIS: Fairy, thank you!

FAIRY: Francis, tell me what you would like.

FRANCIS: I have no more desires.

FAIRY: Would you like to be a chieftain?

FRANCIS: No.

FAIRY: Would you like to be king?

FRANCIS: No.

FAIRY: Old man, would you like your health and youth again?

FRANCIS: I have seen you and I'm content to die.

FAIRY: Farewell, Francis. First burn the sack and the stick.

ALL: The fairy vanished. [23] Francis built a big fire, then he threw the

sack and the stick into the flames.

DEVIL: The Devil crowed from behind a bush. Cockadoodle doo!

FRANCIS: Francis did not hear. Age had made him deaf.

DEVIL: Cockadoodle doo!

DEATH: There's the cock crowing.

ALL: Death struck the old man with her scythe, then she vanished,

bearing his mortal remains.

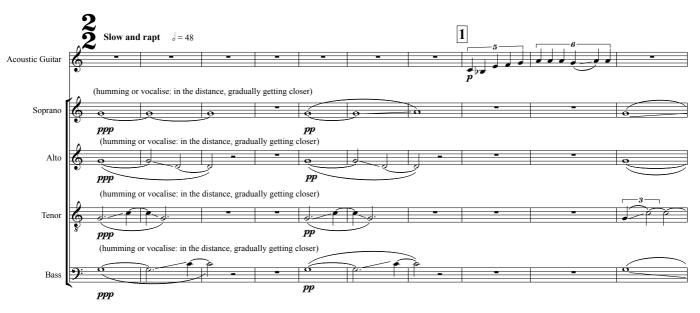
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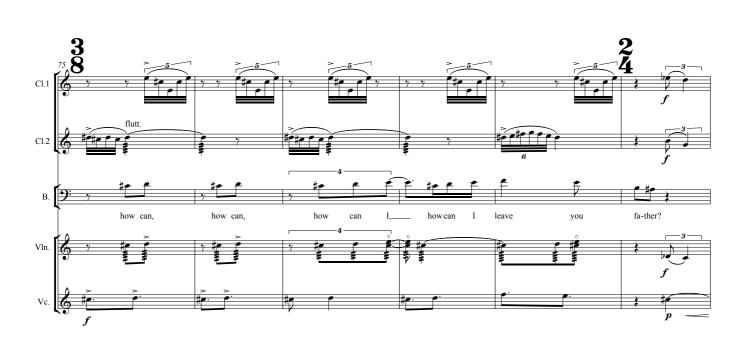


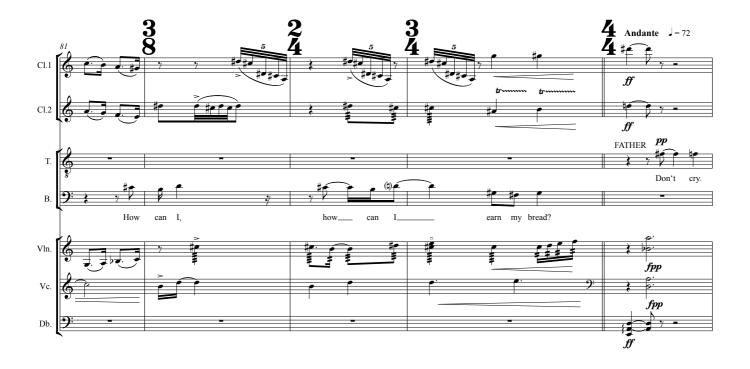
















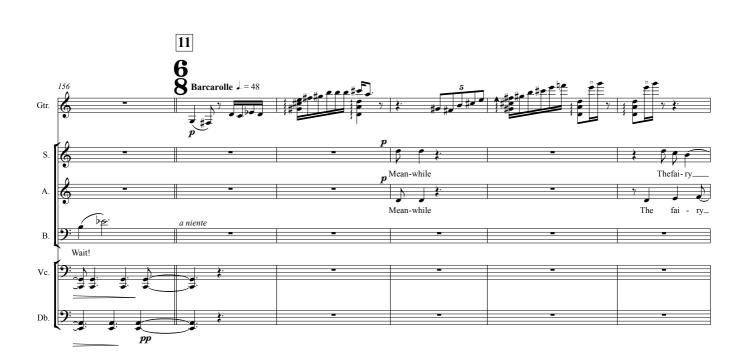










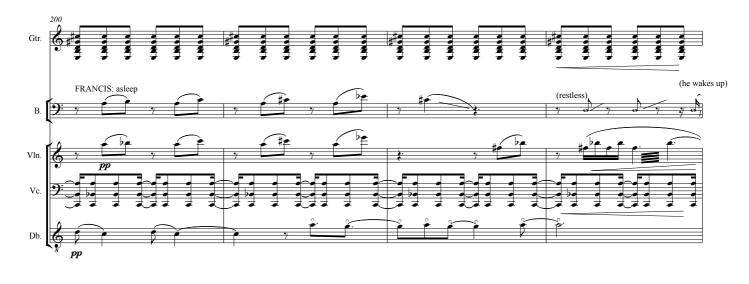












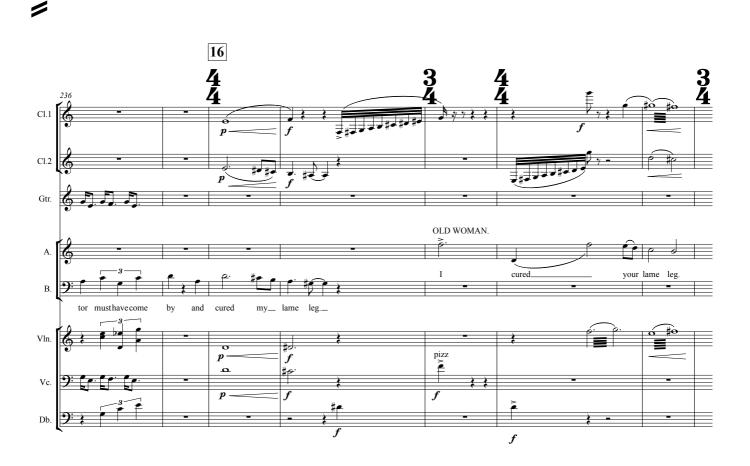












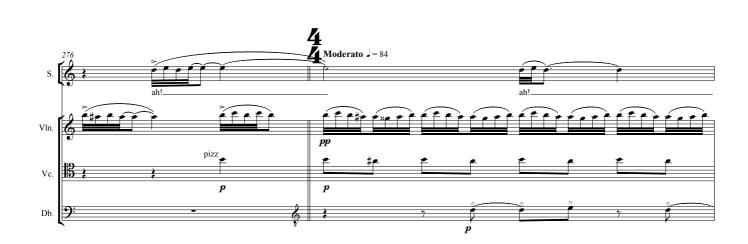














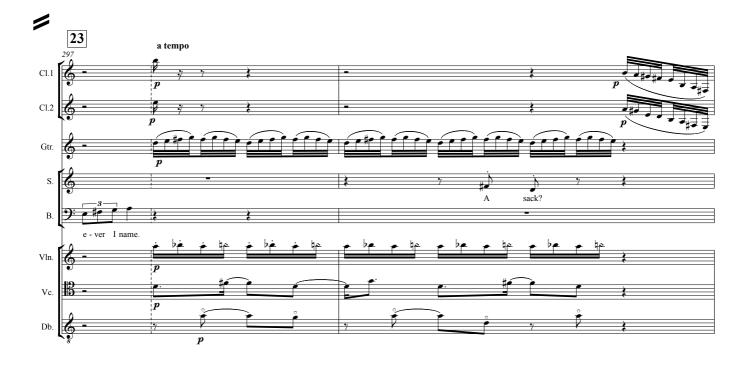






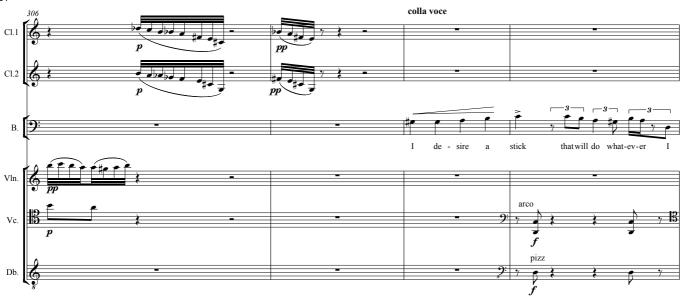


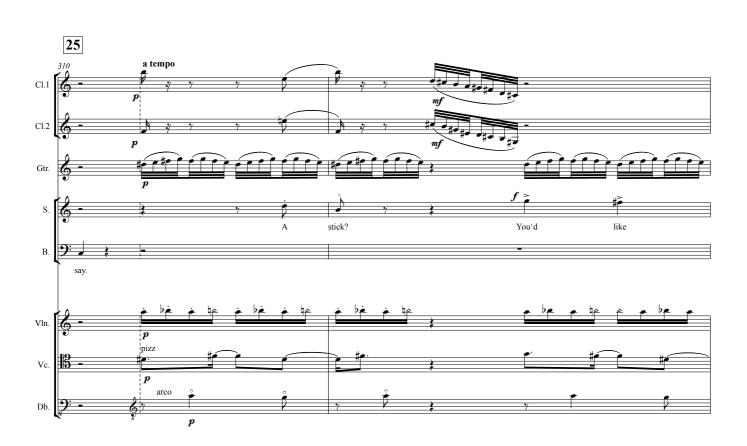














































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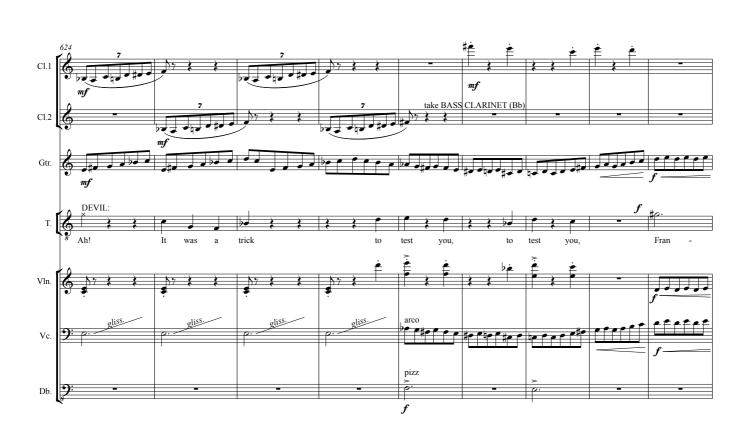










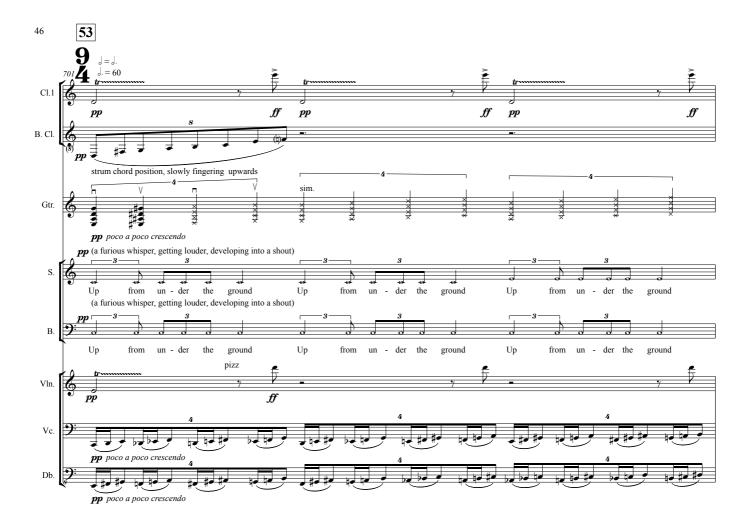










































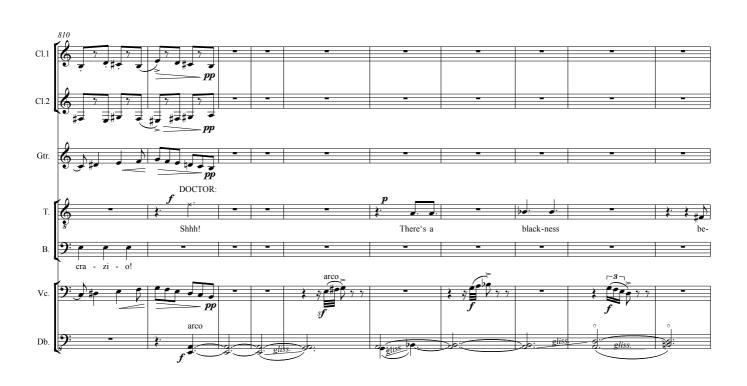








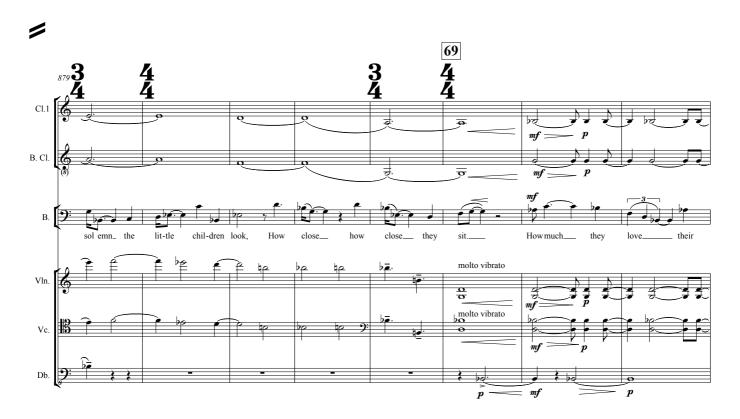










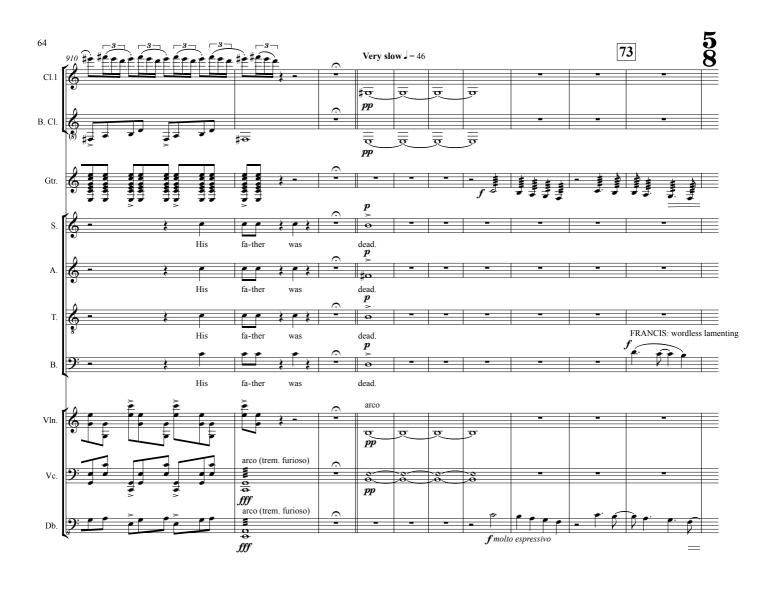






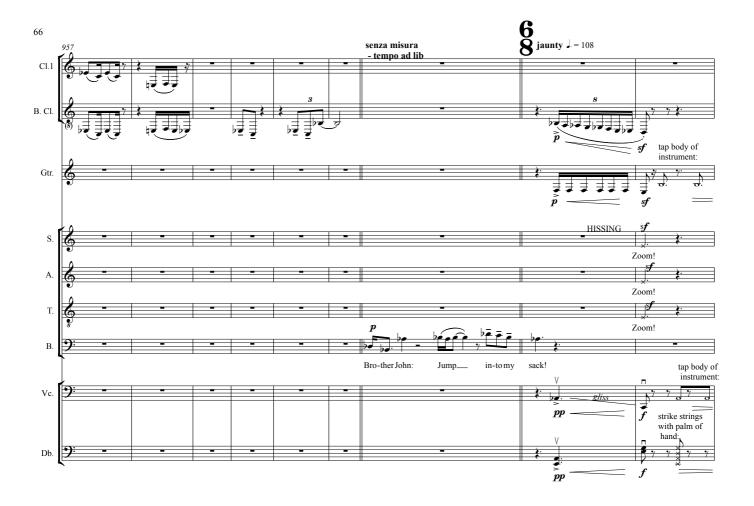














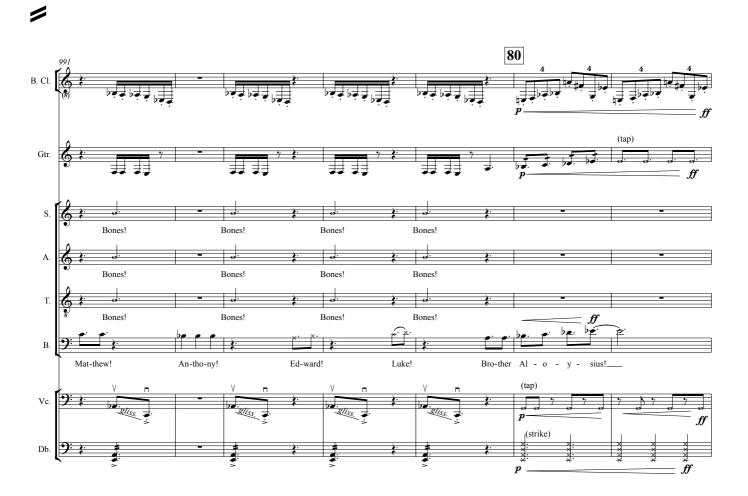






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