

*Songs*  
"Six ~~Poems~~ of R.S. Thomas"

set for tenor, soprano or mezzo-soprano  
voice and piano  
by Elaine Hugh-Jones

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1 Questions

(From "Later Poems"  
1972-1982)

Prepare yourself for the message.  
You are prepared?

Silence.

Silence is the message.  
The message is....Wait.  
Are you sure? An echo?  
An echo of an echo?

Sound.

Was it always there  
with us failing  
to hear it?

What was the shell doing  
on the shore? An ear endlessly  
drinking?  
What? Sound? Silence?  
which came first?

Listen.

I'll tell you a story  
as it was told me by the teller  
of stories.  
Where did he hear it?  
By listening? To silence? To sound?  
To an echo? To an echo  
of an echo?  
Wait.

2 Voices

(From "Later Poems"  
1972-1982)

Who to believe?  
The linnet sings bell-like  
a tinkling music. It says life  
is contained here; is a jewel

in a shell casket, lying  
among down. There is another  
voice, far out in space,  
whose persuasiveness is the distance

from which it speaks. Divided  
mind, the message is always  
in two parts. Must it be  
on a cross it is made one?

3 The River

(From "Later Poems"  
1972-1982)

And the cobbled water  
Of the stream with the trout's indelible  
Shadows that winter  
Has not erased - I walk it  
Again under a clean  
Sky with the fish, speckled like thrushes,  
Silently singing among the weed's  
Branches.

I bring the heart  
Not the mind to the interpretation  
Of their music, letting the stream  
Comb me, feeling it fresh  
In my veins, revisiting the sources  
That are as near now  
As on the morning I set out from them.

4 Night and Morning

(From "Selected Poems"  
1946-1968)

One night of tempest I arose and went  
Along the Menai shore on dreaming bent;  
The wind was strong, and savage swung the tide,  
and the waves blustered on Caernarfon side.

But on the morrow, when I passed that way,  
On Menai shore the hush of heaven lay;  
The wind was gentle and the sea a flower,  
And the sun slumbered on Caernarfon tower.

(From the Welsh traditional)

5 The Return

Coming home was to that:  
The white house in the cool grass  
Membraned in shadow, the bright stretch  
Of stream that was its looking glass;

--  
(From "Selected  
Poems" 1946-1968)

And smoke growing above the roof  
To a tall tree among whose boughs  
The first stars renewed their theme  
Of time and death and a man's vows.

6 Alive

It is alive. It is you,  
God. Looking out I can see  
no death. The earth moves, the  
sea moves, the wind goes  
on its exuberant  
journeys. Many creatures  
reflect you, the flowers  
your colour, the tides the precision  
of your calculations. There  
is nothing too ample  
for you to overflow, nothing  
so small that your workmanship  
is not revealed. I listen  
and it is you speaking.  
I find the place where you lay  
warm. At night, if I waken,  
there are the sleepless conurbations  
of the stars. The darkness  
is the deepening shadow  
of your presence; the silence a  
process in the metabolism  
of the being of love.

(From "Later Poems"  
1972-1982)

*Duration 12 minutes*

Quasi Recitativo

Questions

Elaine Hugh-Jones

Prepare yourself for the message. You are pre-

Handwritten musical score for the first system. The vocal line (top staff) begins with a fermata, followed by the lyrics "Prepare yourself for the message." and "You are pre-". The piano accompaniment (bottom staff) features a complex texture with many notes, including triplets and dynamic markings like *f*, *sf*, and *mf*. A "Ped." marking is present below the piano staff.

-pared? Silence. Silence is the message. The message is...

Handwritten musical score for the second system. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics: "-pared?", "Silence.", "Silence is the message.", and "The message is...". The piano accompaniment (bottom staff) continues with complex textures, dynamic markings like *mp*, *p*, and *pp*, and a "Rit" marking. A "(Ped)" marking is present below the piano staff.

Wait. Are you sure? An echo? an echo of an echo?

Handwritten musical score for the third system. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics: "Wait.", "Are you sure?", "An echo?", and "an echo of an echo?". The piano accompaniment (bottom staff) includes a "Presto" marking, dynamic markings like *mf*, *mp*, and *pp*, and a "Rit." marking. A "Ped." marking is present below the piano staff. A large diagonal watermark "PREVIEW FILE ONLY" is overlaid on the page.

Sound. Was it always there with us failing to

Handwritten musical score for the fourth system. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics: "Sound." and "Was it always there with us failing to". The piano accompaniment (bottom staff) features a "cresc." marking and dynamic markings like *mf*. A "Ped." marking is present below the piano staff.

hear it?

Handwritten musical score for the fifth system. The vocal line (top staff) has the lyric: "hear it?". The piano accompaniment (bottom staff) includes a "dim." marking and dynamic markings like *p*. A "Ped." marking is present below the piano staff.

*mp* *poco stretto*  
*piu f* *3*

What was the shell — doing — on the shore? An ear — endlessly drinking? What?

*poco stretto*  
*piu f*

*Allarg.* *Recit.*  
*f* *3*

Sound? Silence? Which came first? Listen, I'll tell you a

*mf* *cresc.* *ALLARG.* *f*

*mp* *3* *3* *SLOWER*

story, as it was told me by the teller of stories. Where did he hear it?

*mf* *p* *PP* *SLOWER*

*meno mosso* *(♩ = 46)* *pp* *(pp)* *mp*

(♩ = 46) By listening? — to silence? To sound? To an

*pp* *PPP*

*mp* *Rit.* *p* *Accel.* *mf*

echo? — to an echo of an echo? Wait.

*p* *P* *PP* *ACCEL.* *f* *sf*

Voices

Semplice  
ma con moto

(♩ = 60)

mp

Voice

Who to be- lieve? The linnet sings

mp espress  
con moto

mp marc.

Con Ped.

PIANOFORTE

This line poco marc.

bell-like,

a tinkling music.

It

marc. →

mp

Preview File Only

says life is contained here;

is a ja- well in a shell casket, lying

marc.

mf

— a song down.

There is another voice, far out in





MP  
space, whose persuasiveness is the distance from which it speaks.

f  
Divided mind, The message is

\* (Again the tenor piano part  
poco marcato)

always in two parts. Must it be

f Rall. (ten.) A Tempo  
on a Cross it is made war?

A.T. dim. PP

# The River

*Allegretto grazioso*


$\text{♩} = 50$

*mp*

And the cobbled water of the stream — with the

*(Not too fast)* *legierissimo*

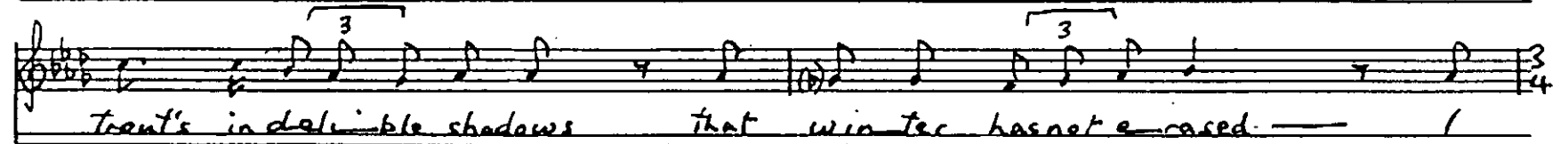
*pp*



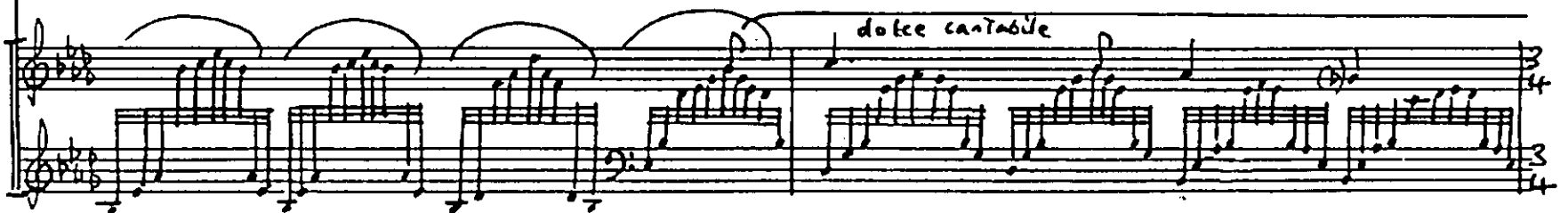
*ped.*

*risolida*

trout's indelible shadows that winter has not erased —

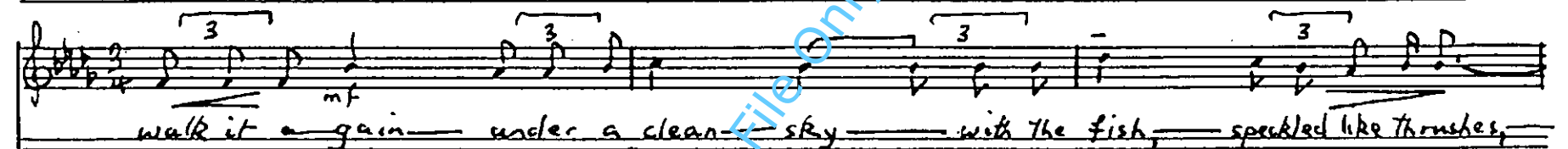


*dolce cantabile*

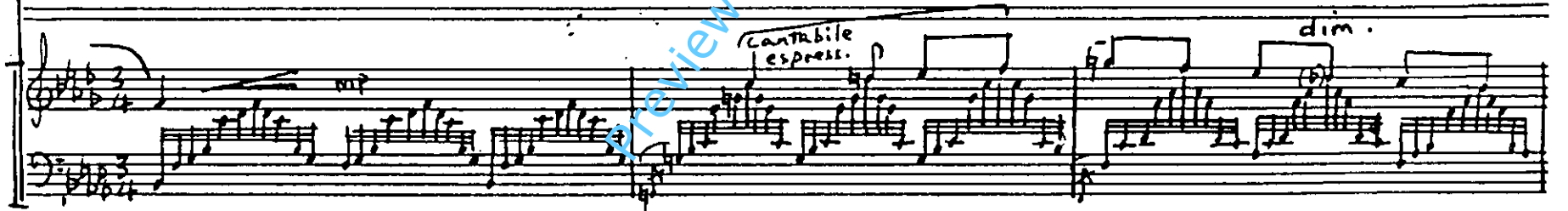


walk it a gain — under a clear sky — with the fish, speckled like thrushes,

*mf*

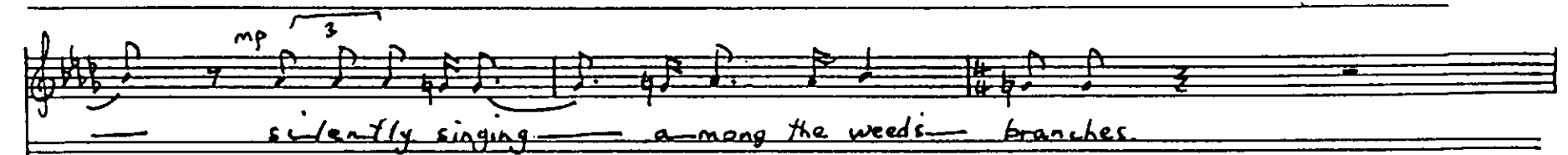


*cantabile espress.* *dim.*



— silently singing — among the weeds — branches.

*mp*

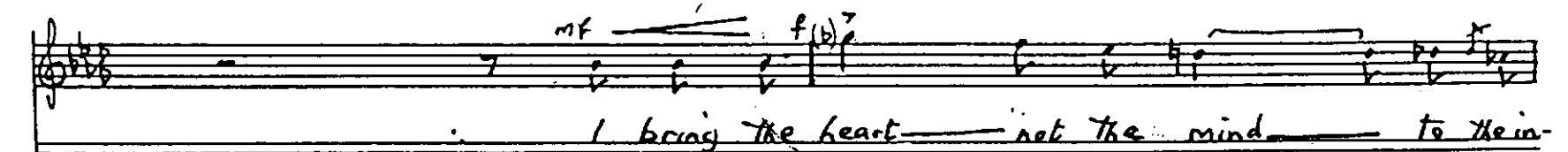


*pp* *marc. cresc.*



I bring the heart — not the mind — to the in-

*mf* *f*



*cresc.* *mf* *f*





dim.  
- ter - pre - ta - tion - of their music,

Letting the stream comb me, Feeling it

fresh in my veins, re - vis - it - ing - the sources

That are as near - new - as on the

morning - I set out from them.



# Night and Morning

*Con poco, ma non troppo*  
 ( $\text{♩} = 4\text{b}$ ) *con Rubato*      *mp*      *f* >

( $\text{♩} = 4\text{b}$ )      One night of tempest / a rose — and went al

(*Not fast*)      *mp*      *mf*      *mp*      *mf*      *f*      etc.

*ped.*

*mp*      *mp*      *mf*      *dolce*      *cantabile*

— long — the Menai — shore — on dream — ing bent;

*sempre con Ped.*

*mf cresc.*      *ff* (*b*) >

The wind was strong and savage swung the tide, and the waves — blustered on Caernarvon side.

*mf*      (*b*) *cresc.*      *f*      (*b*) *f*      (*b*) *f*      (*b*) *f*      (*b*) *f*

*Dim.*      *mf*      *mp*      *p*

*Dim.*      *mf*      *mp*      *p*



*mp*

(Tranquillo)

*mp* But on the morrow, when I passed that way, on

*molto rubato* *dolce*

*P* *mp* *P* *mp* *P*

*ped.*

*P* *pp* *dolce*

*alla voce* *(senza cam. ped.)*

Menci— shore— the bush of Heaven lay; The wind was gentle and the sea a flower, and the

*mp*

*mp* sun slumbered on Caernar— for tower.

*rit.*

*rit.*

*dim.* *pp* *ppp*

(1.35)



# The Return

Slowly,  
Reflectively  
(♩ = 76)

mp

Coming home was to that: — the white house in the cool grass.

pp mp

CON PED. etc.

mp

Membraned with shadow, the bright stretch of stream that was its looking glass;

pp

mp mp

And smoke growing above the roof to a

mp mp

Ped.

(mp) pp

tall tree among whose boughs the first stars — re-newed their theme of

pp

mp

rit. allarg. p A Tempo RIT.

Time — and death and a man's vows.

mp p A Tempo RIT. PPP

colla voce Ped.



"Alive"

Joyfully  
but not too fast

(approx.  $\dot{=} 54$ )

It is a—live. It is you, God. Looking

Con Ped etc.

out I can see no death.

The earth—moves, The sea—moves, The

cresc. mf

Ped. etc.

poco allarg.  
(ad lib)

wind goes on its ex—uberant journeys.

Many creatures re—

f mf a tempo

(Ped.) (colla voce) etc.

—flest you, The flowers—your colour, The tides the precision of your calculations.

ad lib espress.

Ped.



There is nothing — too ample —

*mp* *mf*

*mf mp f*

Ped.

for you to overflow. Nothing — so small — that your workmanship is not revealed.

(Ped.)

I listen and it is you — speaking.

*mp* *mf*

*f p sub. pp cresc.*

etc.

Find — the place where you lay warm. At night — if I

*(cresc.)* *mf* *P*

(Ped.) etc.



waken, there are the sleep-less con- junctions of the stars. The

Handwritten musical score for the first system. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are "waken, there are the sleep-less con- junctions of the stars. The". The piano accompaniment is in bass clef. Dynamics include *f*, *b<sup>7</sup>*, and *mp*. Performance markings include *CRSC.* and *dim.*

darkness is the deepening shadow of your presence; The silence a

Handwritten musical score for the second system. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "darkness is the deepening shadow of your presence; The silence a". The piano accompaniment includes dynamics *dim.*, *pp*, and *cantabile espress.*

process in the metabolism of the being of

Handwritten musical score for the third system. The vocal line has lyrics "process in the metabolism of the being of". The piano accompaniment includes dynamics *mf*, *mp*, and *rit.*. Performance markings include *dim.* and *Rit.*. A *Ped.* marking is present at the bottom of the system.

love.

Handwritten musical score for the fourth system. The vocal line has the word "love." and is marked *SLOWLY*. The piano accompaniment is also marked *SLOWLY* and includes dynamics *pp* and *Ped.*