Four Sonnets of John Clare (2002)

- 1. Fame
- 2. The Death of Beauty
- 3. Memory
- 4. The Shepherd's Tree

The *Four Sonnets of John Clare* were completed in April of this year and commissioned by Wigmore Hall, with funds made available by the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust. The set was written specially for Sir Thomas Allen and Graham Johnson, who gave its premiere on the 16th July 2002 at London's Wigmore Hall. The work was dedicated to William Lyne.

All four sonnets reflect on different aspects of Clare's human experience: the transience of worldly renown, the loss of inspiration, a fear of neglect in death and a love of the numinous in nature.

The music seeks to match Clare's poetic gestures with clarity and economy. In *Fame*, once Clare's initial question is posed, a cumulative harmonic sequence builds to the sonnet's almost bitter conclusion, while in *The Death of Beauty* a freeting musical texture matches Clare's elusive vision of a world without inspiration. *Memory* is the most substantial song of the set and the most human, its music breaking out from sinewy chrematic lines for its tender close. *The Shepherd's Tree* returns us to the fleeting world of the earlier songs, moving from muscular phrases to lyrical fragments as Clare fixes on the haurting transience of nature's music – a fitting close for the whole set.

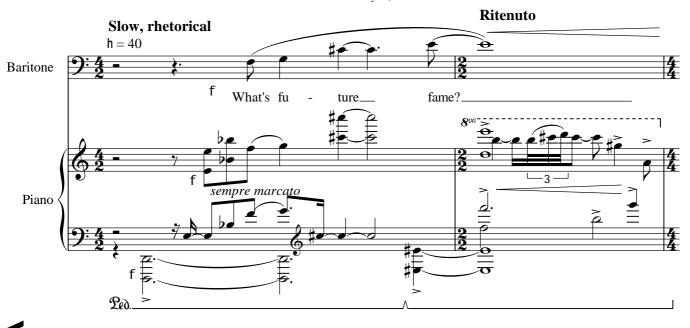
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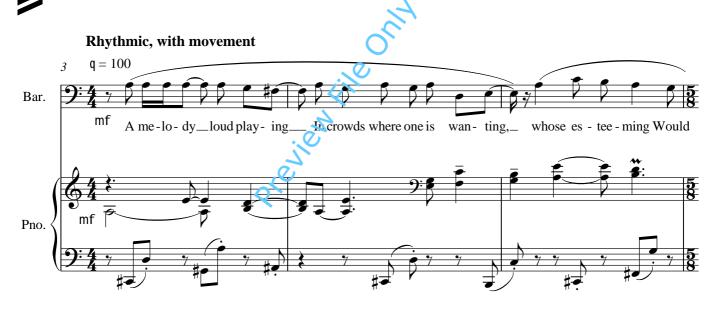
John Clare (1793-1864)

I. Fame

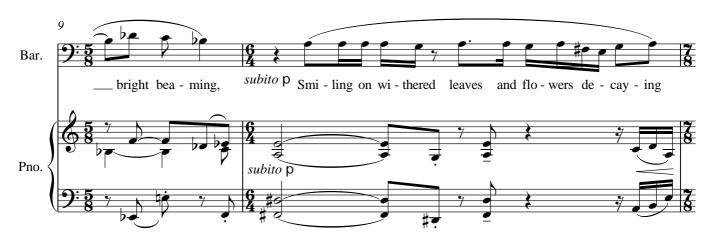
dedicated to William Lyne, MBE

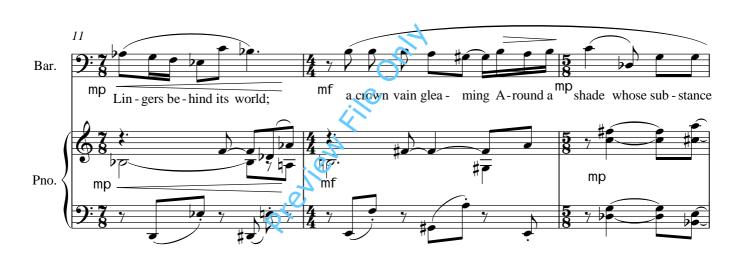
Julian Philips (2002)

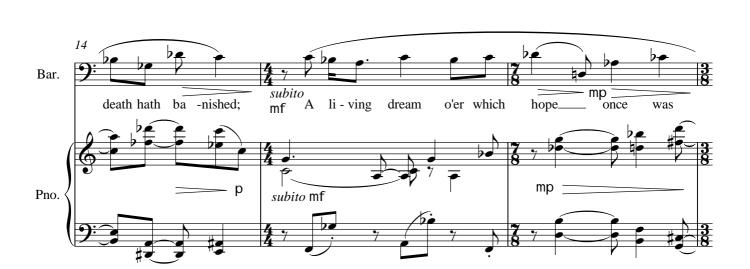








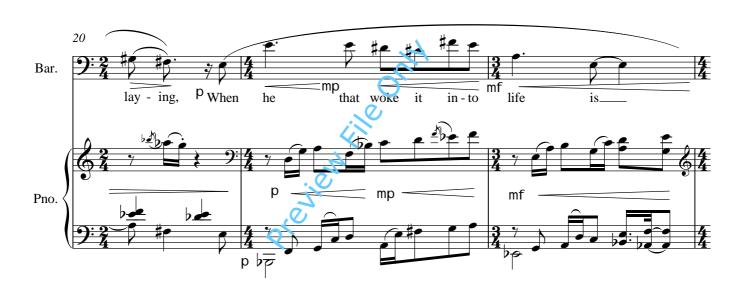




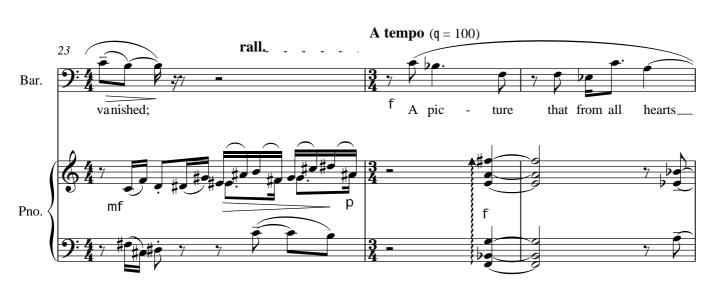




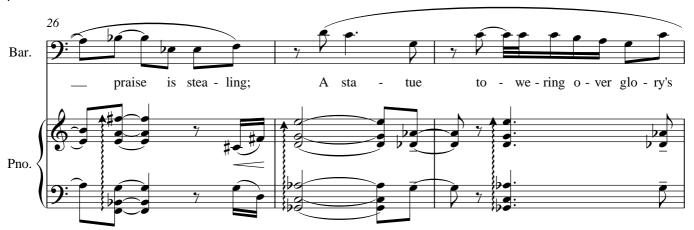




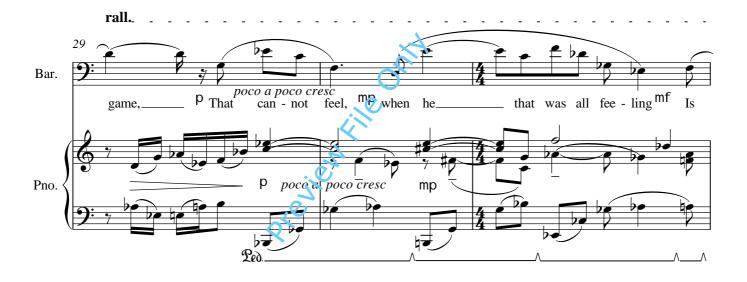




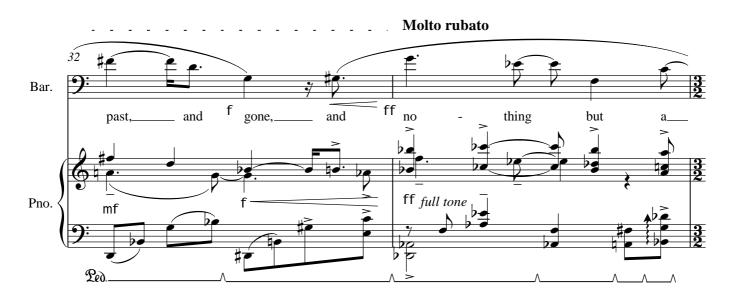


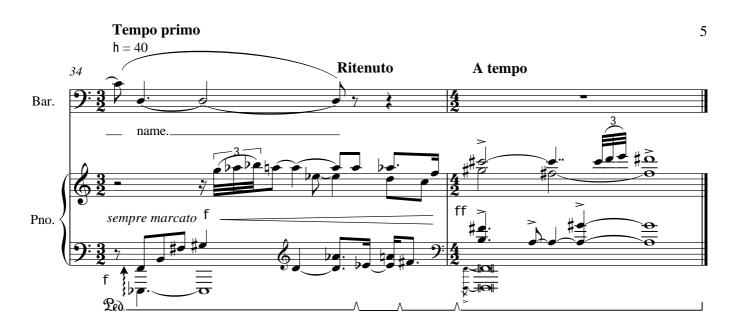










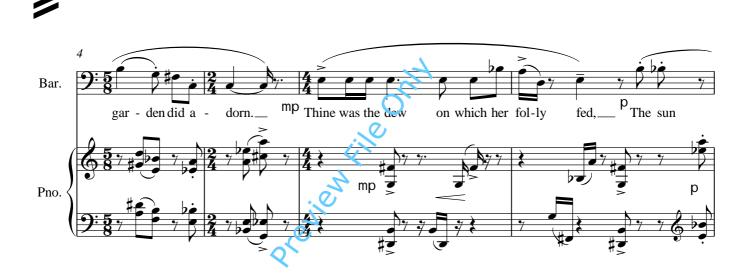


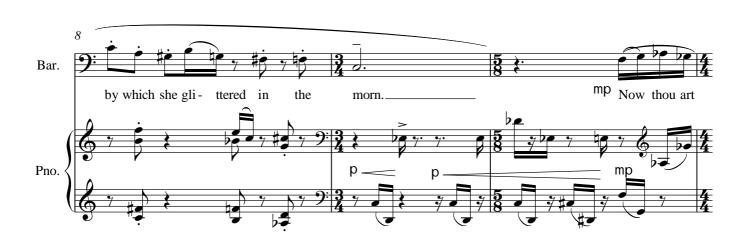
Que vile vile Que vil

II. The Death of Beauty

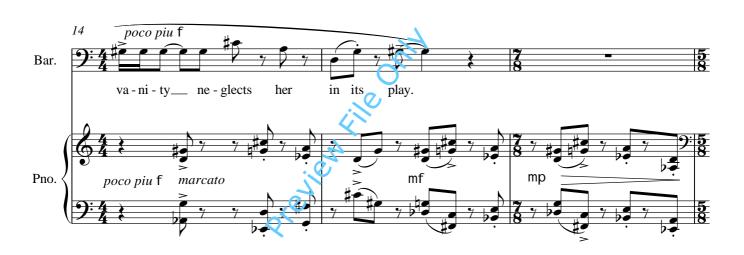
Julian Philips (2002)

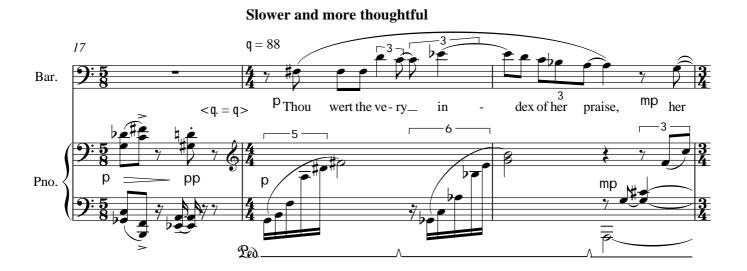


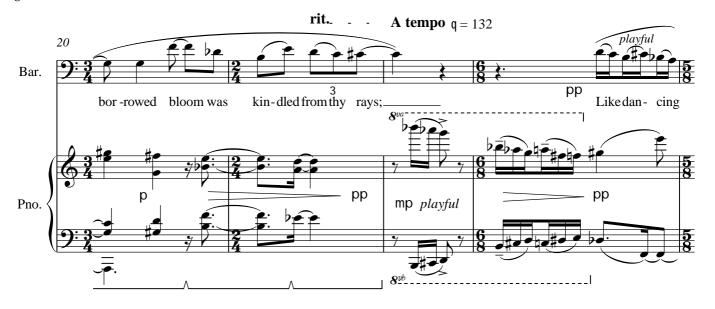


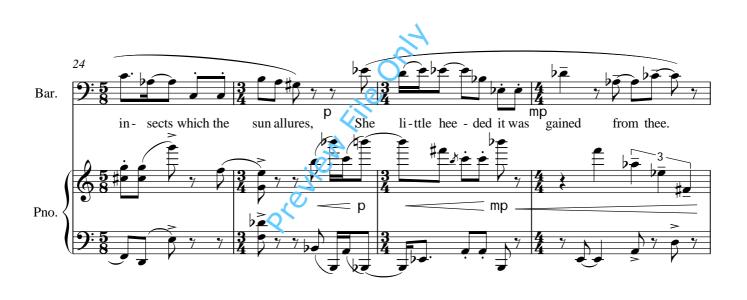


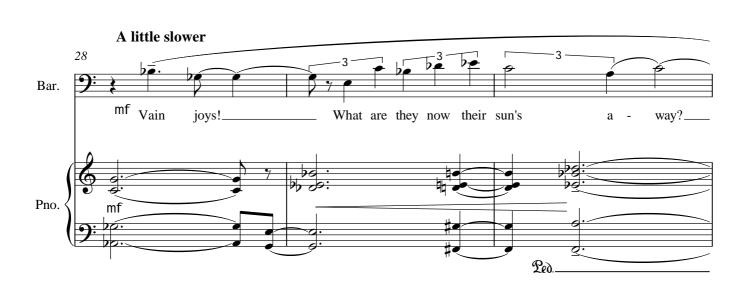




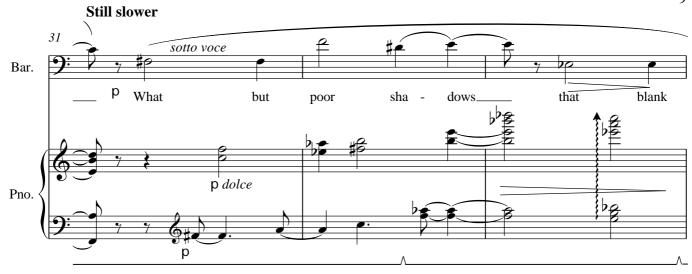


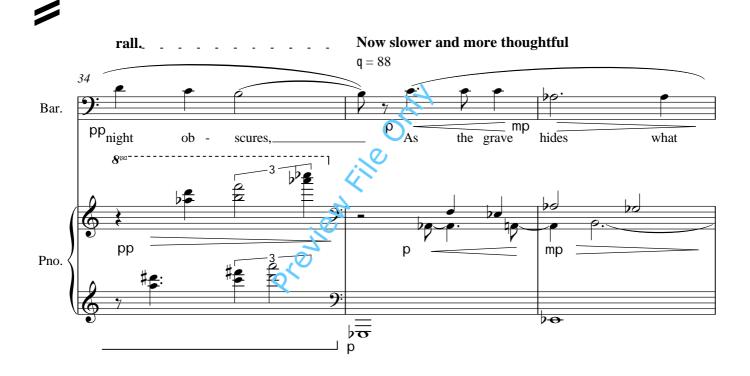


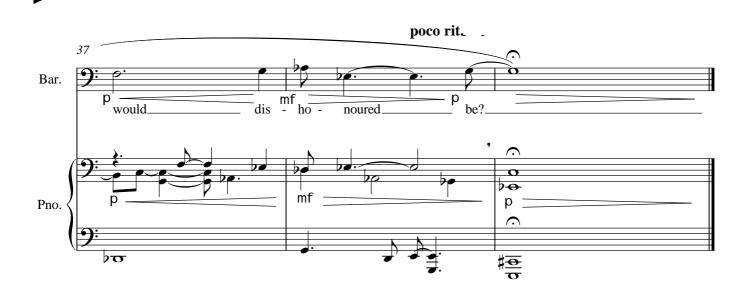












III. Memory

