

“The Fly”

“The Fly”, a poem from the famous English romantic poet William Blake’s (1757-1827) “Songs of Experience” focuses our thoughts on the life of a little common fly. Blake muses for example how “my thoughtless hand” has “brushed away” the fly’s summer play. Arnold Harris has mirrored the text in his acapella SATB setting with a thoughtful section juxtaposed with a lively, dance like section accompanying Blake’s awareness that the fly, like a person, dances and drinks and sings. Changes of key and meter give extra life to this unaccompanied setting.

The Fly

(from "Songs of Innocence & Experience")

William Blake 1757 - 1827)

Music by Arnie Harris ©2021

SOPRANO ALTO

TENOR BASS

S/A

T/B

S/A

T/B

8

Faster

f

J = 75

Lit - tle fly, Lit - the fly thy sum-mers play My
thought-less hand has brush'd a-way Am not I a fly like thee? Or
art not thou a man like me? for I dance and_

for I dance

2

11

S/A

drink and sing for I dance and drink and sing and

T/B

and sing! for I dance and sing and

14

S/A

Till some blind hand shall brush.
drink and sing! Till some shall brush shall brush

T/B

drink and sing! Till some shall

19

S/A

— my wing my wing.

T/B

brush my wing my wing.

tenors only

mf

If

23

A

S/A

and the want of thought is

T/B

thought is life and strength and breath and the want of thought is

+basses *mf*

27

S/A

death then am I a happy fly if I live, or

T/B

f

death then am I a happy fly if I live or

32

S/A

if I die or if I live or die

T/B

rit.

p

if I

p

if I

if I die or if I live or die

36

S/A

live or if or if if I live or if I die //

T/B

rit.

if I live or if I die //

or if if I live or if I die //

4 Tempo primo
41. = 65 ***mf***

S/A

This musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is for the Soprano (S/A) and the bottom staff is for the Basso Continuo (T/B). The key signature is one sharp, indicating G major. The time signature is common time (indicated by '4'). The vocal line begins with eighth-note chords, followed by quarter notes and eighth-note pairs. The basso continuo part consists of sustained notes with occasional harmonic changes indicated by sharp or natural signs.

Lit - tle fly thy sum-mers play my thought-less hand has

mf

T/B

The musical score continues with the soprano and basso continuo parts. The soprano's vocal line continues with eighth-note chords and pairs. The basso continuo part shows more complex harmonic progression with various note durations and key changes.

44

S/A

This section starts with a change in key signature to two sharps, D major. The soprano sings eighth-note chords, and the basso continuo provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chordal patterns.

brush'd a-way Am not I a fly like thee? Or art not thou a

T/B

The soprano and basso continuo continue their parts. The soprano's vocal line includes eighth-note chords and pairs, while the basso continuo maintains harmonic stability with its bassline.

48

S/A

The key signature changes back to one sharp, G major. The soprano's vocal line features eighth-note chords and pairs, with dynamic markings of ***p*** (piano) over some notes. The basso continuo provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chordal patterns.

man like me? Lit - tle fly _____ art not thou _____ art not

T/B

The soprano and basso continuo continue. The soprano's vocal line includes eighth-note chords and pairs, with dynamic markings of ***p*** over some notes. The basso continuo maintains harmonic support with sustained notes and chordal patterns.

53

S/A

The key signature changes to no sharps or flats, C major. The soprano's vocal line features eighth-note chords and pairs, with dynamic markings of ***pp*** (pianissimo) over some notes. The basso continuo provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chordal patterns.

thou a man like me?

T/B

The soprano and basso continuo continue. The soprano's vocal line includes eighth-note chords and pairs, with dynamic markings of ***pp*** over some notes. The basso continuo maintains harmonic support with sustained notes and chordal patterns.