

Peter Dyson
1986



The
Burning
Babe

A Setting of Robert Southwell's Poem
for Contralto and Piano Duet

THE BURNING BABE.

By Robert Southwell

As I in hoary Winter's night stood shivering in the snowe,
Surprised I was with sodayne heat which made my hart to glowe ;
And lifting upp a feareful eye to vewe what fire was nere,
A pretty Babe all burninge bright did in the ayre appeare ;
Who, scorched with excessive heate, such floodes of teares did shedde
As though His floodes should quench His flames which with His tears were fedd.
“Alas,” quoth He, “but newly borne in fiery heates I frye,
Yet none approach to warme their hartes or feele my fire but I !
My faultles brest the fornace is, the fuell woundinge thornes,
Love is the fire, and sighes the smoke, the ashes shame and scornes;
The fuell Justice layeth on, and Mercy blowes the coales,
The mettall in this fornace wrought are men's defilëd soules,
For which, as nowe on fire I am to worke them to their good,
So will I melt into a bath to wash them in My bloode.”
With this He vanisht out of sight and swiftly shroncke awaye,
And straight I callëd unto mynde that it was Christmas daye.

From *St. Peter's Complaint*, 1595

The Burning Babe

for Johanna

Robert Southwell (1562 - 1595)

Peter Dyson

Very freely (♩ = 54)

Contralto

Primo

Secundo

8

C.

Pr

Sec

As I in hoa-ry Win-ter's night

8^{vb}



16

C. *mf* *p*

stood shive-ringe in the snowe, _____ Sur-pris'd I was with

Pr *p* *mf* *p*

Sec *p* *mf* *p*



22

C. *pp*

so-dayne heat, which made my hart to glowe; _____ And

Pr *mf*

Sec *mf*

Red. _____

28 *mf* slightly slower

C. lift-ing upp a feare-full eye to vewe what fire was nere, A pre-tty Babe all burn-inge

Pr *pp* *mf*

Sec *pp* *mf*

8^{va}

8^{vb}



33 *f* A tempo *mf*


C. bright, did in the ayre ap-peare, Who, scor-chëd with ex-ce-ssive heate, such

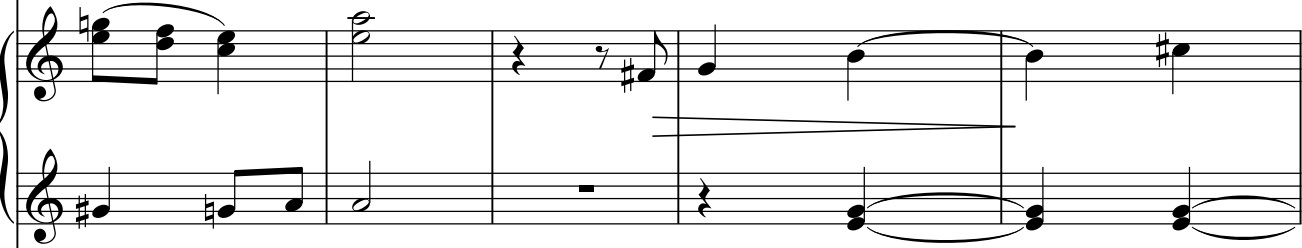
Pr *sfz* *mf*

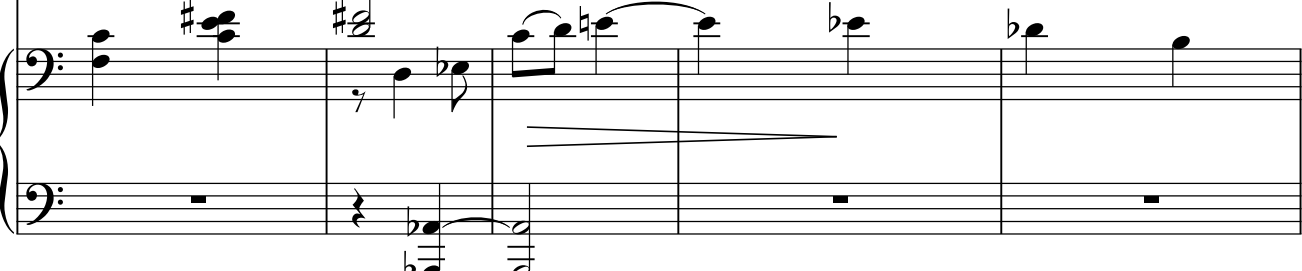
Sec *sfz* *mf*

8^{vb}

38

C. 

Pr 

Sec 

floodes of teares did shedde, As though His floodes should quench His flames which



43

C. 

Pr 

Sec 

with His teares were fedd; "A - las!" quoth He, "but new-ly borne in fie-ry heates I

f *mf* *f* *mf* *sfz* *mf* *sfz*

slightly slower A tempo

49

C. frye, Yet none a-pproch to warme their hartes or feele my fire but I! My fault-les brest the

Pr

Sec *mf* *mf* *sfz*



slightly quicker

f A tempo

55

C. for-nace is, the fu-ell wound-inge thornes, Love is the fire, and sighes the smoke, the

Pr *sfz*

Sec *sfz*

8vb

60

C. a - shes shame and scornes; The fu - ell Ju - stice la - yeth on, and

Pr *mf*

Sec *mf*

(8)-----

65

C. Mer - cy blowes the coales, The me - tall

Pr *f* *8va*

Sec *sfz*

69

C. in this for-nace wrought are men's de - fi - léd soules, For which, as nowe on fire I

Pr

Sec

(8)-----

74

C. am, to worke them to their good, So will I melt in - to a bath to wash them in My

Pr

Sec

(8)-----

sfz

sfz

8^{vb}

80 *p*

C. *mf* *p*

bloode." _____ With this He va-nisht out of

Pr *mf* *p* *8va*

Sec *mf* *p*

a little slower

a little slower still

86

C. sight, and swift-ly shroncke a-way, and straight I ca-llèd un-to mynde that

(8)-----] *tr*

Pr

Sec *8vb*

91 *f*

C. *f* it was Christ-mas daye. _____

Pr *f* *f* *p* *8va*

Sec *f* *sffz* *p* *8vb*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score contains three systems of music. The first system is for a Soprano (C.) and Piano (Pr). The Soprano part begins at measure 91 with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The lyrics "it was Christ-mas daye." are written below the staff. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: a right-hand staff with a treble clef and a left-hand staff with a bass clef. The piano part features a variety of dynamics, including fortissimo (f) and piano (p), and includes an 8va (octave up) marking. The second system is for a Second Piano (Sec) and continues the piano accompaniment. It features a bass clef and includes dynamics such as fortissimo (f), sforzando (sffz), and piano (p), along with an 8vb (octave down) marking. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, beams, and dynamic markings.