

Will Harmer

Summer Dance

For tenor and piano

TEXT

The Fly
William Blake (1757 - 1827)

Little fly,
Thy summer's play
My thoughtless hand
Has brushed away.

Am not I
A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me?

For I dance
And drink and sing,
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.

If thought is life
And strength and breath,
And the want
Of thought is death,

Then am I
A happy fly,
If I live,
Or if I die.

This song, along with 'Lullaby', was composed for the 2024 Peter Tranchell Foundation Composition Competition, for which it won first prize.

Summer Dance sets William Blake's poem *The Fly*, which describes the dancing motion of a fly in summer, leading the narrator to compare his human life with that of his insect companion.

This piece bears resemblance to some of Peter Tranchell's lighter works, which often had a humorous element pervading both words and music. Some of the piano figures and repetitions of words create an exaggerated quality which Blake's text invites. Another element of Tranchell's music that influenced me was the improvisatory quality of his piano writing – in the same way, my piece should be performed with a feeling of spontaneity in the dialogue between voice and piano.

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Con Moto (♩ = 96)

System 1:

Tenor: *f* Lit-tle fly,

Piano: *f* (trills), *fp* (triplets), *f* (triplets)

System 2:

Tenor: *f* Lit-tle fly, *mp* Lit-tle fly— thy sum-mer's play

Piano: *f* (trills), *p* (trills), *f* (triplets)

System 3:

Tenor: *f* My thought-less hand has brushed a-way, *p* brushed a-way.

Piano: *f* (trills), *mf* (triplets), *pp* (triplets)

Meno Mosso (♩ = 80)

12 *p molto legato*

Am not I a fly like thee? Or art not thou A

p

con ped.

17 *Tempo Primo*

man like me? For I dance And

p

sf

p energetic, leggiero

21 *mf*

drink I dance dance drink

f

p

23 *ff*

dance drink and sing,

ff

ff

25 *outraged!* *f* *rit.* *p*

Till some blind hand some blind hand Shall brush my wing.

f *mf*

28 **Meno Mosso** (♩ = 80) *p molto legato*

If thought is life and strength and breath,

p molto legato *pp*

ppp con ped. *p*

33 *pp*

And the want of thought is death, is death,—

p

38 *accel.*

mp

41 **Tempo Primo**

f *exuberant*

Then am I a hap-py fly, a

f *exuberant*

45

48

48

if I die.

p

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

8vb