

PASSING CHIMES

TWO SONGS ON DEATH

for voice and piano

ROGER BRIGGS

PROGRAM NOTES:

PASSING CHIMES was composed in South Bend, Indiana during the summer and autumn of 1980. Both songs deal with the same subject—the bitter sweetness of death—and both songs are a direct response to the poetry in the aftermath of my own father's death. William Stafford's lines reflect a son's beautiful memories of his father while Dylan Thomas' lines portray a son pleading with his father. While Stafford's poem focuses on the simplicity of the joys of life that he shared with his father, Thomas' moves beyond the immediate to a more urgent, universal sense of man's confrontation with life and with death.

The first performance, which took place in the spring of 1981 at Saint Mary's College, was by Carol Knell, mezzo soprano and Jeffrey Jacob, pianist

RB—1981

A version for voice and chamber ensemble (flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and percussion) is available from the composer.

FATHER AND SON

*No sound—a spell—on, on out
Where the wind went, our kite sent back
Its thrill along the string that
Sagged but sang and said, "I'm here!
I'm here!"—till broke somewhere,
Gone years ago, but sailed forever clear
Of earth. I hold—whatever tugs
The other end—I hold that string.*

William Stafford

DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT

*Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

*Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.*

*Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

*Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learned, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.*

*Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

*And you, my father, there on the sad heights,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

Dylan Thomas

DO NOT GO GENTLE

Dylan Thomas

to Carol Knell

Roger Briggs

♩ = 84

1

cantabile & legato
PP

poco rit. *a tempo* *p*

Voice

Donotgo gen - tle in - to that good ——— night, Old age should

Piano

sffz *PP* *pppp (almost inaudible)* *pp* *ppp* *sffz* *pp*

8va *8va* *8va*

Ped. ** Ped. (for colorful clarity)*

11

pp *poco rit.* *Slightly Faster* ♩ = 88

V.

burn — and rave — at close of day;

Pno

pp *p* *mp* *mf* *pp* *mp* *pp*

8va *8va*

Ped. *Ped.*

15

mp *mf* *p* *poco rit.*

V.

Rage — Rage — A - gainsthe dy-ing of the

Pno

mf *pp*

8va *8va*

Ped. *Ped.*

20

Slightly Faster ♩=92 *Accel.* ♩=98

V. *light*

Pno *p cresc.* *mp cresc.* *mf*

(Ped.)

24

rit. ♩=84 *pp mysteriously*

V. *Though wise men*

Pno *dim.* *ff* *sffz* *pp* *mp*

8va *8va*

Ped.

28

V. *p* *3* *pp* *3*

at their end Know dark is right, _____ Be - cause their words _____ had forked no

Pno *pp* *elegantly, flute-like* *3* *mp* *ppp* *mp* *pp* *3*

8va *8va* *8va*

5 *6*