

# The Whitsun Weddings

Philip Larkin (1922-85)

Philip Thicknes (b.1938)

**Moderato** ♩ = 120

Soprano *mf*

That Whit-sun, I was late get-ting a-way:

Piano *mf* *mp*

5

S. **Meno mosso** ♩ = 100

Not till a-bout One-twen-ty on the sun-lit Sat-ur-day Did my three-quar-ters emp-ty train pull out, All

Pno. **Meno mosso** ♩ = 100

9

S. **accel. poco a poco**

win-dows down, all cush-ions hot, all sense Of be-ing in a hur-ry gone.

Pno. **accel. poco a poco** *mf*

13

S. **A tempo** ♩ = 120

We ran be-hind the backs of hou-ses, crossed a street Of

Pno. **A tempo** ♩ = 120 *mp*

17

S. blind - ing wind - screens, smelt the fish - dock; thence the ri - ver's le - vel drif - ting breadth be -

Pno.

21

S. gan, where sky and Lin - coln - shire and wa - ter meet. All af - ter -

Pno.

*rit.* *a tempo* *mp*

*rit.* *mf, a tempo* *p*

**A** **A**

26

S. noon, through the tall heat that slept For miles in - land, A slow and stop - ping

Pno.

31

S. curve south - wards we kept. Wide farms went by, short - sha - dowed cat - tle, and Ca -

Pno.

*mf* *mp*

36

S. nals with float-ings of in-dust-ri - al froth; A hot-house flashed u - nique - ly,

Pno.

39

S. hed- ges dipped And rose: and now and then a smell of grass Dis-placed the reek of

Pno.

42

S. but-toned car-riage cloth Un - til the next town, new and non-des-cript,

Pno.

**B** *f*

**B** *mf*

45

S. Ap-proached with ac-res of dis-mant-led cars. At first, I did - n't no - tice what a

Pno.

*mf*


*mp*


49

S.  noise the wed-dings made Each sta-tion that we stopped at: sun de-stroys The in-te-

Pno. 

53

S.  rest of what's hap-pening in the shade, And down the long cool plat-forms


Pno. 

57

S.  whoops and skirls I took for por-ters lark-ing with the mails, And went on


Pno. 

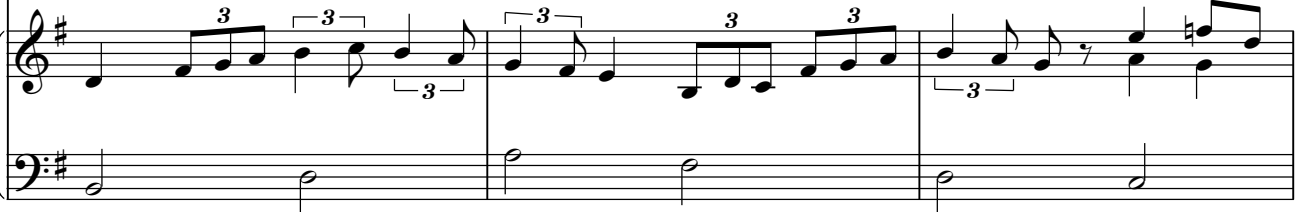
60

S.  read-ing. C Once we star-ted though, We passed them,

Pno.  C

65

S.    
 grin - ning and po - mad - ed girls In pa - ro - dies of fas - hion, heels and


Pno. 


68

S.    
 veils, All posed ir - re - so - lute - ly, wat - ching us go, As if


Pno. 


71

S.    
 out on the end of an e - vent Wa - ving good - bye To some - thing that sur - vived it.

Pno. 

75 **D**

S.    
 Struck, I leant More prompt - ly out next time, more cur - ious - ly, And saw it all a - gain in

Pno. 

79

S. dif-ferent terms: The fa-thers with broad belts un-der their suits And sea-my fore-heads;

Pno.

83

S. mo-thers loud and fat; An un-cle shout-ing smut; and then the perms, The ny-lon

Pno.

87

S. gloves and jewel-ery sub-sti-tutes, The lem-ons, mauves, and o-live och-res that Marked off the

Pno.

*rit.* **Meno mosso** ♩ = 100

*rit.* **Meno mosso** ♩ = 100

**E**

90

S. girls un-real-ly from the rest. Yes, from ca-fés And ban-quet-halls up yards, and bun-ting dressed Coach

Pno.

**A tempo** ♩ = 120

**A tempo** ♩ = 120

94

S. par-ty an-nex-es, the wed-ding days \_\_\_\_\_ were com-ing \_\_\_\_\_ to an end.

Pno.

98

S. \_\_\_\_\_ All down the line Fresh coup-les climbed a -

Pno.

102

S. board: the rest stood round; The last con-fet-ti and ad-vice were thrown, And, as we moved, each face

Pno.

106

S. seemed to de-fine Just what it saw de - part - ing: Chil - dren frowned At

Pno.

110

S. *f*

some-thing dull; fa - thers had ne - ver known Suc - cess so huge and

Pno. *f*

113

S. *mp* *mf*

whol-ly far-ci-cal; The wo-men shared The sec-ret like a hap - py fu - ne-ral; while

Pno. *p* *mp*

117

S. *rit.*

girls, grip-ping their hand - bags tigh - ter, stared At a re - lig - ious wound - ing.

Pno. *rit.*

121

S.

Free at last, And load-ed with the sum of all they saw, We

Pno.



127

S. hur-ried to-wards Lon-don, shuf-pling gouts of steam. Now fields were

Pno.

132

S. build-ing-plots, and pop - lars cast long sha-dows o - ver ma - jor roads,

Pno.

137 **G**

S. and for Some <sup>3</sup>fif - ty min-utes, that in time would seem just long e-nough to set-tle

**G**

Pno.

141

S. hats and say I near-ly died, A doz-en mar-riag-es got un-der way.

Pno.


145

S. 

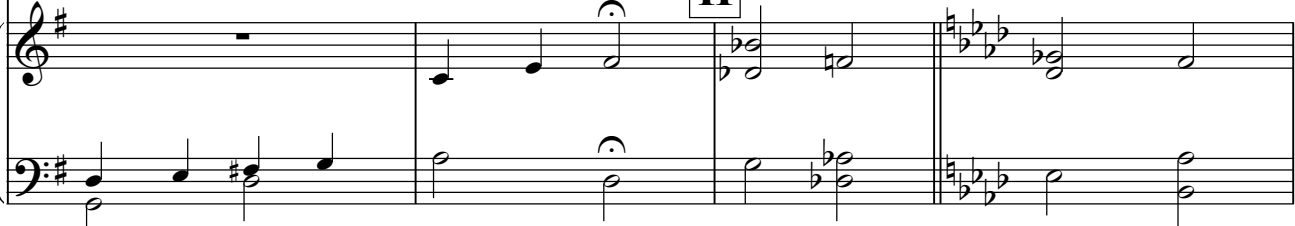
They watched the land-scape, sit ting side by side - An O - de-on went past, a

Pno. 


149

S. 

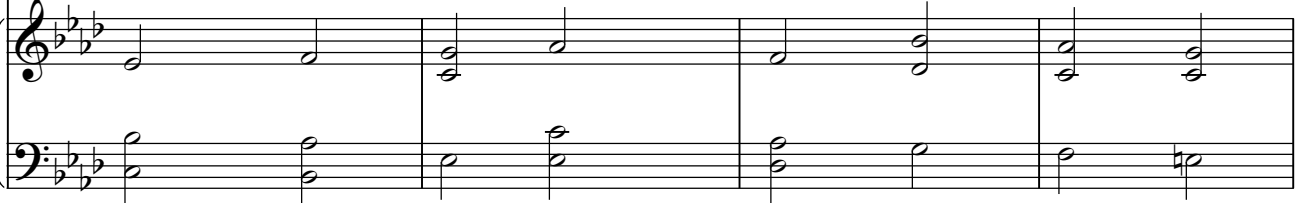
cool-ing tower, And some-one run-ning up to bowl - and none Thought of the oth-ers

Pno. 


153

S. 


they would ne - ver meet Or how their lives would all con - tain this hour.

Pno. 

157

S. 

I thought of Lon-don— spread out in the sun,

Pno. 

163

S. Its pos-tal dis-tricts packed like squares of wheat: There we were aimed.

Pno.

167

S. And as we raced a-cross Bright knots of rail Past stan-ding Pull-mans, walls of black-ened

Pno.

171

S. moss Came close, and it was near-ly done, this frail Travel-ling co-in-ci-dence;

Pno.

176

S. — and what it held Stood rea-dy to be loosed with

Pno.

181

S. 

all the power That be - ing changed can give. **J**

Pno. 

*mp*

186

**poco a poco rallentando**

S. 

We slowed a gain, And as the tight-ened brakes took hold, there swelled A sense of

**poco a poco rallentando**

Pno.

190

**Meno mosso** ♩ = 100

S. 

fal - ling, like an ar - row shower, Sent out of sight some-where be-com-ing rain.

**Meno mosso** ♩ = 100

Pno.

*p*