

**Britten serenade for tenor  
horn and strings lyrics**

**1. Prologue**  
(Solo horn)

**2. Pastoral**

The day's grown old; the fainting sun  
Has but a little way to run,  
And yet his steeds, with all his skill,  
Scarce lug the chariot down the hill.

The shadows now so long do grow,  
That brambles like tall cedars show;  
Molehills seem mountains, and the ant  
Appears a monstrous elephant.

A very little, little flock  
Shades thrice the ground that it would  
stock;  
Whilst the small stripling following them  
Appears a mighty Polypheme.

And now on benches all are sat,  
In the cool air to sit and chat,  
Till Phoebus, dipping in the West,  
Shall lead the world the way to rest.

Charles Cotton (1630–1687)

**3. Nocturne**

The splendour falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story:  
The long light shakes across the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory:

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes  
flying,  
Bugle blow; answer, echoes, dying, dying,  
dying.

O hark, O hear, how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, farther going!  
O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!

Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:  
Bugle, blow; answer, echoes, answer,  
dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river:  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow forever and forever.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes  
flying;  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,  
dying.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892)

**4. Elegy**

O Rose, thou art sick;  
The invisible worm  
That flies in the night,  
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed  
Of crimson joy;  
And his dark, secret love  
Does thy life destroy.

William Blake (1757–1827)

**5. Dirge**

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,  
Every nighte and alle,  
Fire and fleet and candle-lighte,  
And Christe receive thy saule.

When thou from hence away art past,  
Every nighte and alle,  
To Whinnymuir thou com'st at last;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

If ever thou gav'st hos'n and shoon,  
Every nighte and alle,  
Sit thee down and put them on;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

If hos'n and shoon thou ne'er gav'st nane  
Every nighte and alle,  
The whinnes sall prick thee to the bare

bane;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

From Whinnymuir when thou may'st pass,  
Every nighte and alle,  
To Brig o' Dread thou com'st at last;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

From Brig o' Dread when thou may'st pass,  
Every nighte and alle,  
To Purgatory fire thou com'st at last;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

If ever thou gav'st meat or drink,  
Every nighte and alle,  
The fire sall never make thee shrink;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

If meat or drink thou ne'er gav'st nane,  
Every nighte and alle,  
The fire will burn thee to the bare bane;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,  
Every nighte and alle,  
Fire and fleet and candle-lighte,  
And Christe receive thy saule.

Lyke Wake Dirge, Anonymous (15th century)

## 6. Hymn

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,  
Now the sun is laid to sleep,  
Seated in thy silver chair,  
State in wonted manner keep:  
Hesperus entreats thy light,  
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade  
Dare itself to interpose;  
Cynthia's shining orb was made  
Heav'n to clear when day did close:  
Bless us then with wishèd sight,  
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,  
And thy crystal shining quiver;  
Give unto the flying hart  
Space to breathe, how short so-ever:

Thou that mak'st a day of night,  
Goddess excellently bright.

Ben Jonson (1572–1637)

## 7. Sonnet

O soft embalmer of the still midnight,  
Shutting with careful fingers and benign  
Our gloom-pleas'd eyes, embower'd from  
the light,  
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine:

O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close  
In midst of this thine hymn my willing eyes,  
Or wait the "Amen" ere thy poppy throws  
Around my bed its lulling charities.

Then save me, or the passèd day will shine  
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes,  
Save me from curious Conscience, that still  
lords

Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a  
mole;  
Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards,  
And seal the hushèd Casket of my Soul.

John Keats (1795–1821)

## 8. Epilogue

(Solo horn – off stage)