

Canticle II

Abraham and Isaac

BENJAMIN BRITTEN, Op. 51

Slow recitative

GOD SPEAKETH

ALTO

TENOR

PIANO

pp

A - bra - ham!.... My servant A - bra - ham,

pp

A - bra - ham!.... My servant A - bra - ham,

pp

pp

pp

pp

clearly

Take I - saac,... thy son by name, That thou lov-est the best of all,.....

clearly

Take I - saac,... thy son by name, That thou lov-est the best of all,.....

p

p

marked

And in sa - cri - fice of - fer him to me

marked

And in sa - cri - fice of - fer him to me

mp

mp

A. Up - on that hill there.... be - sides thee.....

T. Up - on that hill there.... be - sides thee.....

mf

A. *pp* A - bra - ham, I will that so it be,.....

T. *pp* A - bra - ham, I will that so it be,.....

pp

A. *pp* For ought that may be - fall. moving forward

T. *pp* For ought that may be - fall.

pp *cresc.*

ABRAHAM RISETH AND SAITH:

A. 


T. 

pp cresc.


My 



with resolution

T. 

Lord, to Thee is mine in - tent E - ver to be o -



T. 

- be - di - ent. That son that Thou to me hast



T. 

sent Of-fer I will to Thee Thy bid - ding done shall

rall.



Gently moving

T. *p*
be.

(always sustained)

p

senza Ped. (always staccato)

HERE ABRAHAM, TURNING TO HIS SON ISAAC, SAITH:

T. *p*
Make thee rea-dy, my dear dar-ling, For we must do a lit - tle

HERE ISAAC SPEAKETH TO HIS FATHER, AND TAKETH A BUNDLE OF STICKS AND BEARETH AFTER HIS FATHER.

A. *pp*
Fa-ther, I am all rea - - - - dy.

T. *always p*
thing. This woo-dē do on thy

T. back it bring, We may no lon - - - - ger a -

A. *pp*
 Fa-ther I am all rea - - - - -

T.
 - bide. *(always sustained)* A

(always staccato)

A.
 - dy.

T. *cresc.*
 sword and fire that I will take, For sa - cri - fice be -

cresc.

T. *dim.* *p*
 - hoves me to make; God's bidding will I not for - sake, But e - ver o - be - dient

dim.

A. *p*
 Fa-ther, I am all rea - - - - - dy To do your bid - ding most

T.
 - be.

p

A. mee - kë - ly, And to bear this wood full bayn* am I, As you com -
 (always sustained)

(always staccato)

HERE THEY GO BOTH TO THE PLACE TO DO SACRIFICE.

A. - man - ded me. My... dear fa - ther.... I

T. Now, I - saac son, go we our way To yon - der

A. will es - say, I will es - say To fol - low, fol - low you full fain.

T. mount if that we may.

dim. *dim.* *dim.* *p dim.*

* bayn - willing

ABRAHAM BEING MINDED TO SLAY HIS SON ISAAC, LIFTS UP HIS HANDS, AND SAITH THE FOLLOWING:

Recitative *pp* (broadly) *pp* (speaking)

T. *pp* *(trem.)* *pp*

O! My heart will break... in three, To hear thy words I have pi -

(broadly)

T. -tye; As Thou wilt, Lord, so... must it be, To Thee I will be bayn.

pp *pp*

p simply *pp* simply

A. All rea - dy fa - ther,... lo,... it is

T. Lay down thy fag-got, my own son dear.....

pp

(broadly) quicker *cresc.*

A. here. But why make you such hea - vy cheer? Are you a - ny-thing a-dread?

T. Ah!.....

pp *cresc.*

marked

A. Fa - ther if it be your will,

T. Dear God! That me is woel.....

A. Where is the beast that we shall kill?.....

T. There-of,... son, is none up - on this hill.....

mf

A. Fa - ther, I am full sore af - feared To see you bear that drawnē sword. (#)

T. I - saac, son,

cresc.

cresc.

(very urgent)
cresc.

A. I pray you, fa - ther,

T. peace, I pray thee, Thou break - est my heart e - ven in three.

f (rit)

p cresc.

A. *)layn no - thing from me, But tell... me what you think.

T. Ah! I - saac,

(rit)

f

T. I - saac, I..... must thee.... kill!

rall.

In time - very agitated

f *p*

*)layn - hide

A. *f* *p*

A - las! Fa - ther, is that your will, Your

A. *f* *p*

own - ë child for to spill U - pon this hil - lës

A. *f* *p*

brink?..... If I have tres - passed in a - ny de - gree, With a

A. *f* *p* *f* *p*

yard you may beat me; Put up your sword,..... if your will

A. *pp* *pp*

be, For I.... am but a child, For I.... am but a

A. *p*
 child. Would God my...mother were here with mel.....

T. *f*
 O I - saac, son, to thee I say

A. *cresc.*
 She would kneel down u - pon her knee, Praying you,

T. *f*
 God hath comman - - ded me to - day Sa - cri - fice,.....

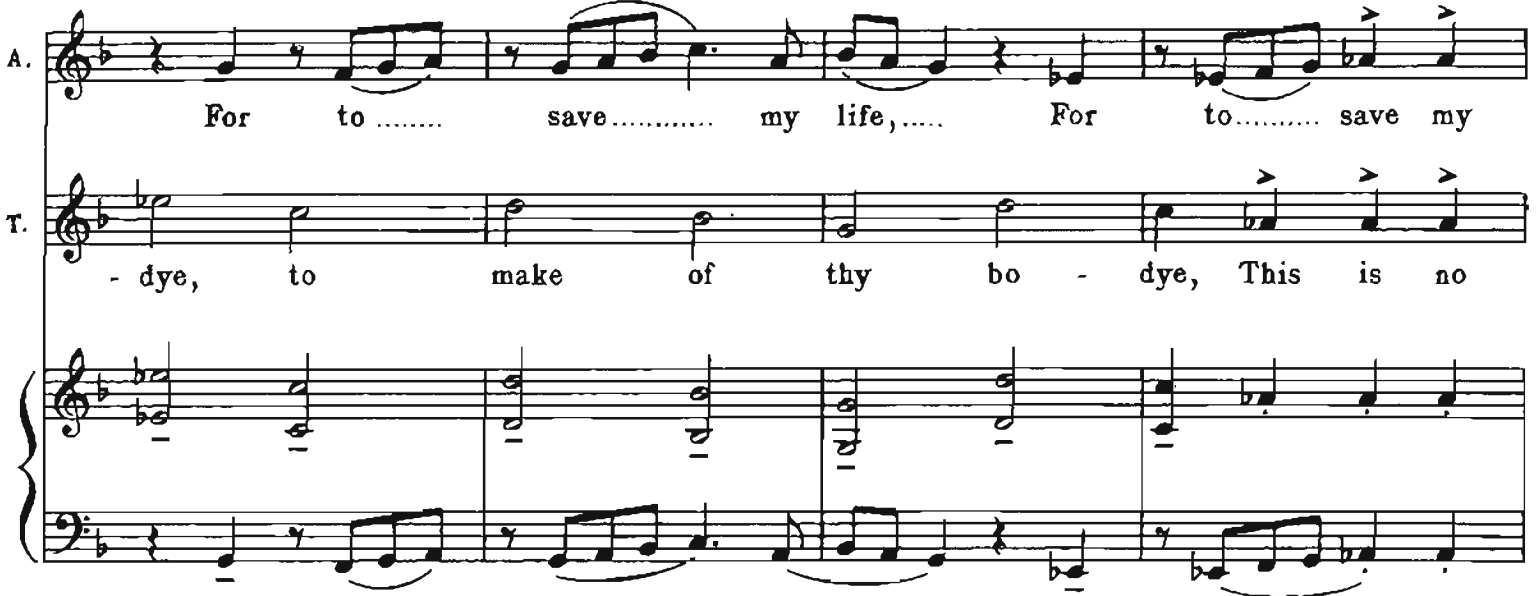
A. *f*
 fa - ther, if it may be, For to..... save my life.....

T. *f*
 this is no nay, To make of thy bo -

marked

A. For to save my life, For to save my

T. - dye, to make of thy bo - dye, This is no



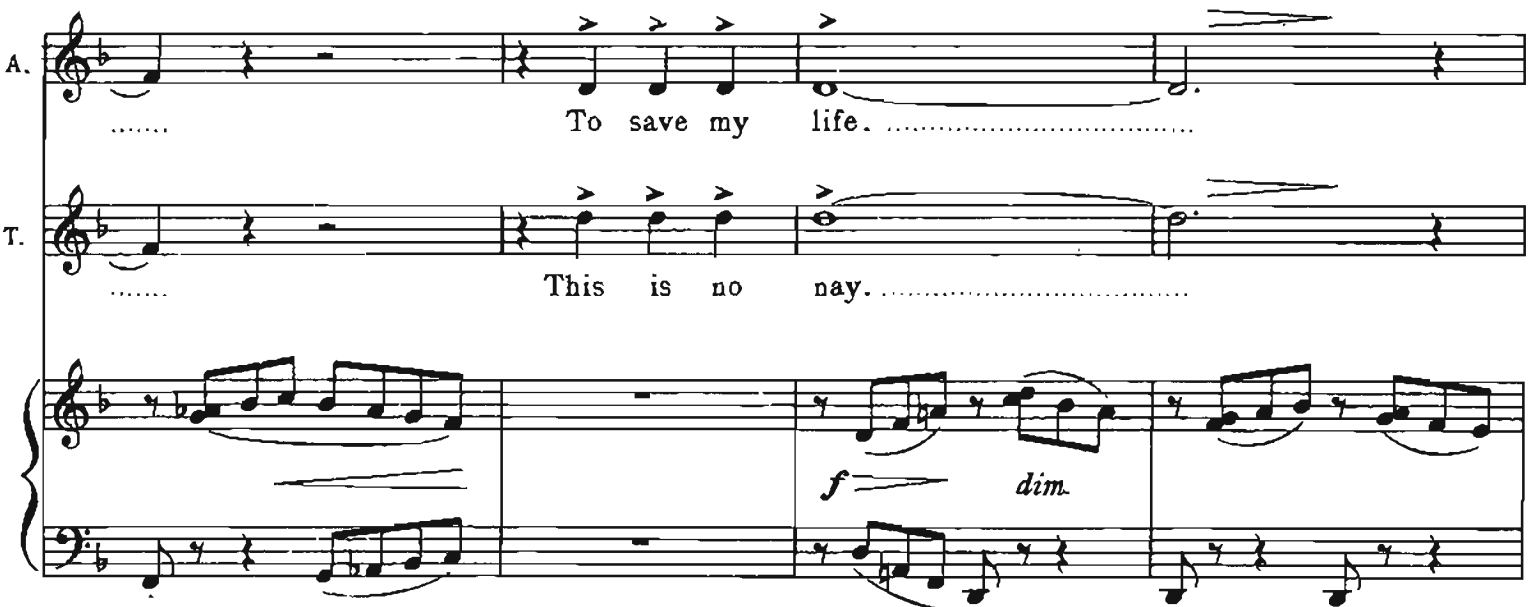
A. life, To save my life,

T. nay, This is no nay,



A. To save my life.

T. This is no nay.



a little slower

A. *p* $\overbrace{\quad\quad\quad}^3$

Is it God's will I shall be slain?

p *pp*

T. *p* $\overbrace{\quad\quad\quad}^3$

Yea, son, it is not for to layn.

pp *pp*

HERE ISAAC ASKETH HIS FATHER'S BLESSING ON HIS KNEES, AND SAITH:

pp slower

A. *ppp*

Fa - ther,

A. $\overbrace{\quad\quad\quad}^3$ $\overbrace{\quad\quad\quad}^3$

see-ing you must-ë needs do so, Let it pass light-ly.... and o - ver go;

Broadly and freely

A. *f*

Kneel - ing on my kne - ës two, Your.... bles - sing on me spread.

T. *f* My... bles-sing,... dear son, give I thee And thy mo - ther's...with

T. heart free; The bless - ing..... of the Tri - ni - ty,

T. *pp* My dear son, on.... thee light....

f *dim.*

HENCE ISAAC RISETH AND COMETH TO HIS FATHER, AND HE TAKETH HIM, AND BINDETH AND LAVETH HIM ON THE ALTAR TO SACRIFICE HIM, AND SAITH:

Recitative *p simply*

T. Come hi-ther, my child, thou art so sweet, Thou must be bound both hands and

Quietly and gently

pp smoothly

A. Fa - - ther, do with me as you..... will, I must o -

T. feet.

A. - bey, and that is..... skill, Go - des com - mand - ment to.....

A. ful - fil, For needs so it must be.

T. I - saac, I - saac,

A. Fa - - ther, greet well my bre - thren....

T. bles - sèd..... must thou be.

A. *cresc.* ying, And pray my mo - ther of her bless - ing, I come no *f*

A. more, no more un - - der her wing, *dim.*

A. *pp* Fare-well for e - ver and aye.

T. *p* Fare-well, my swee - te son of.....

A. *pp* Fare-well, fare - well, for e - ver and aye.

T. *p* grace! Fare-well, fare - well, fare -

pp

A. Fare - well for e - ver and aye, fare -

T. *dim.* - well, fare - well, my..... swee - te son, fare - well, fare -

dim.

HERE ABRARAM DOTH KISS HIS SON ISAAC, AND BINDS A KERCHIEF ABOUT HIS HEAD.

Very slow and solemn

pp

A. - well. I pray you, fa-ther,

T. - well.

always marked

ppp *cresc. little by little*

A. turn down my face, For I am sore a-dread.

T. *cresc.* Lord, full loth

T. *.....were I him to kill!*

8 *(loco)*
con 8

A. *Ah, mer-cy, fa-ther, why tar-ry you so?*

T. *Je - sul! On me have*

cresc.

(loco)
con 8 *cresc.* con 8 *cresc.* con 8

A. *Now, fa - ther, ...*

T. *pi - ty, That I have most in mind.*

f

con 8 *f* con 8

A. *f* I see that I shall die: *cresc.* Al - migh - ty God in

T. *cresc.* To do

(loco) *con 8* *con 8*

HERE LET ABRAHAM MAKE A SIGN AS THOUGH HE WOULD CUT OFF HIS SON ISAAC'S HEAD WITH

A. majes-ty! My soul I of-fer un-to thee!

T. this deed I am sor-rye....

long *long*

f *ff* *Red. con 8*

con 8 *con 8* *con 8*

HIS SWORD; THEN GOD SPEAKETH. Slow recitative

A. *pp* A - bra - ham! ... my servant dear, A - bra - ham!..

T. *pp* A - bra - ham! ... my servant dear, A - bra - ham!..

pp *p* *Red.* *Red.*

clearly

A. Lay not thy sword in no man-ner On I-saac, thy dear dar-ling.....

clearly

T. Lay not thy sword in no man-ner On I-saac, thy dear dar-ling.....

mp

A. For thou dread - est me, well wot I,.....

T. For thou dread - est me, well wot I,.....

mf

A. That of thy son has no mer - cy,.....

T. That of thy son has no mer - cy,.....

mf

Very lively

ABRAHAM RISETH
AND SAITH:

A. *pp* To ful - fil my bid - ding.

T. *pp* To ful - fil my bid - ding. *p* Ah,

pp *p short*

T. Lord of Heav'n and King of bliss,

T. *f* Thy bid - ding shall be done, i - wiss! *p* A horn - ed

T. we - ther here I see, A - mong the bri - ars tied is he,.....

T. *f*
 To Thee of-fered shall he be A - non right in this

T. **THEN LET ABRAHAM TAKE THE LAMB AND KILL HIM.**
 place, A - non right in this place.

T. *f* *cresc.* (*freely*)
 Sa - cri- fice here sent me is, And all, Lord, through ... Thy

ENVOI
 Easily moving

A. *p*
 Such o - be - di - ence grant us, O Lord!

T. *p*
 grace. Such o - be - di - ence grant us, O

A. E - ver... to thy most ho - - - ly word.....

T. Lord..... E - ver... to thy most ho - - - ly

A. That in the same we may ac - cord As... this A - bra -

T. word. That in the same we may ac - cord.

A. - ham was bayn; And then al - to -

T. As... this A - bra - ham was bayn;.....

A. *p*
 - ge - ther shall we That wor - thy king..... in

T.
 And then.... all to - ge - ther shall we That

A. *p*
 Hea - ven see, And dwell with him in

T.
 wor - thy king in Hea - ven see, in Heav'n,.....

A. *p*
 great glo - rye For..... e - ver and

T. *p*
 And dwell with him in great glo - rye

A. *p* e - ver, A - men, For..... e - ver and

T. *p* For..... e - ver and e - ver, A - - - men,

A. *p* e - ver, A - men. *Slower* (♩ = ♩) *p* For.....

T. *p* For..... e - ver and e - ver, A - - - men. For

A. *rall.* *pp* e - ver and e - ver, A - men.

T. *pp* e - ver and e - ver, A - men.