

PROGRAM NOTES

The great English author, Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), wrote the poem *My Boy Jack* during the early years of World War I. It first appeared untitled as the preface of *Cripple and Paralytic*, one of four articles Kipling wrote in *Destroyers at Jutland*, accounts of battle that were published in 1916. The titled poem was subsequently included in *Twenty Poems from Rudyard Kipling* (1918).

As a result of the play script, *My Boy Jack*, written by David Haig in 1997, and the subsequent BBC television film by the same name, the poem quickly came to be identified as Kipling's lament over the death of his son John, who was killed during the Battle of Loos in France in 1915. However, it is just as likely that the poem is a tribute to all who were lost during The Great War, and to those who mourned them.

This more inclusive interpretation seemed evident when Clara Butt, the great English contralto, invited Sir Edward German to compose a setting of the poem for voice and piano in 1916. In a later orchestrated version that the composer made, Butt performed the piece with the Royal Philharmonic, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Clearly, the poem—and its music—played into the significant patriotic spirit of the times.

In my setting, I opted to cast the forlorn “questioner” not as one person—a grieving parent—but rather as a mixed solo quartet, representing “everyone.” My harmonic language in the poem's first three stanzas is intended to portray the sorrow and angst that Kipling's words so effectively convey. In the last stanza, however, the tone of the poem suddenly changes, becoming more positive and resolute: “Then hold your head up all the more, this tide, and every tide...” To reflect this shift, I elected to use a quasi-English folksong style, one that is more lyrical and direct.

—David Ashley White

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The source of some of the historical information given above was taken from an online article focusing on *My Boy Jack*, posted by The Kipling Society in England and edited by Brian Southam.

My Boy Jack (1916)

“Have you news of my boy Jack?”

Not this tide.

“When d’you think that he’ll come back?”

Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

“Has any one else had word of him?”

Not this tide.

For what is sunk will hardly swim,

Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

“Oh, dear, what comfort can I find?”

None this tide,

Nor any tide,

Except he did not shame his kind —

Not even with that wind blowing, and that tide.

Then hold your head up all the more,

This tide,

And every tide;

Because he was the son you bore,

And gave to that wind blowing and that tide!

—Rudyard Kipling
(1865–1936)

For the Concert Chorale, Moores School of Music, University of Houston
 Betsy Cook Weber, conductor

My Boy Jack

for SATB Soli, SATB Chorus unaccompanied

My Boy Jack (1916) by
 Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936)

David Ashley White
 (b. 1944)

Expressive, fluidly moving (♩ = ca. 60)

Soprano Solo
 Alto Solo

Tenor Solo
 Bass Solo

Expressive, fluidly moving (♩ = ca. 60) *p*

Soprano
 Oo, _____

Alto
p
 Oo, _____ oo, _

Tenor
p
 8 Oo, _____ oo, _____

Bass
p
 Oo, _____ oo, _____

Expressive, fluidly moving (♩ = ca. 60)

Keyboard
 (for rehearsal only)

5 B.Solo *p* *urgently* *mf* *f* *p*

T. Solo
B. Solo

“Have you news _ of _ my boy Jack?”

S *mp* *f*

A *mp* *f*

T *p* *mf* *f*

B *p* *mf* *f*

9 T. Solo *mf* *f*

B. Solo *mf* *f*

T. Solo *mf* *f*

B. Solo *mf* *f*

S *pp* *pp*

A *f* *pp*

T *mp* *f* *pp*

B *mp* *f* *pp*

Not _ this tide, _ this tide. Oo, _

Not _ this tide, _ this tide. Oo, _

Not this tide, _ this tide. Oo, _

Not this tide, _ this tide. Oo, _

14

T. Solo
B. Solo

back?"

S

oo, _____ blow - ing, blow - ing, _____ and

A

oo, _____ Not with this wind blow - ing, _____ blow - ing, _____ and

T

oo, _____ blow - ing, _____ and

B

oo, _____ blow - ing, _____ and

musical notation for piano accompaniment

19 A. Solo *mf* *f*

S. Solo
A. Solo

"Has an - y - one else had word of him?"

T. Solo
B. Solo

"Has an - y - one else had word of him?"

S
A

this _ tide. oo, _____ Not this tide. *f* *ff* *f* For

T
B

this _ tide. oo, _____ Not this tide.

musical notation for piano accompaniment

24

S what is sunk will hard-ly swim, not with this wind, this wind.

A *mf* Oo, not with this wind, *f*

T *mf* Oo, not with this wind, *f*

B *mf* Oo, not with this wind, *f*

29

T. Solo *urgently f*

B. Solo "Oh,

S blow - ing and this tide, this tide.

A Oh, blow - ing, and this tide, this tide.

T this wind, Oh, blow - ing, this tide, this tide.

B this wind, Oh, blow - ing, this tide, this tide.

35 *urgently* com - fort

f

S. Solo
A. Solo

"Oh, dear, what com - fort shall I find?"

T. Solo
B. Solo

dear, what com - fort shall I find?"

S

pp \leftarrow *p* *mp* \leftarrow *mf* \leftarrow *f*

Oo. None this tide,

A

pp \leftarrow *p* *mp* \leftarrow *mf* \leftarrow *f*

Oo. None this tide,

T

p \leftarrow *mp* \leftarrow *mf* \leftarrow *f*

None this tide, this tide

B

p \leftarrow *mp* \leftarrow *mf* \leftarrow *f*

None this tide, this tide

Piano accompaniment



*gradually rit. while growing in intensity**a tempo*

40

S *ff*
nor an - y tide, ex - cept he did not shame his kind -- Not

A *ff*
nor an - y tide, ex - cept he did not shame his kind -- Not

T *ff*
nor an - y tide, ex - cept he did not shame his kind --

B *ff*
nor an - y tide, ex - cept he did not shame his kind --

gradually rit. while growing in intensity *a tempo*

45 **Boldly** *fp*

S ev - en with that wind - blow - ing, wind blow - ing, and that tide, that

A *fp*
ev - en with that wind - blow - ing, wind blow - ing, and that tide, *p* that

T *unis.*
that wind blow - ing, blow - ing, oo,

B *unis.* *p*
that wind blow - ing, blow - ing, oo,

Boldly

Tenderly, but not slower

49 *mf* *mp*

S
tide. Then hold your head up

A
tide. Then hold your head up

T
that tide. Oo. Then hold your

B
that tide. Oo. Then hold your

mf *mp*

Tenderly, but not slower

53 *mf*

S
all the more, this tide, and ev-'ry tide; be - cause he was the

A
all the more, this tide, and ev-'ry tide; be - cause he was the

T
head up, this tide, and ev-'ry tide; be - cause he was the

B
head up, this tide, and ev-'ry tide; be - cause he was the

57 *f* *A bit slower* *mf* *poco rit.*

S
son you bore, and gave to that wind blow - ing and that

A
son you bore, and gave to that wind blow - ing and that

T
son you bore,

B
son you bore,

f *A bit slower* *poco rit.*

61 *a tempo* *p* *mf*

S
tide, tide!

A
tide,

T
oo, oo, oo,

B
oo, oo, oo,

a tempo *p* *mf*

64

S *p* *rit.*

A *mf* that tide! *p*

T *p* 8 00.

B *p* 00.

rit.

February 25, 2015
3:30

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