

when I was just a boy
TTBB a cappella

Isaac Lovdahl

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CANTUS-012

when I was just a boy

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Text and Translation

When my father said he was leaving,
I ran with my sister to the brook
behind our grandparents' house.

We held each other as we wept,
innocence spilling from our tiny eyes.

She went back before me
to be with our mother.
I stayed a while longer and sat
in the silence of my final childish moments.

Who would teach me to be strong?
Who would share their wisdom?
Who would pick me up when I fall down?

I will build my own refuge.
I will seek my own teachers.
I will be my own hero.

I will be the man that I needed
when I was just a boy.

From the Composer

when I was just a boy is the most deeply personal piece I have ever written. Unfortunately, like so many other children, my father was not present in any kind of meaningful way during my formative years. So many of us carry the burden of having to break the cycle of absence and abuse. It is my sincerest hope that this music might have a meaningful impact on others who have had similar experiences. To achieve this goal, the piece must be sung with the deep earnestness of your inner child. The tempo should not be strict – it can surge ahead and relax at the discretion of the performers/director. The tenor soloist is encouraged to step forward from the ensemble when they sing, ensuring that they are heard prominently over the ensemble. May all who encounter this music, from the audience or the ensemble, find strength, hope, and healing.

Biography

Isaac Lovdahl is an award-winning composer, conductor, educator, and bass-baritone vocalist who serves as Director of Choral Activities at Bemidji State University and Artistic Director of the Bemidji Chorale. His music has been described as "a revelation" and "remarkable" (*The American Prize*), and is increasingly gaining traction throughout the choral music world. In recent years, Isaac has received award recognition, commissions, and premieres from Cantus, the Yale Glee Club, The Singers - Minnesota Choral Artists, the Young New Yorkers' Chorus, the Cambridge Chamber Singers, Choral Arts Initiative, the Festival of New American Music, the Ithaca College Choral Composition Festival, Minneapolis SongSLAM, and the North Dakota Music Teachers Association in conjunction with the Music Teachers National Association, among others. To learn more, please visit isaaclovdahl.com.

when I was just a boy

TTBB a cappella

music and lyrics by
Isaac Lovdahl

Rubato; molto espressivo (♩ = 53)

The score is for a vocal ensemble (TTBB) and piano. It is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The tempo is marked 'Rubato; molto espressivo' with a quarter note equal to 53 beats per minute. The piece begins with a Tenor Solo part. The lyrics are: 'said he was leav - ing; When my fath - - er said, I ran with my sis - ter... When my fath - - er said, I ran with my'. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *pp* (pianissimo). There are also slurs and accents over the notes. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand, with some triplet figures.

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when I was just a boy

5

T1 *p* to the brook be - hind our grand - par - ents' house. We held each oth - er,

T2 *p* sis - ter. We held each oth - er,

B *p* We held each oth - er,

B *p* We held each oth - er,

Pno.

10

T1 *mp* we held each oth - er as we wept, *f*

T2 *mp* we held each oth - er as we wept, *f*

B *mp* we held each oth - er as we wept, *f*

B *mp* we held each oth - er as we wept, *f*

Pno.

when I was just a boy

A

rit.....

B

mf

14

Solo

T1

T2

B

B

Pno.

p *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

in - no - cence spill - ing from our tin - y eyes. [m]

in - no - cence spill - ing from our tin - y eyes. [m]

in - no - cence spill - ing from our tin - y eyes. [m]

in - no - cence spill - ing from our tin - y eyes. [m]

She went back be - fore me to

18

Solo

T1

T2

B

B

Pno.

p *p* *p* *p*

be with our moth - er. _____

I stayed a while long - er _____ and sat _____ in the si - lence,

I stayed a while long - er _____ and sat _____ in the si - lence,

I stayed a while long - er _____ and sat _____ in the si - lence, sat

I stayed a while long - er _____ and sat _____ in the si - lence,

when I was just a boy

23

T1
sat in the si - lence, in the si - lence.

T2
sat in the si - lence, in the si - lence.

B
in the si - lence of my fin - al child - ish mom - ments. [m]

B
sat in the si - lence of my fin - al child - ish mom - ments. [m]

Pno.

27 *mp*

T1
Who would teach me to be strong? [ŋ]

T2
mp
Who would teach me to be strong? [ŋ]

B
mp
Who would teach me to be

B

Pno.

when I was just a boy

30

T1 *mf* Who would pick me up when I fall

T2 *mf* Who would pick me up when I fall

B *mf* strong? [n] Who would pick me up when I fall

B *mp* Who would share their wis - - dom? [m] *mf* Who would pick me up when I fall

Pno.

34

T1 *sub. p* down? [m]

T2 *sub. p* down? [m]

B *sub. p* down? [m] *mp* I will build, I will build,

B *sub. p* down? [m] *mp* I will build, I will build,

Pno.

Building courage **C** ♩ = 97

45

Solo

when I was just a boy *f*

build, _____ I _____

T1

I will seek my own, I will seek my own, I will seek my own,

T2

teach - ers, my own teach ers, my own teach - ers, my own

B

I will seek, I will seek, I will seek,

B

I will seek, I will seek, I will seek,

Pno.

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48

Solo

_____ will seek, _____ I _____ will be _____

T1

I will seek my own, I will be my own, I will be my own, I will be my

T2

teach - ers, my own teach - ers, my own her - o, I _____ will be my

B

I will seek, I will be, I will be, I will be my

B

I will seek, I will be, I will be, I will be my

Pno.

VOCAL ENSEMBLE

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when I was just a boy

D *molto rit.*.....

As before

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 53$

mf

Solo *ff* **E** *mp* *mf*

my own her - o. man that I

T1 *ff* *mp* *mf*

own her - o. I will be the man [n]

T2 *ff* *mp* *mf*

own her - o. I will be the man [n]

B *ff* *mp* *mf*

own her - o. I will be the man [n]

B *ff* *mp* *mf*

own her - o. I will be the man [n]

Pno.

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Cantus VOCAL ENSEMBLE

58 **F** *molto rit.*.....

Solo need - ed

T1 *mp* *p*

when I was just a boy. [m]

T2 *mp* *p*

when I was just a boy. [m]

B *mp* *p*

when I was just a boy. [m]

B *mp* *p*

when I was just a boy. [m]

Pno.

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