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Boychoir

By Ben Ripley

Mine eyes have seen the glory
Of the coming of the Lord
He is trampling out the vintage
Where the grapes of wrath are stored
He has loosed the fateful lightning
Of His terrible swift sword
Okay! Okay! Enough! Enough!
Now, who wants to tell me what
the time signature is for this song?
Four-four.

Anybody?

It's a four-four.

Come on! You learned
time signatures last week!
You will remain nothing more
than an unmusical mob!

You want a four-four?

I'll give you a four-four.

Glory glory hallelujah

Stop it. You stop!

Teacher hit me with a ruler

The ruler turned bad

and the teacher dropped dead

And the teacher don't teach no more

- Hey, Stet.

- Hey, Curly.

Someone saw your mom out
with a skinhead in Midland.

Shut up, okay?

I thought she only dated Mexicans.

La cucaracha la cucaracha

Hey!

Talk about my mom like that
one more time, Jimmy!

One more time!

Keep your head up when you walk, boy.

Go to hell!

That's what I thought.

- Wake up.

- Hmm...

- Mom, wake up.

- What?

You promised you wouldn't
do this anymore.

How'd it get so late?

Here.

- What happened?

- Hmm...

You're not gonna work?

I don't even know where you work.

It's a restaurant, okay?

I told you already.

- Oh, so you're a waitress.

- No, I'm a zoo keeper.

The... What's her name called? Um...

The principal, Ms. Steel,

she wants to see me again tomorrow.

What is it this time, Stet? Huh?

More fights? You cutting class again?

Stet!

We're one minute late.

Three minutes late. Your watch is slow.

- Why are we singing here?

- Oh, the usual.

Testing new music, tryouts, auditions.

Use it as a rehearsal.

Alright, gather round. Stay focused,

no matter what the battlefield.

Paul, have you seen Stet?

He was supposed to find me.

- What did he do now?

- You really want to know?

Uh, no. He's coming to the concert.

I don't think this is

the time to reward Stet

- for his bad behaviour.

- Yeah, but this is different.

You remember me telling you

about these kids, right?

How they train to sing

and tour the world?

Yeah.

Alright, so pay attention, Stet.

- Quickly and quietly.

- Mr. Carvelle?

I'm Patricia Steel.

We spoke on the phone.

Thank you so much

for coming to our school.

I've been looking forward
to this for a long time.

- You're very persistent.

- Well, I suppose I am.

- Could you excuse me?

- Yes.

We have with us today
one of the world's finest youth choirs,
under the direction of the great
master Mr. Anton Carvelle.

Please welcome The National Boychoir!

Stet?

- Stet!

- It was on the floor.

I was gonna give it right back.

I didn't know

- that it was yours...

- Just come with me.

No attitude. Do you understand?

Just look him in the eyes
and give him a firm handshake.

You only get one chance
at a first impression.

- What are you talking about?

- It's a tryout, Stet.

They're going to audition you.

I brought him here for you.

- Stay here, Stet.

- Let's get it over with.

Mr. Carvelle...

this is the boy that I told you about.

He has an amazing voice.

First of all, I'd like to know
what type of training he's had...

Drake, let's just hear him.

I don't have time for this.

Yes. Stet, if you could start...

Hey, this is Debbie.

If you want to leave a message
for me or for Stet,
you know what to do.

It's your mom. She had an accident.

I'm sorry, Stet.

Are you okay?

Everyone that Father gives
to me will come to me
and I will never turn away
those who believe in me...

You sure you don't wanna go over there?

Okay.

You must be Mr. Owens.

Stet?

PRIEST@ We commit her body
to the ground.

Earth to earth, and dust to dust.

The Lord bless her and keep her.

The Lord make His face
to shine upon her...

Actually, we had your name on the file,
- or rather your lawyer's name.

- I did help support them, yes.

But in 12 years, you haven't seen him.

This was a long time ago. I...

I hardly knew her.

But I always did what was right,
because of the boy.

So, in terms of legal custody...

I have a family already.

I was married when I met her.

You understand that.

Now, I'm not disputing paternity.

What's... what's best here
is that the boy
is placed in foster care.

Oh, I don't think so, Mr. Owens.

Stet, he has talent, musical talent.

I don't know what you're talking about.

I know you have no wish
to be involved with his life,
but the fact is there are
other places for him
other than foster care.

There's a private school.

It's on the East coast.

I don't know how he gets in,
or if he gets in,

but he has a chance at a better life.

It will save you a lot
of time... and exposure.
I'm just saying.
Expectations are,
at least from the market,
that you will see
about 160,000 jobs created...
6.9%...
Hey, hon, it's, uh... it's me.
Uh, listen, my...
my flight was cancelled.
Yeah, yeah, I know.
I guess there's a storm in the Midwest.
No, no, no, it's fine,
I got another flight tomorrow.
I'm coming into Newark
sometime in the afternoon.
Tell the girls I love them. Bye.
I'll call you later.
Bye.
Is that the family you already have?
Yeah.
You can sing, right?
- E flat.
- What?
The squeak in the shoe.
I'm sure you understand
this was an unplanned meeting
and Mr. Carvelle is a very busy man.
So am I, actually.
Okay. Go ahead, Stet.
Hm... Odessa. I remember.
You walked out on me.
That was a first.
Am I right?
Sing. Sing anything.
Mine eyes have seen the glory
Of the coming of the Lord
He's trampling out the vintage
Where the grapes of wrath are stored
He hath loosed the fateful lightening
Of His terrible swift sword
His truth
Is marching

On

Um... Wow, thank you, Stet.

Um... would you step out
and give us a minute?

Well?

- No.

- I agree.

For Christ sakes,
the kid probably sings better
than half of this school.

He has neither the desire nor
the discipline for this school.

And he doesn't know
when or where to breathe.

Well, his technique needs work,
but that's to be expected.

There are other considerations as well,
starting with the calendar.

We're well into the fall term
and we only accept new students
at certain periods of the year.

He's too old. Most of the boys here
have already had years
of rigorous private training
and they play other instruments
along with voice.

Well then, teach him something.

Mr. Owens,
this is the premier
boychoir school in the nation.
Students here sing
with celebrated orchestras,
they record albums, and
they tour throughout the world.

How much?

You really think you can
just bribe your way in here?

The way of the world, sir.

Uh... that's not exactly how this works.

This is for the entire
first year's tuition,
plus a little something extra.

Consider it a donation.

You're in. It's all taken care of.

You got a roof, meals, spending money.
And... I am going home now.
I thought you weren't going
home till tomorrow.
You are a smart boy. You'll be okay.
You'll start in the beginners' course.
We have academics in the morning,
singing rehearsals in the afternoon.
Nobody's late. No one's unprepared.
And we'll expect you
to put in at least 10 hours
of individual practice a week.
You've got a lot of catching up to do.
Here we go.
This side's yours.
Now, the morning bell rings at 6.
Breakfast is at 6:30.
Classes start at 7.
And you must be in uniform at all times,
except weekends and evenings.
And dinner is at 6.
Now, I'll let you settle in.
Hey, Stet.
You'll be fine.
Yeah, that's fine.
Just give me a call back...
Get this in the bank ASAP, Joanie.
And make out a new file: Stetson Tate.
- Will do.
- Interesting concept, selling
admission to the highest bidder.
Wonderfully American.
- Here. The big one, New York.
- New York?
Don't get excited. We didn't get in.
I wish you wouldn't open
my mail, Carvelle.
- It was in my box.
- Holiday concert,
long difficult process,
world class contenders.
- Who'd we lose it to this year?
- Vienna Boys' Choir.
It's all politics, probably.

Politics has nothing to do with it.
We're not good enough.
That's a little harsh, isn't it?
We are good enough. He just
doesn't care about winning.
Must be a special kind of torture,
waiting for someone to retire.
Yes, it is.
Ah! I heard there was a new kid.
Well, looks like we're roommates.
Rafael Abrams. But people call me Raffi.
- Stet.
- Stet...
- As in Stetson?
- Just Stet.
Okay, just Stet,
I'd love to stay and chat,
but I'm late for Polyphonics.
Needless to say,
mi casa, su casa, right?
Borrow any score you like.
...and all the people say rejoice
Rejoice
Rejoice rejoice
Rejoice rejoice
Lemme hear it louder now rejoice
Rejoice rejoice
Rejoice rejoice
Stetson, were you, by chance,
using my sound system?
Because on my way to Polyphonics,
I heard Parsifal blasting loudly
coming from this room.
Mi casa, su casa, right?
It's a gem, Stetson, it's not a toy.
- Like I care.
- Okay.
I see. Don't ever touch it again!
I go there a lot,
like every single summer,
- 'cause my family's there.
- Oh, wow.
So, when's the next time
you get to tour a city?

Atlanta.

Hi.

- I'm Fernando.

- Stet.

Stet.

Okay, so this is the Kodaly for theory
and the Martini for vocal technique.

And we're already six chapters in,
so you're gonna have
to catch up, dude, okay?

Alright, everybody up at the piano.

We're going to start with intervals.

Ready? Sing tonic.

Sing a fifth up.

Sing a minor third down.

Sing a perfect fourth up.

Sing a major second down.

Back to tonic.

Guys. Guys!

Now sing a major chord.

I got it. I got it.

Hello?

Hello?

Hello?

What was that?

It was a 609 number.

There's no one there.

Do you know where that is?

609. No, no idea. Look it up.

Probably one of your
secret admirers, huh?

Hey, Devon, how about a chip?

No. Raffi, put on the movie.

Get your own, Andre.

Anybody have any money?

Okay, let's go...

Let's start! Okay, no. Go!

No way!

- Oh, nice!

- Yes!

This kid's bad news.

Stop! Stop!

Something isn't right. Um...

Pick it up from the 11th measure.

What is it? What's wrong?
Sing the third measure. Stet, just you.
The third measure. Sing it.
It's on the page.
Between the second
and the fourth measure.
It'll be alright.
Okay, guys, let's start again.
- The boy cannot read music.
- Then teach him.
- You're a teacher, right?
- I'm not teaching
the most basic prerequisites
of musicology!
Get over yourself, Drake.
He's got talent,
let's make him a star
like we did with Devon.
I made Devon a star. Stet is no Devon.
Then stick him
in the back row and move on.
Just how many compromises
to our integrity
- do you expect me to make?
- What?
How many compromises to our integrity
- do you expect me to make?
- Many.
A lot.
I make them all day.
You think you've got problems?
I've got the board, the budget,
and all of you to contend with.
Your egos, your demands, the acoustics.
Nothing's ever perfect,
nothing's ever right.
I should've taken that job
in Garrison County.
It was just beautiful
horse country down there.
Girls cleaning out their stables.
It was just, just, just... Go.
Alright, everybody! Let's get started.
Today, we're singing Tallis'

Spem in alium,
composed circa 1570.
It's a 40-part motet,
eight-stacked soprano
antiphonal arrangements.
And by the way, thank you,
gentlemen, for your assist.
Mr. Drake.
Spem in alium
nunquam habui praeter in te.
I have no hope in any other than you.
Now, this is very important.
I have no hope in any other than you.
Opening motif. Key of A.
Starting on the major chord.
Simple as that. Leading trebles.
First phrase only.
Shh, shh... No.
No vibrato.
I want a clean sound. Pure and simple.
Do it again.
Second choir, join in!
Listen to each other.
Baritones, blend with them.
And bass.
That's it.
So simple.
Hold those notes.
Nice.
That's it.
Keep it up.
Careful. Listen to the altos.
And build.
Beautiful.
Now you and you, and you, and you!
Now.
Do you hear it? It's a circle.
Forty voices in a circle.
Now!
It's passing from one group to the next.
You see it move?
There it is!
North to south, east to west.
It's a cross.

It's a crucifix!
It's a church.
Don't you idiots see? It's a cross!
It's a crucifix! And I'm Jesus Christ!
Is that the best you got?
I made it!
- What? Are you serious?
- You made what?
The touring choir!
Wait, so you're coming with us?
Yeah! Yeah, we're going to Japan!
Okay, Suntory Hall in downtown Tokyo.
300 seats in standard configuration.
Not a bad space, you know,
it has a nice acoustics.
Now remember, boys,
sing any false notes in Japan
and what will they turn you into?
- Sushi!
- Sushi.
We're all good singers here.
Then, there's Devon.
- Teach me to read music.
- Me?
What's in it for me?
There's 12 keys, right?
The most basic scale's a major scale,
also known as an Ionian mode.
You got all kinds of notes.
Whole notes, half notes,
quarter notes, eighths.
These notes tell you
the length and duration.
They also time each measure out for you
so you know how long the beats are.
Tell me more.
- Major.
- Good. Now this.
- Major again.
- This?
- Minor.
- Good. And this?
- Minor.
- This?

- Augmented.

- This?

Dominant 7?

Dominant seventh's first inversion.

Okay, guys, we're gonna work
on enunciation, alright?

We have to sing as a unit.

As a singular unit. As a team.

So we're gonna look
at the person across from us.

Yeah, look at your teammate.

Here we go. And we're gonna sing
Niska Banja. Make sure you match up
every single syllable. Ready? And...

Stand up straight.

Okay, guys, stop.

That's enough.

You need to be pushing the books
up with your breath, not your belly.

Stet, don't sing from your throat.

Sounds like you got
a frog trapped in there.

Make sure the air comes
rising up to your stomach
from the deep depths
of your diaphragm, alright?

Try again. Just you.

Hello. Do you speak English?

I need to speak to Mr. Carvelle, please.

Carvelle. C-A-R...

Hello.

Hi. It's Wooly here.

How's Japan? How's Akita?

Have you seen any dogs?

Don't tell me you called me up
in the middle of the night
to talk about dogs. What is it? Shoot.

I know the boy
who's gonna get us to New York.

- Who?

- Stet Tate.

He's made amazing progress.

He can go all the way.

With him, we really

have a shot this year.

- Anything else?

- Um, no.

Then hang up so I can go back to sleep.

Make a wish make a wish make a wish...

- Happy birthday!

- Thank you.

Did you wish for a boyfriend again?

No.

Oh, look, you got your presents!

Gonna open them?

- Hey, Stet.

- Hey.

Hey, Andre. Whoa! Look over there?

- How was Japan?

- Ah, amazing.

Me and Devon, we were like rock stars.

Full houses, Japanese girls, autographs.

It was crazy.

I can't wait for the next tour.

I'll see you later, Stetson.

Alright, that's enough talking.

Everybody to your places.

Let's focus up.

- Mr. Carvelle.

- Mr. Wooly.

Gentlemen, let's start
with a little dictation.

Everyone remembers

Mendelssohn's Denn er hat.

Listen to this.

Remember this?

Now listen.

What's different?

- Can you play it again?

- No. Yes?

You changed modes. You went into minor.

Ah, there's hope for you, Raffi. Good.

You also dropped a note.

Excuse me, did someone say something?

You changed modes and left out a note.

I changed modes and left out a note?

You're in the training choir, right?

You're not even in the touring choir.

And you're saying
that you heard something
that 40 others didn't?
Alright, gentlemen, anyone here
that feels I dropped a note,
raise your hands.
And if you don't feel I dropped
a note, raise your hands.
- Still think I dropped a note?
- Yes, sir.
It was the sixth
in the chord before last.
The sixth in the chord before last.
He's right.
At least someone showed up today.
Yo, people! The bus for the mall
leaves in five minutes!
- Stet, you coming?
- Yeah, I'll be right there.
Come on, hurry up. Movies,
Skittles, girls, stupid stuff.
Your future awaits!
All at the mall! Come on, five minutes!
Five minutes, everybody!
I hate you!
Hildegard von Bingen!
It's as if I made the name up.
But no, I remember
the first time I heard the name.
Everybody knows the name.
Everybody knows the name!
We're talking about the music!
Do you know anybody else?
Do you know anybody else?
Please, this meeting's gone on
long enough. Are we done?!

No.

What do we all think about putting Stet

- in the touring choir?
- What do we all think
about getting a real piano tuner
for this school?
- Let me just jolt that down.
- The atrophy in the pianos is...

Stet would learn faster
in the touring choir.
Completely impossible.
You're not allowed
to join the boychoir without
first passing grade five theory.
He's wasting his time
in beginning vocals.
He needs help. He needs Carvelle
as his teacher.
Someone remind me. Are we an academy
for elite singers or some weird
cat rescue mission?
But he has the voice.
With him, we can sing anywhere.
- He's that good?
- He is.
Carvelle?
- Would anyone like some tea?
- Let's hear him.
Watch the ankles! Watch your legs!
Really good! Really good!
It's not as easy as singing, is it?
Really nice.
Alright, guys, let's take five minutes.
Grab some water, take a break.
Stet.
Stet, we wanted to hear you sing.
I mean, whatever you've been
singing in Wooly's class.
How about the Saint Matthew Aria?
Can I sing Pie Jesu?
Pie Jesu? Where'd you learn that?
I just did.
Okay. Go ahead, then.
Wow. You've come so far so fast.
I'm glad you're at the school.
Carvelle.
What?
I don't get it. I don't understand.
I know you hear what I hear.
Yes. But behaviour is the issue.
A good voice is not enough.
Enough for what? He's good enough

for the touring choir. You know that,
and you've known that
since the beginning.

Give him a proper audition
that he can prepare for
over the Christmas break.

Okay?

Where are my parents?

They're, like, always late.

- Yeah.

- Happy holidays, guys.

- See you, Andre.

- See you in a couple weeks.

- See you next year.

- Yeah, that's true.

Audition materials

for the touring choir.

A lot of work over Christmas.

They're locking the school up.

Is someone picking you up?

Yes, sir. My dad should be here shortly.

Right.

Focus on the Faure and the Britten.

It'll be one of those.

Oh my...

Oh my dear heart young Jesus sweet

Oh my dear heart young Jesus sweet

Prepare thy cradle in my spirit

Hey!

Hey!

Oh my dear heart young Jesus sweet

Prepare thy cradle in my spirit

Welcome back, fellas.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah,

Happy Kwanzaa, Happy New Year,

and all that good stuff.

This is part one

of your touring choir audition.

Take one, pass it down.

You have exactly one hour

to complete the written section.

Ready?

Set?

Go.

Guys, smile. It's not a funeral.
We have just two openings
for the touring choir this semester.
That's why we're having auditions.
Stet. We'll start with you,
then Fernando.
How about, uh...
Britten's Balulalow?
Oh my dear heart young Je...
- Want some water?
- I'm good.
Oh my dear heart young Jesus sweet
Prepare thy cradle in my spirit
And I shall rock thee
To my heart
And never more from thee depart
Fernando.
Oh my dear heart thee ever more
With songes sweet unto thy gloire...
Look straight, don't look at me.
Look straight ahead.
Now...
How does that feel?
Bright, isn't it?
Now sing.
I said... sing!
No, wrong. Not from
your throat, diaphragm.
All the force of your sound
needs to come from there.
Keep singing.
Sing through it.
Put your hand down.
The heat of the stage, can you stand it?
Can you stand two hours of that?
Look at me.
I said, look at me!
How dare you squander your talent?
Keep singing.
How can I take you seriously?
You disrespect me.
You disrespect the school.
Raffi's stereo.
The vending machine.

The window you broke.
The mocking.
You don't have to go
to all that trouble.
All you need to do is quit!
- Just quit!
- I won't quit.
Of course you'll quit! You know why?
Because quitting is all you know!
- I'll do better.
- It's too late.
- You can't make me leave.
- You never wanted any of this.
You know why?
Because music means nothing to you.
You need to really want this.
I do.
Need a buddy?
Congratulations.
Welcome to the majors.
You got a good voice.
Why so glum?
Don't worry.
You'll get the hang of the road.
1,000, 2,000-seat halls,
all those people.
It doesn't matter.
You don't even see 'em.
Just keep up on the music:
me up front, you supporting.
We'll dominate.
Two, three.
Two, three...
Don't let it get away from you.
High knees.
I didn't know you were here.
You wanted to see me.
Rachmaninoff was 20
when he composed that.
20. Just a few years older than you.
I never knew you could play that well.
Well, I learned it when I was 13.
I played it better then than now.
I'm changing the lineup.

Andre's having trouble,
so you're gonna take his place.
You're gonna be in the first
row, third from the right.
I can tell you're nervous already.
The truth is, I'm not a religious man,
but this is about as sacred
as you can get, Stet.
This is a community of people
feeling the same thing.
Most of them strangers,
but you are uniting them.
You are giving them your voice.
And that's as spiritual as it gets.
Completely flat. I want you leveled.
Feet.

Honey, what do you know
about the National Boychoir?
The what? Wait, what?
We got four tickets in the mail.
Tickets to what?
To a concert of theirs.
Tomorrow, up in New Haven.

- Who sent them?
- I don't know. There's no note.

Uh... ignore it. It's probably
just some promotional thing.

Well, why can't we use them?
It's Yale, it's Woolsey Hall.

I haven't been back to campus
since my reunion. And besides,
when's the last time
we did anything as a family?

- Babe, the girls don't like classical music.
- I like choirs.

Sally, we don't even know who sent them.
Who cares?

I think it'd be fun. Don't you, guys?
- Yeah.

- We'll get all dressed up.
Yes?

Hello? What?

Aah!

Chest cold. Slight fever.

Nothing severe.

In three or four days,
he should be fine.

Doctor, is there anything you can do
to make him sing? The concert's today.

- He's our lead singer.
- Not today he isn't.
- We'll have to cancel.
- Why?

Better to cancel than get it wrong.

We don't need to cancel.

We have someone that can step in.

Oh, what was that?

Bam! Bam! Oh, um...

Thanks.

- Ugh!
- Give me this pepper!

He's coming!

- Give me the...
- I hate to break up
this scintillating conversation,
but the concert is at 3.
I want everybody in the lobby at 1.
Stet. Devon's sick. You'll replace him.
You may want to look at the
second movement, page 25.

Good luck.

- Gee, Stet, your first solo.
- You're replacing Devon.
- What the...
- Devon!
- Stetson, what song is it?
- Queen Anne Aria.
- Stetson, this music is really hard.
- Shut up!
- Thanks, Raffi.
- He's fine. He knows it well.

Alright everybody, gather up!

Come on! Hurry up!

- Are you okay?
- Yeah, I'm fine.
- Is it this concert?
- What?

This is a big show for all

of us, for every one of you,
for all of us that have watched
you guys grow this year.
But don't be nervous,
because you guys know what you're doing.
Four bars of orchestra, back
in double forte after G flat.
Come on, Stet, you can do this.
Woodwind, fine. Violins, 10th measure.
Half of you are up bow,
half of you are down bow.
Get it together.
This is not a bloody circus.
- Five minutes.
- You're ready?
- Mr. Carvelle, I can't do this.
- It's too late for that.
- I hate Handel.
- Handel hated singers, too.
Alright, deep breath.
Maestro. Stet Tate. Maestro Molino.
- He's our soloist?
- Yes.
Nice. See you on stage.
- You're not conducting?
- No, you'll be okay.
You know the music.
If you get into trouble,
just follow the maestro's eyes.
Ladies and gentlemen,
the National Boychoir!
There's no score. He has no score.
Calm down.
Give it to me.
If you have to cheat...
cheat better.
- ...two guys in the front?
- How are you seeing...
- Hey! High five!
So, what did you think?
Yeah, I thought they were...
they were great.
- What do you guys want for dinner?
- Chinese.

- Chinese!
- That sounds good.
Should we stay around here
or go back to the city?
Stay around here.
I don't see why you just can't
lighten up for a bit...
I'm telling you, Stet's, like, amazing.
Follow me.
Enjoyed the concert, Devon?
- You did really well.
- Kick his ass!
Yeah, what are you waiting for?
Shh...
I'm not gonna do that.
I lay a hand on you, they kick me out.
Justine.
Yes.
Are you serious?
This is either really bad
or really good.
- New York City.
- Riverside Cathedral.
- Easter concert.
- This year?
It's everything we've been
working toward.
- The highest level.
- What's on the program?
Messiah!
Something like that would top
the Vienna Boys' Choir.
- Time to tell the world who's first.
- It doesn't have a solo part.
And Messiah's Christmas music.
Not always. First 100 years,
they sang it at Lent,
also at Eastertide.
Lent, Eastertide, Christmas,
what does it matter?
Messiah is one hell of a crowd-pleaser.
At Riverside, it will be huge.
Well, what about the solo part?
We write a descant.

We write a new solo part.

They were all doing it
back in those days.

Keep it in the same key
and hit a high D.

- I've already started...

- I'll do it.

- What if you need any help?

- I'll write it.

But can anyone of them
even reach a high D?

- It's either Devon or Stet.

- It'll have to be Devon.

Stet's leaving.

His dad's sending him to a
boarding school in Switzerland.

What?

It's about a nine-hour flight, Stet,
but I was able to get you a window.

I do suggest you try and get some sleep.

I know this is a change,
but it is for the best.

Stay where you are, Stet.

- Let's go, now.

- Didn't you hear me?

What?

He's not going with you.

- He's my son.

- Yes, I know.

Your secret son.

It was you, wasn't it?

You're the one that sent those tickets.

Yes, we send tickets to all the parents,
the majority of whom take
an actual interest
in their child's well-being.

This is very simple, Mr. Owens.

I continue your son's instruction...

and your secret...

remains just that.

Okay, now, take one,

pass it around to your friends.

Don't be deceived

by how simple this looks.

Because this thing, in fact,
is the biggest challenge
you've ever had.
Alright. Don't look so scared.
What is this?
Your worst nightmare, sir.
Sing after me.
And again.
Now...
And now, gentlemen,
the note on the page.
The high D.
Not even close, but whoever hits it first
sings lead treble in New York.
Remember, Handel liked big music.
He's a crowd-pleaser, and that
means you've got to sing out...
and over...
and through the orchestra.
Alright. And now, one octave up.
And when it comes, don't avoid it.
Put everything you are into it.
Every piece of your life.
Whoa! Whoa! How'd you get this?
It's easy.
The secretary keeps the file
room key in her desk drawer.
She's out for the day.
Failed grades, suspensions.
He's even been arrested!
Apparently, it runs in the family.
Whoa!
Get me a flash drive.
Devon, in your own time.
That's it. The high D. Well done!
Boys, a round of applause for Devon.
I knew you could do it.
Guys! Guys, he's coming!
Fight! Fight! Fight...!
That's enough! Stet, stop!
Stet, stop it! Stop it! Stop!
You can go home now, Abby. Thank you.
Tomorrow morning,
eight o'clock, right here.

Understand?

Do you understand?

- What is it?

- They're gonna kick me out.

I know.

- It's Devon's fault!

- It doesn't matter whose fault is it.

Now, I've got one less voice
for New York.

Oh, I see, I screwed up your plans.

Excuse me!

Who do you think you're talking to?

Don't you know what that concert means?

Means to you.

You have a gift, and it's not enough.

And it's not enough for you to be here.

Go back to your room.

You have a discipline hearing
in the morning.

You might want to start packing.

I'm not gonna stay here just
for some stupid committee

- to kick me out.

- Where you're gonna run?

It'll just follow you to
the next place, and the next.

What are you talking about?

You! You! I'm talking about you!

Do you want to know about me?

I was a few years older
than you. I had a chance.

I was at Juilliard,
and I wanted a piano
more than anything else,
and the teacher I wanted
to impress flunked me
straight out, told me,
and this is a quote...

He said I lacked the talent.

- And that was it. I was gone.

- You just left?

I hit him first. Then, I left.

I hit him 'cause he was right.

But you... you've got it.

You've got it right now,
and you're blowing it.
You're a punk.
And your clock is ticking, kid.
You know, your clock
is ticking too, old man.
Yes, Stet.
Come right on in.
You can have a seat there.
Alright. Let's get this over with.
None of us wants to be here.
We're all familiar
with the facts of the case.
Before we make our ruling,
Stet, you have a right
to address the committee.
That means you can talk.
Whatever you want to say.
I know what I did was wrong.
I won't do it again. I wanna stay.
And whatever I said to you,
Mr. Carvelle, I didn't mean.
Please don't kick me out.
I hear you, Stet, but there's
no fighting in the school.
I made exceptions for you before.
At some point,
we all run out of chances.
Please wait outside.
Okay. Reluctantly, I have to
recommend immediate expulsion.
Why don't we take a vote? All in favour?
You too, Anton?
No one's above the rules.
As much as it hurts the choir,
Devon and Stet will have
to be made an example of.
Whoa, whoa, whoa, Stet and Devon?
What the bloody hell's this
got to do with Devon?
I spoke to Devon this morning.
He admitted stealing
Stet's personal file
and circulating his mother's

arrest photo.

Those were acts of cruelty.

We're better off without...

both of them.

Carvelle, there really is no comparison with Stet's own behaviour.

I mean, need I refresh your memory by enumerating examples of his reckless and antisocial behaviour?

Drake! Drake! Quiet!

We all think we know these boys, what goes on with them, but we don't.

We don't know a damn thing.

We have forgotten

what it was like to be them.

In addition, I'd like to say that out of personal ambition,

I encouraged the rivalry between Stet and Devon.

Therefore, Justine,

I intend to step back

from leading the boychoir

and take some time off, starting today.

- What?

- Is this some kind of stunt?

- Are you serious?

- Never more so.

Wonderful. Smashing.

Can I help you with your bags?

No, he doesn't need

any help with his bags.

Carvelle, you can't leave.

Hold it...

Hold it! Hold it! Enough!

In four weeks, we're gonna be

giving the biggest concert

in the school's history,

and we lose Stet and Devon and Carvelle.

I don't know, we're gonna fall

on our asses

right out there

in front of the whole world.

Okay, Stet and Devon

will remain at the school.
They can have Saturday detention
from now till doomsday,
I don't care.
But I'm not gonna let you
piss on this opportunity.
Would you do me the courtesy
of looking at me
when I'm talking to you?
Thank you.
You all are gonna take that sacred,
divine music of Handel's and
knock it out of the ballpark.
I wanna see angels
descending from heaven
right there in that cathedral.
I want people to weep.
I want you and your boys
to shatter the stained glass windows!
Then, you can take
as much time as you want.
And we are rolling our shoulders.
Rolling and turning.
I want to see those bodies moving.
That's right. All going back.
All going back.
All going back.
And now it's changing
and it's all going forward.
And we're going up...
I never thought I'd see you again.
Wild horses couldn't have kept me.
You're doing alright, Stet.
You just keep going now. You understand?
Yes, ma'am.
You've left the spot
for lead treble blank.
You want my opinion?
Yeah, tell me.
Stet and Devon have both hit the high D,
but we can't afford to experiment.
Not here, not today.
Stet is instinctive.
Devon is analytical.

He doesn't make mistakes.
You know it, I know it.
I know that you... you know this,
but I want to say it anyway.
Most of you have one year,
two years, at the most,
two and a half years.
And your gift,
the mystery of your gift...
wake up one morning,
and it just isn't there anymore.
Some of you become altos,
some of you become baritones,
some of you become dentists.
Doctors.
But whatever, there will be
other gifts in your lifetime.
And the most important thing
is when those gifts appear,
nurture them the way
you've nurtured this one.
When you go upstairs to that cathedral,
take a moment, look around...
and feel where you are.
This isn't about Handel.
This is about music.
It's about you.
It's 50 minutes of your life.
And I want you to celebrate yourself.
Time to go. Break a leg. Break a leg.
Game face.
Knock it out to the park, okay?
Don't forget to smile.
Kill it!
Hey...
What is it?
I have something to tell you.
Congratulations.
Your voice is changing.
You're growing up.
You okay?
I knew my voice would change,
but I thought I had more time.
Happens to all of us.

I mean, you don't want to be
a kid forever, do you?

Well...

What are the chances
of a good treble becoming a good alto?

You'll never sing like you did.

That voice, that sound...

it wasn't really yours to keep.

You borrowed it for a little while
and then it went somewhere else.

Then what's the point of all
the lessons and the work
that I did if... if I'm just
gonna lose my voice?

The lessons are the point.

Wonder what will happen to him.

A letter of recommendation
from you could open many doors.

I see.

I don't write recommendations, Drake.

Try it, just this once.

It's a life we give them here,
not a career.

Oh, Stet.

Come in.

I have something for you.

The New York concert.

It's a rough mix. Just came in today.

That's great.

- So, you're leaving us?

- Yes, ma'am.

You don't have to, you know.

We're not kicking you to the curb.

You could stay as an alto.

Wish I could, but I'm being
sent to another school.

Oh... Okay, then.

This is for you also.

Thank you.

Now go.

"To whom it may concern, Stet Tate..."

"...is the best student

I have ever taught."

- Have a good summer, guys.

- Thank you.

Anyone seen Stet?

- Yeah, he's upstairs.

- Have a good time, Devon.

- Goodbye, sir.

- See you very soon.

- Hey, Stet. All set?

- Yup.

- Is someone coming for you?

- No.

I'm taking the train to summer camp.

Boarding school after that.

It's overseas.

It's okay, Mr. Wooly, I'll be fine.

I know.

Well, alright then.

Good luck.

Thank you.

- Have a good summer.

- You do the same.

Mr. Carvelle.

Get outta here.

Go on.

Hey.

I'm Sally.

Stet... let me take those.

So, I have a question for you.

We found a great school in New York.

How do you feel about living with us?

A single note passes out of the ashes

A flickering ember begins

It's the courage to turn

when the pages have burned

And your story now seems at an end

Seasons stay and seasons go

Sending your memories adrift

It's the beautiful longing

embrace the unknown

That's the mystery of your gift

And the echoes of your melody

Will always live in these walls

And the lessons that you gave to me

Before you can fly you must fall

It's the beautiful longing

embrace the unknown
That's the mystery of your gift
There's a voice in the shadow
calling for more
There's a rhythm that beats from within
Lending your voice
to the warmth of your song
There's a strength in the choir of one
Pure is the voice that sees the place
Where the weight of your past
may now lift
It's the beautiful longing
embrace the unknown
That's the mystery of your gift
And the echoes of your melody
Will always live in these walls
And the lessons that you gave to me
Before you can fly you must fall
So sing higher and higher
A thousand new voices ring through
If you sing out of the fire
The courage you need comes from you
There's a voice in the shadow
calling for more
There's a rhythm that beats from within
Lending your voice
to the warmth of the song
There's a strength in the choir of one
And the echoes of your melody
Will always live in these walls
And the lessons that you gave to me
Before you can fly you must fall
It's the beautiful longing
embrace the unknown
That's the mystery of your gift
It's the beautiful longing
embrace the unknown
That's the mystery
Of your gift