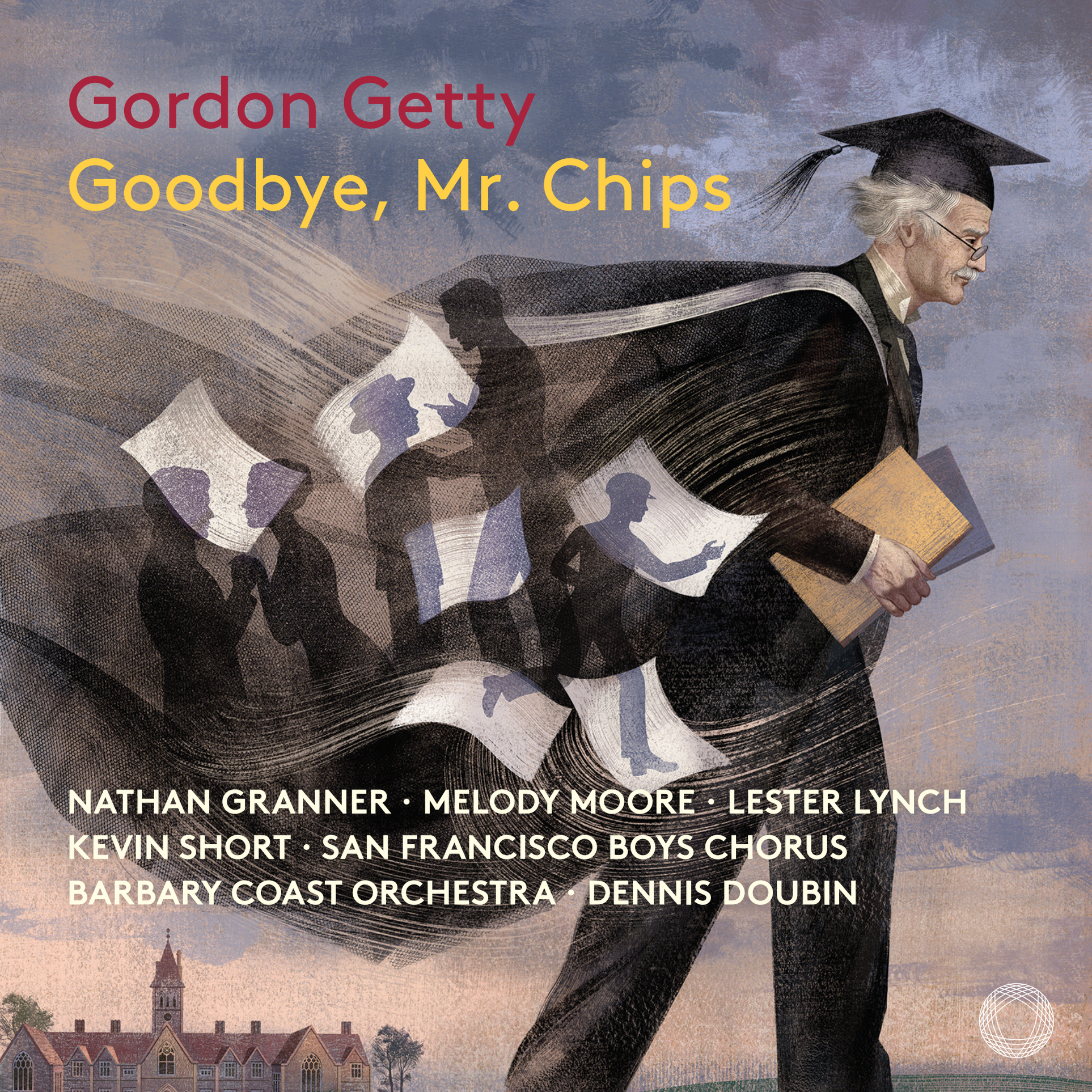
Gordon Getty
Goodbye, Mr. Chips



NATHAN GRANNER · MELODY MOORE · LESTER LYNCH
KEVIN SHORT · SAN FRANCISCO BOYS CHORUS
BARBARY COAST ORCHESTRA · DENNIS DOUBIN

Goodbye, Mr. Chips (2017)

Opera in Two Acts

*Based on the book **Goodbye, Mr. Chips** and other stories by James Hilton.*

Music and libretto by **Gordon Getty**

Disc 1

Act 1

1	Alma Mater, amnis pratum...	1. 27
2	Chips was the soul of Brookfield.	2. 27
3	Chips, my good fellow...	5. 03
4	...there was Kathie.	5. 10
5	Kathie, Kathie...	5. 43
6	Chips, darling, it's started.	4. 41
7	Somehow I walked the three miles back to campus...	3. 00
8	I suppose I was the first...	4. 14
9	Call-over: Wayne, Weaver, Webb...	4. 34
10	Sometimes the mood was somber...	2. 25
11	There had been talk...	6. 46
12	Poor Ralston!	3. 24
13	Kathie, you won't remember...	3. 09

Total playing time Disc 1: 52. 10

Disc 2

Act 2

1	Intermezzo	6. 26
2	Ralston soon went on to better things.	6. 28
3	Sir, my father was... (Dream sequence)	8. 48
4	Chips caught bronchitis...	7. 45
5	Chips had retired from teaching...	9. 04
6	When the Armistice came in nineteen-eighteen...	8. 44
7	Mrs. Wickett also told me...	5. 50
8	Thank you, Miss Bridges.	3. 07
9	Well, you old ruffian...	4. 07
10	Alma mater - I thought I heard you...	2. 00

Total playing time Disc 2: 62. 26

Barbary Coast Orchestra
Dennis Doubin, conductor

San Francisco Boys Chorus
Ian Robertson, artistic director

Cast in order of appearance

Merrivale	**Lester Lynch**, baritone
Chips	**Nathan Granner,** tenor
Kathie	**Melody Moore**, soprano
Faulkner	**Michael Jankosky**, tenor
West	**Bruce Rameker**, baritone
Ralston	**Kevin Short**, bass-baritone
Rivers	**Kevin Short**, bass-baritone
Grayson	**Kevin Korth**, baritone
Maynard	**Samuel Faustine**, tenor
Linford	**Melody Moore**, soprano

Dennis Doubin &
Barbary Coast Orchestra

With the 2021 premiere of his operatic film *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, American composer **Gordon Getty** adds a fourth opera to his list of compositions, which also includes works for orchestra, chorus, vocal and instrumental soloists, and chamber ensembles.

His staged works have been mounted by Leipzig Opera, Welsh National Opera, San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and Bolshoi Ballet, while his orchestral repertoire has been recorded and performed by the likes of the San Francisco Symphony under Michael Tilson Thomas, Mikhail Pletnev leading the Russian National Orchestra, and Sir Neville Marriner with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields. Getty's life in music is the subject of Peter Rosen's 2016 documentary *There Will Be Music*. Recent honors include the European Culture Prize and an inaugural induction into Opera America's Hall of Fame.

Gordon Getty is a PENTATONE artist and his music is published by Rork Music. For more information, visit www.gordongetty.com.

Gordon Getty

Goodbye, Mr. Chips

Hilton's masterpiece is largely a series of vignettes where few characters, Chips and Kathie aside, appear or are mentioned in more than one scene. Opera and the spoken stage tend to work best when we follow a few characters over time. Thus Doctor Merrivale, who is found only in the opening scene of the book, becomes the narrator who guides us through the opera. Likewise, Kathie reappears in flashbacks long after her early death in childbirth.

One of the recurring themes in the book is the loss of Chips' old students, one after another, in the Great War. I express this powerful idea by making sure that all three students whom we meet by name before the war die in it, and are seen again in ghostly presence as Chips reports their loss to the student body in chapel, and once more in his deathbed delirium.

Chips' antagonist is the overbearing new headmaster Ralston, who sees Chips' ways as slack and old-fashioned, and demands that Chips retire. Ralston gets his comeuppance when the school backs Chips. He moves on, and does not reappear in the novel. I adapt one of Hilton's short stories about Chips to bring Ralston back at the end. In that story, an old student faces twelve years in prison for grand larceny, worries that the scandal will ruin the chances of his son's admission to Brookfield, and asks and receives Chips' promise to help. I make the son a grandson, and turn the old student into Ralston.

These retouches to expand the roles of Merrivale, Kathie, the three students and Ralston allow the audience to see familiar faces and hear familiar voices from scene to scene. That somehow seemed right to me, and offered the practical advantages of role

consolidation without much changing of Hilton's beautiful design.

One problem in staging the opera is Chips' quick changes in age from 85 to 48, and then back again, in the scenes of Kathie's first appearance in Act I, and her last near the end of Act 2. One nice solution is for an actor to mime the few lines of the 48-year-old Chips while the real Chips sings them, just as they do in the scene of Chips' vigil, in Act 2, where Chips prays for the rescue of Grayson's father.

Another issue in staging concerns the Linford scene near the end of Act 2. Kathie, on her deathbed, had promised Chips, "I will knock on your door, and take your hand, and help you down the mountain one more time." My idea, and Hilton's too, I think, is that Kathie is somehow keeping her word through Linford. I make this point clear to the audience by requiring the soprano who sings Kathie to sing Linford also. It is also possible for her to act the part herself, or for a child actor to mime it while she is seen or projected singing from behind or outside.

Gordon Getty

Program Notes

James Hilton (1900-54) published his first novel in 1920 and by 1933 had produced a dozen, all but one of which were widely ignored—and that one scored only a lukewarm success. *Lost Horizon* and especially *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, both published in 1933, changed everything; and although he would pen a further six novels after them, they would remain the greatest successes of his literary career. He did write a few follow-up short stories about his beloved character Mr. Chips, and although these were hungrily devoured by fans, they essentially stand as footnotes to *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*. He produced the novella in the course of four foggy days in November 1933 to fulfill a £50 commission from the *British Weekly*. A couple of years later he recounted, "I am chary of using the word 'inspiration,' which is too often something nonexistent that a writer waits for when he is lazy; but as a matter of record, *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* was written more quickly, more easily, and with fewer subsequent alterations than anything I had ever written before, or have ever written since." It appeared in print the following month in the *British Weekly*'s Christmas supplement. Hilton then sent it across the ocean to the *Atlantic Monthly*, which included it in its April 1934 edition, and within a few months it was issued in book form in both London and New York.

Goodbye, Mr. Chips is set at a British boarding school, the sort of locale he knew from first hand thanks to his headmaster father. "I do take pride in the reception that America has given to my very English book," he wrote. "One feature has been the discovery of the original Mr. Chips in so many different parts of the world; and I believe those letters from readers have told the whole truth, and that my tribute to a great profession has

fitted a great many members of it everywhere." There he pinpointed the key to the book's snowballing success. Rather than unroll through some intricately constructed plot, the tale focuses almost entirely on the title character, who exerts universal appeal as the teacher many people would like to have, one who may be a bit out of step with the world but who always has his students' best interests at heart.

Before the decade was out, the book was adapted for other media: radio plays for the BBC in 1936 and for Lux Radio Theatre (starring Laurence Olivier) in 1939, a London stage version (with Leslie Banks) in 1938, and in 1939 a blockbuster film (for MGM's British division) starring Robert Donat in the title role and Greer Garson as Kathie, the love of his life. Academy Awards voters were faced with dazzling choices that year—*Gone with the Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Dark Victory*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *Babes in Arms*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Stagecoach* among them—but even in such a lineup the film received seven Oscar nominations and Donat was honored as Best Actor, edging out Olivier, Clark Gable, Mickey Rooney, and James Stewart. Further adaptations for radio, stage, film, and television followed in ensuing decades, including the work's transformation into a 1969 movie musical starring Peter O'Toole and Petula Clark, with songs by Leslie Bricuse and underscoring by a Hollywood up-and-comer named John Williams.

It was perhaps inevitable that *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* would be transformed into an opera, but it took a while for it to align with a composer who embraced its sensibilities—a story told in the 1930s about a character who lived in resolutely traditional fashion through many preceding decades. Gordon Getty was unusually

qualified for the task. Through an uncanny coincidence, he was born the same month the *British Weekly* published Hilton's story—but, of course, he was too young to have taken in its initial gust of popularity. "I first encountered the story in a re-release of the 1939 film with Robert Donat and Greer Garson," he says, "and I knew I would write the opera sooner or later. After reading Hilton's novella many, many years later, I immediately read it twice more, I was so tremendously moved. I then read the short stories Hilton wrote on Chips, and was off and running with the libretto. The story captured me immediately, as well as the character of Chips himself and the affirmation of what he stood for." It was a good fit. Getty has composed in many musical genres, including piano, chamber, and orchestral works, but the lion's share of his catalogue involves the voice, whether in songs, choral pieces, cantatas, or operas. He already had three operas in his portfolio: *Plump Jack* (premiered in 1987), centering on Shakespeare's Falstaff; *Usher House* (2014), based on Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher"; and *The Canterville Ghost* (2015), after a short story by Oscar Wilde.

These reflect his penchant for setting established literary works, to which he applies his own quintessential musical language. "I am two-thirds a 19th-century composer," he once remarked without a trace of apology. Steering clear of certain avant-garde techniques has not impeded his originality, and audiences have responded warmly to the emotional appeal his scores can exert. He is very much in tune with the essence of Mr. Chips, a Classics teacher given to Latin puns and witticisms, obstinately finding his subject to be, as he puts it, "a guide to our journey *in search of the beauty that holds*."

If Getty draws on classic works for his operas, he nonetheless writes his own librettos, incorporating some text verbatim from his sources while massaging the material into effective narratives. "I could no more leave the words to someone else than leave the music to someone else," he states. Hilton's novella would not translate well to the stage without some adaptation; indeed, earlier theatre and film directors altered the story's chronology and locations considerably. Perhaps the most obvious issue for operatic treatment is the character of Mr. Chips' sweetheart-then-wife, Kathie, the female presence in what is otherwise a world of men—teachers, administrators, students, and alumni of an all-male school. She dies rather early in the story, but Getty preserves her as a character—and as a soprano contrast to the tenor, baritone, and bass voices of the other principal characters—by casting the libretto as a memory-play in which she re-emerges for scenes throughout.

This is an overwhelmingly gentle opera, not much given to *fortissimo*, although outbursts of anger or laughter prove sometimes necessary. Mr. Chips is a peaceable sort, a steadying influence whose inherent kindness radiates to those around him. The piece unrolls continuously, with arias clearly emerging from their musical surroundings yet knitted into the overall texture. The piece calls for a modestly scaled orchestra of strings, keyboard, and an effectively deployed percussion section, along with mostly single winds, though with individual wind players doubling related instruments, such as flute plus piccolo or oboe plus English horn, to expand the sonic possibilities.

The path to this recording was not predictable. "*Goodbye, Mr. Chips* was headed towards a stage production when Covid struck," Getty reports. Instead, plans were adjusted to yield a filmed production, shot in an airplane hangar on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay and premiered in late 2021. "We were incredibly lucky to be able to record the film soundtrack at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music using the Dante System, which allowed simultaneous recording from multiple locations throughout the building with no latency, no time delays." The audio recording presented here incorporates a few minor changes effected after the film was made, and has been recorded entirely anew.

Anemoia: nostalgia for a time one has never experienced personally. Mr. Chips, a Classicist to the core, would have liked that word, and one senses that Getty must have been animated by this sense, too. He did not attend a school like Mr. Chips' Brookfield; "I was in military school for a time," he says, "but that's as close as I got!" Nonetheless, the pages of his opera exude his deep admiration of Brookfield, its values, and its people. Listeners are bound to respond to this work differently depending on where they find themselves along life's course. "I think *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* is for all ages and all time," says Getty. "I imagine a young reader would see the narrative through the experience of the boys of Brookfield. Reading it as a man of 80-plus years, I saw the story through Chips' eyes." Mr. Chips just goes on assuring and enriching those who encounter him—readers, viewers, and now listeners.

James M. Keller
The longtime Program Annotator of the San Francisco Symphony

Synopsis

Act I

We hear children singing "Alma Mater," a school song in Latin. Merrivale tells how Chips—"Mister Chipping" or "sir" by the students to his face—became a legend over 48 years of teaching Latin at Brookfield, an English boarding school for boys. We first see Chips, now 85 and retired, with Merrivale, his doctor, in Chips' drawing room across the street from Brookfield. It is 1933. Chips tells Merrivale how he had met Kathie, a girl with golden hair, on vacation in the Lake District in 1896. They had married within weeks.
We see them on the eve of their wedding, and then celebrating in Brookfield as they expect their first child. He buys baby clothes, a rattle, a music box. But she dies in childbirth, and the baby is stillborn. The doctors had warned of complications. We see her farewell to Chips at the hospital (Kathie's aria). Her last words to him are: "I will save a place for you, if I am sent the right way, and keep an eye on you, if their telescopes are strong enough, and put in a word for you, if I can find the right ear, because I love you forever and ever and ever. Goodbye, Mr. Chips."

Merrivale tells us the rest. Chips gradually shows the gentle whimsies half-expected in senior schoolmasters. Kathie has become a part of him. He wears the same old gown for years because Kathie had stitched it once. He slips more humor into his lectures to help the boys understand and remember, just as Kathie had thought he should. We see his kindly reaction when one student, Faulkner, plays a prank on him. We see him reprimand another, West, for fighting a neighbor boy. The normal penalty is expulsion. Chips puts the fear of God into West, but lets him off with probation and 200 lines. Alone, Chips says, "The head would rusticate him if he knew. But West has good stuff in him. Kathie, I think that this is what you would have done."

Headmaster Meldrum dies. Chips becomes acting head, and delivers the eulogy. The new headmaster, Ralston, a stern authoritarian, faults Chips for his tattered gown and old-fashioned Latin pronunciation. He demands that Chips retire. Chips is angered but amused as to both criticisms, and declines with wit and grace.
"I don't intend to retire," he says, closing the door politely, "and you can do what you like about it." The scene is overheard. The whole school learns of it. All back Chips. The chairman of the board of governors, Sir John Rivers, tells him, "You can stay here until you're a hundred, if you feel like it. Indeed, it's our hope that you will."

Act 2

Ralston has moved on. The young new head, Chatteris, is a decent sort who lets Chips carry on as before. We see Chips hosting the boys the night before they leave for Christmas holidays. Later he consoles one of them, Grayson, when his father was thought lost on the Titanic. Alone, Chips kneels and prays: "Kathie, beautiful Kathie, if you can find the right ear, please put in a word for Grayson's father." Grayson soon runs in. He is overjoyed. His father has been found safe.

Chips retires at 65, and speaks at a dinner in his honor. He tells anecdotes, some humorous and some touching, of his long teaching career. He adds, "But chiefly, I remember all your faces. I have thousands of faces in my mind, the faces of boys. If you come and see me in years to come, and I hope you will, I shall try to place

those older faces of yours, but it's just possible I shan't be able to, and you will say, 'the old boy doesn't remember me.' But I do remember you, as you are now. That's the point. In my mind, you never grow up at all."

Chatteris leaves to serve in World War I. Chips is invited back to fill in once more as acting head. We see him, as such, reading the list of alumni who have died that week. We see West, Faulkner and Grayson, still boys, as their names are called. Sirens interrupt him. German airplanes are attacking nearby military bases. The building shakes. Chips resumes as if nothing were amiss, and arranges for one boy, Maynard, to find a quote from Caesar that ends the scene in laughter.

We return to Chips' drawing room in 1933, soon after Merrivale has left. The doorbell rings. It is Ralston.
He begs Chips' pardon and advice.
He says, "Tomorrow I will be arrested for grand larceny. I will plead guilty, and serve twelve years in prison ... There is another choice. There is also the gentleman's way ... Is there a God, Mr. Chipping?" Chips answers, "There's one inside." "Yes," Ralston says, "there is." He will serve the twelve years.
Now he asks another favor. He has applied to Brookfield on behalf of his grandson, and is worried about the scandal. Chips promises.

Chips is also visited by Linford, a new student. A lady had told him to come. As he leaves, he says, "Goodbye, Mr. Chips!" Chips, alone, says, "Mr. Chips! Just like dear Kathie!" He nods off, and slumps to the floor.

He revives in the hospital bed where Kathie died. Merrivale, Rivers, Chatteris and Maynard, now a member of parliament, stand by. Chips tells Rivers of his promise to Ralston. "Scandals be damned," says Rivers, "the boy will be admitted!" Chips nods off again.
Maynard, who had talked to Linford, mentions the visit and the lady.
"A lady," muses Merrivale, "with golden hair." "Yes! So he told me. Do you know her, Merrivale?" "Only by description."
"Pity," says Rivers, "pity that he never had any children." Students outside are heard singing "Alma Mater."
Chips wakens. He says, "I heard you, one of you, say that I never had any children. Oh, but I have, I have! Thousands of 'em, and all boys."
He calls their names. Again these include Faulkner, Grayson and West.
All answer. "My last joke, did you hear it?" he asks. "Did it make you laugh? Kathie, did it make you laugh?"
He dies.

Libretto

Disc 1

Act I

1

While the audience files in, projections show Brookfield in an English countryside. Texts of the Latin Chorus and translation are superimposed as the singers begin. After they finish the first line, the word projections remain while the background changes from the winter sky to black-and-white photos, optionally intermixing movie clips, showing Brookfield 1870 – 1933.

Chorus *(unseen)*
Alma mater, amnis pratum,
Custos nostrum es.
Cantum nostrum audi, mater,
Tibi praebitum.

Stellae dum lapsaverint
In perpetuum,
Recordata eris tu
Nocte dieque.
Usque ad diluculum,
Nunc et postea
Elucebis denique,
Hic et ubivis.

(Alma mater, Brookfield,
You are our guardian.
Hear our song, Mother,
Offered to you.

Until the stars fall,
Forever,
We will remember you
Night and day.

Until the dawn,
Now and hereafter,
You will shine forth to the last,
Here and everywhere.)

2

Scenes of Brookfield now illustrate the narrative of Dr. Merrivale, 35, as he moves unnoticed among them.

Merrivale
Chips was the soul of Brookfield. Forty-eight years a teacher there, living the last twenty-two of them here, across the street at Mrs. Wickett's, then a kind of semi-retirement there. He remained the guest of honor at Old Brookfeldian dinners. He was the Court of Appeals in matters of Brookfield history and tradition. He knew all of the students to the end, greeting them all by name as they tipped their caps to him on the street or on the playing fields. I had been calling on him, at the last, every fortnight or so. He seemed as hale as always, that dull November afternoon in '33. He greeted me at the door, asked of my wife and our children, our plans for the winter. All bounce and warmth and spark, the same old Chips. But eighty-five is a ripe old age, and he had caught a chill that wanted watching.

Fade to Chips' drawing room at Mrs. Wickett's. A window shows fog. Merrivale is putting away his stethoscope. Chips is buttoning his shirt.

3

Merrivale
Chips, my good fellow, you're fitter than I am. You'll outlive us all. Stay indoors for a while, even so, and early to bed. You know how to ring me, night or day, if the sniffles act up.

Chips
(Age 85) So I will, good Merrivale. Nothing wrong with me except anno domini, and that hunts us all down at the last. *(Merrivale chuckles.)* It's tea and soup and blankets for me, just now, and memories. A treasury of them, Merrivale, a treasury. Wonderful memories, all but a few, and sixty-three years of them here. One day, perhaps, when you have time...

Merrivale
I have now. I would very much like to hear them.

Chips pours sherry. Projections may illustrate his account as he continues.

Nathan Granner

Chips

Memories, then! I arrived here in 1870, aged twenty-two, first having taught for a year at Medbury. It was old Wetherby's last year as headmaster. He said, "I see you had discipline problems at Medbury. No matter. This is a new start. Our boys and theirs are the kindest in the world, Mr. Chipping, one at a time, but a roomful of them is a lion's den. (*Opens the window. Fog drifts in. "Alma Mater" is heard again.*) They will maul you to shreds unless you crack down from the first." I knew that from Medbury, and took it to heart. *(Both men laugh.)* My very first class was prep*. *(Chips closes the window)* Talk about a lion's den! There were all five hundred of the good-hearted ruffians in Big Hall, ready to pounce. I walked in, grim as a headsman. *(Acting it out as Merrivale enjoys the performance)* Somebody dropped a desktop. Evenly, calmly, the headsman, the lion tamer, I asked, "Who did that?" No one spoke. "Then you all have a hundred lines." One boy stood up and owned the deed. "Then you alone have a hundred lines." No problem after that! *(Merrivale laughs as Chips continues)* The boy is now Viscount Colley. He and I laughed when his son tried the same sort of trick on me, to get the same lesson, and later his grandson as well. *(Merrivale laughs again)* Sixty-three years! Think of it, Merrivale! The Franco-Prussian war, the Boers, the Kaiser, and now Hoover and Baldwin and the slump. *(Stands to pour again)* And Kathie. Halfway along, for only a little while,

4

there was Kathie. *(Sits down)*. We met in the summer of '96 in the Lake District. I was climbing Great Gable. A girl on a ledge looked in trouble. A girl with golden hair. I ran to her, hurt my own foot, and she had to help me down the mountain. *(Both men*

* Supervised homework at the end of the school day

laugh. The room fades gradually to projections tracing Chips' narrative.) She looked in on me every day, riding her bicycle 'round the lake to the inn where I stayed. We were Miss Bridges and Mister Chipping down the mountain, Kathie and Chips the day after, hopelessly in love in two weeks, and married in London a week after that. The night before our wedding, as I dropped her off at her aunt's house in Ealing, I remember that she said something curious...

A house on a street in Ealing in 1896. Chips is opening the door for Kathie. They kiss.

Kathie
Goodbye, Mister Chips!

Chips
Dear Kathie! As if my name were really that! Then we shall be Mr. and Mrs. Chips tomorrow!

Kathie
Tomorrow and always, and little Chips off the two old blocks!

Chips
Off us two old blockheads for always! Mr. and Mrs. and baby Chips for always! *(They kiss again.)*

Chips and Merrivale back in Chips' drawing room in 1933.

Chips
She won every heart at Brookfield as easily as mine. She was all sunlight, all surprise, all gifts and all giving. *(Fade to Brookfield concert hall, projections only, as Chips continues. Chips may be seen or unseen as projections change to follow his narrative.)* I remember her playing the cello in a Mozart trio at a school concert, her white arm sweeping the bow against the brown sheen of the instrument. *(Rising)* She was everything young and beautiful,

everything new and forever, wise and merry, quick and deep, footsure. She was the spark, the glow, the pulse and current of my life and all our lives. All loved her, all trusted her, the masters, their wives, the boys, chars, cooks, tradesmen, all, because they knew that she could see with their own eyes. She could see them from inside. She knew which boys, despite all, were worth one more chance. She knew that the boys are our measure and our chronicle and our future. It was she who showed me that we can't really teach them, but must help them teach themselves, since that's the learning that holds and builds and stands up to whatever comes outside. That's the secret. It's the boys, the boys, and whatever mix of patience and wit and guidance and guile and fear of hellfire will trick them into teaching themselves! "Chips, dearest," she said, "you have the gift of making them laugh in just the right places, so that they will wonder why and begin to learn on their own. Once they start that, Chips, my dearest, there will be no stopping them in the whole world!" Not in the whole world! She saw through to the truth, as always.

5

Kathie! Kathie! Kathie! Kathie! *(Overcome, steadies himself. Merrivale helps him back to his chair.)* Thank you, Merrivale. It seems that my pins are not so steady as they were. Anno domini! It was thirty-seven years ago that I brought her first to Brookfield, and we knew her for two. I am profoundly grateful for them. Few men have owned as much. Soon our first child was on the way...

The same room, 1897, daylight. Chips, 49, alone, standing at his bookshelves. Enter Kathie.

Kathie
Wonderful news, darling Chips! The most glorious! Dr. Cole says that I am with child!

Chips
Darling Kathie! With child, with our child! There will be three of us soon! We will uncork the Margaux tonight! We are the king and queen of Brookfield!

Kathie
And heir apparent! Not so apparent just yet, darling Chips, but watch out! He will be all too apparent, and soon. I will be big as a whale by Christmas, Chips, my darling, for the whole world to see, and we will have somebody new in the family by spring!

Chips
He or she! A new Master or Miss Chips by spring!

Projected scenes of Brookfield, summer changing to winter as Chips continues unseen:

Chips
You know well, good Merrivale, how happy that time can be. Champagne, cigars and celebration. We bought baby clothes, a rattle, a music box.

The drawing room again, evening, November 1897. Kathie, alone reading. Enter Chips.

Chips
Darling Kathie, see what I found for the baby!

Kathie
Wonderful, Chips! *(Chips unwraps a rattle, which rattles briefly, and a music box.)* Wonderful! Both beautiful, Chips! The music box is perfect! *(Chips opens its lid to play it.)*

Chips
It cost six shillings at Mrs. Brool's. She marked it down from six guineas for our baby. It's older than you are, dearest Kathie, I think, and maybe older than I am.

Melody Moore

Kathie
Then we will honor our elders, my darling, and hold it for our child and all children to come. *(They embrace.)* It is something magic from the artisans of Elfland. We will find somewhere safe for it.

Fade out. Projections show snow falling. Fade in again to Chips and Kathie in the same room one month later. A window also shows snow falling.

Kathie
Happy New Year's Eve, darling Chips!

Chips
And the happiest, happiest New Year's Eve to you, dearest Kathie! And how is our baby this evening?

Kathie
He will certainly be an explorer. I feel him exploring his little world over and over.

Chips
Or she!

Kathie
Or she!

Now projections follow Chips' account as he continues seen or unseen.

Chips
Then the troubles began. By spring term there were longer visits and longer faces at the doctor's. You would have been scarcely born yourself, good Merrivale, and medicine was not so far along...

6

A hospital room. Kathie in bed. Chips at her side.

Kathie
Chips, darling, it's started. They'll kick you out soon. Dr. Cole says that things are a bit touchy. Our baby has decided to stretch out the wrong way, it seems, and doesn't want to budge. Stubborn as a true Chips. Not to worry. We always get it right in the end. It will take more than a kink in the piping to stop a Chips, much less two of us! But just in case, my darling, just in case, you must know what to do. You must marry again, so that she and our baby can love you as much as I do. And you must stay just the same. You must cram your fists in your pockets when you are angry, which is never for long, and you must slide your glasses back up your nose when they slide down, which is often. And you must teach the boys, just as you have, so that they will learn to teach themselves, and teach the world, because now they are my boys too. And then one day, one wintry day at the end, when everyone is going home to bed, one drear and drizzly day far off, when all the world has jumped to someplace new, and doesn't know just where, or what comes next, when everything is falling upside down, so that our boys will have to put it right, on one such day far off, my dearest darling, I will call on you. I will knock on your door, and take your hand, and help you down the mountain one more time. And all the while, I will save a place for you, if I am sent the right way, and keep an eye on you, if their telescopes are strong enough, and put in a word for you, if I can find the right ear, because I love you forever and ever and ever. Goodbye, Mister Chips! *(Doctor and nurses move in, lead Chips out.)*

7

Projections show town giving way to country and then Brookfield. Chips is seen or unseen.

Chips
Somehow I walked the three miles back to campus in the rain. Mother and child both lost. No one there knew. I wanted to get used to things, if I could, before facing the kind words of others. *(No bitterness or irony.)* I took the fourth form as usual

just before call-over*, setting them grammar to learn by heart as I stayed at my desk. *(A form room, boys, Chips at his desk, a window at the back showing rain.)* I was in a kind of trance, I suppose, until the hour ended and the boys filed out...

Faulkner *(last boy)*
Sir, there are a lot of letters for you.

Chips
So there are. I hadn't noticed them. Thank you, Faulkner. *(Exit Faulkner. Chips opens and reads a letter.)* "Ludens Aprilis dolandum bone vir." *(Opens and reads the rest as he continues.)* April fool, Mr. Chipping. April fool? Of course! It's April first, 1898. Dear boys! Dolandum! Chipping! How Kathie would have laughed! Clever boys! Clever scamps! Clever Faulkner! Dolandum! Dear Kathie! How Kathie would have laughed!

* Roll call

Dear Kathie! *(Laughing and crying together)* Dear Kathie! How Kathie would have laughed!

8

Fade to projections illustrating Merrivale's account. Merrivale may be seen or unseen.

Merrivale
I suppose I was the first to hear this straight from Chips. Now he needed rest. I asked Mrs. Wickett to keep an eye on him, and took my leave. The rest of his story is Brookfield lore, passed down from the masters and students. All agree that marriage had changed and enriched him. Anyone could see the new spring in his step, the smile, the twinkle, the confidence. Now he began to slip more humor into his lectures, little puns and ironies that make things easier to remember. When he knew that students had been coached and saw them coming, he could play that to advantage.
Same form room. Chips is lecturing to the same class. Faulkner, a good-hearted prankster, sits front center.

Chips
Thus the Senate enacted the Lex Canuleia, the law allowing patricians to marry plebeians. It meant that if Miss Plebs wanted to marry Mr. Patrician, and he said he couldn't, then she could say, "Yes, you... "

Chips gestures to the left, then right, then to all together, like a conductor cueing an orchestra. Faulkner leans stage left to join that group, then stage right to join the other, as those groups yell in turn:

Left Boys
Can!

Right Boys
You!

All Boys
Liar!"

All rise to yell "Liar," and file out merrily as Chips motions them to do. Fade out. Brookfield projections as before, now about 1900. Merrivale may be seen or unseen.

Merrivale
Bereavement, after the first, somehow brightened and enriched him once again. It was as if Kathie had become a part of him. There was a gain in perspective, scope, dimension. He had earned the respect of the boys from that first day, and gradually their trust and admiration over more than a quarter century at Brookfield, but only now came their love. Now he had earned the right to those gentle eccentricities that so often attack parsons and schoolmasters. He wore his old gown until it was almost too tattered because Kathie had mended it once to stitch a sleeve, so he kept it. He took call-over standing on a bench by Big Hall with an air of mystic abandonment to ritual, the School List

curling over a board as he read the name of each boy to repeat as they all passed by...

9

1900, Chips standing on a bench outside the door of Big Hall. Boys file in, repeating their names as he calls them. The rest, out of his sight, spoof him good-naturedly.

Chips
(Calling as boys respond) Wayne. Weaver. Webb. Wellinger. Wenn-Smith. Werner. West... *(No answer this time.)* West... *(Chips marks the list, then continues.)*... Whiteburn. Wick. Williams. Wilsey. Winters. Wise. Witt. Woodley. Worth. Wyatt. Yarrington. Yearman. Young. Zane-Willis.

All Boys have now entered Big Hall. West runs in, scuffed up.

West
(Evasively) I'm sorry, sir. I took a spill at cricket and had to wash up.

Chips
(Sternly, looking him straight in the eye) Have you been fighting, West?

West
(Pause.) Yes, sir.

Chips
Tell me what happened.

West
It was about the railway strike, sir. My older brothers are both strikers. One of the neighbor boys said that the men are overpaid already. We fought.

Chips
Who swung first?

West
(Pause.) I did, sir.

Chips
Is the other boy all right?

West
Yes, sir. He's bigger than I am, sir, and got the best of it.

Chips
Do you know that what you did deserves expulsion?

West
Yes, sir.

Chips
No matter what he said?

West
Yes, sir.

Chips
Then you know never to do it again. You are on probation. You have two hundred lines.

West
(Relieved) Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. *(Runs into Big Hall.)*

Chips
(To himself) Good lad, West. The Head would rusticate him if he knew. But West has good stuff in him. One day he will be a great man, Kathie, or a damned nuisance, *(Chuckles.)* or both, as so many have been. Kathie, I think that this is what you would have done. *(Rubbing out what he had written on the list)* I think that this is what you would have done. *(Fade out.)*

10

Merrivale
(Seen or unseen) Sometimes the mood was somber...

Big Hall, 1901, Chips and all 500 Brookfield students.

Chips
This January, it was the sad duty of Headmaster Meldrum to inform you of the passing of our beloved queen at Osborne House. It is now mine to report his own death yesterday of rheumatic fever. *(Gasps from the*

boys.) The Governors have asked me to serve in his place until a successor can be found. He was the twenty-third headmaster of Brookfield since it was founded in Queen Elizabeth's time, and the only one under whom I have served since I came here to teach in 1870. His predecessor, Mr. Wetherby, who engaged me, and who had held the office thirty years himself, died before the beginning of autumn term that year. Mr. Meldrum was a classicist, as am I, and as was Mr. Wetherby, and he thought, as do I, that the classics are taught for good cause. There is a beauty that holds. He taught that to all of us, master and student, to you and to some of your fathers. His was a life to remember, a life of renown, a guide to our journey in search of the beauty that holds.

Again projections illustrate Merrivale's narrative while he is seen or unseen.

11

Merrivale
There had been talk of making Chips' position permanent, but he was not really disappointed when the Governors brought in a youngster of thirty-seven, glittering with Firsts and Blues, and with the kind of personality that could reduce Big Hall to silence with the lifting of an eyebrow. Chips was not in the running with that sort of person; he was an altogether milder and less ferocious animal. Ralston was disliked as much as Chips was loved. Efficient, ruthless, ambitious. Ralston was a live wire; a fine power transmitter, but you had to beware of him. Chips had not bothered to beware of him. Teaching was his business, and problems could be faced when met. The big row came in aught-eight, when Chips had turned sixty. He was invited to Ralston's study. Then came his urbane ultimatum:

Ralston's study, 1908.

Ralston
Mister Chipping, have you ever thought you would like to retire?

Chips
(Startled) No, I can't say I've thought much about it yet.

Ralston
Well, Mr. Chipping, the suggestion is there to consider. The governors, I am sure, would agree to an adequate pension.

Chips
(Flaming up) But I don't want to retire! I don't need to consider it!

Ralston
(Calmly) In that case, things are going to be a little difficult.

Chips
Difficult? Why difficult?

Ralston
(Calm as always) Since you force me to use plain words, Mr. Chipping, you shall have them. For some time past, you haven't been pulling your weight here. Your methods of teaching are slack and old-fashioned, your personal habits are slovenly, and you ignore my instructions in a manner which I should regard in a younger man as rank insubordination.

Chips
(Cramming his fists into his pockets) But, slovenly, you said!

Ralston
Yes, slovenly. Look at the gown you're wearing. It is almost too tattered to stay on your shoulders. I happen to know that that gown of yours is a subject of constant amusement throughout the school.

Chips
(Fondly, to himself, as he takes his

hands from his pockets to show himself the sleeve Kathie had mended) True, very true, but it is a keepsake, rich in memory, something touched by someone in the past. *(Now looking at nothing in particular, serene, with no trace of irony, lost in thought)* And amusement of the students, kind Headmaster, can sometimes find a purpose. *(To Ralston, cramming his fists back in his pockets, indignant again)* But you also said insubordination!

Ralston
No, I didn't. I said I should have regarded it so in a younger man. In your case, it's more likely a mixture of slackness and obstinacy. Take the manner in which you speak Latin, for instance. I believe I told all of the masters to follow the new style without exception. You prefer to stick to your old methods, and the result is simply chaos and inefficiency.

Chips
(Defiant) Oh, that! Well, I admit that I never agreed with the new way of pronouncing. Making the boys say "Kickero" at school, when they'll be saying "Cicero" for the rest of their lives, if they say it at all. And instead of "vicissim*," God bless my soul, you'd make them say, "We kiss 'em!" *(Laughs to himself as Ralston stares.)* Mr. Meldrum, who preceded you, spoke Latin just as I do. And so did Mister Wetherby, who preceded him. In 1870, when he first approved my syllabus, he said, "You'll take the Cicero for the fourth." And he said "Cicero," not "Kickero"! *(Moves to the door as he finishes.)* I don't intend to resign, and you can do what you like about it! *(Exit Chips, closing the door politely.)*

* In turn, conversely

12

Again projections trace the narrative.

Merrivale
Poor Ralston! He had bitten off more than he could chew. For it had chanced that a small boy had been waiting outside to see Ralston that morning. He had been listening. He told his friends. Some of these told their parents. Soon the story went everywhere. "We kiss 'em" was judged his finest touch. The whole school rallied around Chips. The Chairman of the Board of Governors, Sir John Rivers, visited Brookfield, ignored Ralston, and went directly to Chips.

Still 1908. Chips and Rivers, aged 50, alone by the Brookfield cricket oval. Cricket is played in the background, with Big Hall visible farther off.

Rivers
Chips, old fellow, I hear you've been having the deuce of a row with Ralston. I want you to know that the governors are with you to a man. We don't like the fellow a great deal. Claims to have doubled the School's endowment by some monkeying on the Stock Exchange. I daresay he has, but a fellow like that wants watching. So if he starts chucking his weight about with you, you can tell him very politely to go to the devil. The governors don't want you to resign. Brookfield wouldn't be the same without you, and they know it. We all know it. You can stay here until you're a hundred if you feel like it. Indeed, it's our hope that you will. *(Exit Rivers.)*

Chips
(Dabbing his eyes with a handkerchief) Thank you very kindly, Chairman Rivers.

13

Kathie, you won't remember Johnny Rivers;
He came to Brookfield well before your time.
A lively soul, a Puck, a scalawag

Who hid my glasses once, so that I had
To read the Eclogues out at full arm's
length
While all the class made merry.

O my love,
Where have they gone, those lads,
those lives, those threads
That once we wove together, you and I?
Some broken now, some frayed, but
most, I think,
Woven together into something fine,

Chorus *(offstage)*
Long remembered, old in story,
Lads before us come and gone.
Fare you well, lads, off to glory,
Banners high, our contest won:

We who stay will follow after,
One and all for worst and best,
Brace and beam and rail and rafter,
Each with each to stand the test,
Fellows all in tears and laughter,
Shipmates on our journey West.

Chips
(Continuing as the Chorus sings)
Woven of jest and dreams, and Lord
knows what,
Of cabbages and kings and poetry,
Of common things enchanted in a spell
To cast across the wind, across the
world,
Across the sea and stars, wherever
thought
And song and story go, then home
again,
With something fine. And I will say
"Well done,
Well played, my lads, well borne by each
and all,
Well fought by all the school," but
just for now,
I thank you, very kindly, *(Dabbing his
eyes)* Chairman Rivers.

Chips dabs his eyes again.
Fade out.

Gordon Getty

Disc 2

Act II

1

Scenes of Brookfield again.

Chorus *(offstage)*
Long remembered, old in story,
Lads before us come and gone.
Fare you well, lads, off to glory,
Banners high, our contest won:

We who stay will follow after,
One and all for worst and best,
Brace and beam and rail and rafter,
Each with each to stand the test,
Fellows all in tears and laughter,
Shipmates on our journey West.

2

Merrivale
Ralston soon went on to better things. Chips could not have known that he would meet him again, one distant day, and save his soul. The new headmaster, Chatteris, was even younger than Ralston had been, but a decent sort who let Chips carry on as before. Chips would always invite the boys the night before Christmas holidays...

Chips' drawing room, evening, December 1911. Chips and boys, including Grayson, are opening presents under a Christmas tree.

Grayson
(To Chips) Here's one for you, sir, from Australia. *(Hands Chips a Christmas-wrapped package.)*

Chips
Thank you, Grayson. Now off to your beds, every one of you, and off for the holidays in the morning. My best to Father Christmas, if you see him, and to all of yourselves and your families until we resume. *(The boys leave with their presents. Chips reads the card on the package.)* From Mrs. Brool! *(He unwraps the package and takes out a letter and a second music box something like the first. He lifts the lid to play it, listens and reads the letter.)* "Dear Chips, this and the other one seem to belong to a set. Strange, that somehow I found them fourteen years and half a world apart. Perfect for your new children and grandchildren as they come along." *(The lid closes as the tune ends. Chips puts down the letter.)* Fourteen years, and no one has had the heart to tell her. Kathie, there must be beautiful music on your side. Look what dear Mrs. Brool and the artisans of Elfland have given us on this!

Fade to Merrivale, with projections of winter and snow easing gradually into spring.

Merrivale
I was thirteen then, and remember the winter as cold. But spring was so much the more glorious, and Chips, by all report, was still at the top of his game.

Form room, April 16, 1912. Chips and teenage boys. The window shows mid-afternoon.

Chips
...and Mr. Patrician said he couldn't, then Miss Plebs could say, "Yes, you..." *(Chips conducts as before.)*

Left Boys
Can!

Right Boys
You!

All Boys
Liar!"

All rise laughing, as before, on "Liar."

Chips
That concludes today's lesson. (Boys begin to file out merrily.) Grayson, I would like to see you for a moment. *(Grayson stays. The rest leave.)* Grayson, I don't want to be severe,

because you are generally pretty good in your work, but today, you don't seem to be trying at all. Is something the matter?

Grayson
No, sir.

Chips
Well, we'll say no more about it, but I shall expect better things next time.

Grayson
Yes, sir. *(Walks a few paces toward the door, turns.)* Sir, *(Tearing up)* my father was on the Titanic last night. We're waiting for word.

Chips
Good Lord. Good Lord. Grayson, you are excused all classes today. I shall ask for prayers in chapel this evening.

Grayson
Thank you, sir. *(Exit Grayson. Chips goes to one knee.)*

Chips
Kathie, beautiful Kathie, because all the boys are your boys too, and because our little baby would have been just Grayson's age, and because you yourself lost both your parents young, and know how hard it can be to find our way alone, dear Kathie, Kathie my beauty, if you can find the right ear, please put in a word for Grayson's father.

3

Memories reappear as he remains kneeling. They are seen in successively different parts of the room, each in the place and light as remembered, as the real room darkens toward night. Chips' responses are to himself, face to the audience, still kneeling, as an actor mimes his part.

Grayson
Sir, my father was on the Titanic last night.

Chips
Good Lord, good Lord, Grayson!

Grayson
Here's one for you, sir, from Australia.

Chips
Thank you, Grayson... From Mrs. Brool!

Kathie
Chips, did you hear about dear Mrs. Brool? She is off to Australia the week after next! She has cousins in Perth, and the doctors believe that the move will be good for her. Her wonderful old curiosity shop will be closed. All Brookfield will miss her, my darling, and we most of all for her kindness to us and our baby.

Chips
Kathie!

Kathie
Chips, darling, you have the gift of making them laugh in just the right places.

Chips
Kathie!

Faulkner
Sir, there are a lot of letters for you.

Chips
Dolandum! Clever Faulkner! How Kathie would have laughed! *(Laughs and cries.)* How Kathie would have laughed!

West
It was about the railway strike, sir.

Chips
Good lad, West. Kathie, I think that this is what you would have done. I think that this is what you would have done. Kathie! Dear Kathie!

Ralston
Mister Chipping, I happen to know that that gown of yours is a subject of constant amusement throughout the school.

Chips
It is a keepsake, rich in memory, something touched by someone in the past.

Rivers
You can stay here until you're a hundred if you feel like it. Indeed, it's our hope that you will.

Chips
Thank you very kindly, Chairman Rivers.

Grayson
Sir, my father was on the Titanic last night.

Chips
Kathie, Kathie my beauty, if you can find the right ear, please put in a word for Grayson's father.

Full night in the form room. The window gradually shows stars as Chips remains kneeling.

Hubbub of boys' voices outside, faint at first, gradually swells.

Grayson
(Offstage, shouted) Sir! Sir!

Chips rises and turns on the electric light just before Grayson bursts in.

Grayson
He's all right, sir! My father was rescued! He's all right! *(Weeps with joy.)*

Chips
Well! I'm delighted, Grayson. A happy ending! You must be feeling pretty pleased with life!

Grayson
Yes, sir! *(Exit. Fade out.)*

4

Brookfield exterior. Projections show winter changing into spring and summer.

Merrivale
Chips caught bronchitis early in 1913, missed most of the winter term, and decided to retire anyhow. He was 65, and didn't want to hang on if he wasn't up to it. He retired officially at the end-of-term dinner in July...

End-of-term dinner at Big Hall, July 1913. Chips at the center of the head table, Chatteris and Rivers at his sides. Masters, students, parents, governors, dignitaries.

Chips
(Rising to applause) I would like to thank Headmaster Chatteris *(Bows to him.)* for his kind introduction. Far too kind, in fact, but he comes of an exaggerating family. I remember having to thrash his father for it.

(Hushed laughter from all, including Chatteris.) I gave him one mark for Latin translation, and he exaggerated it into a seven. *(Uproarious laughter.)* I have been at Brookfield 42 years, and I have been very happy here. It has been my life. "O mihi praeteritos referat si luppiter annos*." I need not, of course, translate. *(Uproarious laughter.)* I remember lots of changes at Brookfield. I remember the first bicycle, the first electric lights. We had a member of the staff called a lamp-boy, who did nothing but clean and trim and light lamps throughout the school. I remember Mrs. Brool, whose photograph stands in the tuck shop where she served since Headmaster Wetherby's time. She inherited money from Scotland, then opened a wonderful old curiosity shop in Ware Street, and now sends all of us old Brookfeldians Christmas gifts every year from Australia. I remember when two-thirds of the school went down with German measles, and Big Hall was turned into a hospital ward. I remember when there was a hard frost that lasted seven weeks in the winter term. There were no games, and the whole school learned to skate on the fens. Eighteen eighty-something, that was. I remember the great bonfire we had on Mafeking Night. It was lit too near the pavilion, and we had to send to the fire brigade to put it out. *(Hushed laughter.)* And the firemen were having their own celebrations, and most of them *(Clears his throat.)* were in a regrettable condition. *(Uproarious laughter.)* In fact, I remember so much that I often think I should write a book. Now what should I call it? "Memories of Rods and Lines," eh? *(Cheers, applause and laughter.)* I remember... *(Laughter continues.)* I remember... so many things... *(Laughter dies down.)* but chiefly, I remember all your faces. I shall never forget them. I have thousands of faces in my mind, the faces of boys. If you come and see me in years to come, and I hope you will, I shall try to place those older faces of yours, but it's just possible I shan't be able to, and you will say, "The old boy doesn't remember me." *(Hushed laughter.)* But I do remember you, as you are now. That's the point. In my mind you never grow up at all. Never. Sometimes, for instance, when people talk to me about our respected Chairman of the Board of Governors, *(Bows to Rivers.)* I think, "Oh yes, a jolly little chap with hair that sticks up on top, and no idea of the difference between a gerund and a gerundive." *(Laughter from Rivers and all.)* Well, well, I mustn't go on all night. Think of me sometimes as I shall certainly think of you. "Haec olim meminisse juvabit*. Again, I need not translate. *(Laughter and prolonged cheers.)*

* Jupiter brings back past years to me.

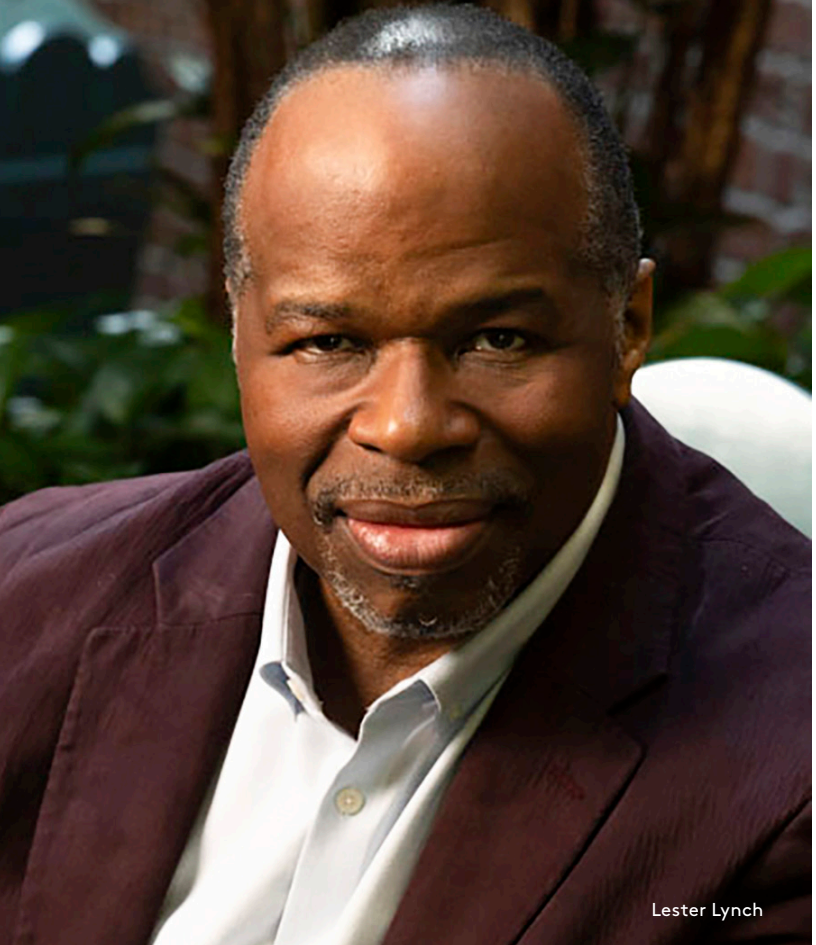
* One day you will do well to remember this.

5

Again projections illustrate Merrivale's narrative while he is seen or unseen.

Merrivale

Chips had retired from teaching, but he kept on inviting all of the new boys to tea, just as before, at the start of the fall term. He still watched all of the big matches on Brookfield ground. He was invited to dine once a term with the Head, and once with the masters. He was elected president of the Old Boys' Club, and went to their dinners in London. He accepted an offer to edit the new Brookfeldian Dictionary. He wrote articles, full of jokes and Latin quotations, for the Brookfield magazine. He could be seen in the audience at the school plays and concerts, and knew all the boys by name, as always, when they spoke to him. He was guest of honor at the end-of-term dinner, in July, 1914. There was war talk. His friend Herr Staefel, who taught German, and was leaving



Lester Lynch

for Germany the next morning, told him the Balkan business wouldn't come to anything. *(The photo of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand is projected, then scenes of mobilization.)* Then war. The younger masters began to volunteer. Chips was invited back. He accepted. Chatteris, who was only 37, went off to serve in '17. Once again, Chips became acting Head. It was his duty, as such, to read the list of war dead after Sunday service in Chapel...

1917, Chapel, boys and masters seated. Chips holds a list.

Chips

I'm afraid that six Brookfeldians have died this week, four in the fight for Passchendaele. That brings the total of our war dead now to three hundred twelve. Each is remembered as one of our own, and wished safe passage in his journey on. *(Looks at a list. As West, Faulkner and Grayson are mentioned, we see them as students again.)* First I must report the loss of Hadley West, class of aught-two. You will remember him as a Master of Maths and Sciences here from '12 through '16, when he enlisted. He was awarded a DSC for bravery under fire. Some of you are old enough to remember Roy Dunster, class of '12. He was one of our champion cricketers, and was cox of the Blues at Oxford. You will have read in the papers of the death of Major General Francis Faulkner, a triple first in aught-two, who wrote us all holiday greetings in Latin. David Forrester, class of '14, was one of our shortest boys, but tall in gifts and heart. He had been breveted major, in the worst of the fighting, and died at the head of his troops. Colin Grayson, also class of '14, was with us when his father was thought to be lost on the Titanic. I had not expected that it would be the father, and not the son, that I would be called to condole.

Finally, I must tell you of the loss of Max Staefel, the German master, somewhere on the Western Front. The letter I received was censored, and I cannot say exactly where. He was thirty years my junior, but a close friend.

Maynard *(one of the boys)*
Western Front? Does that mean that he fought for the Germans, sir?

Chips
It does. He, too, was a Brookfeldian who died for his country. One day, when the war is over... *(Air raid siren; a bomb is heard exploding in the distance.)* But not quite yet. It seems that one of our military bases nearby is being paid a call. We will be safest here. These stone walls have stood three centuries, and should shield us from anything apart from a spot-on hit. That would do for us anywhere. *(Nervous laughter from the boys. Explosions continue, still distant.)*

Let us meanwhile put the time to use. It may seem to you that the business of Caesar in Gaul is of lesser concern, under present events, but that is not really the case. I have brought my copy of his Gallic Wars. Is anyone willing to construe? *(Explosion a little nearer.)*

Chorus *(Heard from offstage as Chips and Maynard continue)*
Alma mater, amnis pratum,
Custos nostrum es.
Cantum nostrum audi, mater,
Tibi praebitum.

Maynard
I will, sir.

Chips
Very good. *(To the boys)* Will you pass this to Maynard? Maynard, turn to page forty and read from the bottom line. *(They pass the book.)*

Maynard
"Genus hoc erat pugnae..." this was the kind of fight... *(Louder explosion.)* "... quo se Germani exercuerant."

Chorus
(Onstage students, except Maynard, join.) Stellae dum lapsaverint,

Very loud explosions; the room trembles. Chips holds up his hand for pause.

Chorus *(Now offstage only)*
In perpetuum.
Recordata eris tu
Nocte dieque.

The noise abates. Chips lowers his hand.

Maynard
... in which these Germans busied themselves. *(Laughter from the boys, continuing as Maynard and Chips speak.)* Oh sir, that's good! *(Fainter explosion.)* One of your very best!

Chips
(Very faint explosion.) Well, you can see that these dead languages can come to life again. Eh? *(Laughter continues, softer as the boys file out.)*

6

Again projections illustrate Dr. Merrivale's narrative as he moves among them seen only by the audience.

Merrivale
When the Armistice came in 1918, Chips was seventy. He retired again, but no more really retired than the first time, and so passed his last fifteen years. Maynard, now Member for Northcliff, and other old boys who had lived through the war would motor up to visit him at Mrs. Wickett's, and he invited the new ones to tea as always. The boys wanted to know his opinions on everything. What did he think of Lloyd George, the Chamberlain brothers? What about Churchill or Ramsey? Mussolini or

Hitler? Did Germany want a new war? Mrs. Wickett told me later on that chill November afternoon in '33, after my visit, that Chips would have two more visitors that day, and a further surprise between. The first visitor was one he could not have expected.

Chips in his drawing room. Doorbell. Chips answers it.

Chips
(At the door) Mr. Ralston, I think.

Ralston
It is.

Chips
Come in, Mr. Ralston. Come in from the cold. *(Leads him in.)* I can offer you tea, or sherry, or both. How can I be of help?

Ralston
Thank you, nothing, Mr. Chipping. I have come to ask the favor of your counsel on a personal matter. I wronged you once, and apologize. I saw even then that you have a gift that I lack. A sense of the larger context. I am in need of that now.

Chips
I will help if I can. *(Leads him to a chair. They sit.)*

Ralston
You may have read of me in the financial pages. I turned from academy to investments. I had some success. The Brookfield endowment has done well with its shares in Ralston Industries, and more so when I bought them back yesterday at a price above market.

Chips
So I heard, Mr. Ralston, and thought there may be some mistake. I'm certain that I can persuade the directors to cancel the sale if there was.

Kevin Short

Ralston
Dear Mr. Chipping! There was no mistake. Tomorrow I will be arrested for grand larceny. I will plead guilty and serve 12 years in prison. The shares are worthless. I bought them back to spare Brookfield. Now Mrs. Ralston is leaving me. I am alone. If I serve the 12 years, I shall be 77 on release. There is another choice. There is also the gentleman's way.

Chips
I understand. Three Brookfeldians have been sentenced to prison since I came here. I visited each, and welcomed each back at the end. I'm 85 now, and cannot promise both in your case. I tried to remind them that each day, even in prison, is a chance to build.

Ralston
I have not built well, Mr. Chipping. The gentleman's way stops the loss. Is there a God, Mr. Chipping?

Chips
(Pause for emphasis. Then, speaking gently) There's one inside.

Ralston
There's one inside. Yes. There is. Thank you, Mr. Chipping. Thank you profoundly. There is a chance to build. I am not a religious man, as you see, but you will be remembered in my prayers. I think I have found what I sought. If you visit me in prison, I shall be most obliged. Now I must take my leave. Thank you again, Mr. Chipping. *(Chips walks him to the door. Ralston remembers something, stops.)* Mr. Chipping, before I go, might I ask another favor?

Chips
I will grant it if possible.

Ralston
Mrs. Ralston and I have applied to Brookfield for our grandson Peter. He is all we have left. He is a good lad, and quick. His father died in the Bloody Sunday troubles, before he was born, and his mother in the flu of '27. If the scandal were to ruin his chances, it would break our hearts.

Chips
He will be accepted. I think you can count on me, Mr. Ralston.

Ralston
(Weeping) Thank you yet again, Mr. Chipping. *(Exit Ralston.)*

7

Merrivale
(Seen or unseen) Mrs. Wickett also told me that earlier that day, just before my own visit, she had brought him a box of his old things she had found in the attic...

Chips is opening the box in his drawing room. He takes out baby clothes, the same rattle seen before, which again rattles briefly, and then the two music boxes. He dusts the first one, reflects, dabs his eyes, and again opens the lid to play it.

Chips
Think of it, Kathie! We might have had a grandson, as Ralston has, just old enough for Brookfield now. Would he have shown your gift for music? Would he take to the classics? He would love the movies and airplanes and motor cars, all still strange to me in this bluff and bumptious world, and push on to stranger things because boys must. He would chase the horizon, just as we taught all the boys to do, and make us change forever to keep to the beauty that holds.

A knock on the door. Chips opens it. Enter Linford, age 12.

Linford
Please, sir, does Mr. Chips live here?

Chips
(Amused to be called that as his real name) I am the person you want. Now what can I do for you?

Linford
I was told to come here, sir.

Chips
(Closing the door, leading him in) Quite right, my boy. All the new boys are invited to tea with me. (*Leads Linford to a chair, busies himself making tea.*) What is your name, young man, and why didn't I see you with all the other new boys two months ago?

Linford
Linford, sir. I've been out since the beginning of the term with chicken pox.

Chips
Ah, that accounts for it. You know, Linford, you'll like Brookfield when you get used to it. It's not half such an awful place as you imagine. You're a bit afraid of it, yes? *(Linford nods)* So was I when I first came here, 63 years ago. When I first went into Big Hall and saw all those boys, I don't think I've ever been so scared in my life. Not even when the Germans bombed us in the war. But it didn't last long, the scared feeling, I mean. I soon made myself at home. *(Carries the tea and cake to a table in front of Linford, sits across from him. Chips and Linford continue as he does so.)*

Linford
Were there a lot of other new boys that term, sir?

Chips
(Laughing) God bless my soul! I wasn't a boy at all. I was a young man of 22. And the next time you see a young man, a new Master, taking his first prep in Big Hall, just think what it feels like.

Linford
But if you were 22 then, sir...

Chips
Yes? Eh?

Linford
Then you must be very old now, sir.

Chips
(Laughs merrily.) Well, I'm certainly no chicken! *(Laughing)* No chicken!

Linford
I apologize, sir. I said that wrong.

Chips
Not at all, my boy, not at all. I have seen many days. May yours be as many and as happy. I'm afraid you're growing up in a very cross world, Linford. Maybe it will have got over some of its crossness by the time you're ready for it. Let's hope so, at any rate. *(The tea and cake are finished. Chips looks at his timepiece)* I'm sorry, you can't stay. *(Chips leads Linford to the door)* Goodbye, my boy. *(They shake hands.)*

Linford
Goodbye, Mr. Chips.
(Exit Linford. Chips closes the door.)

Chips
Mr. Chips! *(Laughing)* Just like dear Kathie! *(Laughing and weeping together as he arrives at his chair and sits)* Dear Kathie! Good lad, Linford. Odd, though, that he said it just like that. Dear Kathie!
(Nods off, slumps to the floor)

8

Projections show photos of Great Gable, circa 1896. Chips is 48 again. He may be seen or unseen.

Chips
Thank you, Miss Bridges. I'm such a fool to have hurt my foot. With dark coming, and those grumpy-looking clouds, I don't know how I could have made it down without your help.

Kathie
(Seen or unseen) We'll be fine, Mr. Chipping. The worst is past. Take hold of my other shoulder as we shift left here...

Now projections show Lake Windermere, still circa 1896. Chips and Kathie may be seen or unseen.

Chips
It seems my foot is coming round, Kathie, thanks to you. At the inn, I hobble around without my stick now.

Kathie
Bravo, Chips! You'll be running the mile in no time! Easy does it here, though!

A different photo of Lake Windermere, days later.

Kathie
Chips, darling!

Chips
Beloved Kathie!

Winter sky again. It gradually darkens into night as Kathie continues, and clouds disperse to show a field of stars.

Kathie
Chips, darling, it's started. Just in case, you must know what to do... And one day, when all the world is falling upside down, I will call on you. I will knock on your door, and take your hand, and help you down the mountain one more time. And all the while, I will save a place for you, if I am sent the right way, and keep an eye on you, if their telescopes are strong enough, and put in a word for you, if I can find the right ear, because I love you forever and ever and ever. Goodbye, Mister Chips!

9

As she sings "Goodbye, Mister Chips," the projection gradually fades to reveal the hospital room where Kathy died. Chips is in the bed. Merrivale attends him. Rivers, Chatteris, Mrs. Wickett, Governors, masters and Maynard, now 35, stand by. Chips rouses.

Merrivale
Well, you old ruffian, are you feeling all right? That was a fine shock that you gave us!

Chips
What has happened?

Merrivale
Merely that you threw a faint. Mrs. Wickett came in and found you. Lucky she did. You're all right now. Take it easy. Sleep again if you feel inclined.

Chips
I will soon. First I have a promise to keep. I had a visit from Ralston today.

Rivers
From Ralston! After twenty-five years!

Chips
He's in a spot of trouble. He said that we'll read of it soon. He has applied to Brookfield for his grandson Peter. He was worried about the scandal. He wept. I reassured him.

Rivers
I read the financial pages, dear Chips, and I can guess what he meant. Scandals be damned! The boy will be admitted.

Chips
Thank you, good Chairman. Thank you all, old friends. Now I think I will catch that little nap. *(Dozes off.)*

Maynard
(To Merrivale) Odd thing, Merrivale. The new boy, Linford, who you treated for chicken pox, just told me he visited Chips this evening. He said that a lady had told him to.

Merrivale
A lady with golden hair.

Maynard
Yes! So he told me. Do you know her, Merrivale?

Merrivale
Only by description.

Maynard
Poor old chap. Must have lived a lonely sort of life, all by himself.

Merrivale
Not always by himself. He married, you know.

Maynard
Oh, did he? I never knew about that.

Merrivale
She died in childbirth, mother and child both. 35 years ago, he told me. It was a month before I was born.

Rivers
Pity. Pity that he never had any children. *(Linford is seen in a balcony)*

10

Linford, Maynard, Rivers and offstage Chorus of Brookfield Boys
Alma mater, amnis pratum,
Custos nostrum es.
Cantum nostrum audi, mater,
Tibi praebitum.

Stellae dum lapsaverint
In perpetuum,
Recordata eris tu
Nocte dieque.

Usque ad diluculum,
Nunc et postea
Elucebis denique,
Hic et ubivis.

(Alma mater, Brookfield,
You are our guardian.
Hear our song, Mother,
Offered to you.

Until the stars fall,
Forever,
We will remember you
Night and day.

Until the dawn,
Now and hereafter,
You will shine forth to the last,
Here and everywhere.)

Chips
(Rousing again as the Chorus begins, and continuing as they sing) I thought I heard you, one of you, say it was a pity that I never had any children. Oh, but I have. I have. Thousands of 'em, thousands, and all boys ... *(Boys, scattered in the audience or in the aisles, repeat their names as called)* Dunn, Dunster, ... all boys, ... Farr, Farnis, Faulkner, ... come round me now, all of you, for a last word and a joke ... Forbes-Wright, Forrester, ... My last joke, did you hear it? Did it make you laugh? Kathie, did it make you laugh? ... Gray-Choate, Grayson, ... wherever you are, give me this one last moment with you ... Wellinger, Wenn-Smith, Werner, West ... My boys.

Chips dies. Curtain.

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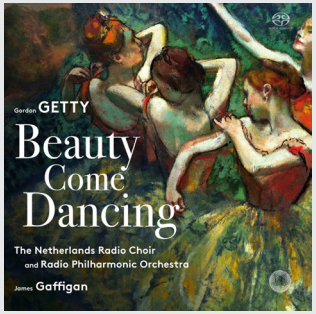

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Dennis Doubin
& Leslie Ann Jones

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