

“Oh Danny Boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling” These words were written by an English lawyer, Frederick Edward Weatherly, who was also a songwriter. Weatherly never set foot in Ireland, but the words have been associated with Ireland almost from the start, most likely because of the tune, Londonderry Air.

The text has always been very meaningful and poignant to me, and there are many interpretations. However, I am most drawn to those that describe a father saying farewell to his son who is being called into military service. In earlier times, soldiers could go months and even years without having communication with loved ones at home. The “summer” (long, happy days) of their relationship is about to end. The son is leaving to an unknown future, and the father, himself, is making his own final covenant with his boy. That covenant is that the son will someday return to his father’s place of rest, and breathe a blessing (“Ave”) over him, and re-unite, if even for a moment, remembering the “summer” of their lives, and looking forward to permanent reunion someday.

No one could argue the merits and beauty of the tune, Londonderry Air. My sense of the text, however, is that of a love story of the deepest and strongest ties capable between two human beings. The farewell is said with honor, yet deeply personal. It is said with a dignity and profundity that is rare, particularly in our present world. And so, it is with that sense of passion, longing, sadness, and quiet consolation that I penned notes to Danny Boy. May the simple nobility of the text etch deep in the hearts and minds of all those who hear it.

Pronunciation note:

This text is a blend of old Italian and Latin, and becomes a language unto itself. This provides a sort of veil that encases the traditional English text, and gives the piece an almost ancient, haunting character, culminating in eternal peace. Pronounce as Latin according to Roman usage.

ZRS

Z. Randall Stroope conducts honor choirs and all-state choirs throughout the United States, and is the artistic director of several summer festivals in England and Eastern Europe. His collegiate choirs have traveled throughout the world, including China, South Africa, Russia, eastern Europe, Japan, and the Baltics. His principal composition teachers were Normand Lockwood and Cecil Effinger, both students of Nadia Boulanger who, in turn, was taught by Gabriel Fauré. Of the eleven compact discs Dr. Stroope has recorded, two CDs (Passages; Volume I and Volume II) are exclusively his own works. Visit www.zrstroope.com for a complete list of his works and further information about him.

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31

31 Dan - ny, *unis.*
 8 Boy the pipes, the pipes are cal - - ing.

mp
 Pa-ce a-di-o fa -

31

34 *mp*

34 8 You must go and I must bide. Sleep in peace un-til you

me. Dor-me fa-bi - o mar - tyr.

34

37

mf

37

8

come. *hold back* *mf* And I shall sleep, *a tempo*

Dor - me mar - tyr. Dor - me ri -

37

hold back *mf* *a tempo*

40

40

8

f *molto espr.* And I shall sleep, Un - til you come to

tor - - - - no. Un - til you come _____ to

40

f *molto espr.*

43

f *a tempo*
hold back
hold back
sonorous a tempo
hold back
sonorous a tempo

me, Dan - ny Boy. But come you back ___ when sum-mer's in the

me, Dan - ny Boy. But come you back ___ when sum-mer's in the

43

hold back
a tempo

46

poco rit.
mp
mp
poco rit.
mp poco rit.
unis.
mp poco rit.

mea - dow, O ___ come ___ when val - leys hushed with snow,

mea - dow, O ___ come ___ when val - leys hushed with snow, Dor - me mar -

46

49

49 *unis.*
And I shall sleep, And I shall

tyr, dor - me mar - tyr, *mf*

49

52

52 *mf*
sleep, And I shall sleep, Un-til you

dor - me mar - tyr Un-til you *f molto espr.*

52 *f molto espr.*

52

55

55

hold back
hold back
f

8 come to me, Dan - ny Boy. But come you

come _____ to me, Dan - ny Boy. But come you

55

hold back

55

hold back

58

58

a tempo
sonorous
a tempo

8 back when sum-mer's in the mea-dow, O come when val - leys hushed with

sonorous
a tempo

back when sum-mer's in the mea-dow, O come when val - leys hushed with

58

a tempo

61

mp *molto rit.* *p unis.* *a tempo*

8 snow. It's I'll be here in sun-hine or in sha - dow.

mp *molto rit.* *unis. p* *a tempo*

snow. It's I'll be here in sun-shine or in sha - dow.

61

mp *molto rit.* *p a tempo*

64

p

64 *p* A - ve. A -

8 *mp* When you come, O Dan - ny Boy.

mp When you come, O Dan - ny Boy.

64 *mp*