

Nico Muhly

# TWO BOYS

An Opera in Two Acts  
Libretto by Craig Lucas

Vocal score

(2013)

Extract: 'U There/Who Is This?'

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# Voices New Zealand

## Performances 16-18th October 2020 ONLY

Commissioned by The Metropolitan Opera. Originally commissioned by The Metropolitan Opera/Lincoln Center Theater *Opera/Theater Commissions* Program.

World Première: English National Opera, June 24, 2011, conducted by Rumon Gamba.

North American Première: The Metropolitan Opera, October 21, 2013, conducted by David Robertson.

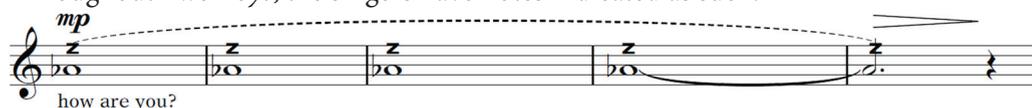
### CHARACTERS

Anne Strawson (Detective Sergeant, 50s) .....	Mezzo-Soprano
Brian (16) .....	Tenor
Doctor .....	Baritone
Rebecca (idealized version, 30s) .....	Soprano
Anne's Mum (70s) .....	Mezzo-Soprano
Jake (idealized version, 15) .....	Baritone
Fiona (Spy, 35) .....	Mezzo-Soprano
Peter (38) .....	Bass
Jake (real version, 13) .....	Treble
Cynthia (Jake's Mother, late 30s) .....	Soprano
Brian's Mother (40) .....	Mezzo-Soprano
Brian's Father (40) .....	Baritone
American Suburban Mother (30s) .....	Two Sopranos
American Suburban Girl (13) .....	Soprano
Celebrant .....	Baritone or Tenor
Liam (Detective Constable, middle-aged) .....	Tenor
American Congressman (49) .....	Tenor
American Congressional Page (19) .....	Tenor
Rebecca (real version, 16) .....	Non-singing

CHORUS of internet users, churchgoers, shoppers, skateboarders, nurses, hospital attendants, doctors, hospital visitors, etc.

### PERFORMANCE NOTE

Throughout *Two Boys*, the singers have notes indicated as such:



Each singer should repeat the text freely on the given pitches, in any tempo, being careful not to coordinate precisely with other singers. One's individual rate of text chanting can and should change throughout these sections. The text repeats until new text is given.



Other times it is less specific: each singer should randomly sing, on the given pitches, any phone number that comes to mind. The result will be a wild chattering. Various sources of text are used in the score, such as addresses, numbers, shopping lists, etc.

Unfinished sentences are best approached by knowing what the character might be about to say and having the next words ready on the tongue, rather than simply breaking off where the text ends. Broken thoughts, of course, have long been a staple of contemporary drama, but are much less common in opera. The aim is a verisimilitude of conversational speech.

### Scene 4: Brian's Bedroom

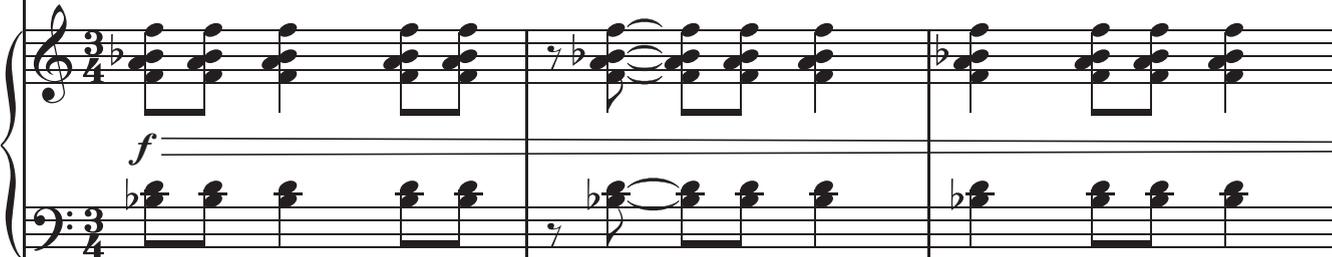
*Brian alone. He opens his laptop.*

♩ = 154

256 **N** *pp*

A. 

u there u

Pno. *f* 

Onscreen we see a local “TeeN4TeeN” chatroom—bits and pieces as well as whole chunks of what Brian sees: lines of text scrolling upward; screen names, some of which show thumbnail photos, others of which show a generic figure in silhouette under a question mark.

259

S. *f* who is this? who is this?

A. *f* who is this? who is this?

A. *mf* there u there u

Pno. *mf*

262

S. who is this? who is this? who is this? who is

A. *sub. ff* who is this? *mf* who is this? who is

A. there u there there u there u

T. *f* always full value  
8 hey

Pno. *f*



271 *mf, suddenly seductive, dolciss.*

S. who is this? who is \_\_\_\_\_

A. who is this? who is \_\_\_\_\_

T. there u there u

hey hey

Pno. *f*

274 *sf*

S. — this who is this

A. — this who is this

T. there u there u

hey hey

Pno. *mf*

277

A. there u there u

T. hey

Pno. *f*

280

A. there u there u

T. hey hey hey

Pno.

283

A. *sub. ff* there u *mf*

T. *cantabile* hey I thought

Pno.

286

A. there u there u

T. I lost u

Pno. *mf*

289

A. there u there u

T. hey hey hey hey

Pno.

292 *sub. ff* *mf*

A. there u there u there u there u there u there u there there u there u there u there u

T. u still here u still

Pno. *f* *mf*

295 *sub. ff*

A. there u there u

T. here u still here u

Pno.

298 *pp*

S. [phone numbers]

A. *mf* there u there u

T. still here u still

Pno. *f*



307 *mp cantabile*

A. there? ne - - ver mind\_\_\_\_\_

T. hey hey u still here

I. went snoop - ing in my things *sempre mf* what'd she\_\_\_\_\_

B. uh - oh

Pno.

311

A. - ne - ver mind\_\_\_\_\_

T. u u still here

B. - find? When can I see you?

spliff

Pno.

316

A. ne - - ver mind\_\_\_\_\_

B. when I es - cape!!!

Pno. *mp*

320 *mp cantabile*

S. who\_\_\_\_\_ is\_\_\_\_\_ this\_\_\_\_\_

A. ne - - ver mind\_\_\_\_\_ ne -

Pno.

325 *mf* *p*

S. who is this who

A. ver mind ne - ver

B. [phone numbers]

Pno. *f* *sf*

330 *mf* *p*

S. is this who is

A. mind ne - ver mind

I. *f* *f*

T. u com-ing o - ver? u com-ing o - ver?

II. *f* *f*

B. *f* fade out u com-ing o - ver?

Pno. *sf* *sf* *p* *sub. f* *ff*

335 *mf*

S. — this — who — is —

A. — ne - - - ver mind

T. — u com - ing o - ver? — u com - ing o - ver? —

*f* *sim.*

u com - ing o - ver? — u com - ing o - ver? —

Pno.

339 *f*

S. — this —

A. — ne - - - ver mind

T. — u com - ing o - ver? — u com - ing o - ver? —

u com - ing o - ver? — u com - ing o - ver? —

Pno.

343

A. — ne - - ver mind

T. u com - ing o - ver? u com - ing o - ver?

u com - ing o - ver? u com - ing o - ver?

Pno. *mp* *f* *sub. mp dolciss.*

347

S. *p* got - ta run got - ta

A. — ne - - ver mind

T. u com - ing o - ver? u com - ing o - ver?

u com - ing o - ver? u com - ing o - ver?

Pno. *f*

351 *f*

S. run got - ta run got - ta

A. — ne - - ver mind

T. u com - ing o - ver? u com - ing o - ver?\_

u com - ing o - ver?\_ u com - ing o - ver?\_

Pno. *mp sf mp*

355 *mp*

S. run got - ta run see you

A. — see you

T. I thought I

u com - ing o - ver? u com - ing o - ver?\_

u com - ing o - ver?\_ u com - ing o - ver?\_

Pno. *mp f*

359 *mf* *pp*

S. *mf* *sempre p*

A. *mf*

T.

Pno. *f*

la - - ter you still here you still here

— la - - ter — you still —

lost u I thought I lost u I

u com-ing o - ver? —

mindful16's thumbnail photo: a beautiful, composed, mature teenage girl. Brian's photo shows a muddy, sweaty, grinning boy in a football jersey.

♩ = 72 (Same tempo)

364

Reb. *mf cheerful*  
He - ya

Brian *mf cheerful*  
Who's this?

S. *mp*  
you still here you still here you still here?

A. *ppp*  
— here? you still — here? —  
— thought I lost — u — I — thought — I —

Pno. *p* *mp*

♩ = 72 (Same tempo)

368

Reb. Re - bec - ca — who r

Brian do I know — you?

A. *fade*  
— lost u —

Pno.

372

Reb. *seductive*  
u? Hi

Brian  
Bri - an

Pno. Vla., Hn.

376

Reb. Bri - an... so what's your game?

Brian  
No, it's "A" game

Pno. *mf*

380

Reb. *mf, dolciss.*  
I bet

Brian  
al - ways bring my "A" game

Pno. *p*

8<sup>ba</sup>..1

384

Reb. *mp*  
you do! but what's the jer-sey?

Pno. *f* *p*

387

Brian  
I'm right wing-er on my team

Pno. *sfp*

390

Reb. wan - na chat?

Brian  
What are we do-ing

Pno.

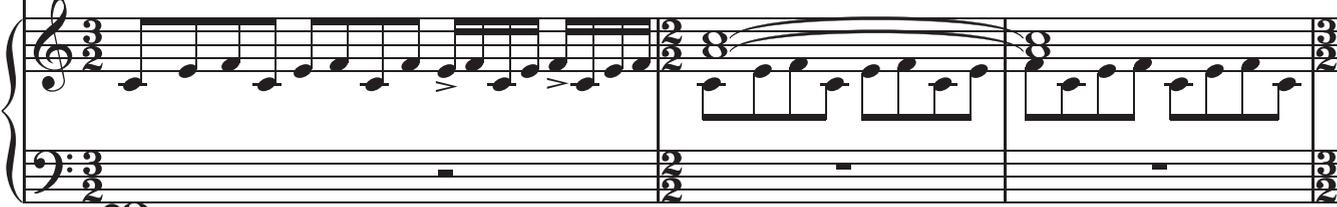
392

Reb. 

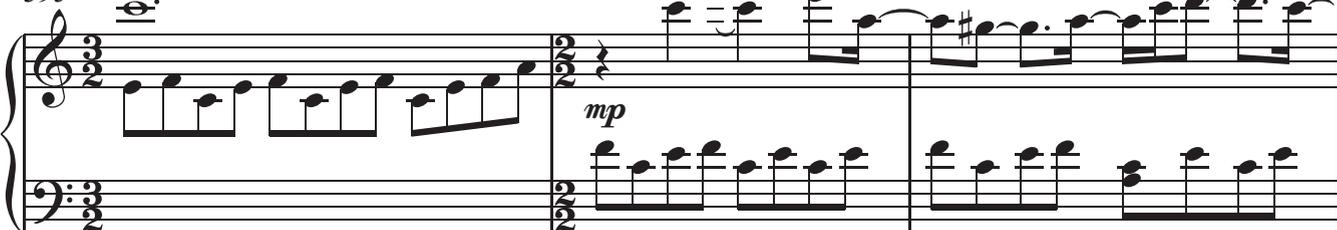
Want to go pri - vate?—

Brian 

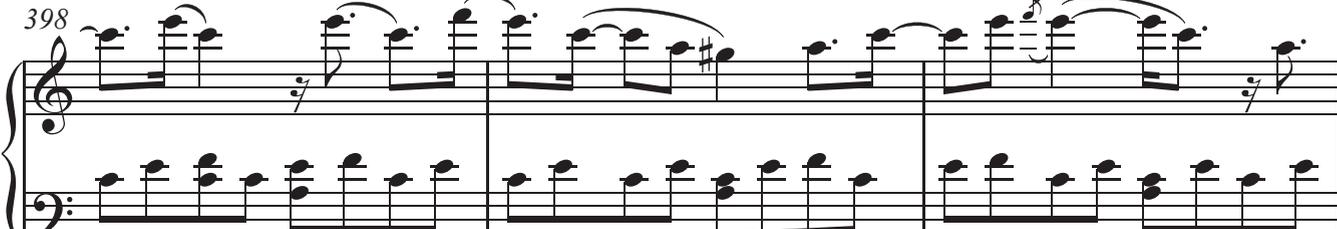
now, then?

Pno. 

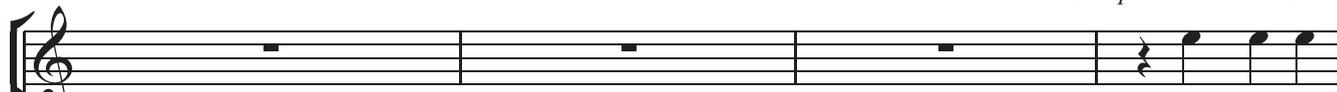
395

Pno. 

398

Pno. 

401

Reb. 

*In a private chatroom:*

What's go-ing

Pno. 

405 **q**

Reb. on? not too much.

Brian Not much. You?

Pno.

409 *mf sultry*

Reb. My\_\_\_\_\_

Brian Where are\_\_\_\_\_ you?

Pno.

413 *Brian types "LOL"*

Reb. bed - - room You

Brian Where do you live?

Pno.

417

Reb. know where the new shop - ping cen - tre is? be - hind that.

Pno.

*Rebecca's room, as Brian imagines it, becomes more upscale, evincing more class, as do Rebecca's hair and attire, even to the point of gaudiness.*

420

Reb.

Brian Posh!

Pno. *mp*

424

**R** In 4

Reb. Age? Sex? Lo - ca - tion?

Brian Six - teen,

Pno. *sempre p*

*Ped. freely*

428

Reb. You gay?—

Brian male, no- where near as nice.

Pno. (sempre p)

432

Reb. Ne- ver tried. So. You got a

Brian Not last time I checked You?

Pno. mf > mp

437

Reb. girl- friend? No?— No.—

Brian No.— No. Got a boy- friend? Why

Pno.

443 **In 2**

Reb. Have - n't met a - ny - bo - dy You a vir - gin?

Brian not?

Pno. **In 2**

446

Reb. Bol - locks!

Brian Yes True. You?

Pno.

450

Reb. no It?

Brian D'ja like it?

Pno.

452

Reb. It was bril- liant! u should try it!

Brian Fill in the blanks!

Pno.

456

Brian I've half a mind to!

Pno.

458

Reb. You could still have a girl- friend tho.\_\_\_\_\_ Should I\_\_\_\_\_

Brian Don't, tho.

Pno. *p* *mp*

462 S

Reb. — be your girl- friend? Are you tak- ing the piss?

Brian Are you tak- ing the piss?

Pno. *mf* *mp* *cresc.*

466

Reb. My-be not My

(pronounced "maybe")

Brian We could meet.

Pno.

471 *Anne writes "Maybe"*

Reb. - - be

Brian I'm pret- ty near

Pno. *mf*

475

Reb. Not 2- nite, tho. Some - thing kin - da

Brian Why?

Pno.

480

Reb. weird's go - ing on.

Brian Good

Pno.

*pp*

484

Reb. Sca - ry

Brian weird? What?

Pno.

*mp* *sub. p* *8va* *sf*

488

Reb. *can't say*

Brian *You said "not too much" be-fore*

Pno.

491 *Anne has stopped writing.*

Reb. *This was be - fore that*

Pno.

494

Anne *You're stall - ing* *f*

Brian *What?! You there?*

Pno. *mp*