

Synopsis of 'The Boy David' by J M Barrie
 Music by Tje Pieteru

(No 1) Act One, Bethlehem About 3000 years ago (No 1)

Jesse's Home, His sons at their evening meal - Mother enters
 She is in time to stop a brawling -

Entrance of David with the words "Mother Mother I've killed

(No 2) a lion" - general consternation, changes to mockings of David
 by his brothers -

(No 3) His tale of how he killed the lion + the bear - His mother cries
 out, "Cease you lying child" - David reels - is punished -

(No 4) Entrance of Samuel an "alarming + striking figure" -
 He is here to "find one of the brood of Jesse" -

(No 5) Scene between David + Samuel in which Samil is convinced

(No 6) that "David is the one he seeks" + anoints him much to the

(No 7) agitation + perplexity of his mother -

Samuel warns the Mother "If you have a loose tongue there is now
 not a step between him + me + death - He prostrates ^{himself} before

see
 (No 7) the shinning David + goes out -

Mother gives David all Jesse's food - she had prepared -

(No 8) Entrance Jesse having basked his petts well in Urusalem -

He is told by Mother that she has eaten his food - He threatens
 her - The frenzy of exaltation is now upon David + he orders
 Jesse to "put down that belt" - Jesse shrinks back in religious fear

(No 9) 'Possessed' possessed + keeping his distance from David goes out
 David alone is quivering from head to foot - He appeals to the "Other One" of
 whom Samuel has spoken - Other One, David is in darkness! Will you not tell me what to

(No 10) do - Invisible choirs - When he opens his eyes a grt change has come



over him "Mother I am to go to the camp of Saul to slay another lion - I am to go on my father's ass - I am to take my sling + my harp

(No 11)

Radiantly happy he prepares to depart
Curtain

2^m act 1st scene

Near the camps of Israel + the Philistines -

(No 12)

Entrance of Saul - "A noble figure in Israel's history, who is to be a broken column" Monologue -

Entrance of Ophir, (his captain) + Jonathan his son - they speak of Samuel's "silence" -

(No 13)

Nathan, as a young prophet, is announced - A fierce scene follows in which Nathan orders Saul - "Get up, battle in array, for this day shall the Philistines fall before Israel" - but what means Saul

(No 14)

angry is the following sentence "When the sun is hot there will come through the tents of Israel one riding on an ass - To him shall be the first blow -

(No 15)

Nathan is discharged by Saul in an explosion of cold fury -

(No 16)

Almost immediately there follows "the strangeness that comes upon Saul" when he comes to, he clasps his boy to him "Some voice disturbed the balance of my mind" - He dismisses them -

(No 17)

David enters riding on his ass? He greets Saul cheerily -

(No 18)

Scene between Saul + David in which humour predominates - David asks Saul the way to the Camp of Saul - Saul gives David a token "this will clear all paths for you"

at the end of which Saul gives David a token,
 a spear & a shield — David excitedly asks questions about
 Saul the King, Saul having told him merely that he is "the Son of Rish"
 a shepherd — David departs for the camp —

Saul again alone communes fiercely with himself — "Not this time
 Samuel, shall yr prophecy come to pass — Saul shall wax greater &
 greater — there is naught like being a King + King I will abide
 Curtain —

Scene 2nd act 2nd

the death of Goliath

(No 20) The scene is an outpost of the slingers in advance of the
 Israelite army —

(No 21) The curtain rises on a scene of wild tumult between Israelites &
 Philistines: (not battle but brawl)

the Armour-bearer of Goliath enters & taunts the Israelites with
 "Get you a champion" as he turns to go he blows a challenge
 (No 21) on Goliath's double noted horn — The Israelites rage at the indignity
 they have had to endure —

(No 22) An unseen horn, different in tone, is heard — All are stirred — thinking
 of excitement, which changes to mirth as they see David riding
 on the ass — with a horn in his hand —

(No 23) All ask many questions, but Ophir is surprised that no guards
 opposed yr coming hither" David shows him the token which Saul gave him
 + Abner the 2nd in command tries to make amends for their frivolity.

by " If you will be pleased to alight —
 There is some humorous eye play, with the ass & all run
 off to see "Hiram, who has been given the ass to Take care of,
 being kicked off its back — Jonathan + Ophir ^{remains} alone
 on the stage & Jonathan remonstrates with Ophir who is apprehensive
 of this young boy "riding on an ass" —

The slingers return outraged at Saul having sent them
 such a champion — Ophir succeeds in rousing them not against
 Saul but against Samuel — Ours of "the battle now" ending with
 "But where is the boy" — "I am gathering pebbles for my sling

Abner trying to dissuade him from sounding the challenge
 tells him, "Know boy there is none in Israel who will face this
 monster — who cries mockingly that Israel is without a God,
 David asks, Who is the God of Israel — Our Maker, whom
 this Goliath defies — David, Can it be? He looks up & then
 crosses to where Ophir has ^{scornfully} thrown his horn —

Jonathan tries to dissuade him, as do the others but David
 though still in a quiver, "Perhaps I am afraid" — "but thus
 does David" & blows a clear challenge — which is
answered by the Philistines, while the Israelites thinking
 David is doomed cruise away out of sight —

see
no 22
see
no 20

see
No 20

Goliath speaks to David (from behind the scenes) + curses him, "thou Israelite who are without a God"

see
No 10

David answer in the words of the bible - "Thou comest to me with a sword + with a spear + with a shield but I come to thee in the Name of Him whom thou has 'defied'"

Darkness has descended - David discharges his sling - Goliath falls, David calls to Jonathan to come with him to carry the spoils of Goliath back to the Israelite camp

see
No 12

Wailing of the Philistines - Howling with joy of the Israelites

see
No 15

until one cries out "the battle" - more + more take this up until they all rush off in the direction of the Philistines

see
No 23

their voices mingling in one unanimous cry "the Battle"

Curtain

3 act 1st scene

David plays before Saul

The tent of Goliath now occupies a conspicuous place on the stage

After a short scene between Ophir + Abner - Jonathan comes from the tent + meets Saul who speaks loweringly about Jonathan being too much with David when Jonathan should realize that "as long as David liveth upon the ground, you shall not be established in this Kingdom"

David overhearing voices calls to Jonathan, + recognizing Saul gazes gloriously on him "Son of Kish let me encompass thee" Throwing the scene

6

that follows it transpires that David's shepherd is the king + he upon ascertaining this cries to Jonathan - "Stand away Jonathan - I know

see No 7

how to do it" + prostrates himself before Saul - after which with Jonathan imperiously dismissed, untaken to David, a humorous

No 24

scene ends ^{with Goliath's helmet + spear} after which the scene turns on a very dramatic quality, ^{with David playing on his harp} until the actual moment when Saul throws his javelin at David - silence within the tent, then with inarticulate

No 25

cries laughter & wild gestures Saul sweeps across the stage, triumphant - challenging - Suddenly he thinks he hears voices "Hast thou slain the Lord's

anointed" - Saul shudders with fear, cries brokenly, "David David", David peeps out of the tent - wide-eyed - + very sad - First thought is flight, then

seeing Saul "sunk down on a tree trunk with head buried on his arms" - he starts playing on his harp, taking courage he creeps on his knees, closer & closer to him, for a moment there is danger in Saul's attitude - "then all tension leaves

No 26

Saul + he is merely listening to the music like one very far away"

Curtain

3rd act 2nd scene & finale

The Vision

The Scene is the house of Jessa as in 7th act -

No 27

The music depicts the peace of the night in the household

the 1st vision shows Saul + his troop asleep on a hillside -

David, now a captain, but in rags, appears at top of the hillside he very cautiously approaches Saul + "pulls the bolster inch by inch from beneath Saul's head" also a leather cresset of water + the jarlin + carrier

No 28

them to the top - then he sounds his horn - they awaken - David proves to Saul his utter devotion to him + Saul recognizes this + "I will take thee back into my service because my soul was precious in thine eyes this night, Vision fades as David prostrates himself before Saul

2nd Vision the Throne room

No 29

In which Saul summons his two daughters "to make one of you

a snare unto the son of Jesse" David enters - Saul proposes

"this day shall you be my son-in-law - Merab humbles herself + begs to be excused Michal "Never Captain can you be got

enough for me - I am for a King" + withdraws

David, "unconscious of their going", mounts the throne + we see that he likes it, but ^{he} suddenly becomes bewildered + leaves the throne, "as one who has done sacrilege -

3rd Vision

Saul visits the Witch of Endor -

No 30

Samuel is called up ^{from the dead} + Saul asks for guidance - He receives

see No 4

a relentless answer - Tomorrow thou + thy son shall no longer be of this world - You will be in mine with me - fades -

4th VisionN^o 31

A mountain side battle scene - Saul + Jonathan among the slain - David is seen, kneeling beside Saul then rising + saluting - "How are the mighty fallen" etc the words taken from the bible, at the end he addresses Jonathan + then sinks down mourning for Jonathan - fades out

5th + last Vision

the figure of Samuel comes to Saul - throughout this scene they are as simple as "two villagers gossiping about old times" - they gradually begin to recognize each other + Samuel ultimately prostrates before Saul "whom it vaguely disturbs" - the scene darkens + David clad only in his night attire is flitting about here + there in search of Saul + does not find him - the scene blacks out + changes to the

see
N^o 1

room of the sleepers - [early morning - Mother enters + finds David's bed empty - she utters one alarmed cry "Jesse" then realises it better not to awaken the others - David comes in sleep-

see N^o
27

walking + goes straight to his bed + lies on it in an extremity of sleep + exhaustion - The invisible choir begin to intone the middle + end of the 23rd Psalm (this is the only liberty the composer has taken with J.M. Barrie's libretto) - + as the music

see
N^o 2 +
1Asee
N^o 10

soars higher + louder, the Mother stands at the door which shows the light of a dawning day + remains in the attitude of one who is listening to a glory not of this earth Curtain + end of opera