#### PAUL WINCHESTER

# IFITWAS YOUR SON

SATB chorus unaccompanied

If it was your son you would fill the sea with ships all by the millions acting as a bridge to get it through.
But don't worry,
He's just a child of lost humanity, of dirty humanity, which makes no noise
He is not your son.
Sleep peacefully,
it's not yours...

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- Twitter User Interface

- Muhammad Najem

#### Composer's Note

When I stumbled across this poem on facebook, I was immediately struck by the poignancy and truth of its words – about how easily we can look away from tragedy and fail to remedy human pain and suffering in favor of our own comfort. I was stunned to learn that the words were written by a very young man, a 16-year-old Syrian journalist reporting via social media on the horror, violence, and suffering in his country.

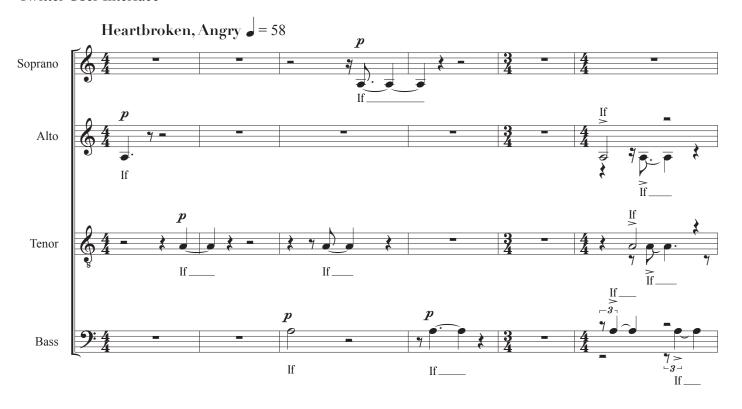
Posted with this short poem was a picture of a small child – probably 3 or 4 years old – in a life jacket on the shore, wailing, as his family seeks refuge from war. I had only seen this repackaged through facebook and so when I went to find the original post, made on Twitter, I found the image replaced with the disclaimer message printed above. Now, I never use Twitter, which means that whatever my content settings are are the default. I was so struck by the irony: the message of this poem paired with a disclaimer hiding the photographic subject of the work by default for fear of disrupting our peace and our worry – our false tranquility that requires the shutting out of the terrible suffering of those around us.

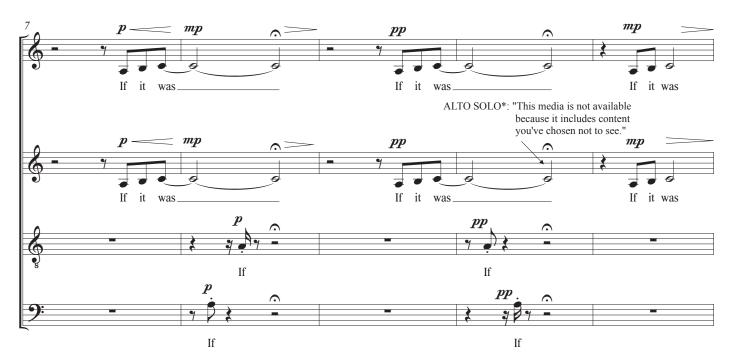
May all children be ours.

## IF IT WAS YOUR SON

Muhammad Najem; Twitter User Interface

Paul Winchester





<sup>\*:</sup> Each of the spoken solos should be delivered quickly, pleasantly, and impersonally; almost like a pre-recorded message

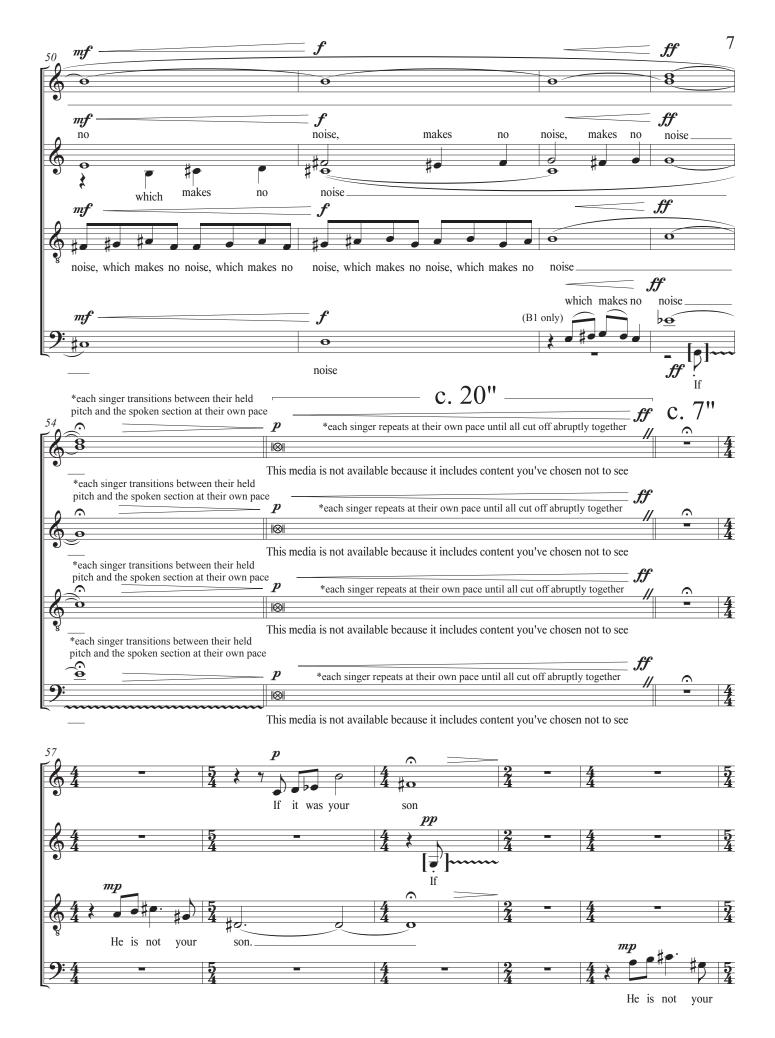
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