

Heart of Oak

Lesley Nelson-Burns

The music to Heart of Oak was by Dr. William Boyce (1711-1779). The English words were written by the famous actor David Garrick (1716-1779) in 1759.

Garrick is also credited with the theatrical blessing, "Break a Leg" as he was reportedly so involved in his performance of Richard III that he did not notice the pain of a fracture he incurred.

Lyrics

Come cheer up, my lads! 'tis to glory we steer,
To add something more to this wonderful year;
To honour we call you, not press you like slaves,
For who are so free as the sons of the waves?

Chorus

*Heart of oak are our ships, heart of oak are our men;
We always are ready, steady, boys, steady!
We'll fight and we'll conquer again and again.*

We ne'er see our foes but we wish them to stay,
They never see us but they wish us away;
If they run, why we follow, and run them ashore,
For if they won't fight us, we cannot do more.

Chorus

They swear they'll invade us, these terrible foes,
They frighten our women, our children, and beaus;
But should their flat bottoms in darkness get o'er,
Still Britons they'll find to receive them on shore.

Chorus

We'll still make them fear, and we'll still make them flee,
And drub 'em on shore, as we've drubb'd 'em at sea;
Then cheer up, my lads! with one heart let us sing:
Our soldiers, our sailors, our statesmen and Queen.

Chorus