

Big River
Jimmy Nail

BIG RIVER
words and music by Jimmy Nail

[Intro]

A Am E x2 (first beat on each chord arpeggiated)

E Esus4 E A
walking on cobbled stones, little bits of skin and bone
C#m G#m F#m Bsus4 B
jumping on a tram car for a ride
E Esus4 E A
I can remember then, as I was just a boy of ten
C#m G#m F#m Bsus4 B
hanging around the old quayside
A E C#m
now all the capstans and the cargo boats
A
and stevadores are gone
E
to where all the old ships go
F#sus4 F# Bsus4 B E
but memories just like the seas live on

Esus4
that was when coal was king,
E A
the river a living thing
C#m G#m F#m
and I was just a boy, but it was mine,
Bsus4 B E A B
the coaly tyne

E A B
for this was a big river,
C#m G#m F#m Bsus4 B
I want you all to know that I was proud
E A B C#m G#m
this was a big river, but that was long ago,
F#m Bsus4 B E
that s not now, that s not now

E Esus4
my father was a working man,
E A
he earned our living with his hands

C#m G#m F#m Bsus4 B
 he had to cross the river every day
E Esus4 E A
 he picked up a union card out of the Neptune yard
C#m G#m F#m Bsus4 B
 mouths to feed and bills to pay
A E C#m A
 there came a time for him to sail across the sea and far away
A E
 finally when the war was won

F#sus4 F# Bsus4 B E
 you brought him home and home he stayed

E Esus4 E A
 and when his days were done, under a golden sun
C#m G#m F#m
 you took him back to where he longed to be,
Bsus4 B E A B
 Back to the sea

E A B
 for this was a big river,
C#m G#m F#m Bsus4 B
 I want you all to know that I was proud
E A B C#m G#m
 this was a big river, but that was long ago,
F#m Bsus4 B E
 that s not now, that s not now

Repeat Intro

E Esus4
 the Neptune was the last to go,
E A
 I heard it on my radio
C#m G#m F#m Bsus4 B
 and then they played the latest number one
E Esus4
 but wadda they do all day?
E A
 and what are they supposed to say?
C#m G#m F#m Bsus4 B
 what does a father tell his son?
A E C#m A
 if you you believe that there s a bond between our future and our past
E F#sus4
 try to hold on to what we had,
F# Bsus4 B E
 we build them strong, we build to last

E **Esus4** **E** **A**
 cause this is a mighty town, built upon a solid ground
C#m **G#m** **F#m**
 and everything they tried so hard to kill,
Bsus4 **B** **E** **A** **B**
 we will rebuild

E **A** **B**
 for this was a big river
C#m **G#m** **F#m** **Bsus4** **B**
 I want you all to know I m so very proud
E **A** **B** **C#m** **G#m**
 this was a big river, but that was long ago,
F#m **Bsus4** **B**
 that s not now
E **A**
 and this is a big big river,
C#m **G#m** **A**
 and in my heart I know it will rise again
B **E** **Esus4** **E**
 the river will rise again

Dedicated to Jimmy Bradford (1914 - 1990)