

THE MASK OF ORPHEUS

a lyric tragedy in
three acts

music by
Harrison Birtwistle
libretto by **Peter Zinovieff**

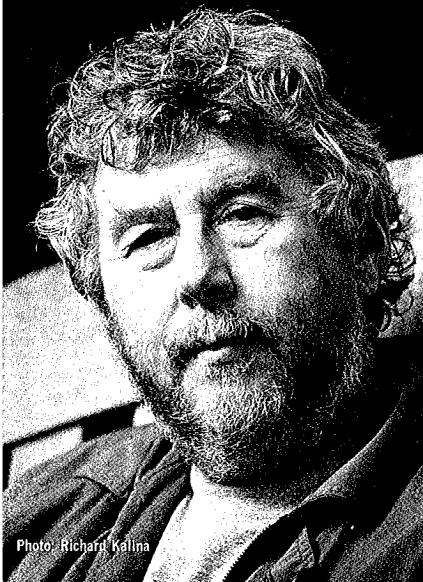


Photo: Richard Kalina

THE MASK OF ORPHEUS

ACT 1 67'29

[1] Parados 2'12

SCENE 1

[2] First Poem of Reminiscence 9'13
[3] First Act of Love / First Duet of Love 3'34
[4] First Passing Cloud 2'41
[5] First Structure of Decision 1'32
[6] First Ceremony 2'03
[7] First Love Duet 2'49
[8] First Song of Magic 2'34
[9] First Immortal Dance 3'03

SCENE 2

[10] First Cry of Memory 3'18
[11] Second Passing Cloud 3'47
[12] Second Act of Love 3'57
[13] First Allegorical Flower of Reason 3'43
[14] First Look of Loneliness (Aristaeus) 5'20

SCENE 3

[15] First Time Shift / First Human Lie 1'30
[16] First Whisper of Change (a) 0'46
[17] Second Ceremony / First Exchange 2'06
[18] First Song of Failure 2'35
[19] Second Immortal Dance 0'59
[20] First Hysterical Aria (a) 1'04
[21] Second Statement of Reason 2'03
[22] First Hysterical Aria (b) 0'36
[23] First Magic Formula 1'49
[24] First Hysterical Aria (c) 0'47
[25] First Shout of Gratitude 3'28

ACT 2 48'21

SCENE 1

[1] Second Time Shift / Second Love Duet 4'18
[2] First Whisper of Change (b) 0'49
[3] 1st Arch 2'57
[4] 2nd Arch 2'15
[5] 3rd Arch 2'15
[6] 4th Arch 2'21
[7] 5th Arch 2'08
[8] 6th Arch 2'14
[9] 7th Arch 1'44
[10] 8th Arch 2'05
[11] 9th Arch 2'52

SCENE 2

[12] 10th Arch 2'05
[13] 11th Arch 2'04
[14] 12th Arch 1'43
[15] 13th Arch 1'50
[16] 14th Arch 1'51
[17] 15th Arch 2'27

SCENE 3

[18] 16th Arch 1'43
[19] 17th Arch 3'48
[20] Second Allegorical Flower of Reason 3'28
[21] Third Terrible Death / Second Whisper of Change 1'23

ACT 3 46'27

SCENE 1

[1] Third Time Shift 3'32
[2] Third Whisper of Change 1'03

SCENE 2

[3] Third Dream 2'39
[4] Third Allegorical Flower of Reason 3'27
[5] Third Song of Magic (a) 0'30
[6] Euridice Puppet / Euridice Singer 2'28

SCENE 3

[7] Third Song of Magic (b) 1'04
[8] Third Spoken Argument 1'38
[9] Third Song of Magic (c) 1'08
[10] Third Sentence of Teaching 1'45
[11] Third Terrible Death 1'19
[12] Third Song of Magic (d) 1'08
[13] Third Ceremony 2'30
[14] Third Song of Magic (e) 1'31
[15] Third Love Duet 1'49
[16] Third Song of Magic (f) 1'53
[17] Third Hysterical Aria 3'47
[18] Third Passing Cloud 3'05
[19] Third Immortal Dance 3'15
[20] Exodos 6'56

THE PERFORMERS

*The Man
The Myth/Hades*

*The Woman
The Myth/Persephone*

*The Man
The Myth/Charon
The Oracle of the Dead/Hecate*

*The Caller
Priest/Judge 1
Priest/Judge 2
Priest/Judge 3
Woman/Fury 1
Woman/Fury 2
Woman/Fury 3*

Orpheus:
Jon Garrison, *tenor*
Peter Bronder, *tenor*

Euridice:
Jean Rigby, *mezzo-soprano*
Anne-Marie Owens, *mezzo-soprano*

Aristaeus:
Alan Opie, *baritone*
Omar Ebrahim, *baritone*
Marie Angel, *soprano*

The Troupe of Ceremony/Judges of the Dead:
Arwel Huw Morgan, *baritone*
Stephen Allen, *tenor*
Nicholas Folwell, *baritone*
Stephen Richardson, *bass*
Juliet Booth, *soprano*
Philippa Dames-Longworth, *soprano*
Elizabeth McCormack, *mezzo-soprano*

BBC Symphony Orchestra
Andrew Davis, *conductor*
Martyn Brabbins, *assistant conductor*
BBC Singers
Simon Joly, *chorus-master*
Ian Dearden, *sound diffusion*
Anthony Legge, *musical preparation*
Kenneth Richardson, *casting adviser*
Electronic material realised by Barry Anderson in association with IRCAM, commissioned by English National Opera.

THE CHILDREN'S STORY

The Children's Story is the text that provided the first impetus for work on the libretto and music of *The Mask of Orpheus*, and the original version is reproduced in the libretto which accompanies this disc. The opera's librettist, Peter Zinovieff, has provided the following updated version as an introduction to the recording.

PARADOS & ACT 1

Music was invented after the main wars of the gods. Hermes scooped out the flesh from a tortoise shell, tightened a piece of leather over it, added a piece of wood for a bridge and five pieces of cow gut for strings. This lyre was the first musical instrument. Hermes gave it to Apollo thereby securing his friendship for always.

Apollo became the god of music and, symbolised by the sun, represented reason in all things.

Orpheus was the son of the king Oegeus and, so it is said, the muse Calliope. He lived more than four thousand years ago in north-eastern Greece. He taught against Dionysus and preached the worship of one god - Apollo.

Apollo taught Orpheus the magic of words and poetry and even gave him the magical lyre he had

been given by Hermes. Orpheus then added two strings to the original five and used these to represent the seven vowels of the special alphabet he used in his songs. He also invented the plectrum which he used when he played. Orpheus became the greatest musician and poet the world had ever known. He was even greater than Linus, his brother, who invented rhythm. Orpheus made magic with his songs: even trees and animals and rocks moved in sympathy when he played. Indeed, it is said that there are trees growing at Zone, in northern Greece, which still grow today in the pattern of one of Orpheus's dances.

Orpheus joined the Argonauts on their extraordinary journey to find the Golden Fleece in the expedition to the Black Sea, perhaps returning back across Europe by river, past Britain and France, Portugal and Spain, to the Mediterranean. He saved the ship Argos many times by the magic of his song. At one time he only had to whistle to re-float the ship off a rocky shore onto which it had been cast in a storm.

Orpheus's words were so marvellous and powerful that they were kept secret throughout

history and are now lost for ever. His mystical poems are supposed to have contained the meaning of life, love and the universe.

Orpheus fell in love with beautiful Euridice (whose name means 'Universal Justice'). Who would not be in love with Orpheus? The hero of the Argonauts and the greatest singer in the world. Everyone was pleased. It was the perfect match. They were to be married and there was, of course, to be a great wedding feast and ceremony.

Hymen was asked to come to the occasion as he was supposed to bring good luck if he could be persuaded to sing. However, ominous things started to happen. The ceremony started very late. Hymen arrived even later and his symbolic torch smoked so much that tears came into everyone's eyes. A gigantic black bird cast a shadow across the sun. There were heavy and long silences among the guests. Orpheus had a terrible vision that the whole ceremony was a re-enactment of the old story of Dionysus being torn apart, boiled in a cauldron and then made back into himself by his grandmother Rhea. Why?

It hardly seemed like a wedding at

all and though Orpheus finally sang a beautiful song of magic, the guests left with heavy hearts. The omens were bad, but nothing like bad enough to foretell the terrible things to come and the violent deaths of Orpheus and Euridice.

Immediately after the wedding there was a short time for hot Summer and peace.

Euridice often wandered by the river Enipeus (the River of Woe) and there she made friends with the Naiads (Wood-Nymphs). She was always beautiful and always dressed in blue. She missed not being with Orpheus. She often yawned in the hot Summer; she also yawned with boredom.

One day Aristaeus, the bee-keeper, saw Euridice from across the river (which was, at this point, little more than a stream). Like Orpheus, he immediately fell in love with her and contrived to see her by the river at the same time and on every day. Euridice did not deny him. They would walk along the river and the woods. The Naiads were jealous of having their beautiful friend taken away from them. But Aristaeus was a perfect companion for Euridice. He told her of the marvellous things in nature: about his bees and the cultivation of vines and

olives. It is true that Aristaeus could not make magic with his songs like Orpheus but Euridice did not want magic. She wanted a son.

One day Aristaeus made love to Euridice on the bank of the river. While they were kissing Euridice was very happy but afterwards she became frightened and guilty at having deceived Orpheus.

She started to run away from Aristaeus and he ran after her. He called out how much he loved her and promised that her unfaithfulness to Orpheus did not matter: that no-one would ever know. He promised her happiness for ever. However Euridice wanted to return to Orpheus. She no longer cared for Aristaeus.

Suddenly Euridice stumbled in the long grass and fell over. A huge water snake reared out of the river and coiled itself around her ankle and bit her. She tried to run away but the poison of the snake's sting killed her before she even had time to cry out.

Aristaeus killed the snake and tried to revive Euridice. He held her in his arms but she was already dead. He could not accept that he had been, however indirectly, the cause of her death.

Aristaeus then went to Orpheus

and told him how Euridice had been stung by a water-snake and that her dead body still lay by the water's edge. He did not tell Orpheus that she had been running away from him, nor did he say that he had seduced Euridice and that they had both betrayed Orpheus's trust.

Orpheus was numbed and silent. Aristaeus was punished for his treachery by the wood nymphs. They killed his bees and made his vines and olive trees have strange diseases so that he was no longer able to cultivate honey, wine and olive oil.

Orpheus was completely stunned by his wife's death. Despite all he did, all his songs and all his power, he was not able to revive her when he went to the river bank where she lay dead. She was blue in the face and her ankle was hugely swollen from the poison. In vain did he call for help from Apollo, his teacher. This was the first time that Orpheus's magic music failed.

Euridice was claimed by the Underworld. Orpheus was absolutely desolate, and indeed, he was doomed to be so for the rest of his life. He never smiled again.

Despite the grief, Euridice's journey to the Underworld had to

be made as tolerable as possible. She was given a ceremonial funeral in the best tradition. All the sacred rites were performed. A slow and hushed time. Euridice was burnt on a gigantic funeral pyre together with sacred tablets to instruct her how to reach the fields of Paradise. Coins were placed in her mouth to pay Charon to ferry her across the river of fire - the river Styx. Sacred toys were burnt with her to propitiate the gods. Hermes was implored to act as her guide to the sombre depths.

Everyone at the funeral was in mourning. How recently the same people had been at the inauspicious wedding ceremony! A marvellous dance was performed with a ceremonial snake. Euridice had died from a snake bite; it was a snake funeral she was given. The dancing became wilder and wilder. The dancers wore grotesque Dionysian masks of women and effigies of Euridice were torn apart in her memory. The wild abandon was in the old tradition and celebrated the re-birth of Dionysus through this funeral of Euridice.

Orpheus ignored the funeral. He would not accept that he was unable to change it. He was, after

all, Orpheus. He could make magic. Surely he should be able to retrieve his love, Euridice, from the Underworld? He was even prepared to descend to the depths of the dead to bring her back. His sadness made him mad in his daring.

Orpheus went to consult the Oracle of the Dead. She lived in a cave which was reputed to be the entrance to the Underworld. He implored her to tell him what he could do. The witch-like oracle knew about the marvellous power of Orpheus's music. She was jealous. She wanted his skill. Orpheus sang a simple and wonderful song which won her over. The whole cave vibrated and moved to his rhythms and melody. She gave him three clues and pretended that the cave where she lived was, indeed, the entrance to the Underworld.

"Always face the way of the sun"

"Choose without choosing"

"Never talk directly"

The Oracle sang weird wild prophecies and asked strange hysterical riddles. Orpheus believed her. He would now be the second mortal to descend to the Underworld and return. He shouted his triumph and dived deep into the cave, facing the way

he had come: the way to the sun. The Oracle of the Dead was furious because when she tried to copy Orpheus's song, all she could achieve was a wretched screeching and croaking. She had been tricked. The rocks would not move to her music. She would not help Orpheus again.

ACT 2

After Orpheus had visited the Oracle he absolutely believed he would be able to go down to the Underworld and bring back Euridice. At the same time he was exhausted by his encounter with the Oracle and the funeral of his Euridice. A funeral at which he was hardly present. He fell into a deep and terrible sleep.

First he saw Euridice as a tiny doll struck down by gigantic snakes, then as a sort of puppet clattering to the ground by the river.

Next Orpheus imagined a wonderful series of arches crossing a valley. On the far side lay the dead and the near side the living. A river rushed through the central arch towards him. He saw seventeen arches and they were made of different materials and each arch contained different images and dreams and patterns so that the whole construction made up the entire world as he

know it.

He imagined that he had to cross these arches and bring back Euridice.

Dreams and nightmares were his destiny. Nothing true. He dreamt of his descent and return from the impossible Underworld.

He imagined that he had reached the river Styx but Charon would not ferry him across. However, first with Charon and then with each obstacle he came across, his music and words worked their magic. He was allowed past and was even able to bewitch the dread characters of the lower regions.

The furies reminded him of ghastly-looking Euridices but as he sang they cried for the first time and tears fell down their cheeks. The Judges of the Dead seemed to him as grotesque versions of the Priest who had conducted both the wedding and the funeral ceremonies: they merely muttered as he passed. The sounds of hell became louder and louder.

Finally, in his fantasy, Orpheus came before the terrible ruling trio of the Underworld: Hades (the King), his wife Persephone and her boon companion, the goddess of witches, Hecate. He saw these

dread characters as gigantic heads towering high above him. He hardly wondered why Persephone looked like Euridice, or why Hades looked like himself, or that Hecate looked like the Oracle of the Dead. He did not know that he was dreaming.

Orpheus continued to sing at his most magical. So much so that it appeared to him that he had succeeded in being allowed to find Euridice and to return with her to the outside world where the sun was bright. He remembered the Oracle's words so he always faced away from the Underworld, he made no choice and he addressed no-one directly.

The awesome trio of Hades, Persephone and Hecate surrounded Orpheus. He moved past them and also through myriads of wispy shadows, each looking like a frail Euridice. He made no choice but imagined that one had been made for him.

Gradually Orpheus struggled to return to the real world. He imagined Euridice following him. He encountered the same obstacles as before but, despite their screams of rage, they had no power against the force of his song.

One arch of the huge construction followed another. Each had its

own, seemingly interminable, problems. He visualised Euridice following him but remembered to always face the way of the sun and never once looked back to see whether what he imagined was real. He even thought of her limping from the snake bite which had killed her. He called out to Apollo and was rewarded by being able to see a distant and dim image of the sun straight ahead. He heard Apollo's voice in his head urging him to "sing, sing, sing".

Suddenly as the sun grew brighter and the journey became nearly completed, Orpheus awoke from his dream.

He turned round with a jolt to see where he was. Too late. Euridice was already slipping back from his grasp. All that was left was her terrible scream howling in his ears as she disappeared - this time for ever.

Orpheus's own scream, like that of the worst wounded animal, mixed with hers. He staggered out of the cave into the sunlight unable to recognise that his terrible series of dreams had been so realistic as to have been real life. Real or not, this was the second time that Orpheus had lost his wife Euridice.

Orpheus rushed once more to the

back of the dim cave. There was a river, certainly, but this one was not on fire nor was there any reluctant Charon refusing to ferry him across it. Some say that Orpheus was so desolate that he hanged himself. Others say that he waited by the river for seven days and nights without eating or drinking before acknowledging his failure.

ACT 3

Orpheus often imagined that a different fate had been his: that he had really descended to the Underworld and had indeed been able to bring back Euridice. He also imagined that he had never made the attempt and that Euridice still lived.

He almost gave up the worship of Apollo. He did visit the Oracle of the Dead again but to no avail. She would only answer with incomprehensible screeches.

Finally, Orpheus emerged from his despair. He built a temple to Apollo on the nipple-like summit of Mount Pangeum. Every morning he would greet the dawn with his music and watch the sun rise up above the Aegean Sea.

Trees grew around where he lived and wild animals came to listen to him sing and play. The trees arranged themselves in an order -

as if they, too, were joining together in a dance to Orpheus's music.

Many of the women of the valley wanted Orpheus as their husband and sometimes one or other would visit him and ask him to marry her. But Orpheus rejected all women: he had lost Euridice. He preferred to preach the worship of a single god, Apollo, to young men, and taught against the religion of Dionysus. He suggested to his disciples that to admire things of the mind gave more intense pleasure than those of the body.

These teachings of Orpheus were very daring, and it was said that the Gods were very angry at having such secrets revealed to ordinary mortals.

Gradually Orpheus's fame spread and he became revered as a great teacher, a maker of magic, and, in some ways, as a god himself.

There are two other traditions of how Orpheus died - other than that he had committed suicide by hanging himself. In one he was killed by a thunderbolt sent down by Zeus as a punishment for having revealed secrets in his songs. In the other he was attacked and killed by wild, jealous women (the Maenads)

crazed with wine and their Dionysian ritual.

After Orpheus rejected women these Maenads became determined to kill Orpheus and to sacrifice him to Dionysus who had taught them to worship the pleasures of life and the body. They hated Orpheus for telling their sons about words and music. At first they only threw pine-cone spears at him, then stones, and finally they killed Orpheus with farm implements that their husbands had left outside the temple they had been building to Apollo. They cut his body into pieces. This was the third time Orpheus had died. He had had no opportunity to sing.

The women not only killed Orpheus: they killed music. The trees and animals mourned this death. Time stood still. The sun was eclipsed and there were terrible thunderstorms. The women tore Orpheus to pieces, limb from torso and muscle from bone. They then sacrificed his remains to Dionysus and ate the most intimate parts of his flesh. After they had achieved their aim they threw the head and bones and tattered remains of Orpheus's skin into the river Hebrus. They also threw in the cracked shards of Orpheus's seven stringed lyre.

As Orpheus's head and lyre were swept down the river to the sea, they both murmured piteously. All the skies and world mourned for Orpheus. The river Hebrus itself plunged underground for five miles before re-surfacing. The women were turned into stone pillars by Apollo.

In the end the lyre was broken into tiny fragments and destroyed, but Orpheus's head did reach the sea and, miraculously, floated across the Aegean until it was cast up on a lonely shore on the island of Lesbos. Even here it still made inarticulate and magical sounds.

A huge snake attempted to attack the skull but, as it rose to strike, Apollo killed it. The skull was carried inland and when it was shown to have magical powers, and when it was realised that this was the last remnant of Orpheus, people came from far and wide to consult what had become a new oracle.

For a time it seemed that Orpheus's magic had not deserted the world and, indeed,

this oracle on Lesbos become as important as Apollo's own at Delphi. Not for long. Apollo himself became jealous: "Cease your slinging", he commanded. The skull became silent and it then rapidly decayed. Orpheus was finally silenced by his own creator.

Although this was the final earthly death of Orpheus, his song and words survived for thousands of years and his teachings have influenced all civilisations since. Unfortunately Orpheus's words were considered so precious that they were kept secret, so that despite many people being initiated into the Orphic way of life, they were bound by promises to keep the words secret. Now we only have a few scattered words of Orpheus left and even these may not have been from the poet himself. Of his music, of course, nothing remains.

EXODOS

After Orpheus was killed and after his Oracle had waxed and waned, Aristaeus went to the river where Cyrene, his mother lived. He

asked how he might redeem himself to get back his bees now that Orpheus was dead.

She told him to force Proteus to tell him how. But even after catching Proteus, the only information he could glean was the, by now well known, story of Orpheus and Euridice. Later, though, Cyrene told her son that enough time had passed for him to propitiate the wood nymphs who had been such friends of Euridice.

He selected four perfect bulls and four unyoked heifers and sacrificed them to the Gracious Ones of the Grove. He then left them in a thicket. After nine days Aristaeus offered poppies as a funeral gift to Orpheus. He slayed a calf and a black ewe for Euridice.

After nine days he went back to the site of his sacrifice. Bees were swarming from the rotting flesh of the oxen.

Aristaeus had been forgiven for his part in this tragic story.

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The 1980s were an extraordinary time for new opera. Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise*, Stockhausen's *Donnerstag*, Berio's *La vera storia* and Adams's *Nixon in China*, all received their first performances during the decade. Perhaps the most eagerly awaited, however, was the premiere at the London Coliseum in 1986 of *The Mask of Orpheus*, on which Harrison Birtwistle and his librettist, Peter Zinovieff, had been working since 1973. It was universally hailed at the time as the most important musical and theatrical event of its decade; ten years on, despite an absence of any further complete performances, its standing has, if anything, grown all the greater. *The Mask of Orpheus* is undoubtedly a key work in Birtwistle's output, and his subsequent operas - *Yan Tan Tethera*, *Gawain* and *The Second Mrs Kong* - all need to be evaluated in its light. But also, increasingly, it has come to be understood as a key work in the development of post-War opera, a work which, like no other, pushed the boundaries of what was possible in lyric theatre. In its imaginative fusion of music, song, drama, myth, mime and electronics, it has become a beacon for many younger composers.

To refer to it as an opera is perhaps a little misleading. Like such eminent antecedents as Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* (an 'Opernhaus-Stück') and Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*, it is a piece of total theatre which transcends the conventional label. Birtwistle and Zinovieff call it a 'lyric tragedy' while the work's title itself alludes to the theatrical spectacle of the Elizabethan masque. Another appropriate tag might be the one Wagner chose to adopt: music drama. Indeed, there are many striking parallels with Wagner, especially *The Ring*: the epic scale of the work; its mythical subject

matter; its concern with retelling the same story from different perspectives; its structural origins in Greek tragedy; even the gap between the composition of Acts 1 and 2 (1973-75) and Act 3 (1981-83) resulting, as in *Siegfried*, in a significant reassessment of musical priorities. Yet Birtwistle remains fascinated by the idea of opera because of the ritual situations it offers. As he has often commented, there are certain things you do not have to justify in an opera, and one of these is its formality.

In this respect, *The Mask of Orpheus* shares much with Birtwistle's first opera, *Punch and Judy*. There, the librettist, Stephen Pruslin, provided him with a complex structure of over a hundred self-contained numbers (arias, chorales, Baroque dances, travel music, weather reports, etc.) organised into ritual cycles of repetition. *Orpheus* is similarly divided into some 126 discrete events - always grouped in threes - with such formal titles as 'Song of Magic', 'Poem of Reminiscence', 'Orphic Hymn' and 'Hysterical Aria', and which are clearly identified in the score. Furthermore, each is given a conventional operatic designation (usually recitative or aria) which defines its 'ritual situation', its musical and dramatic personality. As in *Punch and Judy*, when an event recurs, it is usually transformed in some way, the same object being viewed from a different angle. However, Birtwistle is also quick to point out the differences between the two works: "I wanted to invent a formalism which does not rely on tradition in the way that *Punch and Judy* [did]... In *The Mask of Orpheus*, I didn't want to hark back any more; I wanted to create a formal world that was utterly new."

Birtwistle has had a life-long preoccupation with the

function, significance and power of myth. It is the universal qualities of myths that appeal to him, their concern primarily with collective rather than individual experiences, even though those experiences tend to be focused on one individual - Mr Punch, Orpheus, Gawain, King Kong. Rarely in his stage works does Birtwistle concern himself with conventional kinds of operatic characterisation (the exception, perhaps, is his representation of the passionate love of Kong and Pearl); it is certainly difficult to identify directly with the characters one sees and hears on the stage. As Stravinsky said of the hero of his stylised retelling of the Oedipus myth, the "audience is not indifferent to the fate of the person, but I think it far more concerned with the person of the fate, and the delineation of it which can be achieved uniquely in music." Such is Birtwistle's achievement. When Orpheus dies many times and in different ways in *The Mask of Orpheus*, we do not weep because we are not looking at one man in a particular time and place, but at *everyman*. Zinoviefv argues that Orpheus did not exist as an individual but is a collective inheritance. Thus, we are presented with multiple versions of the Orpheus legend in the one work.

Paul Griffiths, writing in 1991, caught the central premise of the work perfectly when he wrote that "in *The Mask of Orpheus* the old myth was observed as if in a broken mirror, or a troubled pool, elements of the story being repeated, or omitted, or distorted, or used as occasions for telling other stories". One way in which this is achieved is through Orpheus, Euridice and Aristaeus each being assigned three roles: the Man/Woman, the Hero/Heroine and the Myth played, respectively, by a singer, a mime and a giant singing puppet. All wear masks in order to emphasise the work's stylisation (no doubt influenced by Birtwistle's work on Peter Hall's

production of the *Oresteia* at the National Theatre, as well as an interest in Noh drama). Orpheus Man dominates Act 1 and, as the work unfolds, the centre of gravity shifts progressively towards Orpheus Myth. Key events are presented more than once, either simultaneously (such as when Euridice dies, watched by Aristaeus in Act 1) or successively (as when, in the first of what are called the Time Shifts, Orpheus himself watches Euridice die). Thus, it is clear that another of the central concerns of the work is that of time itself: the exploration of a multiple present containing both past and future.

Working with myth absolves Birtwistle of conventional narrative responsibilities, tied as they are to a singular, linear concept of time. In the majority of his stage works, he has not generally been concerned with story *per se* (like the Ancient Greeks, he operates on the assumption that everyone knows the basics of the plot), but rather with the way in which the story is told. In a sense, the subject-matter is unimportant (*Orpheus* actually began life as Faust) because the focus is on the work's ritual, repetitive structures - though the Orpheus story in particular has had an ongoing attraction for Birtwistle in such works as *Nenia: the Death of Orpheus* and *On the Sheer Threshold of the Night*. By viewing the same object or event from changing perspectives, Birtwistle argues, a three-dimensional picture of the whole can be built up - though, of course, this is something he has always been doing, from *Verses for Ensembles* of the late 1960s to *Endless Parade* of the late 1980s, and beyond.

The heart of Orpheus lies in Act 2, which is dominated by the vast, allegorical structure of the arches (compare this, for instance, with the ritual cycles of 'The Turning of the Seasons' and 'The

Hunt' which dominate the two acts of *Gawain*). There are seventeen arches, each of which represents a different attribute of Orpheus's world: countryside, crowds, evening, contrast, dying, and so on. The arches also correspond with the seventeen verses of Orpheus's second 'Song of Magic', each verse of which is itself made up of a dream (aria), a fantasy (recitative), a nightmare (speech) and a sudden awakening in varying (precisely specified) proportions. Yet it is never intended that we see this architectural structure: it is a device which both symbolises and gives order to Orpheus's dream of his descent to and return from the Underworld. Like the allegorical title taken from Brueghel that Birtwistle gave to his first big orchestral work, *The Triumph of Time* (completed just before he began serious work on *Orpheus*), the arches are an allegory of time where the river flows through the seventh arch from the past to the present, while the future is contained in the water flowing across the arches from the dead to the living. Within the context of this imaginary structure, Orpheus dreams of his journey to find Euridice, the people he encounters on the way (reworkings of the music and characters he had met in Act 1), his turning only to lose Euridice once again, and his death.

The "other stories" to which Griffiths referred are the tales told by Orpheus to the trees after losing Euridice for the second time, and which here take the form of interludes enacted by a mime troupe to an electronic tape. There are six interludes in all, each lasting about three minutes, and each causing the main action to be suspended. Three tell stories of violent deaths - the 'Passing Clouds of Abandon' - and three are lyrical stories of love, though they also contain deaths - the 'Allegorical Flowers of Reason'. As allegories within the larger allegory,

they have a symbiotic relationship to the principal drama: they reflect both the violence of the murder of Orpheus and the lyricism of his love for Euridice, yet they remain independent. The electronic music, realised at IRCAM by the late Barry Anderson, is among the most brilliant ever produced, and is formed from just four notes and chords on the harp to create what the composer describes as "a mad, mechanical percussion instrument". Just as, for instance, Birtwistle extends the sonic and expressive scope of the solo piano in *Antiphonies* by the use of tuned percussion, so here the computer extends the harp (Orpheus's lyre) outwards throughout the audible spectrum and the entire auditorium.

These interludes are not the work's only electronic dimension. Fragmented echoes of the 'Clouds' and 'Allegories' can be heard in the many 'signals' of Apollo which punctuate the course of the drama - most prominently at the beginning, where Apollo presides over the birth of Orpheus and teaches him to sing, between each of the arches of Act 2, and increasingly towards the end of Act 3 as Orpheus is finally silenced by his creator. These signals are accompanied by the disembodied voice of Apollo, ominous words in an invented language which resonate round the theatre, and which are manufactured (using the CHANT program at IRCAM) from the constituent phonemes of the names of Orpheus and Euridice. The two words heard most clearly at the start are OFOFARIFI ('Remember!') and DREIDI ('Speak!'); later we also hear the command RUFFI ('Love!'). In Act 3, Orpheus Man himself sings the 'Third Song of Magic' in this Orphic language, rivalling Apollo, and thus inviting his own destruction.

The third electronic element is that of the auras,

background sounds representing, among other things, summer (Acts 1 & 3), winter (Act 2) and the tides (Act 3). The aura of summer includes distinct references to the buzzing of the bees of Aristaeus (the first man to cultivate bees for honey, olives and grapes). The aura of the tides focuses on the note E at key moments in the ebb and flow of the tides. It acts as a pedal, giving a sense of shimmering musical stasis (like the tides - always the same yet always different) appropriate to the Act's exploration of myth, of timeless time. Ten years later, at the end of *The Second Mrs Kong*, Birtwistle returned to pedal Es - and to Orpheus and Euridice - beautifully symbolising the fact that, left only with their memories, Kong and Pearl are forever together yet forever apart. At the end of *The Mask of Orpheus*, Orpheus has lost Euridice, and all that is left is his remembering: the last song we hear is an echo of their first Love Duet. It is fitting, too, that the closing sounds of this lyrical tragedy should be those of the harp which, in its many different guises, has represented Orpheus throughout, from birth to death.

Any attempt to provide a synopsis of the plot of *The Mask of Orpheus* will be incomplete and, in a sense, doomed to failure in that it will impose a linear structure on a work which, as we have seen, is concerned with eschewing such a singular kind of narrative. Much of what structures *Orpheus* is not directly present (such as the arches or the tides) and much of what occurs in the story is not directly sung or spoken by the stage characters. The cuts made for the original ENO production, and also at the 1996 concert performance from which this recording derives, hardly affect the story, but they do further obscure the structure, particularly in Act 3. The allegorical presentation of *The Mask of Orpheus* allows for no easy interpretation of the plot. Nonetheless, some sense of the basic story is necessary in order to begin to make sense of the work.

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THE ELECTRONIC MUSIC OF THE MASK OF ORPHEUS

Collaborations between composers are not common. It is true that in the field of improvised music, players invent ways of sharing and exploring ideas, but where a notated music is concerned, it is difficult to conceive of a forum where two musical imaginations might play. Electronic music, which cannot rely upon conceptual conceits, requires the idea to be realised as sound before the composer/creator can move on, and offers a real workspace in which to frolic, invent, modify and design: a place where ideas become uncontrollable and collaborators can work with the stuff of music, the very sounds themselves.

In the early 1980s, when the electronic music elements of *The Mask of Orpheus* were created, Barry Anderson was one of the most experienced and imaginative composers working with technology. His generosity of spirit marked him out as one of only a handful of people capable of entering into another composer's creative universe, absorbing it and responding to it with fidelity and freshness. As a result he was able to meet Harrison Birtwistle's ingenious strategies and schemes head on and, whilst others may have been lured into an exploration on their own terms, he managed to conjure a sound world for the opera that is at once original yet ingrained with Birtwistle's own voice. Collaborations have rarely yielded such intimate and emphatic music.

The realisation of the electronic music was made possible through the cooperation of L'Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM), the experimental computer music studio founded by Pierre Boulez in Paris. Work began in earnest in early 1982. At that time computer systems capable of recording and transforming

sound were large and slow. Using what were then the most advanced computer programs available for the spectral analysis, synthesis and modification of sound, Anderson and Birtwistle set about creating three pools of materials.

The first used four recordings of a harp - two chords (one complex, the other simple) and two individual notes (one high and one low). These were analysed in the computer, resynthesised and transformed. The subsequent sounds were later composed into the six mime interludes. These lyrical 'Allegorical Flowers of Reason' and savage 'Passing Clouds of Abandon' are cut into the opera at its most dramatic moments. In them Birtwistle composed with rhythmical and metrical devices which only computers could execute with flawless precision. Anderson orchestrated them with metallic harp sounds he had forged from his four harp recordings. The prodigious archive of metallic harp plucks, some violent and loud, others delicate and quiet, combined with the cunning metrical organisation to produce some of the most memorable aural images of the opera - a music which is at the same time extraordinary and intriguing yet curiously familiar. If the invention in electronic music had stopped there it would have been hailed as a triumph, but it was to proliferate in two other spectacular directions.

Each act is characterised by electronic *aurae* created by hundreds of oscillators. They evoke the seasons, with complex, slowly evolving timbres suggesting the rustle of leaves, sea, wind and bees. The opera starts with the aura of summer, its sound resonating in the auditorium before the conductor has entered, creating an unearthly, glowing silence against which the amplified vocal and orchestral music plays. For much of the time it shimmers

beneath the orchestral textures, though it frequently emerges more strongly, when its intricate spectral detail is projected throughout the auditorium. More enthralling still is the invented language of Apollo. The opera is interrupted by 70 'signals'. These are invented words and phrases, sometimes mixed with metallic harp sounds, derived from the names of Orpheus and Euridice. They were made in the CHANT program, developed by Xavier Rodet and Yves Potard at IRCAM. This is a computer instrument devised to synthesise the human singing voice. The resulting stony yet eerily compassionate utterances permeate the opera.

It was into this sound world that I entered in 1986, to assist Barry Anderson in the live mixing and projection of the electronic music and amplified voices and instruments. It was to prove to be a thrilling and inspiring time. The electronic music is strictly notated in the score, and I remember up to the last moment, rushing off to West Square Studios at Morley College in London to re-edit tapes for the next day's rehearsals. In the original performance all these materials were played back from a combination of four-track and two-track, analogue tape machines. Barry would start the machines by remote control, from the auditorium and mix them with the amplified sounds of singers and orchestra. A tape technician would monitor the playback machines, stopping them and resetting for the next cues. It was a nerve-racking process.

The original English National Opera performances brought together more collaborators - Philip Ashley from the Coliseum itself, Philip Clifford, who was then Head of Sound at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester and from IRCAM, Etienne Bultingaire. *The Mask of Orpheus* became an opportunity for us to learn and test new techniques and, with current technology, still offers up fresh challenges. In 1986, we were able to evaluate multiple radio microphone systems - up to thirteen channels were used in some scenes, with microphones often hidden inside the masks of the performers. We developed techniques to amplify, mix and project groups of solo singers and a chorus into the auditorium, to coordinate these musicians who were located all around the theatre and to initiate the punctual playback of over one hundred electronic music cues.

Before the performance recorded here, the master tapes were transferred to newer, digital formats and playback was from samplers and compact disc. In the process, it was revealing to discover that, in an era when music can appear dated so quickly - and that can be especially so with electronic sound, tied as it is to the technology which produced it - the electronic music of *The Mask of Orpheus* is distinctive and continues to speak with expressive confidence and in a timeless, unaffected voice.

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Parodos At sunrise, Apollo oversees the birth of Orpheus, bestowing upon him the gifts of speech, poetry and music. As he learns to speak, Orpheus's first memory is of voyaging with Jason and the Argonauts.

Act 1
Scene 1 Orpheus falls in love with Euridice; she agrees to their marriage.
(First Passing Cloud: The Myth of Dionysus)
In the wedding ceremony, Hymen is invoked and the Troupe of Ceremony ritually questions the lovers; the omens are bad as Euridice stumbles over her answers, and Orpheus's love song fails to dispel the gloom.

Scene 2 Two versions of Euridice's death are presented simultaneously.
(Second Passing Cloud: Lycurgus)
Aristaeus as Man and Hero makes love to Euridice, Woman and Heroine, as she walks by the river; in one version she resists; in the other she does not. In both, though, she dies from the bite of a water snake.
(First Allegorical Flower: Anemone)
Aristaeus tells Orpheus of his wife's death.

Scene 3 First time-distortion: Orpheus imagines that it was he and not Aristaeus who watched Euridice's death.

During her funeral, the Troupe of Ceremony asks Hermes to guide Euridice to the Underworld, while

elements of their earlier love duet are recalled. Orpheus is unable to accept that he was powerless to save his wife and goes to consult the Oracle of the Dead. In exchange for his gift of music, she offers him three clues to the Underworld - "Always face the way of the sun", "Choose without choosing", "Never address anyone directly" - but when she attempts to imitate his song she can only produce screams and shrieks. Orpheus imagines he can find his way to the Underworld. He describes the 17 arches of the aqueduct that connects the mountain of the living to that of the dead; Euridice is transformed into myth.

Act 2 The Orpheus Myth makes his way across the 17 arches of the aqueduct, following the Oracle's instructions while the sleeping Orpheus Man describes the journey as if in a nightmare; all the characters he encounters are distorted versions of those he has met in the first act.

Second time-distortion: Euridice's death is presented again; this time she is killed by two giant snakes.

Arch 1 Countryside. Orpheus sings to Charon as he crosses the River Styx.
Arch 2 Crowds. Orpheus's music moves the Furies.
Arch 3 Evening. Orpheus's death is foretold; he sees a vision of Euridice.
Arch 4 Contrasts. Orpheus drinks from the pool

- of memory, but refuses the pool of forgetfulness; he has a second vision.
- Arch 5 Dying. He sees those tormented in the Underworld.
- Arch 6 Wings. His magic overcomes all dangers.
- Arch 7 Colour. Orpheus reaches the centre of the Underworld and confronts its rulers, Hades, Persephone, and Hecate. He does not notice that they mirror himself, Euridice and the Oracle.
- Arch 8 Secrecy. Orpheus continues his singing.
- Arch 9 Glass. He makes his escape.
- Arch 10 Buildings. He is surrounded by shadows of Euridice.
- Arch 11 Weather. The shadows dance before him but he does not select one.
- Arch 12 Eyes. Orpheus begins his return, thinking Euridice is following him, but it is Persephone.
- Arch 13 Knives. Persephone stumbles and another Euridice replaces her. As Orpheus overcomes all the dangers she tries to leave the Underworld, but cannot; Apollo urges Orpheus to sing.
- Arch 14 Animals. Orpheus crosses the Styx. Charon refuses to carry Euridice and she falls away. As Orpheus meets the sunlight the memory of Euridice fades.
- Arch 15 Ropes. Orpheus has lost Euridice for ever.
- Arch 16 Order. Orpheus realises his journey was a dream, and re-enacts it as Orpheus Hero.
- Arch 17 Fear. Orpheus mourns Euridice, rejecting three offers of marriage. (Second Allegorical Flower: Hyacinth) Orpheus hangs himself.
- Act 3 The structure of the act is based upon the movement of the tide on a beach: nine episodes from the myth are

presented in a time-sequence that begins by flowing backwards, then moves into the future and finally returns to the past. Between these episodes, Orpheus sings the verses of his 'Song of Magic', eventually challenging Apollo.

Third time-distortion: Orpheus Hero is rejected by the Underworld and re-created as a myth.

- Episode 1 Orpheus Hero re-enacts his return from the Underworld and his suicide.
- Episode 2 Orpheus Man sings of his descent to the Underworld.
- Episode 3 Euridice's death is viewed by Orpheus Man and Hero.
(Third Allegorical Flower: Lotus)
- Episode 4 Orpheus Hero re-enacts his journey from the Underworld, with the same result.
- Episode 5 Aristaeus is punished by his bees and is consoled by Orpheus; Zeus kills Orpheus with a thunderbolt for daring to reveal divine mysteries through his art.
- Episode 6 Orpheus Myth is dismembered by the Dionysiac women.
- Episode 7 His head floats down the river Hebrus.
- Episode 8 Orpheus Myth has become an oracle, consulted by Aristaeus. Apollo eventually silences him for challenging his own Delphic oracle.
(Third Passing Cloud: Pentheus)
- Episode 9 The sacrifice of Orpheus Myth is resumed from Episode 6, as the women eat his flesh.

Exodos The myth of Orpheus decays.

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HARRISON BIRTWISTLE

Harrison Birtwistle was born in Accrington in the north of England in 1934 and studied clarinet and composition at the Royal Manchester College of Music, making contact with a highly-talented group of contemporaries including Peter Maxwell Davies, Alexander Goehr, John Ogdon and Elgar Howarth. In 1965 he travelled to Princeton as a Harkness Fellow where he completed the opera *Punch and Judy*. This work, together with *Verses for Ensembles* and *The Triumph of Time*, firmly established Birtwistle as a leading voice in British music.

The decade from 1973 to 1984 was dominated by his monumental lyric tragedy *The Mask of Orpheus*, staged by English National Opera in 1986, and by a series of remarkable ensemble scores now performed by the world's leading new music groups: *Secret Theatre*, *Silbury Air* and *Carmen Arcadiae Mechanicae Perpetuum*. Large-scale works from the past decade include the operas *Gawain and The Second Mrs Kong*, the concertos *Endless Parade* for trumpet and *Antiphonies* for piano, the orchestral score *Earth Dances* and *Panic* scored for saxophone, drummer and orchestra which received a high-profile premiere at the Last Night of the 1995 BBC Proms, with an estimated

worldwide audience of 100-million.

A recipient of the 1986 Grawemeyer Award, the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres in 1986, a British knighthood in 1988 and the Siemens Prize in 1995, he is currently Henry Purcell Professor of Composition at King's College London, Director of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music and Composer in Residence with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Recordings of his music are available on NMC (NMC D003, NMC D009, NMC D042S), Collins Classics, Decca, Philips, Deutsche Grammophon and Etcetera.

PETER ZINOVIEFF

Peter Zinovieff was born in 1933 of Russian émigré parents. He spent seven years at Oxford studying geology.

He left geological research to found Electronic Music Studios (EMS) in 1960.

This company financed an important pioneering experimental computer-music and voice-synthesis studio by designing and selling, world-wide, a large number of huge and small synthesisers (Synthis). These were used by pop groups (eg Pink Floyd, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, and The Who) as well as by serious composers, universities and radio stations (from Moscow to the

BBC). These synthesisers are currently undergoing a revival and are still being produced.

Among the studio's 'world-firsts' was a computer-composed and computer-spoken set of poems about Orpheus.

Zinovieff's passion lay in the studio's musical research. He collaborated with many composers to help them produce their electronic compositions (eg Harrison Birtwistle, Hans Werner Henze, Jonathan Harvey, Justin Connolly, and Don Banks). Any project which pushed the musical-technological barriers to the limit was accepted.

In 1978 the National Theatre took over the entire studio with a view to creating a National Computer-Music Studio, but the project came to nothing.

Zinovieff now works at computer graphics from his home in Cambridge.

A CD of his own early electronic compositions (written before he met Birtwistle or Henze which then led to his decision that collaboration was much more wonderful than composing) is to come out later this year.

ANDREW DAVIS

Andrew Davis, Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra since 1989, had a traditional English musical upbringing at London's Royal Academy of Music and then King's College, Cambridge as organ scholar. He was continuo player for such orchestras as the English Chamber Orchestra and Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, then studied with Franco Ferrara in Rome. By 1974, he had held posts with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic; had become a frequent conductor at the BBC Proms; and had taken the Philharmonia on European tours and the English Chamber Orchestra to the Far East. In 1974, he became the first British conductor to work with five major US orchestras in one season: New York Philharmonic, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland and Los Angeles.

Andrew Davis was appointed Music Director of the Toronto Symphony in 1975, and under his direction it developed into Canada's leading orchestra, receiving world-wide recognition and fame. He still works frequently with the Orchestra as its Conductor Laureate.

For many seasons a regular visitor to the Glyndebourne Festival Opera, he became their Musical Director in 1988. As a guest

conductor of opera, recent seasons have included frequent visits to the Chicago Lyric Opera, productions for The Metropolitan Opera, New York, his Bavarian State Opera debut and *Rosenkavalier* for London's Royal Opera House. He has recorded for labels including CBS, Virgin Classics, Warner Classics International and NMC.

He has appeared with all the major London orchestras, and among the many European orchestras with whom he has given concerts are the Berlin Philharmonic, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Tonhalle Zürich, Stockholm Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic, La Scala, Milan, and the Orchestre National in Paris.

He received the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society/Charles Heidsieck Conductor's Award of 1991 for leading the BBC Symphony Orchestra through an outstanding Diamond Jubilee season, for excellence in the operatic field and for his championing of British music, especially the music of Tippett. In September 2000 Andrew Davis becomes Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Chicago Lyric Opera. He will also become the BBCSO's first-ever Conductor Laureate, maintaining a presence in London concert life and at the Proms, and will return regularly to Glyndebourne as guest conductor.

MARTYN BRABBINS

Martyn Brabbins studied at Goldsmiths' College, London. Between 1986-1988 he studied with Ilya Musin at the Leningrad State Conservatoire, and in 1988 won first prize in the Leeds Conductors Competition. He is Associate Principal Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Principal Conductor of Sinfonia 21 and Conducting Consultant at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

Since 1988 he has worked with practically every major symphony and chamber orchestra in Britain, as well as a number of overseas orchestras including the St Petersburg Philharmonic, North German Radio Orchestra, Orchestra of Gran Canaria and the Australian Youth Orchestra. He has conducted the Nash Ensemble in Lisbon and Sinfonia 21 at the Ars Musica festival in Belgium and on tour to Russia. He is a frequent visitor to many UK festivals with a variety of orchestras and ensembles including Lichfield, Windsor, Cheltenham, Bath, Aldeburgh, Three Choirs, Vale of Glamorgan and the BBC Proms. He also works with Sinfonia 21 at their annual summer festival at Michelham Priory.

His operatic engagements have included *Don Giovanni* at the

Kirov, *Magic Flute* for English National Opera, *Der Ferne Klang* for Opera North, *Magic Flute*, *Albert Herring* and *Falstaff* for English Touring Opera, *Il Seraglio* for Opera-go-round and works including *The Olympians*, *Christmas Slippers* and *The Flying Dutchman* for Chelsea Opera Group. He has recorded for Hyperion, Naxos, ASV and is featured on a number of NMC discs including, most recently, David Bedford's Recorder Concerto (NMC D045S) and Minna Keal's Cello Concerto (NMC D048S).

JON GARRISON

TENOR

Jon Garrison enjoys a distinguished operatic, concert and recording career both in his native USA and Europe. His many roles for the Met include Cassio (*Otello*), Tamino, Alfred (*Die Fledermaus*) and Don Ottavio, while for New York City Opera he has sung the Duke of Mantua, Nadir, Don Ottavio, Rodolfo, Ruggero (*La Rondine*), Tamino and Tom Rakewell and Nicholas in the world premiere of Jay Reiss's *Rasputin*. He has also performed in the world premieres of Stewart Copeland's *Holy Blood*, *Crescent Moon* (Cleveland Opera) and Hugo Weisgall's *The Gardens of the Adonis* (Opera Omaha). Other highlights of his career include a recording of Schoenberg's

Gurrelieder on the occasion of the farewell performances of Zubin Mehta's tenure with the New York Philharmonic in May of 1991, the recording of Szymanowski's Symphony No 3 under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle for EMI, the Evangelist in the *St Matthew Passion* under Raymond Leppard for EMI, *The Rake's Progress* and *Oedipus Rex* on the MusicMasters label, and Handel's *Roman Vespers* for RCA.

PETER BRONDER

TENOR

Peter Bronder was born in Hertfordshire of German/Austrian parents and studied at the Royal Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio. From 1986 to 1990 he was principal tenor with Welsh National Opera, taking major roles in operas by Mozart, Donizetti, Bellini, Rossini and Verdi. In 1986 he also made his debut at Covent Garden as Arturo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), in 1989 at English National Opera as Vanya in *Katya Kabanova* and at the Netherlands Opera as Ernesto (*Don Pasquale*). In 1990 he appeared at Glyndebourne as Mr Upfold (*Albert Herring*), and in 1993 with Scottish Opera as Rodolfo. In 1995 he made his debut at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. He has also appeared in *Die Fledermaus*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Iphigénie en*

Tauride with WNO; *Der Rosenkavalier* and *The Barber of Seville* at ENO; *Salome* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at Covent Garden, *La Rondine* at Opera North and *Mary Stuart* at Scottish Opera. Peter Bronder's concert appearances have taken him all over the world, working with major orchestras and conductors, and he has recorded extensively, both commercially and for radio and television.

JEAN RIGBY

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Jean Rigby studied at the Birmingham School of Music and then with Patricia Clark at the Royal Academy of Music, with whom she continues to work. After a year at the National Opera Studio, she joined English National Opera where she has sung many roles including Dorabella, Octavian, Penelope (*The Return of Ulysses*), Ursula (*Beatrice and Benedict*) and Amastri (*Xerxes*). In 1983 she made her Covent Garden debut as Tebaldo (*Don Carlos*), and she has since appeared there as Mercedes (*Carmen*) and Nicklauss (*The Tales of Hoffman*). She has also sung Carmen for Scottish Opera, Mercedes and Nancy (*Albert Herring*) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and appeared in *The Italian Girl* in Algiers at the Buxton Festival. She made her US debut

as Charlotte (*Werther*) in San Diego, and in 1997 her engagements have included Charlotte for Seattle Opera, Mahler's Second Symphony in Boston and London, concerts with Leonard Slatkin at the Istanbul Festival; *L'Enfance du Christ* in Hamburg with Norrington and Irene (*Theodora*) for Glyndebourne Festival.

Jean Rigby is also a sought-after concert artist, and regularly sings at the Proms and in the major London concert halls. She recently recorded *The Rape of Lucretia* with Richard Hickox and *Das Lied von der Erde* with Mark Wigglesworth, and gave the world premiere of a cycle by Michael Berkeley.

ANNE-MARIE OWENS

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Anne-Marie Owens was born in South Shields and studied at the Newcastle School of Music, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and at the National Opera Studio. She began her professional career singing Mistress Quickly for Glyndebourne Touring Opera and in 1985 joined English National Opera, where she has sung Charlotte, Rosina, Magdalene, Suzuki, Bianca (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Geneviève (*Pelléas and Mélisande*), Preziosilla (*The Force of Destiny*) and Ježibaba (*Rusalka*). During the 1994/95 season she

scored a great success there as Anežka (*The Two Widows*), and as Marfa in *Khovanshchina*; the same season she sang Thirza in *The Wreckers* at the 1994 Proms (a performance which was recorded for CD), and also took part in the world premiere of Judith Weir's *Blond Eckbert*, which was filmed by Channel 4. Elsewhere she has sung Jocasta (*Oedipus Rex*) and the title-role in Dukas's seldom-performed *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* at Opera North, and she has appeared at La Monnaie in Brussels as Baba the Turk and Brangäne. She is also much in demand as a concert singer, appearing all over the UK, Europe and in the USA.

ALAN OPIE

BARITONE

Alan Opie was born in Cornwall and studied at Cambridge University, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the London Opera Centre. He began his career as Principal Baritone at Sadler's Wells Opera (now English National Opera), where his roles included Rossini's Figaro, Busoni's Doctor Faust, Germont, Valentin, Eisenstein and Falke, Sharpless, Papageno, Melitone, Pizarro, Malatesta and Sancho Panza. He has combined his work at ENO with performances for other major British opera companies, whilst he

international career has taken him to Bayreuth as Beckmesser, and to the opera houses of Chicago, Santa Fe, Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna, Brussels and Berlin. He made his debut at the New York Met in December 1994 with great success as Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*), and appears regularly at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. In October 1996 he made his debut at La Scala in a new opera, *Outis* by Luciano Berio, in which he sang the title-role. Alan Opie's extensive concert repertoire ranges from Bach to Britten, and his many recordings include *Gloriana*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Peter Grimes*, Vaughan Williams's *Hugh the Drover*, and the role of Beckmesser with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Sir Georg Solti. Recent performances include Falstaff at ENO, Don Alfonso at Glyndebourne and Beckmesser and Sharpless at the New York Met.

OMAR EBRAHIM

BARITONE

Omar Ebrahim became a chorister at the newly-built Coventry Cathedral in 1964, and went on to study singing at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He then worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company and in the Glyndebourne Chorus, singing Schauard (*La bohème*) for Glyndebourne Touring Opera in

1980. Since then he has performed a wide range of repertoire, including *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, *Iolanthe* and *Die Fledermaus* for Scottish Opera, and the title-role in Verdi's *Macbeth* for Opera-go-round. He also took the lead role in Marschner's *The Vampire* for BBC Television. Omar Ebrahim is particularly associated with contemporary music, and has taken part in Nigel Osborne's *The Electrification of the Soviet Union*, Sir Michael Tippett's *New Year* and Birtwistle's *The Second Mrs Kong* for Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Opera, Birtwistle's *Gawain* and Luciano Berio's *Un re in ascolto* for Covent Garden, Stephen Oliver's *Beauty and the Beast* for the City of Birmingham Touring Opera, Nigel Osborne's *Terrible Mouth* and Jonathan Dove's *Siren Song* for Almeida Opera, two new operas at the Munich Biennale, and Birtwistle's *Punch and Judy* (Punch) for Opera Factory. He has also performed Ligeti's *Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures* with many distinguished international contemporary music groups and has recorded the piece with Salonen and the Philharmonia. As an actor, he has performed Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon* at IRCAM, and *A Survivor from Warsaw* and Henze's *The Raft of the Medusa* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

MARIE ANGEL

SOPRANO

Australian-born Marie Angel has appeared with Opera Factory in London and Zurich in a number of major Mozartian roles (Donna Anna, Fiordiligi, and the Countess), and also as Poppea, Purcell's Dido, Calisto, Denise (*The Knot Garden*), Pretty Polly (*Punch and Judy*), Iphigenia in *Iphigenias*, Opera Factory's version of the two Gluck operas, and in various works by Kurt Weill. With English National Opera she has appeared as Euridice in Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, as Queen Tye in Philip Glass's *Akhmat* and the Countess in Zimmerman's *Die Soldaten*. Elsewhere in the UK, she has sung the Queen of the Night for Welsh National Opera, Musetta for Opera North, and Jo Ann in Tippett's *New Year* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera. In 1991 she made her debut at the Royal Opera House in Birtwistle's *Gawain*, singing Morgan le Fay, a role she revived in 1994. She also sings regularly with Victoria State Opera, and has appeared in the USA with Houston Grand Opera singing Queen Tye. She recently sang in Theo Loevendy's new opera *Esmée* for the Holland Festival, and made her Netherlands Opera debut as Esmerelda in the world premiere of Louis Andriessen's *Rosa*, directed by Peter Greenaway, and revived in 1998. She is a noted exponent

of contemporary concert music, and has sung Berio's *Recital* at the South Bank, and Ligeti's *Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures* in Paris and in concert at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna.

STEPHEN ALLEN

TENOR

Stephen Allen studied as a baritone at the Royal Northern College of Music, where his opera roles included Sharpless, Michele, Tonic, and Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*) - a role which he has also sung at the Mannan Festival in the Isle of Man. A scholarship from the Peter Moores Foundation enabled him to continue his studies in Italy, in Vienna with baritone Walter Berry, and with Teresa Cahill. In 1994 he sang Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* at the Astrakhan International Festival of Vocal Arts in Russia, and Fabrizio (*The Thieving Magpie*) for British Youth Opera.

Since retraining as a tenor, his roles have included Goro (*Madama Butterfly*) for Clonter Opera Farm and Opera Campo Bello, Finn (*Ruslan and Lyudmila*) for Dorset Opera, and covering Lysander (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and First Jew in the 1995 production of *Salome* at English National Opera.

NICHOLAS FOLWELL

BARITONE

Nicholas Folwell studied at the Royal Academy of Music and with Raimund Herincx. He began his career at Welsh National Opera, where his roles included Mozart's Figaro and Leporello, Pizarro, Melitone, Escamillo, the Poacher (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), Alberich in *The Ring* under Sir Reginald Goodall both in Cardiff and at Covent Garden, Melot, and Klingsor (which he recorded). He has also appeared with the other major British opera companies, recently as Falke, Mutius in the world premiere of Stephen Oliver's *Timon of Athens*, and the title role in the world premiere of Judith Weir's *Blond Eckbert*, all at English National Opera. He made his debut at the Royal Opera House as the Poacher (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) under Sir Simon Rattle; sang Creon and the Messenger (*Oedipus Rex*) for Scottish Opera; has sung Pizarro and Mozart's Figaro for Glyndebourne Touring Opera; and appeared as Count Laski in Chabrier's *Le Roi malgré lui* for Opera North. Abroad he has sung Alberich at Nantes, Mozart's Figaro in the Netherlands, and Koroviev in the world premiere of York Höller's *The Master and Margarita* at the Paris Opera. He has also appeared in concert performances of several Kurt Weill stage works on the South Bank and with the

London Sinfonietta and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Rattle. His wide concert repertoire ranges from the classics to contemporary works such as Iain Hamilton's *Prometheus*.

ARWEL HUW MORGAN

BARITONE

Arwel Huw Morgan was born and educated in Ystalyfera, Swansea Valley. After studying chemistry at Imperial College, London he worked as a teacher before joining the chorus of Welsh National Opera in 1978. He subsequently sang several principal roles for WNO including Don Fernando (*Fidelio*), Angelotti (*Tosca*) and The Parson (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), and has recently returned to WNO as Leporello in a new production of *Don Giovanni*. In 1987 he made his English National Opera debut in a new production of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtensk*, and joined the company as a Principal the following year. Since then he has sung numerous roles including Figaro (*La Nozze di Figaro*), Falstaff (*Falstaff*), the title role in a new production of *Don Pasquale*, Sharpless (*Madam Butterfly*), Carl Olsen (*Street Scene*), Sacristan (*The Adventures of Mr Broucek*) and Leporello (*Don Giovanni*). Other UK operatic engagements have included Fabrizio in a new production of *The Thieving Magpie*

for Opera North and Osmin in English Touring Opera's production of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. He has recorded the role of Polonius in *Hamlet* for Decca under Richard Bonyngne and in 1991 he sung Snug in a new production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Aix Festival.

STEPHEN RICHARDSON

BASS

Stephen Richardson was born in Liverpool and read music at Manchester University before training at the Royal Northern College of Music. Since graduating, he has assumed many of the leading bass roles in the operatic repertoire including Osmin (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), Colline (*La bohème*), The Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*) and Tiresias (*Oedipus Rex*), working with the major British companies and overseas.

As a concert artist he is known for the breadth of his repertoire, and is particularly associated with contemporary music, including premiere performances of Gerald Barry's *The Conquest of Ireland*, *The Intelligence Park* and *The Triumph of Beauty and Deceit*, Tan Dun's *Orchestral Theatre II: Re and John Tavener's Eis Thánaton and The Apocalypse*. Recordings include Oliver Knussen's *Where*

the Wild Things Are, the title role in Alexander Goehr's *Death of Moses* for Unicorn Kanchana, and discs for DG Archiv, Denon and Philips.

JULIET BOOTH

SOPRANO

Juliet Booth studied Modern Languages at Bristol University, and then received a scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music, where she won many awards, including the Gold Medal for Singers and the Ricordi Opera Prize. She made her operatic debut with Opera North as Frasquita, and has since returned as Ninetta (*Love for Three Oranges*), Poussette (*Manon*), Xenia (*Boris Godunov*), Norina (*Don Pasquale*), Arminda (*La finta giardiniera*), Gilda, Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), Musetta and Mimì, and Alexina (Chabrier's *Le Roi malgré lui*). She has also sung Mélisande at Aldeburgh, Micaëla (*Carmen*) at the Royal Albert Hall, Mozart's Countess for Welsh National Opera and Glyndebourne Touring Opera, Morgana (*Alcina*) in her Covent Garden debut, Milada in Fibich's *Sárka* and Tatyana (*Yevgeny Onyegin*) at the Wexford Opera Festival, and Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. Concert performances have included Henryk Górecki's Third Symphony

in Paris and Paul McCartney's *Liverpool Oratorio* in Italy. She has recorded *The Coronation of Poppea* and Bruckner's Mass in F, and appeared in a televised production of *Carmina Burana* from the Edinburgh Festival. Juliet Booth often appears in recital with Malcolm Martineau at major British and European venues and festivals.

PHILIPPA DAMES-LONGWORTH

SOPRANO

Philippa Dames-Longworth studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (where she won the Ricordi Opera Prize), the Britten-Pears School, and with Gérard Souzay in France. She made her professional debut in John Tavener's *Thérèse* at the Royal Opera House, and has appeared with Opera 80 as Amelia (*A Masked Ball*), Donna Elvira, Santuzza and Tatyana. In 1995 she took part in Declan Donnellan's production of *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* at English National Opera, where she has also understudied various major roles, including Ellen Orford, the Marschallin and Mozart's Countess. She also covered the title-role in *Katya Kabanova* at Glyndebourne, and appeared in Glyndebourne Touring Opera's 1995 production of *Owen Wingrave*. Recent engagements include singing Princess Yevpraxia in the British

Premiere of Tchaikovsky's *The Enchantress* at the Brighton Festival, and Brünnhilde's immolation scene from *Götterdämmerung* at the Edinburgh Festival, conducted by Elgar Howarth.

Abroad she has sung Eurydice in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* at the Maggio Musicale in Florence, conducted by Roger Norrington (with whom she recorded the role of Erato in Gluck's *Il Parnaso* for BBC Radio 3). On film she has appeared in Michael Torke's opera, *King of Hearts* for Channel 4.

ELIZABETH MCCORMACK

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Elizabeth McCormack was born in Fife, Scotland, and studied at the National Opera Studio and Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, having graduated from Glasgow University. In 1987 she won the Scottish Opera John Nobel Bursary and the Decca-Kathleen Ferrier Prize.

She began her professional career in 1988 in *Dido and Aeneas* with the English Chamber Orchestra and has since appeared at English National Opera as Pitti-Sing (*The Mikado*), and as Cherubino; with Scottish Opera as Iolanthe, the Daughter in the world premiere of Judith Weir's *The Vanishing Bridegroom* (also televised and performed at Covent Garden),

Dorabella, Varvara (*Katya Kabanova*), and Hannah (*Mary Stuart*); with Opera North as Pippo (*The Thieving Magpie*); the title role of *La Cenerentola* for Castleward Opera; and at the Buxton Festival in the title role of *Tancredi* and as Melanto (*The Return of Ulysses*). She made her Paris debut in 1991 in Hassé's *Requiem* (which she has recorded), and has since sung Flora (*La Traviata*) at the Châtelet Theatre, where she returned in 1996 as Karolka in *Jenůfa*, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. In 1997 she sang Annio (*La Clemenza di Tito*) and Flower Maiden (*Parsifal*) for the Opera de Bastille, Paris. She appeared in the BBC's 1995 Hindemith Festival in *Das Nusch-Nuschi*, and her recordings include Villa Lobos's *Magnificat*.

BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The BBC Symphony Orchestra aims to introduce audiences to the best of new music, presented against a background of established masterpieces from the classical period to the twentieth century. In its sixty-seven-year history it has given the first performances of well over a thousand pieces, many of which were originally commissioned by the BBC, and have by now become twentieth-century classics. As well

as the orchestra's enterprising series of public concerts on the South Bank, the year features regular invitation concerts and studio recordings, all broadcast on Radio 3, and in the summer months the BBC Symphony Orchestra plays a major role in the BBC Proms. The Orchestra also tours widely overseas.

In a period when competition is tough, money is in short supply and it is tempting to play safe with programming, the BBC Symphony Orchestra continues to mount special projects. Among these have been the January weekends devoted to exploring the works of a single composer, which have included Henze, Berg, Janáček, John Tavener, Hindemith and, in 1996, Charles Ives. During the 1996/97 season the weekend was devoted to the work of Polish composer Witold Lutosławski. In addition to *The Mask of Orpheus*, other big projects made possible by the resources and artistic commitment of the BBC have included Luciano Berio's opera *La Vera Storia* in 1994. As well as its public appearances and BBC broadcasts the orchestra can be heard in an increasing number of commercial recordings, most recently those of British music conducted by Andrew Davis in NMC's British Line series and on NMIC.

In 1989 Andrew Davis joined the impressive list of Chief Conductors

who have worked closely with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the results in the concert hall have shown that the combination of Davis and the BBC SO guarantees music-making of the highest quality. Andrew Davis and the BBC have now extended this exciting partnership until the year 2000. The Czech conductor Jiří Bělohlávek, in demand all over the world, was appointed Principal Guest Conductor in 1995.

Flutes

Lorna McGhee¹
Richard Stagg²
Susan Thomas²
Christine Messiter²

Oboes

David Powell⁴
Mark Howells⁵
Katie Clemmow⁴
Sue Bohling⁵
Michael Winfield⁷

Clarinets

Richard Hosford⁴
Donald Watson⁹
Marina Finnamore¹⁰
Tim Payne¹¹

Soprano Saxophones

Martin Robertson¹²
Tim Holmes¹²
Glenn Martin¹²

Bassoons

Graham Sheen
Stephen Maw¹³
Dominic Morgan¹⁵
Clare Glenister¹⁹

Horns

Jonathan Williams
Michael Murray
Andrew Antcliff
Brendan Thomas
Elizabeth Randell

Trumpets

William Houghton
Andrew Hendrie¹⁴
Martin Hurrell¹⁴
Paul Cosh¹⁴

Trombones

Christopher Mowat
Henry Hardy
Stephen Saunders
Patrick Jackman
Peter Harvey
Robert Goodhew

Tubas

Paul Smith
Nicholas Hitchens

Percussion

David Hockings
Terence Emery
Kevin Nutty
Frederik Bjorlin
Joseph Cooper
James Holland
Michael Doran

Harps

Sioned Williams
Louise Martin
Nuala Herbert

Electric Guitar

Forbes Henderson

Bass Guitar

Malcolm Moore

Electric Mandolin

Nigel Woodhouse

Sampler

Clive Williamson

- 1 doubling piccolo
- 2 doubling piccolo & alto flute
- 3 doubling piccolo, alto flute and bass flute
- 4 doubling oboe d'amore
- 5 doubling cor anglais
- 6 doubling oboe d'amore & cor anglais
- 7 doubling cor anglais & bass oboe
- 8 doubling E flat clarinet
- 9 doubling E flat clarinet & bass clarinet
- 10 doubling bass clarinet
- 11 doubling bass clarinet & contrabass clarinet
- 12 doubling bamboo pipes
- 13 doubling contrabassoon
- 14 doubling conch shell

BBC SINGERS

"Arguably our finest professional choir" was how Richard Morrison, writing in *The Times*, recently described the BBC Singers. This unique group of musicians has been at the forefront of British musical life since its formation seventy years ago, and has worked with some of the most notable composers, conductors and orchestras of the century. The BBC Singers have given first performances of numerous compositions now firmly

established in the choral repertoire - Britten's *A Boy was Born* and *Hymn to St Cecilia*, Poulenc's *Figure Humaine*, and works by, amongst others, Berio, Boulez, Henze, Tavener and Xenakis.

With the most extensive repertoire of any choral group - ranging from early music, through light repertoire, to the most challenging contemporary scores - the BBC Singers make studio recordings for broadcast on BBC Radio 3, perform regularly with the BBC's orchestras, take part in programmes for Radio 2, Radio 4 and the BBC World Service, and make frequent concert appearances at home and abroad.

Sopranos

Joanne Andrews
Margaret Feav'our
Pamela Priestley-Smith
Alison Smart

Altos

Lynette Alcantara
Jacqueline Fox
Kim Porter
Penny Vickers

Tenors

Eugene Ginty
Neil MacKenzie
Andrew Murgatroyd
David Roy

Basses

Richard Bourne
Stephen Charlesworth
Bridley Sherratt
Graham Titus

Grâce à leur répertoire plus étendu qu'aucun autre groupe choral - allant de la musique ancienne, en passant par un répertoire léger, jusqu'aux partitions contemporaines les plus difficiles, les BBC Singers font des enregistrements en studio qui sont diffusées sur BBC Radio 3 ainsi que des interprétations régulières avec les orchestres de la BBC; ils participent aux programmes de Radio 2, Radio 4 et de BBC World Service, et passent régulièrement en concert chez eux et à l'étranger.

Soprani

Joanne Andrews
Margaret Feaviour
Pamela Priestley-Smith
Alison Smart

Alto

Lynette Alcantara
Jacqueline Fox
Kim Porter
Penny Vickers

Ténors

Eugène Ginty
Neil MacKenzie
Andrew Murgatroyd
David Roy

Basses

Richard Bourne
Stephen Charlesworth
Brindley Sherratt
Graham Titus



MARTYN BRABBINS



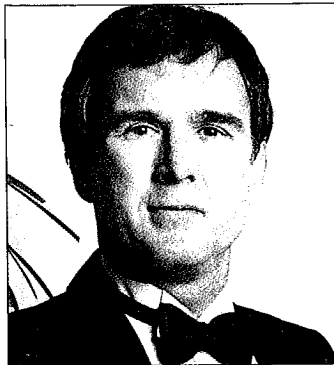
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ANNE-MARIE OWENS



ANDREW DAVIS



JON GARRISON



JEAN RIGBY

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OMAR EBRAHIM



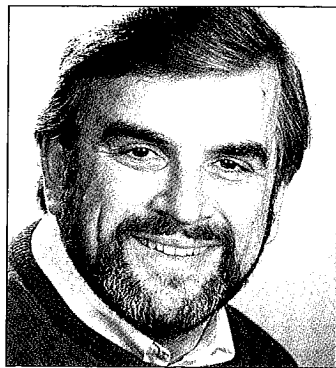
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STEPHEN ALLEN



NICHOLAS FOLWELL

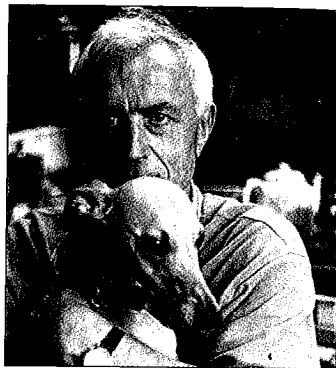


PHILLIPPA DAMES-LONGWORTH

photo: Robert Carpenter, Turner



ELIZABETH McCORMACK



PETER ZINOVIEFF



STEPHEN RICHARDSON

photo: Celine Barsley

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