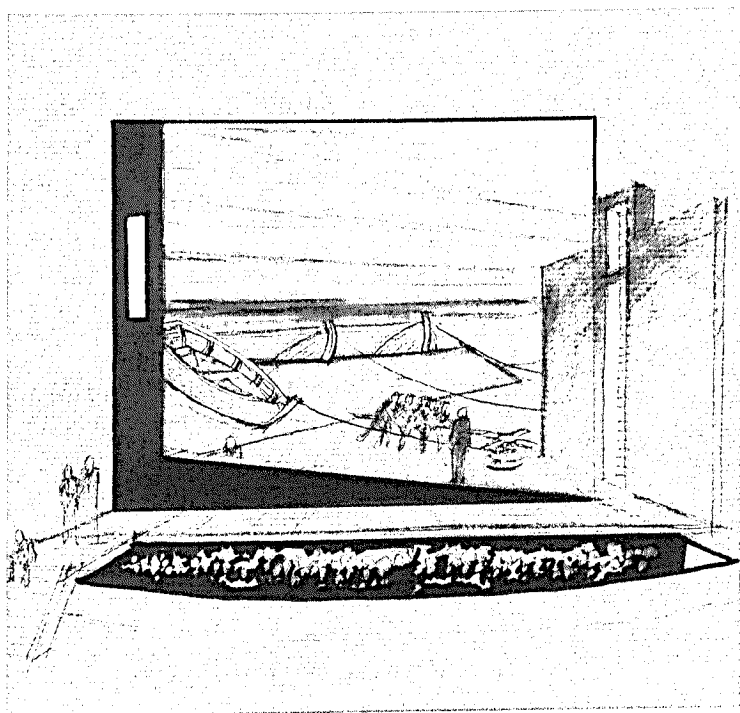


Welsh National Opera

WNO



# Peter Grimes

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SHAKESPEARE  
COMPANY  
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ROYAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

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02744  
**Peter Grimes**

Opera in a prologue and three acts by Benjamin Britten  
Libretto by Montagu Slater after George Crabbe's poem  
*The Borough*

By kind permission of Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers  
Limited

First performance 7 June 1945 at Sadler's Wells, London  
First performance of this production: 15 February 1999 at the  
New Theatre, Cardiff



*Benjamin Britten*

**Performances**

Cardiff \_\_\_\_\_ Monday 15 February, Saturday 20 February,  
\_\_\_\_\_ Wednesday 24 February  
Oxford \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday 2 March, Friday 5 March  
Birmingham \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday 23 March, Friday 26 March  
London \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday 30 March, Saturday 3 April  
Liverpool \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday 6 April, Friday 9 April  
Swansea \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday 13 April, Saturday 17 April

# Cast

Peter Grimes *a fisherman* \_\_\_\_\_ John Daszak  
 Ellen Orford *a widow, schoolmistress* \_\_\_\_\_ Janice Watson  
 Captain Balstrode *retired merchant skipper* \_\_\_\_\_ Donald Maxwell  
 Auntie *landlady of "The Boar"* \_\_\_\_\_ Ann Howard  
 1st Niece } *main attractions of "The Boar"* \_\_\_\_\_ Charlotte Page  
 2nd Niece } \_\_\_\_\_ Nicola Howard  
 Bob Boles *fisherman and Methodist* \_\_\_\_\_ Peter Bronder  
 Swallow *a lawyer* \_\_\_\_\_ Andrew Greenan  
 Mrs Sedley *a widow* \_\_\_\_\_ Susan Gorton  
 Rev. Horace Adams *the rector* \_\_\_\_\_ Neil Jenkins  
 Ned Keene *apothecary and quack* \_\_\_\_\_ Peter Savidge  
 Hobson *carrier* \_\_\_\_\_ Alan Ewing  
 Boy (John) *Grimes' apprentice* \_\_\_\_\_ Iain Goosey  
 Dr Crabbe \_\_\_\_\_ Paul Gyton  
 Boys \_\_\_\_\_ Jeremy Evans, Michael Holmes, Myles Leadbeatter  
 Townsfolk, fisherfolk

Conductor \_\_\_\_\_ Carlo Rizzi ex Apr 13  
 Julian Smith Apr 13  
 Producer \_\_\_\_\_ Peter Stein  
 Set Designer \_\_\_\_\_ Stefan Mayer  
 Costume Designer \_\_\_\_\_ Moidele Bickel  
 Lighting Designer \_\_\_\_\_ Heinrich Brunke  
 Staff Producers \_\_\_\_\_ Robin Tebbutt/Annilese Miskimmon  
 Choreographer \_\_\_\_\_ Caroline Lamb  
 Design Assistants \_\_\_\_\_ Annette Meyer, Ursula Patzak  
 Music Staff \_\_\_\_\_ Michael Pollock, Russell Moreton,  
 David Seaman, Anthony Negus

Scenery built and painted by Cardiff Theatrical Services  
 Costumes by Welsh National Opera  
 Additional costumes by: Terry Milton, Keith Watson, Naomi Isaacs,  
 Debbie Marchant, Celia Pierce, Jenny Falkner, Gwen Russell, Jeanette  
 Haslam, Jenny Adey, Tervor Collins, Joan Coleman.  
 Boats by Brian Upson of Aldeburgh  
 Picture credits: Set designs by Stefan Mayer, costume designs by Moidele  
 Bickel, rehearsal photographs by Brian Tarr, portrait of Crabbe by Thomas  
 Phillips, courtesy of John Murray (Publishers) Ltd.

There will be intervals after Act 1 and Act 2  
 The performance lasts approximately 3 hours 10 minutes

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# Synopsis

## Prologue

*Inside the Moot Hall, the Borough*

An inquest is being held into the death of a young boy apprenticed to Peter Grimes, one of the local fishermen. Many of the townspeople are present. After investigating the circumstances of the boy's death, the coroner (Mr Swallow) brings in a conclusion of death in accidental circumstances. But Grimes complains that this does not really clear his reputation, for the case will still go on in people's minds. When the others have left, Ellen Orford, the Borough schoolmistress, tells Grimes that she will work with him to restore his name, and pledges friendship.

## Act 1

### Scene 1

*A street by the sea a few days later*

Grimes is finding it difficult to work his fishing boat single-handed. Ned Keene, the apothecary, tells him he has found another apprentice boy. Ellen Orford, the schoolmistress, agrees to fetch the boy in Hobson the carrier's cart, even though the Borough inhabitants disapprove. Soon after she leaves, a storm breaks, which is all the more threatening because there is also a spring tide. Boats are made fast, nets brought in, and house windows are shuttered. Captain Balstrode, a merchant skipper, tells Grimes that he should consider leaving the Borough, and encourages him to marry Ellen. Without her, and with a new apprentice, the same tragedy is bound to be replayed.

### Scene 2

*The Boar on the evening of the same day.*

Though it is past closing time, the pub is full, and people are still coming in out of the storm. News arrives that the coast road has been flooded and a landslide has swept away part of the cliff by Grimes's hut. Quarrels break out among the drinkers. Someone starts up a round. When Ellen arrives with the boy, Grimes insists on taking him back to his hut through the storm.

## Act 2

### Scene 1

*A street by the sea, Sunday morning a few weeks later*

Ellen Orford and Grimes's new apprentice boy sit on the beach in the sun, while morning service is being held in the nearby parish church. Ellen discovers that the boy's clothes are torn and his neck is bruised. When Grimes appears, having spotted a shoal of fish, Ellen reproaches him for ill-treating the boy. They quarrel, and Grimes hits her. They are overheard by some of the neighbours. By the time the church service is over, news has got about that 'Grimes is at his exercise'. Swallow sends Hobson with his drum to summon a posse to go to Grimes's hut. Auntie, the nieces and Ellen stay behind.

## Scene 2

*Grimes's cliff-top hut*

Grimes and the boy reach the hut. Grimes collects his fishing gear, but the boy is weeping with fear. Grimes tries to soothe the boy, but then hears the neighbours coming up the hill. He tries to leave the hut in haste, flings the tackle out of the door, and sends the boy down the cliff face. The boy slips and falls to his death. Grimes scrambles after him. The search party finds the hut empty, with no sign of Grimes or the boy.

## Act 3

### Scene 1

*A street by the sea, a few nights later*

A subscription dance is taking place in the Moot Hall, and there is a lot of coming and going between the Hall and the Boar. Neither Grimes nor his apprentice have been seen, and people suppose they have gone fishing. Mrs Sedley overhears Ellen Orford telling Balstrode that the jersey she embroidered for the boy has been washed up on the beach. Seeing that Grimes's boat is now back, Mrs Sedley tells Swallow what she suspects. Swallow, the Mayor of the Borough, leads his posse to arrest Grimes.

### Scene 2

*A few hours later*

The dance is over, and a fog has risen from the sea. The cries of the man-hunt and the sound of the fog-horn break the silence. Grimes creeps back to his boat. Ellen Orford and Balstrode find him there, hungry, wet, exhausted and almost insane. Balstrode proposes a way out: he must take his boat out to sea, scuttle it and sink with it. Grimes does as he is told. As dawn breaks, the Borough comes back to life. The coastguard station reports a boat sinking far out at sea, but the news is dismissed as a rumour. The people of the Borough start to go about their tasks. It is the beginning of another day.

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# Outsiders

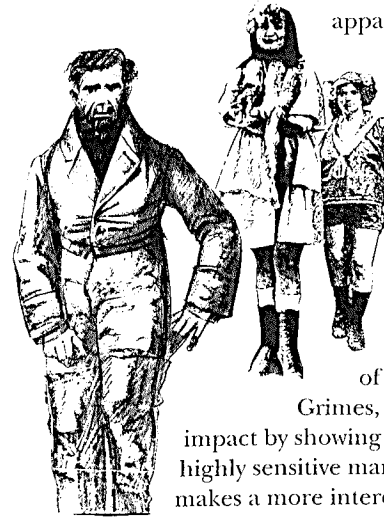
Peter Stein interviewed by Simon Rees

**Are you focusing on Grime's quality of being an outsider?**

If you said that the opera was just about an outsider, this would be a one-sided approach. There is much more to it than that. The story as stated in the opera is that the society of the Borough is a mass of outsiders. It is not just Peter Grimes. Boles is an outsider, who has exiled himself from the Anglican church, and talks about the people and the church in an aggressive way. Even though he's sometimes demagogic in company, he is totally alone, and this fits in well with the general state of affairs in the Borough. Ellen Orford and Balstrode are both outsiders, respected by the community but also shunned by it. So is Mrs Sedley. Even Ned Keene has outsider tendencies, when he tries to provoke the community by overruling Swallow's judgement that Peter Grimes should not have any more boy apprentices. He challenges the whole community by saying 'I have an apprentice for you', and organising for the boy to come from London. This is the richness of what was added to the original story. If I see it correctly, Britten and Slater began with Crabbe's Borough, then contradicted the story, especially that of Peter Grimes. Then, by adding other characters who are also drawn from the Borough, they came back to the original poem again. The relationship between the libretto and its source, as well as between Britten and Slater, is shifting and complicated. Initially Britten was enthusiastic about Slater's ideas, but later he had enormous problems with his language. Slater overdrew on his poetical bank account, and Britten realised that the words of the libretto often rang false and were 'poetic' in the worst sense of the word.

**So how do you approach Grimes's own high-flown language?**

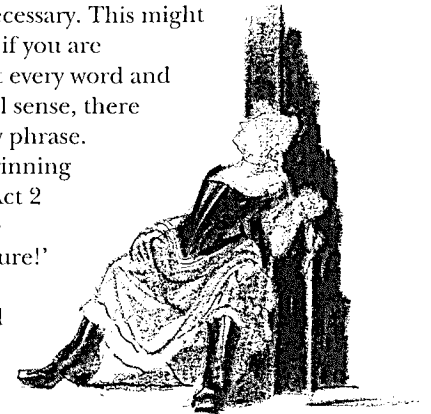
This is all right, because it is clearly Britten's intention to add other elements to Grimes than merely those of criminal and outsider. He is no longer an outsider because he is vicious or brutal or dishonest, but because of his strange sexual makeup which makes him unable to ask a woman with whom he is



apparently in love to marry him. He is an outsider in his behaviour towards the boys, which is the same as in Crabbe's poem. He also sees and feels things that other people do not see, and this makes him a poet, a man of imagination, with his own visions and his own life. He is clearly near to madness.

Instead of Crabbe's depiction of the madness of the haunted Grimes, Britten and Slater give a larger impact by showing Grimes' madness as that of a highly sensitive man with poetic potential. It makes a more interesting story than one simply teaching that crime does not pay. Consequently,

the libretto is not very consistent, and among the layers of interventions some of the meaning of the text is lost. There are many examples, the simplest being that the final text of the prologue has Swallow asking Grimes how long he has been at sea. Grimes says 'Three days' and Swallow asks what happened next. Grimes says 'He died lying there among the fish.' Swallow then asks what he did, and Grimes says he 'threw them all overboard'. Swallow asks 'You mean you threw the fish overboard'? This is the simple interpretation of the text, and it no longer makes sense. However, initially the answer was 'Throw them overboard.' This means that Swallow's correction is necessary. This might seem to be splitting hairs, but if you are producing the scene and want every word and every action to make theatrical sense, there must be a motivation for every phrase. Another example is at the beginning when Ellen Orford enters in Act 2 scene 1, and sings how 'you've learn'd how near life is to torture!' But the problem was that this originally read 'you've learned how near love is to torture,' which makes sense in



Slater's original text. What we have in the libretto at this point simply doesn't make sense, and I don't like actors and singers to say things on stage that they have to pass over with their eyes shut because they don't understand what is meant.

### **Is there something diabolical about Grimes himself?**

I am quite happy to show something diabolical about Peter Grimes himself, so long as there is something diabolical about the Borough. With all the different layers that Britten and Slater added, his character became much more complicated. As we say in German, the devil is in the details, and so the devil is split up in a lot of devilish little situations. The mythological basic meaning is clearly there, but it is difficult to bring it out in the production. We must trust in the strange, contradictory behaviour of the singer who plays Grimes. This is one reason I have always refused to produce *Peter Grimes* in the past, because the singers put forward for the role did not fit this special problem. There must be something vexing about him: not only cruelty, and avoiding the sentimentality that Pears brought out. Clearly, Grimes must be a young, virile man, who makes a sexual impact, so that a relationship between him and Ellen Orford is thinkable, desirable and normal. The singer playing Grimes must come over as hard to decipher. This is the very word Grimes uses: he wants to decipher the things he sees: the stars, or fate, or humankind. He has poetical and philosophical tendencies, but for all that he is a simple fisherman.

### **How do you make the distinction between the different manifestations of the people of the Borough, in the Moot Hall, at church, at the dance and so on?**

I have tried to show the Borough in contradictory situations. The people are quick to change their minds. In Act 1, scene 1, when Ellen tells them why she is going to fetch the boy, they accept this, but then when the storm blows up, they behave quite differently.

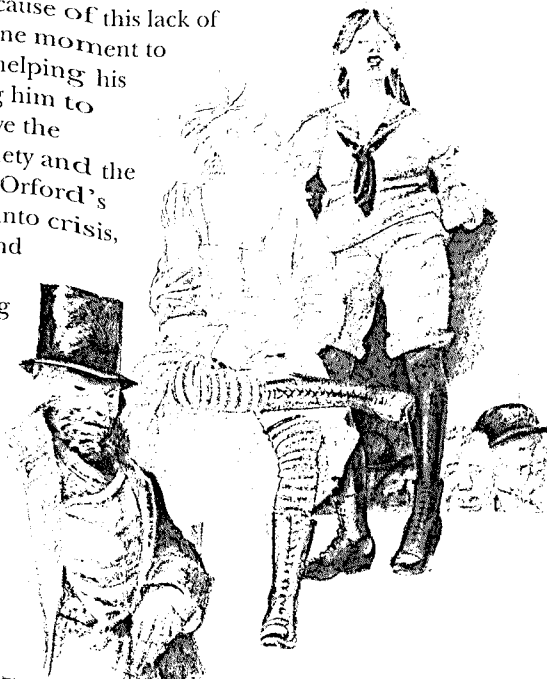
### **Do they have a leader?**

They are looking for a leader, but they do not find one where they expect to. The rector tells them that he does not like directing, and Swallow does exactly the same. Although he represents worldly power, he tries to get rid of this power,

because he would rather be somewhere else: he'd prefer to be Mayor of London. So he uses irony to distance himself from his subjects. In the third act, he takes matters into his own hands, and with his constable Hobson he becomes the leader of a kind of lynch mob, which is more a popular uprising against an outsider or criminal. Because of this lack of leadership - which you also find in modern-day political parties - different people take matters in hand: Boles, when he functions as a demagogue, especially in Act 2; Balstrode in the pub scene; and sometimes Ellen Orford, who as I've said leads public opinion for a while in Act 1. What attracts me is the richness of the different relationships between the collective and the individual, and the interchanging of these relationships and their positions.

### **Why is it Balstrode who delivers the verdict on Grimes?**

That is something I find hard to answer: it is nearly impossible to digest. I can understand dramaturgically that there is a need to make an end. Crabbe's story finishes with Grimes's death, haunted by the spectres of his victims. In Slater's libretto, it was necessary that Grimes could not survive, and this is the reason for this abrupt unhappy ending. What I find hardest of all is that at this point there is no music: all of a sudden, Balstrode uses plain, spoken English, and it becomes enormously strong because of this lack of musical effect. From one moment to the next, Balstrode is helping his friend and then telling him to commit suicide, to solve the problems between society and the individual. Even Ellen Orford's role at this point goes into crisis, though she hesitates and doesn't know what to do. It is a very hard frog to swallow. It doesn't make theatrical sense. In opera it is possible because operatic dramaturgy is based on musical dramaturgy, in

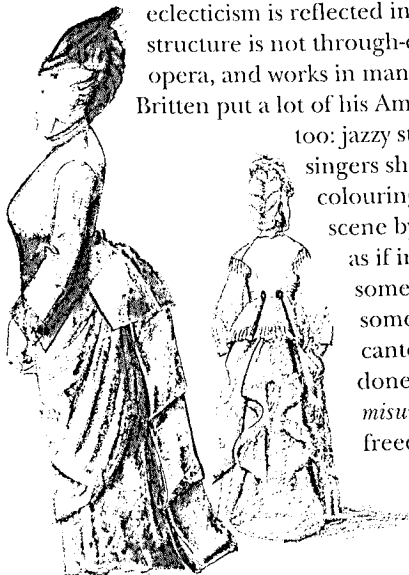


which everything changes in half a second because you bring in a new chord, a *fortissimo*, and everything that went before is lost. This structure of leaps and bounds, quick accords and effects, is very musical, but I find it dramatically difficult.

### What do you find the most musically dramatic moments in the piece?

Musically, the greatest effects are clearly the interludes. But scenically, the most impressive thing is very naïve and simple: the shouting of Grimes's name. This is very effective and original. And the foghorn, too, that goes with it: I like it because it's nearly not music, just aggressive shouts contrasted with one simple instrument, nothing else. After the last 'Grimes!' there is a pause, followed by an orchestral entry that describes them running. Because the characters really are running, this pause produces a 'Bißhemmung' - a delayed bite - that all predators have, a little moment of hesitating before giving the bite that kills their prey. Konrad Lorenz describes this phenomenon. The quartet is a very good and beautiful piece of music, but from the dramatic point of view, this is the moment I find most striking.

*Peter Grimes* is an eclectic opera, and contains references to *Wozzeck*, Debussy, Wagner, even Puccini, but its eclecticism is reflected in an intelligent way. The structure is not through-composed - it's a numbers opera, and works in many ways like a musical. Britten put a lot of his American experience in it, too: jazzy stuff. It is important that singers should change their vocal colouring and behaviour and pacing scene by scene, sometimes singing as if in *Tosca*, sometimes *Wozzeck*, sometimes *West Side Story*. And sometimes even Italianate bel canto, *cantabile*. This is seldom done, just as the *recitativo senza misura* is seldom given the freedom it should have.



### What do you do with the Interludes?

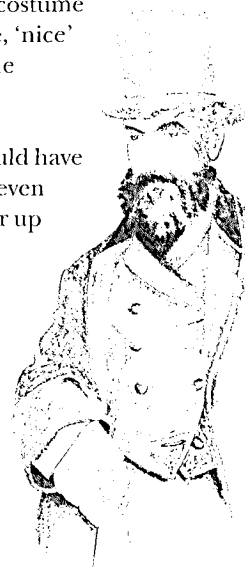
I close the curtain. It is wrong to do anything during the interludes, because it can only make things poorer. They should be used to give time for the scene changes. In our small theatres it is all the more important that there is no noise from the stage, which destroys the effect of the interludes, so I have to bring the safety curtain down.

### What can be made of the difficult role of the boy?

I'm very happy with the boy we have found, Iain Goosey. His role is extremely important, and you must bring this forward. He's courageous, understanding, intelligent - and he's twelve. I feel sure he will want to continue working in the theatre. There is one moment which is especially moving, even though it is silent. Ellen tells him to go with Grimes, and at the last moment he refuses, and turns towards stage left. Ellen follows him, and pushes him towards Peter.

### How did you plan the look of the production?

We decided not to update the piece to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not to leave it where Crabbe set it, near 1800, and not to put it where the libretto suggests, around 1830. Instead we updated it to the 1870s. Why? Because the Biedermeier costume is a little too remote and has decorative, 'nice' connotations that are unproductive. The fishermen's costumes of the 1870s are documented by Sutcliffe's Whitby photographs, and are timeless: they could have come from the Biedermeier period, or even earlier, right back to the middle ages, or up to today. The costumes give a general idea, rather than falling in love with details, and though they are clearly nineteenth-century they are more or less timeless, and must stink of the sea. I am unable to work with a visual effect that runs too strongly against the music, or in parallel with it, like the detestable pseudo-operatic realism of the fifties, where you almost had to close your eyes in order to listen to the



music. The paradox of the stage directions is that you have to see both the sea and the borough: if you're at sea you see the borough; if you're in the borough you see the sea.

Another paradox is the requirement of a huge space, where three boats can be brought in. I have tried to invent a staging that can provide as many long walks as possible, using the diagonal marked by the quay, and taking the pulse from the site of Aldeburgh, where the shingle bank becomes a wall, and where the Moot Hall is lower than the highest point of the beach. Then I have introduced an upper part of the town (not quite the same as in Aldeburgh) with a stepped walk on the other diagonal, leading up into the flies, and then a pair of tiny stages left and right of the pit, to expand the distance between the characters.

#### How much of the staging is realistic?

I decided that a certain realism is necessary, starting from the costumes. The only real objects are the boats - not the houses, which are too difficult, and the quay and the shingle, which are abstract simple surfaces, painted with tar. The boats are wonderful, because they are built by an Aldeburgh boat-builder to authentic designs. Peter's hut, an upside-down boat, has a certain realism about it too. The Boar is tiny and overcrowded, with sixty people cramped into twenty-four square metres. Grime's hut is an endangered living-space, because there was a landslide. The hut is not fixed, but hangs over space, balanced like the house in Chaplin's *Gold Rush*. It seems about to tumble over, to fall down. These are quotations of realism in the midst of more or less abstract surfaces, which organise the space.



## Interludes

### Carlo Rizzi interviewed by Simon Rees

Peter Grimes is an opera in which the connections between the plot and its setting in one particular part of the world - the English fishing-port of Aldeburgh - become very important. On many different levels we see man's fight against nature: one man against his own nature, the community of men fighting the wider nature of the sea and the weather. The six sea interludes are strongly inspired by this, and there are many ways of listening to them.

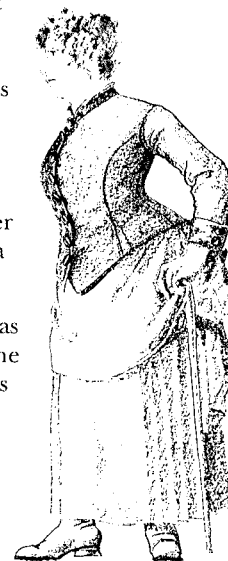
The first interlude is rather pictorial, with the calm of the sea at the beginning, little waves shown by brass chords, with the little freak waves that come to the shore represented by clarinet, harp and violas, playing rapidly. The calm, the almost eternal stillness of the sea very early in the morning: that's the first of these sea pictures.

The second interlude is the storm. This is an absolute masterpiece of description, of the tumultuousness of the sea, but there is also a calm lying in the middle.

The third interlude, at the beginning of Act 2, shows yet another picture of the sea, on a festive, joyous day, with a glitter of waves, a glitter of sunshine, as Ellen Orford describes it. All this is clearly marked in the score.

The fifth interlude, at the beginning of the third act, has the feeling of a heavy, leaden sea, calm but at the same time the messenger of bad news, not an easy, tranquil calm but a calm pregnant with future developments.

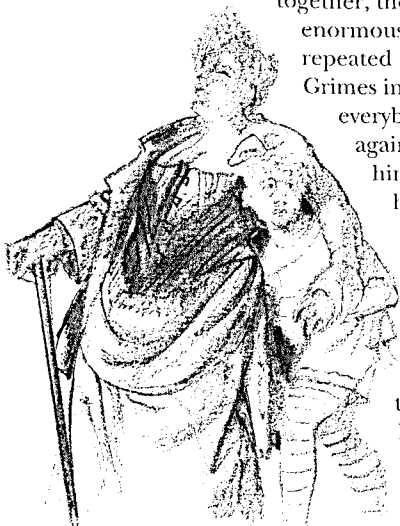
Britten uses nature to describe man, as well as mankind, to describe the inner feelings of the principal roles, particularly Grimes. Grimes's character is not very clear; he is not clear in himself about what he wants and what he does. He goes to a certain point and then retreats, as if he wants to be an outsider. But the moment he is considered an outsider, he blames others for making him so. It is



the story of somebody who cannot accept himself. Much has been written about Britten's homosexuality, and that of Grimes, about Britten's fondness for children and Grimes's relationship with his apprentices. Without minimalising this, I think the picture is much wider. Grimes is not simply troubled because he cannot approach Ellen as he would like to. He is a man with a 'fiery vision', as he calls it: this is his perception of himself. He also knows that others call him a dreamer. The opera is not just about rejection, but also about acceptance: the case of Britten's being so openly homosexual at that time probably had a lot to do with it. But Grimes's character is not so straightforward: you can't mark him as homosexual or not, happy or not, an outsider or not.

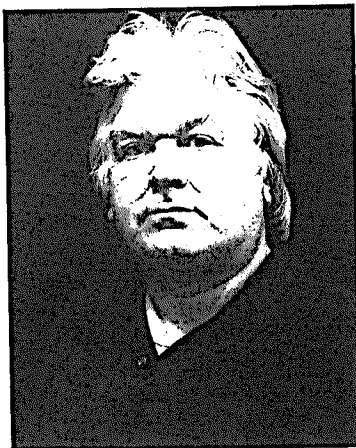
This also comes out in the interludes, for instance in the second interlude of Act 2, the famous passacaglia. This fourth interlude is a masterpiece of technical construction, both from the way it is structured and because of the skills Britten used to obtain special effects within the orchestra. Apart from the opening solo of the viola, the statement of the passacaglia theme is made by cellos and basses, with timpani. This creates an atmosphere, not merely by notes on a beat, but a feeling of expectation, of something that is going to happen, is happening, but has not yet quite happened. Britten builds it up, first with the viola, then with woodwinds, then the brass, then violin, then full orchestra, then goes back to the woodwinds, then woodwinds and violin

together, then the full brass, arriving at this enormous climax that still states the same repeated theme - and then we finally find Grimes in his hut, full of rage against everybody, not just against the boy, but against the townspeople for treating him as an outsider, and against himself. He is full of rage and anger because he hit Ellen, and did not want to hit her. I am convinced that when he hits Ellen and goes away, it is not just that he goes back to his fishing, but that he cannot bear to be with her any more: he knows he has done something wrong, not just because he acted with physical violence,



but because it is another moment of failure in his relationship with others. He gets to a certain point, but then when Ellen, in love and compassion, tells him how he has failed, he can't bear it. He hits her because he can't bear to face himself and the fact that Ellen is once again coming too near him. It is a sad story, but not, I think, in these modern times, such an unusual one. It could also be read as the story of a genius: geniuses are people who don't quite fit a single category. They're alone: ahead but alone. And don't forget that the man who wrote this opera was a genius: this first opera of Britten's really is a masterpiece.

The fourth interlude clearly describes Grimes's turmoil as he goes from the town square to his hut, and this is shown by the various themes. We have the loneliness of the feigned calm at the beginning. Then the lacerating, moving viola phrase, beautiful music but not a pleasant melody: it is like something ripping the heart apart. Then the tension created by the woodwinds, with a phrase that goes nowhere. And then a phrase that is full of turmoil and excitement, stated by the woodwinds and violins, that will later become the love-phrase when Grimes sings 'There's the jersey that she knitted, with the anchor that she patterned.' These emotions become clearer when Grimes is in his hut, but during what I think of as the journey to the hut, the music shows the turmoil of different thoughts that come into



his mind and don't have time to get unravelled and rationalised.

Technically speaking, the real stroke of genius is the variation using brass alone, where Britten creates chords by the successive entry of all the instruments, building a melodic line that spans from the third trombone to the first trumpet. This shows beautifully Britten's real knowledge of the orchestra.

The sixth and final interlude seems to me to look inside the personality of Grimes, rather than looking at the challenge between nature and man. Grimes is coming back after being out at sea: who knows, he may have taken the body of the dead boy and sunk it, fearing that people would accuse him of his death. He comes back, utterly disorientated. He doesn't know what to do, or where he is. Later, he asks himself: 'What is home? Calm as deep water. Where's my home? Deep in calm water.' It's a switch of personality, and we have the same in the music of the interlude. The first entry of the flute is clearly written as a mad phrase, and then we have a brief phrase from harp and cellos, and then back to an oboe with a high E flat, one of the highest notes it can produce, with a timbre that becomes thin, penetrating and painful, because there is no ease of rhythm. This is clearly a description of a man who does not know what to do, and is in great pain. The interlude is soon over, leaving the different emotions Grimes is suffering on a horn discord that will be the basis of the next scene. In this scene we hear the man hunt on the one hand, and on the other we have Grimes, alone with his imagination, shown by this horn chord and the bass tuba sounding the fog-horn. It is a masterpiece of interiorisation. I find an incredible pleasure in conducting it. As in all real masterpieces every note matters, and only opens to you if you try to see what is behind the music's beautiful facade.

## Place as Protagonist

Peter Davidson

*Peter Grimes* has its origin in an article by E.M. Forster which literally directed the course which the rest of Britten's life was to take. Seldom can a couple of pages of adroit evocation have had so profound an effect on a life, on a town and on the course of twentieth-century opera. As the composer wrote in his 1945 *Introduction to Peter Grimes*,

During the summer of 1941, while working in California, I came across a copy of *The Listener* containing an article about George Crabbe by E.M. Forster. I did not know any of the poems of Crabbe at that time, but but reading about him gave me such a feeling of nostalgia for Suffolk, where I had always lived, that I searched for a copy of his works and made a beginning with *The Borough*. Mr Forster's excellent account of this 'entirely English' poet evoked a longing for the realities of that grim and exciting seacoast around Aldeburgh...*The Borough* - and particularly the story of 'Peter Grimes' - provided a subject and a background from which Peter Pears and I began to construct the scenario of an opera.

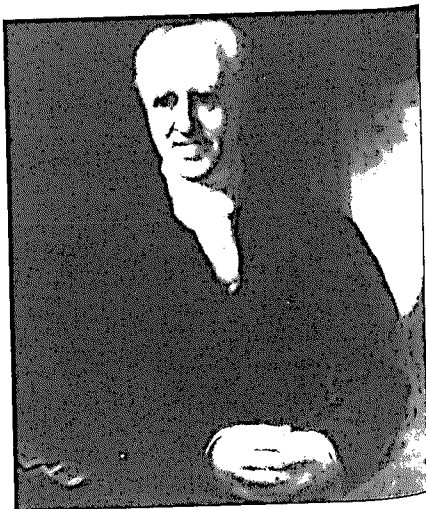
Forster's article does indeed paint Aldeburgh as 'a bleak little place; not beautiful', emphasising how 'it huddles round a flint-towered church and sprawls down to the North Sea - and what a wallop the sea makes as it pounds the shingle! Near by is a quay, at the side of an estuary, and here the scenery becomes melancholy and flat; expanses of mud, saltish commons, the marsh-birds crying.'

The impression which Aldeburgh made after Britten's Festival had flourished for a decade, was much gentler - the grim, lawless and impoverished town which the poet George Crabbe left for good as soon as he was able to do so, had mellowed through Victorian 'improvement' and had become cosmopolitan with international artists and





musicians. The general feeling was much more that of the 'summer morning' interlude in the opera, a trim town by sunlit water, a place to which people came for pleasure. Similarly, the coastal marshes which Crabbe and Forster evoke so powerfully seemed, on a festival walk led by the Suffolk writer Norman Scarfe, (who describes Aldeburgh in his Shell Guide to the county as 'ugly and delightful') an almost unbearably bright region of gleaming mud and vast skies - magical and still.



Forster's article devotes a substantial space to Crabbe's descriptions of those very marshes, appreciating how skilled Crabbe is in the evocation of landscape, particularly the kind of landscape which is all-but indescribable:

Crabbe is a peculiar writer: some...find him dull, and even unpleasant...his feeling for certain types of English scenery does appeal to me very much...how subtly he links the scene with the soul of the observer. Grimes rows out alone into the estuary and waits there - waits for what?

When tides were neap and, in the sultry day,  
Through the tall bounding mud-banks made their way  
There anchoring, Peter chose from man to hide,  
There hang his head and view the lazy tide  
In its hot, slimy channel slowly glide

How quiet this writing is: you might say how dreary. Yet how sure is its touch; and how vivid that estuary near Aldeburgh.

Britten writes about his roots in Suffolk: before the war he had lived in Snape, at the head of that very estuary. Britten's involvement with Suffolk is beautifully evoked by an anonymous photograph of the late thirties which shows him playing darts in an unidentified pub (darts, according to Robert Graves, reached

its peak of popularity in 1937). He looks transcendently happy: it is obvious (mathematician and tennis-player as he was) that he was brilliant at darts. More than this, he looks totally at his ease in ordinary Suffolk surroundings, in sharp contrast to Crabbe who was haunted by the origins which he had escaped even when he was a well-connected clergyman living far from the estuary of the Alde.

The photograph and Britten's *Introduction to Peter Grimes* combine to give some idea of why Forster's article may have led Britten and Pears to risk the wartime crossing of the Atlantic, to face a tribunal as pacifists on their return, moved by the power of the place which is in a real sense the protagonist of the opera which they planned together in the course of their return. Imogen Holst's biographical study of Britten, published during his lifetime, has a splendid evocation of their lives in wartime England - of night journeys to perform Britten's English folk-song arrangements on the tired piano of some village-hall deep in the East Anglian country.

It is almost a cliché of the cultural history of the '40s, that Britten and Pears came back from America whereas their friends Auden and Isherwood stayed there for the duration of the war. Something like a myth has grown up around this fact, that Auden and Isherwood's decisions to stay somehow diminished them as writers, where Britten and Pears's not-uncourageous return led naturally onwards towards triumphant artistic careers which saw them in their later years, both honoured and titled, as two of the more refreshingly unlikely recruits to the English establishment of the twentieth century.

It is true that Auden's writing changed radically when he settled in America and the sparse, focused evocations of Pennine landscapes which are at the centre of his 30s poetry vanish for good to be replaced by the urbanity of 'a minor transatlantic Goethe'. It is impossible *not* to speculate about the non-existent poetry of wartime England which Auden never wrote. How wonderful it might have been: the enforced trust of blacked-out cities; the unnaturally perfect summer of 1940 with the fighter planes overhead; railway journeys to remote stations in the dark. And yet, tempting as it is to speculate on these works which never existed, the truth is that Auden, unlike Britten and Pears (and at real personal cost) had abandoned Europe before he ever boarded the ship for New York. The vital clue is the thirteenth of the *Sonnets from China*, published just before his departure, which states, with the lucidity of despair, that the Enlightenment, the rule of reason, having failed, Europe was sliding once more into a barbarism which Auden could do nothing to mitigate



...the will of the unjust  
Has never lost its power.

And so the poet who had once been at the centre of writing in the England of the thirties, the definer of its language, moved into self-imposed exile, demonstrating in the flawed libretto of *Paul Bunyan* that America was in itself a language which he had failed to learn overnight.

Despite the remarkable range of American musical idiom which Britten absorbed and used in *Paul Bunyan* (perhaps initially from the American song book which had been a gift from Montagu Slater, the future librettist) it seems certain that it was the return to the place which had called him home which released in him the musical certainties of *Peter Grimes*. It is as though Crabbe had enabled him to see the familiar places 'as if for the first time'.

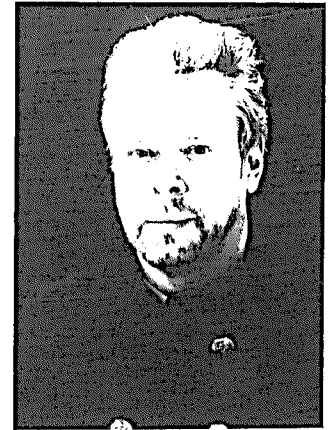
Forster's article manages in its brief compass to tell the reader or listener a lot about Crabbe, beyond setting him firmly in the landscape about which he wrote with such precision. But who is this now obscure poet who lies behind Britten's opera, behind Britten's decision to throw his lot in once more with his native county?

Crabbe is a strange, elusive poet: superficially an unremarkable eighteenth-century moralist who lived on into the 1830s. But the more you read his work, the stranger it appears: troubled dispatches from a menacing, impoverished rural England, in which there are infinite ways of missing your chance, of

falling to the bottom of society. This is a point captured beautifully by Forster's article which emphasises how well Crabbe knew 'the almshouses and the hospital and the prison and the sort of people who drift into them'. He is a melancholy, scrupulous, strange poet, author of visionary dream-poems as well as of narratives of provincial misfortune. He published one volume of impeccably placid Anglican sermons, as was expected of a clergyman with noble patrons in the hunting shires.

Yet even here, his fears break out in one extraordinary sermon on the text about the Devil going about as a raging lion, a sermon which expodes into a terrible exposition of the ubiquity and resourcefulness of evil. (Indeed, Crabbe's

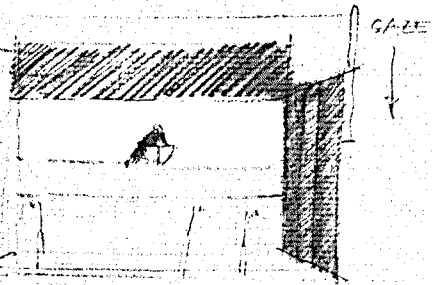
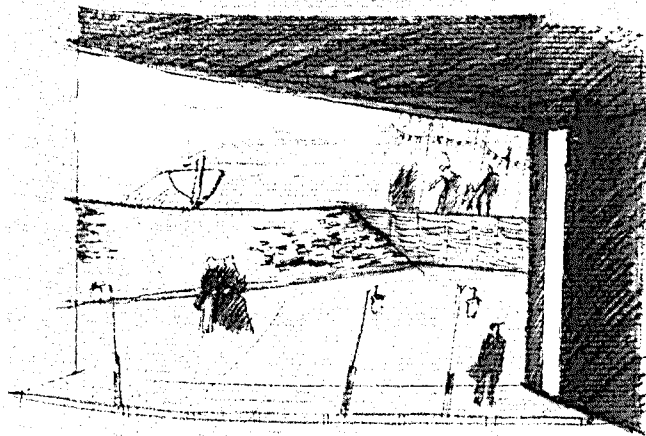
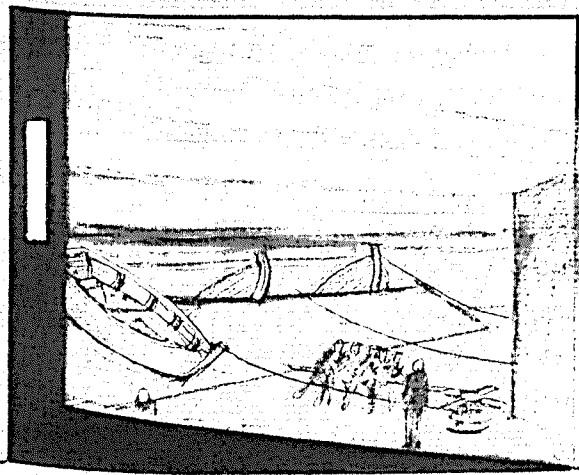
Peter Grimes is linked to the devil by his name: Grimes, Grim, the Old Grim of Grim's Dyke and Grime's Graves, the abandoned east-Anglian flint mines, the devil himself.) I can't imagine what the village made of Crabbe's distracted sermon on that distant, snowy Sunday evening, when the carrier, I suspect, had failed to deliver the laudanum which usually kept Crabbe's nightmares and waking dreams under some kind of control.



Crabbe's poems always proceed with horror and regret just below the surface. For all that he escaped from his origins, acquiring education and prosperity as he did so, Crabbe is alone amongst the English poets for his ability to recapture the horrors whispered in the Borough during his hard childhood in poor circumstances. The terror in *Peter Grimes* is rooted in his recollections of Aldeburgh, of half-understood adult conversations, accusations of deviance and sadism, rumours of murder.

Crabbe rejected Aldeburgh, for all that it haunted his poems and his dreams: his very successful *Tales of the Hall* written in later life, have as their framing narrative an odd wish-fulfilment in which a prosperous and genteel narrator returns to his family, not to the real Aldeburgh of Crabbe's childhood, but rather to a quiet mansion-house a little way inland, lit by the calm and reconciled light of sunlit early autumn. Every member of the audience must decide for themselves how the placidity of Crabbe's words, quoted at the close of Montagu Slater's libretto for *Peter Grimes* should be apprehended, as Aldeburgh goes again about its business, in the terrible absence of the hunted Grimes. But we may be certain that for Britten, who came in himself to be seen in later years as the Genius of the Place of Aldeburgh (as the *Shell Guide* testifies), it was Crabbe's evocation of the poverty-stricken and lawless Aldeburgh of the eighteenth century, and his descriptions of the river-estuary which led Britten and Pears back to the place which was to foster their creative partnership. Aldeburgh is a protagonist of the opera, and also a place which, in Forster's description was the reason for an essential change in the lives of its creators.

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# Catching a Crabbe:

## A note on creative perversion

Tom Rosenthal

'...one bit of good work I'm doing is on the opera libretto - I am finding lots of possibilities of improvement, especially the character of Grimes himself which I find doesn't come across nearly clearly enough. At the moment he is just a pathological case - no reasons & not many symptoms! He's got to be changed a lot.'

Thus Benjamin Britten in a letter of 12 March 1943 to Erwin Stein. He had clearly come a long way from his note to Elizabeth Meyer of 29 July 1941. 'We've just discovered the poetry of George Crabbe (all about Suffolk & are very excited - maybe an opera one day...!!)'

As is now well known, Britten came to Crabbe via a reprint in *The Listener* of E.M. Forster's Third Programme broadcast on 29 May 1941 about the eccentric Suffolk poet and his 'Poem in twenty-four letters' called *The Borough*, his transparent disguise for Britten's beloved Aldeburgh.

Rarely can a great work of literature have been converted into a great opera with such dedication and genius and yet with so many twists and turns of the characters of the protagonists. Crabbe would doubtless have been seduced by the power and beauty of the music, would surely have recognised the sharply sardonic eye turned upon Aldeburgh, but equally surely would have been amazed by the heroic nature of the operatic Grimes.

Old *Peter Grimes* made Fishing his employ,  
His Wife he cabin'd with him and his Boy,  
And seem'd that Life laborious to enjoy:  
To Town came quiet *Peter* with his Fish,  
And had of all a civil word and wish.  
He left his Trade upon the Sabbath-Day.

And so it goes. The trouble with Crabbe's portrait of this paragon Peter Grimes it that it is our Peter Grimes' father.

This is just some of what Crabbe wrote about *our* Peter Grimes:

With greedy eye he'd look'd on all he saw,

He knew not Justice and he laugh'd at Law;  
On all he mark'd he stretch'd his ready Hand,  
He fish'd by Water and he filch'd by Land:  
Oft in the Night has *Peter* dropt his Oar,  
Fled from his Boat and saught for Prey on shore.

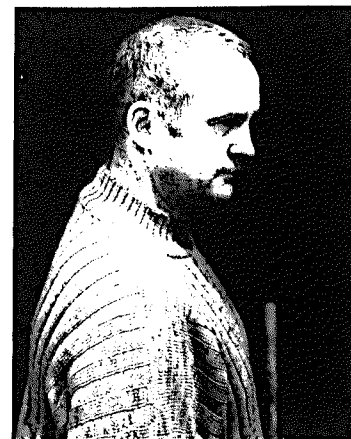
He wanted some obedient Boy to stand  
And bear the blow of his outrageous hand;  
And hop'd to find in some propitious hour  
A feeling Creature subject to his Power....  
But none enquir'd how *Peter* us'd the Rope,  
Or what the Bruise, that made the Stripling stoop;  
None could the Ridges on his Back behold...

The savage Master, grin'd in horrid glee;  
He'd now the power he ever lov'd to show,  
A feeling Being subject to his Blow.

There is more of this. Quite enough to show that Grimes is a sadist and, by most criminal codes, guilty at least of manslaughter if not murder. There are also hints that he bugged his wretched victims as well. It is also more or less clear that he killed his father in a rage. Grimes dies in delirium in the Poor House, driven into madness and death by dreadful visions of his victims, the apprentices led on to torment him by his blood-boltered father.

Crabbe knew his man. He most definitely does not present us with a noble, even heroic figure; more sinned against than sinning; failing in his worthy ambition to fish well and successfully, become a pillar of the community; determined to marry and settle down with the saintly Ellen Orford and finally, with Aristotelian grandeur, driven by Captain Balstrode, the *good* representative of a hostile society, to suicide as the only possible way out.

In his preface to *The Borough* Crabbe writes: 'The character of Grimes, his obduracy and apparent want of feeling, his gloomy kind





of misanthropy, the progress of his madness, and the horrors of his imagination, I must leave to the judgement and observation of my readers. The mind here exhibited, is one untouched by pity, unstung by remorse, and uncorrected by shame.'

But it is not only Grimes who is translated in the opera. Ellen Orford also gets a full Letter. In it she too is revealed as, whilst fundamentally a fine person, a tragic figure 'burthened with error and misfortune'. She is a ruined woman, her teens spoiled by a stepfather with too many children who made her 'nurse and wait on all the infant race', before she is seduced and abandoned, with an idiot child, by her first lover, a gentleman 'much above me'. Eventually she marries another man, her children die, one of them by hanging. Widowed, she opens a little school, goes blind and more or less starves.

There is of course nothing reprehensible in Britten's treatment of Crabbe's original. Most operas differ hugely from their literary sources, just as films do from novels. Different art forms require different structures and Britten has no more betrayed Crabbe than Verdi has betrayed Shakespeare and Schiller or Bizet Mériméc. But Britten has, far more than in Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* or Owen Wingrave severely distorted both plot and character.

Even E.M. Forster, as it were the onlie begetter of the work, had mixed feelings. He once speculated:

'It amuses me to think what an opera on Peter Grimes would have been like if I had written it.... I should certainly have starred the murdered apprentices. I should have introduced their ghosts in the last scene, rising out of the Estuary... blood and fire would have been thrown in the tenor's face, hell would have opened, and on a mixture of *Don Juan* and the *Freischütz* I should have lowered my final curtain.'

(Perhaps it is just as well that, apart from his co-authorship with Eric Crozier of the libretto for *Billy Budd*, Forster stuck to his day job.)

While Britten always had, like Verdi before him, very tight control of his libretti, that of *Grimes* was probably the one where his own views and interpretation were the most involved and, in no bad sense, overriding. He and Pears had already worked out the basic scenario before they approached any professional writer to do the libretto. Their first choice, Christopher

Isherwood, declined. The second was Montagu Slater who accepted, but the relationship was not an easy one and Britten also enlisted the discreet assistance of Ronald Duncan, later to be his librettist for *The Rape of Lucretia*.

Slater himself published his poem *Peter Grimes* a year after the opera was launched and his preface is revealing:

'I owe the idea, title, the names of three of the characters and the first and last chorus to George Crabbe. And the place is Crabbe's "Borough". Given this amount of derivation the work must still, I think, be judged in its own right.' ... 'In writing it I worked in the closest consultation with the composer, Benjamin Britten, from the moment when he first suggested the theme. We worked very much as a script-writer and director work on a film, the composer in this case being the director. The comparison has value, because for several reasons I believe it is useful at the present moment to dwell on how much there is in common between the arts of drama, opera, radio and film.'

Slater has been tactful but the analogy of film director and script-writer is telling. Everyone knows that the director is always the master and one can hardly blame Britten for the way in which he shaped the opera. While in later operas such as *Billy Budd* (1951) and *Death in Venice* (1973) he could tackle homosexual themes much more overtly, in the early forties this was still not possible and one must remember that Britten and his lifelong lover, Peter Pears, faced, at any time during those years, the constant risk of prison. Thus there was no way that Britten could have written, even if he had wanted to, let alone staged, a truthful and accurate version of Crabbe's *Grimes*; even if an operatic version of this unsavoury brute could have been at any time palatable, let alone enjoyable to a typical opera audience then, or even perhaps now.

There is also the question of Britten's repressed but nonetheless ever-present paedophilia which inspired some of his finest music for boys' choirs and is the sub-text of operas like *The Turn of the Screw* and *Death in Venice*. That at least caused him to present one of Grimes' hapless 'work house brats' in such a sympathetic way, although Grimes is not directly responsible for the boy's death.

There is, of course, much more to Britten's immensely free adaptation of Crabbe (which in Hollywood terms would probably merit one of those credits reading 'based on an original idea by....') than the issue of repressed paedophilia and the need to

conceal, or at least not dwell on, homosexuality.

Probably the most positive of Britten's passions was his pacifism which so informs not just the obvious works such as the *War Requiem* but, perhaps even more powerfully, *Owen Wingrave*. When Murray Schafer commented that the operatic Grimes is so different from the poetic one, Britten replied:

'A central feeling for us was that of the individual against the crowd, with ironic overtones for our own situation. As conscientious objectors, we were out of it. We couldn't say we suffered physically, but naturally we experienced tremendous tension. I think it was partly this feeling which led us to make Grimes a character of vision and conflict, the tortured idealist he is, rather than the villain he was in *Crabbe*.'

It is probably this identification, born out of the composer's pacifism and highly controversial sojourn in America as much as, if not more than, any question of sexual concealment which provides the strongest motivation for the re-creation of Grimes as the lone hero against the hostile and vengeful community. (No doubt it is altogether too fanciful to interpret Grimes as a Western movie hero facing a lynch mob...)

It's worth remembering that between that discovery of *Crabbe* in 1941 in America and its 1945 première there was a long journey: a journey back from an America which he had begun to find too right wing, too inimical to his own political views. He had poignantly expressed in his letters to England not only his unhappiness with America but also his strong feelings of English identity, as both a human being and a composer. *Paul Bunyan* (1941) was his first opera and is in all senses an American work. Significantly it is called an operetta. It is followed by his first English opera, undoubtedly that and not an operetta. What could be more English than the tale of a Suffolk fisherman and the turbulent setting of Aldeburgh?

That the Suffolk-born composer should have so perverted the *chef-d'oeuvre* of Aldeburgh's own poet is extraordinary. But he did not *subvert* it in turning it into his own overpowering piece which will surely last as long as *Crabbe*'s, no matter how different it is.

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Tom Rosenthal is writing a study of opera librettos and their literary originals.

# Montagu Slater

1902-1956

Andrew Biswell

Montagu Slater is the most shadowy of Britten's librettists. Unlike W.H. Auden, E.M. Forster or Myfanwy Piper, his life is thinly documented, and Britten's biographers, not all of whom appear to have read his works, struggle to give a clear sense of his presence on the literary scene in the 1930s and 1940s.

A Grub Street writer in the tradition of Dr Johnson, Slater spent most of his short life writing. The idea of interviewing him about his involvement with Britten does not seem to have occurred to anyone during his lifetime. He was born in 1902 in Millom, Cumberland, where his father divided his time between being a postmaster and running a tailor's shop. He won a scholarship to Magdalen College, Oxford, graduating in English in 1924, and became a journalist on the *Liverpool Post*. He spent four years in Liverpool and met his future wife, Enid, before moving to London, where he wrote for the *Morning Post* and the *Observer*. Slater wrote, but did not publish, two books of poetry around this time - *The Venereal Hypothesis* and *St James's Park*, a long poem in heroic couplets.

At some point between the General Strike and 1930, Slater joined the Communist Party. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he never renounced his commitment to Communism, and this newly embraced belief (the equivalent, perhaps, of Graham



Greene's slightly earlier conversion to Catholicism) informed almost everything he wrote thereafter. 'Under capitalism,' he said in an editorial for the *Left Review*, 'Art has lost its subject matter,' and only Communism could restore it. Slater's first salvo in the war against capitalism was a novel about Liverpool, *The Second City* (1931). This was followed in 1934 by *Haunting Europe*, a novel about the defeat of fascism by a socialist revolution.



As the theatre critic of the *New Statesman* in the late 1920s, Slater was well placed to observe developments in the drama of his time. His own experiments in verse drama may be thought of as a conscious reaction against what he saw as the shortcomings of T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. It was, he argued, a symptom of Eliot's decline that he had ended by writing a poetic play with a detective-story title. What was required instead was Socialist Realism, in accordance with the new Soviet doctrine. In practice this meant that drama should aspire to the condition of documentary, and that working people were its proper subject.

As a Communist, Slater found himself working among fellow party-members and fellow travellers when he was hired in 1935 by the Left-leaning GPO Film Unit to write the narration for Alberto Cavalcanti's film, *Coal Face*. It was while working on this film that he met Britten - and also the poet Auden, who contributed a brief song to the film, and whose influence is visible in Slater's 1930s' poetry.

Slater's first theatrical contribution with Britten was the play *Easter 1916*, produced by the Left Theatre company at the Phoenix Theatre in 1935. The play follows Irish industrial and national politics through the fiery years 1913-16, and the

*Manchester Guardian's* reviewer wrote enthusiastically of the first production that 'dramatic societies resolved to escape the blight of being bourgeois may well engage themselves upon this work.' This compliment was probably not intended to sound ironic.

Slater's next project began as a documentary account of a strike at Nine Mile Point Colliery in South Wales in 1936. This was the year in which George Orwell journeyed north to Wigan to investigate the effects of the depression on coal-mining communities. Having produced a non-fiction book about the strike, *Stay Down Miner*, Slater adapted it for the stage, and invited Britten to compose incidental music. In the original version of *Stay Down Miner*, performed by Left Theatre in May 1936, there was a song in Act 3 during the ascent from the mine to the surface, which disappeared when Slater revised the text for publication (it appeared the following year under the title *New Way Winds*). The song was set for male voices by Britten and, as far as I am aware, it has not been performed since 1937. Britten's setting of this song is unpublished:

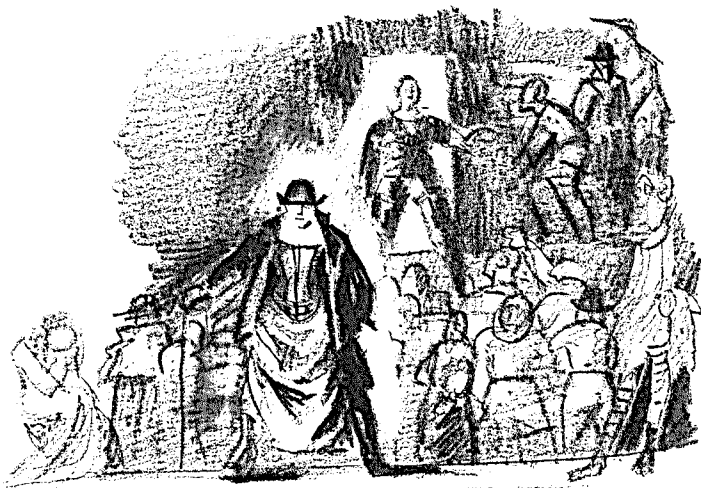
These foothills which we speak of as a mountain  
Are crossed by long-legged sheep and telfer span.  
Mountains are formed by turmoil in earth's crust;  
The minerals bear their tracks and miners must.

If any peak, however weather-worn  
Feels dental-drillings, then a town is born:  
Sometimes unsheltered, where the bracken grew  
And sometimes pouched as by a kangaroo.

The foothills splayed like fingers on a hand  
Shelter the southern ports and fatter land,  
Oh! climb still northward where the wrist joins  
on  
To the Black Mountains  
and the hills of Brecon.

Oh! climb still  
northward and  
against the wind  
Into a world of





mineral-bearing ground.  
Mountains are formed by turmoil in earth's crust;  
The minerals bear their tracks and miners must.

The spectre of Auden is easily detectable here, particularly in the use of telegraphese (e.g. 'turmoil in earth's crust'). Those anatomical and dental images are also voiced in an idiom learned from Auden's *Poems* (1930) and *The Orators: An English Study* (1932).

The *Daily Telegraph* reviewed the Britten-Slater *Stay Down Miner* unfavourably, but the review is little more than a confession of critical ineptitude and incomprehension: 'I have a very solid respect for Montagu Slater's intellectual gifts. But I do wish that when he writes for the theatre he would avoid the Hyde Park orator's habit of wrapping himself up in a fog of words, so that you can sometimes find out what his subject is but seldom what he is trying to say about it. Clarity is a dramatist's first virtue.' To complain about the play's obscurity was and is unjust: it is a lucid account of a 1930s industrial dispute, very much in the spirit of early documentary films, such as those put out by the GPO Film Unit. Undeterred by the failure of their plays to attract critical adulation, Slater and Britten continued to work together, notably on *Pageant of Empire*, a satirical sketch

performed at Collins' Music Hall, London, in 1937 (the music for which is now lost) and on two puppet plays, *Old Spain* and *The Seven Ages of Man*. Britten's letters for 1938 record an oddly proleptic moment, when Enid and Montagu Slater sent him a copy of *The American Songbag*.

Britten and Peter Pears sailed to America in 1939, but Britten maintained a correspondence with the Slaters while he was out of England. After Britten and Pears had returned from the United States, Slater appeared, along with William Walton, as a witness at Britten's Conscientious Objector Tribunal in 1942. The outcome was an unconditional exemption from military service. 'The best possible result,' wrote Britten. 'I am now free to go on with my work.'

During the Second World War, Slater was head of scripts in the Film Division of the Ministry of Information, and he continued to work as a theatre critic for *Reynolds News*. Given these other commitments, it is surprising that he also found time to produce his most enduring dramatic poem - the libretto for *Peter Grimes*, first produced at Sadler's Wells in June 1945.

When Pears was interviewed some years later about *Peter Grimes*, he gave a vivid account of the difficult circumstances out of which the libretto emerged. It was by no means an easy collaboration: '[Slater] was a very slow writer, and found it difficult to produce what Ben wanted, so the actual work of the libretto was often well behind the work of the music.' Pears recalled that Britten was often 'writing music ahead and waiting for words to come along by the next post.'

Slater published his original version of *Peter Grimes* in book form in 1946, so it is possible to reconstruct the process whereby sections of the draft libretto were cut by Britten as the opera took shape. Some of the excised passages are remarkable as poetry, but most of Britten's cuts seem to have been made for dramatic reasons, in order to move the action along more swiftly. For instance, towards the end of Act 2 in Slater's published text, Grimes sings to his apprentice about the joys and horrors of the fisherman's life:

We shall sail. When we cast off,  
 O we'll gulp the salt of life.  
 While we round the point you'll shout  
 To hide the terror in your heart.  
 When the gunwale dips and waves  
 Leap upon us from above,  
 And the lonely seagulls cry  
 You'll be frightened. So shall I.  
 You'll discover by and by  
 What this ends in is the sea.

This grim prophecy is a fine example of Slater's Audenesque, and it bears a close resemblance to Auden's nocturne 'Now through night's caressing grip' from *The Dog Beneath the Skin* (a song set by Britten in the 1930s). It is an eloquent if ambivalent, celebration of a traditional way of life, but Britten was probably right to cut it in the context of the opera. Nevertheless, one is still grateful that Slater chose to publish his draft libretto in full.

The reviews of *Peter Grimes* were generous, but there was a reluctance to engage with some of the complexities of Slater's text - and early critics were entirely silent about the possibility of a pederastic sub-text. The *Modern Music* reviewer wrote: 'perhaps a flaw in the libretto is that it never gives the cause for Grimes's original isolation from the community. But beyond that the piece has the quality of a Greek tragedy, wherein misfortune comes not from direct malfeasance on the part of the protagonist, but as a result of some failing in his character, in this case the arrogance which brings about his destruction.'

In retrospect, Slater's rift



with Britten after 1946 seems inevitable: one of Slater's daughters remembers her father's mounting disapproval of Britten's role as 'court musician'. Besides, Britten's decision to drop this embarrassingly unapologetic Communist associate is consistent with his post-war reevaluation of his no-longer fashionable Leftism. Like Auden before him, Slater found himself cast out of Britten's inner circle.

His appetite for writing was undiminished by his deep regret that Britten had found other librettists. He continued to produce plays, novels and non-fiction books at an impressive rate, including *Englishmen with Swords* (1949), a narrative about the English Civil War based on contemporary records and written in the style of Daniel Defoe's novel, *A Journal of the Plague Year*. Slater's last work of fiction, a detective story entitled *Man With a Background of Flames*, was published in 1954.

With the single exception of the *Peter Grimes* libretto, Slater's work is out of print and almost invisible. You will not find an entry for him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the index of *Times* obituaries, the *Oxford Dictionary of Opera*, or any of the other major reference books. It seems to me that the neglect of this key 1930s literary figure is quite unjustifiable, though the fact of his commitment to Communism makes any republication of his work unlikely in the immediate future. But surely it is time that Slater's dramatic writings - particularly *Stay Down Miner* and *Easter 1916*, with their unpublished music by Britten - were taken out of the library and put back on the stage.

#### Further reading

- Philip Brett (editor), *Benjamin Britten: Peter Grimes* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983)
- Humphrey Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten: A Biography* (London: Faber, 1992)
- Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford: OUP, 1988)
- Christopher Headington, *Britten* (London: Omnibus, 1996)
- Donald Mitchell & Philip Reed (editors), *Letters from a life: The Selected Letters and Diaries of Benjamin Britten* (2 vols., London: Faber, 1991)
- Montagu Slater, *Peter Grimes and Other Poems* (London: John Lane, 1946)
- Montagu Slater, *New Way Wins* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1937)

# Accidental Circumstances

Chris Ball

An inquest is a factual enquiry to determine, essentially, four pieces of information, namely who the deceased was and how, when and where the deceased came by his death. In addition, the particulars required by the Registration Acts to be registered concerning the death need to be ascertained. An inquest is not a trial and is 'inquisitorial' rather than 'adversarial' in nature. Essentially this means that the coroner questions the witnesses, although a 'properly interested person' or their legal representative can ask questions provided of course those questions are directed to establishing who, how, when and where. An adversarial system involves opposing sides, i.e. prosecution and defence in a criminal trial, or plaintiff and defendant in a civil claim.

No verdict shall be framed in such a way as to appear to determine any question of criminal liability on the part of a named person or civil liability.

The office of coroner can trace its origins back to 1194 but clearly in the ensuing 800 years the functions and procedures of the office have changed considerably. Crabbe's poem *The Borough* was published in 1810 but the opera is set 'towards 1830'. The earliest specific Coroner's Act dates from 1843 although earlier statutes regulated the function of coroners. Today, a coroner is either a lawyer or a medical practitioner of five years' standing. The Borough's coroner is Mr Swallow, a lawyer (presumably a solicitor) and, in addition, Mayor of the Borough, a position that today would disqualify him from sitting as coroner. Formerly, a coroner had to own freehold land, and it seems that some coroners satisfied the requirement by the ownership of burial plots!

An inquest is held when there is reasonable cause to suspect that the deceased has died a violent or an unnatural death, has died a sudden death of which the cause is unknown, or has died in prison or in such a place or in such circumstances as to require an inquest under any other Act.

Generally speaking, there has to be a dead body lying in the coroner's jurisdiction. In certain circumstances, an inquest can still be held even though the coroner is not 'seised' of a body. The coroner informs the Secretary of State that he has reason to believe

that a death has occurred in or near his district and the circumstances of death are such that he thinks an inquest ought to be held and would be held if there were a body, even though the body has been destroyed or is irrecoverable. In coastal jurisdictions, this would cover a situation where a boat sank offshore, it was known that there were several people on board and either no bodies were recovered or only some bodies were recovered. Although the position was far from clear, it is arguable that all 'internal waters' as distinct from 'territorial seas' fall within the jurisdiction of a coroner.

The opera opens in the Moot Hall as Mr Swallow is conducting an inquest touching the death of William Spode, an apprentice of Peter Grimes. I have compared the section of Crabbe's poem that deals with Peter Grimes with the libretto to the opera in an attempt to assess the evidence and see whether or not an inquest today would arrive at the same verdict. Before I began this comparison, I assumed that the poem would contain far more detail than the libretto but, if anything, the reverse is true, and the libretto is far more elaborate than the poem. For example, the apprentice's name is not mentioned in the poem, and when the fatal journey is described - Grimes was sailing to London to sell his catch but the apprentice was 'new to danger on the angry sea' and at line 146 the poem continues thus:

The boat grew leaky and the wind was strong,  
Rough was the passage and the time was long;  
His liquor fail'd, and Peter's wrath arose,-  
No more is known - the rest we must suppose,  
Or learn of Peter; - Peter says he 'spied  
The stripling's danger and for harbour tried;  
Meantime the fish, and then th'apprentice died.'

The village women alleged that the apprentice had drowned and it could be assumed that the boy did not return in which case there would be an inquest without a body. The libretto makes it quite plain that the body was 'brought ashore from [Grimes's] boat.'

There was only one witness to the apprentice's death, and if Peter Grimes gave a credible account, it would be impossible to gainsay that account, particularly if no body was found. Even with a body, in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, forensic medicine was not practised as it is to today.

It is clear from both the poem and the libretto and stage directions that there was a good deal of prejudice against Grimes. Even for the provinces, Aldeburgh, the model for the Borough, was a backwater, but even so, its inhabitants were clearly offended by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century system of buying workhouse apprentices. According to the

poem, Grimes had engaged two such apprentices, both of whom died although there is no mention of an inquest for the first death before Grimes acquired his third apprentice whose 'manners [were] soft and mild, and whom the women of the Borough thought may have been 'some noble sinner's son'.

Although the coverage of the inquest in the poem is very brief, it seems likely that the mayor had a preconceived notion rather than listening objectively to the evidence because he:

..with tone severe replied, –  
'Henceforth with thee shall never boy abide;  
Hire thee a freeman, whom thou durst not beat,  
But who, in thy despite, will sleep and eat:  
Free thou art now! - again shouldst thou appear,  
Thou'lt find thy sentence, like thy soul, severe.'

This creates the impression that the coroner is treating the proceedings almost as a criminal trial. Although he may have felt disgust for Grimes, as an independent judicial officer, the coroner should have maintained a degree of clinical and professional detachment.

Today, a coroner may make recommendations if he believes that action should be taken to prevent the recurrence of similar fatalities. Clearly Grimes' track record left something to be desired. In addition, today, no witness at an Inquest is obliged to answer any question tending to incriminate himself but Grimes was not legally represented at the inquest.

As I have indicated above, the libretto contains more information than the poem, but even so there are many unanswered questions. This is not uncommon with an inquest partly because of the limited nature of the enquiry and partly because, when there are no independent witnesses, a balanced view is not possible.

The character of Grimes in the opera is very different from the character that emerges from the lines of the poem. Swallow asks Grimes whether he wishes to give evidence, although today the coroner would explain to Grimes that he did not have to answer any question that was likely to incriminate him. Swallow then asks Grimes to repeat the oath after him. Swallow must have said the familiar words of the oath on many occasions and speaks them very rapidly, but Grimes then repeats the oath at a much slower speed giving the impression that he is thinking about the words he is reciting and not just following Swallow blindly. This is a most effective and telling exchange.

In answer to the coroner, Grimes explains that he was sailing to

London to sell a huge catch which was too big to sell in the Borough. The boat was blown off course by the wind and they ran out of drinking water. They were at sea three days and the boy 'died lying there among the fish'. Grimes threw the fish overboard and set sail for home. On his arrival, he called Ned Keene the apothecary, and the Rector also attended. There was a certain amount of excitement, and under some stern questioning from the Coroner, effectively Grimes admitted shouting abuse at Mrs Sedley, Grimes offering the justification that he did not 'like interferers'. Ellen Orford, the schoolmistress, helped Grimes carry the boy home.

The coroner sums up very briefly indeed, advising Grimes not to get another boy apprentice and then returned the verdict that William Spode died in accidental circumstances. 'But that's the kind of thing people are apt to remember.'

Normally the announcement of the verdict at an inquest brings the proceedings to a close and the court is cleared. On occasions, the atmosphere at an inquest can be highly charged: emotional outbursts are by no means uncommon. The chorus sings: 'But when the crowner sits upon it, who can dare to fix the guilt?' This exchange indicates a popular misconception as to the function of an inquest: no one is on trial, and questions of guilt and innocence are matters for a criminal court.

Grimes then starts an exchange with the coroner indicating that he must have help, like every other fisherman. The coroner suggests that Grimes should get a woman to help him look after the apprentice. Grimes replies that he will not do so until he has 'stopped peoples' mouths'. The hubbub begins again. Clearly the coroner is in danger of losing control, so he orders the court to be cleared. Grimes remonstrates:

'The case goes on in peoples' minds.  
The charges that no court has made  
will be shouted at my head.  
Then let me speak, let me stand trial.  
Bring the accusers into the hall.  
Let me thrust into their mouths,  
the truth itself, the simple truth.'

As the coroner leaves, the spectators rise. That then is the evidence. We know who the deceased was - William Spode. We know that according to Grimes, he died on Grime's boat, *The Boy Billy*, out at sea but there is no more precise location and we do not know the date. We know from the coroner's opening remarks that the apprentice's body was brought ashore on the 26<sup>th</sup> ultimo, but there is no month and no year. Equally, there is no evidence that life was formally

pronounced extinct by a qualified medical practitioner, and there is no mention of a post mortem examination or a medical cause of death. Thus, we know who the deceased was, where he died in fairly vague terms, but not when or how.

'How...the deceased came by his death' is a rather more limited question than 'how the deceased died', and this purpose of an inquest has been the subject of much judicial debate. Clearly 'how' goes beyond the medical cause of death upon which both the poem and the libretto are silent, and if Grime's account in the libretto is to be believed, then William Spode did not drown but died aboard the boat, presumably from a combination of exposure, weakness, lack of water, etc.

Today, such an inquest would be held with a jury because the death arose during the course of the apprentice's employment and it would be a reportable incident. Even if this provision did not apply, with the two earlier cases referred to in the poem, a coroner would be justified in summoning a jury because 'the death occurred in circumstances the continuance or possible recurrence of which is prejudicial to the health or safety of the public or any section of the public.'

The death of Grime's second apprentice did result in a jury inquest.

Strictly speaking, the 'verdict' comprises the name of the deceased, the injury or disease causing the death, the time, place and circumstances at or in which injury was sustained, the conclusion of the coroner and jury as to death and the registration particulars. Colloquially, however, 'conclusion' and 'verdict' are treated synonymously. Although convention has resulted in standard forms of wording, e.g. natural causes, accidental death, misadventure etc., there is no magic behind these conventions and any wording can be used. For example, in the mid 19th century, a common 'conclusion' was 'death by visitation of God', which today would be recorded as 'natural causes'.

Swallow recorded a 'verdict' of 'accidental circumstances'. Each word contains four syllables and I suspect that this symmetry really explains the choice of words. Today, the equivalent would be either accidental death or perhaps misadventure, although the difference between the two is not always easy to explain and often they are treated interchangeably, although there are differences but on occasions these differences seem more imaginary than real. For statistical purposes, accident and misadventure are treated as being the same and therefore further discussion is not warranted.

Was Mr Swallow's 'conclusion' in accordance with the limited evidence that he heard? Certainly if we were relying upon the poem alone, then line 149 - 'No more is known - the rest we must suppose' - says it all,

and clearly an 'open verdict' would be appropriate. Essentially this verdict should be used as a last resort and although there may be uncertainty as to the precise cause, time or place of death, if there is sufficient evidence to record how the deceased came by his death, then an 'open verdict' would not be appropriate.

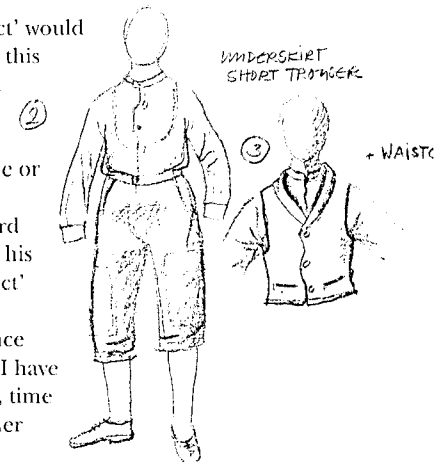
Applying this to the evidence revealed in the libretto, as I have indicated above, the cause, time and place of death are either not mentioned at all or the

evidence is somewhat vague or circumstantial. But how did William Spode come by his death? He died in an open boat in rough seas when the drinking water supply had run out. With this information, an 'open verdict' is probably not appropriate and a positive conclusion should be reached. Although the coroner and the majority of the villagers were prejudiced against Grimes and did not approve of his lifestyle, and although they may have been critical of his venturing out to sea with a young apprentice, as a matter of pure law, rather than being influenced by public opinion, it would be very difficult to establish, beyond all reasonable doubt, that Grimes had acted in a criminally reckless manner, which would justify a verdict of unlawful killing which encapsulates both manslaughter and murder.

Although the evidence is limited and unsatisfactory, on a balance of probabilities, accidental death would be the appropriate 'conclusion', although there is still a good deal of uncertainty surrounding all the circumstances, and perhaps with more sympathetic questioning from the coroner, Grimes might have been more forthcoming with his evidence. Even when the evidence is more cogent and there are independent witnesses, there can still be significant gaps in the story.

Of course 'accidental death' does not have the same effect musically as 'accidental circumstances' and in the same way that the libretto is an entirely different art form from the original poem, then my analysis of the evidence is far removed from an actual inquest.

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## Moidele Bickel

Costume Designer

Born Munich. Joined the Schaubühne Berlin in 1970. For Stein designed Ibsen's *Peer Gynl*, Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, *Antiquity Project I*, Handke's *They are Dying Out*,

Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Botho Strauss' *Great and Small* and *The Park*, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Genet's *The Blacks*, Chekhov's *Three Sisters* and *Cherry Orchard*, O'Neill's *Hairy Ape*, Racine's *Phädra* (Schaubühne), *Julius Caesar*, *Wozzeck*, Grillparzer's *Libussa* (for Salzburg), *Otello*, *Falstaff*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (for WNO). For Grüber designed *Hamlet*, *Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald*, Labiche's *The Rue de Loursine Affair* (Schaubühne), *Parsifal* (for Amsterdam), Bartók's *Bluebeard* and Schoenberg's *Erwartung* (for Frankfurt). For Bondy, Marivaux's *Triumph of Love* (Schaubühne), *Don Carlos* (for Paris). For Chereau *Wozzeck* (for Paris), Botho Strauss' *Le temps et la chambre*, *Don Giovanni* (for Salzburg) and the film *La Reine Margot*. For Wilson *Death, Destruction and Detroit I* and *II* and Philip Glass *The White Raven* (for Lisbon).



## Peter Bronder

Boles

Born Hertfordshire, studied Royal Academy of Music and National Opera Studio. Roles include main roles *La bohème*, *La traviata*, *I Puritani*, *La Sonnambula*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*,

*The Barber of Seville*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Magic Flute* and *Eugene Onegin*, Alfred *Die Fledermaus*, Pylade *Iphigénie en Tauride* for WNO. Other roles include Arturo *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Cassio Otello*, First Jew *Salome* and *Pedrillo II Seraglio* for ROH; Vanya *Katya Kabanova*, Italian Tenor *Der Rosenkavalier*, Almaviva *Barber of Seville* for ENO; Ernesto *Don Pasquale* for Netherlands Opera; Upfold *Albert Herring* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Narraboth *Salome* and Mazal *Brouček* for Bavarian State Opera; Rodolfo *La bohème*, Leicester *Maria Stuarda* and Dancing Master *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Scottish Opera, Prunier *La Rondine*, Captain



*Wozzeck* and Alexander *Il re pastore* for Opera North, Dr Caius *Falstaff* for Baden-Baden which was also recorded. Recent concerts include Beethoven's Choral Symphony with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Orpheus II *Mask of Orpheus* (both recorded), *Wozzeck* with the Philharmonia under Christoph von Dohnanyi as well as appearances at the Edinburgh Festival and CBSO. Future plans include *Pedrillo* for Brussels.



## Heinrich Brunke

Lighting Designer

Born Farmsen, Germany. At Schauspielhaus Hamburg (Iwan Nagel) has been Lighting Designer for among others P.Zadek, K.E.Herrmann; at Schauspielhaus Cologne

(J.Flimm/ V.Canaris) for among others J.Flimm, L.Bondy, R.Wilson, C.Nel, G.Tabori; 1979-1985 has done all the lighting design for the productions of the Dance Forum Cologne; other work as lighting designer includes *Death, Destruction & Detroit*, *Orlando*, *Madness of Dead* (prod. R.Wilson) for Schaubühne Berlin; *The Time Rocker* (world premiere) and *Antigone* for Thalia Theater Hamburg; *Orlando* for Edinburgh Festival 1996. His lighting designs for opera include *Iphigénie auf Tauris* for Opera Frankfurt; *Graf von Ory* for Opera Amsterdam; *Magic Flute*, *Madam Butterfly* for Opéra de Bastille, Paris; *Don Carlos* for Opera Zürich; *Blaubart* and *Erwartung*, *Wozzeck* (prod. Peter Stein) and *Pelléas et Mélisande* (prod. R. Wilson) for Salzburger Festspiele; *Madam Butterfly* for Teatro Communale Bologna; *Oedipus Rex* for Chatelet, Paris; *Pelléas et Mélisande* for Opéra Garnier, Paris. His most recent works include *Lohengrin* (prod. R. Wilson) for Metropolitan Opera, New York; Philip Glass *White Raven* (prod. R.Wilson) for EXPO 98 Lisbon (world première) and *Dantons Tod* (prod. R. Wilson) for Salzburger Festspiele.



## John Daszak

Peter Grimes

Born Cheshire, studied Guildhall School of Music, Royal Northern College of Music and in Italy. Debut Ferrando *Così fan tutte* for Mid Wales Opera. Roles include Don José *Carmen*,

Large Prisoner *From the House of the Dead*, Grigory *Boris Godunov* and Steva *Jeniſa* for WNO; Steva, Young Guard *King Priam*, Jack *Mahagonny*, Pang *Turandot*, Skuratov *From the House of the Dead*



and Dimitri *Boris Godunov* for ENO; Duke *Rigoletto*, Ferrando *Così fan tutte* in Italy; Jack/Toby Higgins *Mahagonny* for Opéra de Lausanne; Michel *Julietta* for Opera Zuid, Holland. Appears frequently on the concert platform including Otumbo *Alzira* for ROH, title-role *Oberon* with City of London Sinfonia, Governor/Vanderdendur *Candide* with the London Symphony

Orchestra. Recordings include Spoleta *Tosca* for Chandos. Future plans include Cassio *Otello* with the LSO under Sir Colin Davis, Yannakos *The Greek Passion* for Bregenz Festival, Max *Der Freischütz* and Achilles *King Priam* for ENO; Mathō *Salambo* for Opéra de Bastille and title-role *Peter Grimes* for La Scala.



## Alan Ewing Hobson

Born Northern Ireland, studied University of East Anglia. Debut Osmin *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for Buxton Festival, subsequently for Festival of Beaune, Spoleto, Théâtre de Poissy and, with William Christie and Les Arts Florissants in Strasbourg (also recorded for Erato). Also with Christie, many international concert tours, notably Polyphemus *Acis and Galatea* (also recorded for Erato). With Richard Hickox, Swallow, Quince *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Ratchiffe *Billy Budd* (with the LSO and Chandos). For the LSO has appeared with Michael Tilson-Thomas and Panthée *Les Troyens* (Sir Colin Davis); Second Armed Man *Die Zauberflöte*, Schwarz *Die Meistersinger*, Gawain (also for Collins Classics) and in concert performance Foka *The Enchantress* for ROH. Future plans include Field-Marshal Kutuzov *War and Peace* for 1999 Spoleto Festival (with Richard Hickox), *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* at the 1999 Maggio Musicale, Florence and a European tour as Lucifero *La Resurrezione* with Trevor Pinnock and The English Concert.



## Susan Gorton Mrs. Sedley

Born Cheshire, studied Royal Manchester College of Music. Roles include Dame Carruthers *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Mamma Lucia *Cavalleria rusticana*, Martha *Faust*, Innkeeper *Boris Godunov* and Buryja *Jenůfa* for WNO, Mrs Sedley, Mistress Quickly *Falstaff* for ENO, The Chambermaid *The Makropulos Case* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Marcellina *Le nozze di Figaro*, Feklusha *Katya Kabanova* and Filipyevna *Eugene Onegin* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera; The Pilgrim *Snatched by the Gods*, The Elephant *Broken Strings* by Param Vir for Scottish Opera; Mrs Sedley for Lyric Opera, Chicago; Mistress Quickly Florence Pike *Albert Herring* for English Touring Opera; Fominishna in Julian Grant's *A Family Affair* at the Almeida Festival (world premiere). Future plans include The Chambermaid *The Makropulos Case* for Gran Teatre dei Liceu, Barcelona, Mary *Der Fliegende Holländer* for Lyric Opera Chicago, Buryja, Auntie *Peter Grimes* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera.



## Andrew Greenan Swallow

Born Birmingham, studied St John's College, Cambridge and Royal Northern College of Music with John Cameron. Principal Bass at English National Opera 1992-97 where roles included King Henry *Lohengrin*, Sarastro *Magic Flute*, Rocco *Fidelio*, Timur *Turandot*, Sparafucile and Monterone *Rigoletto*, Nourabad *Pearl Fishers*, Commendatore *Don Giovanni* and Swallow *Peter Grimes* (also on Decca video). Elsewhere roles include Landgraf *Tannhäuser* at QEHL, Swallow in Hamburg; Abimélech *Samson et Dalila* in Tel Aviv; Bottom *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Teatro Regio, Turin (Mauceri). For ROH Swallow (Mackerras), Ataliba *Alzira* (Elder), 1<sup>st</sup> Nazarene *Salome* (Dohnanyi), Pietro *Simon Boccanegra* (Solti). Appears frequently on the concert platform, most recently with BBC Symphony and English Chamber Orchestra and in Verdi's *Requiem* with Belgian National Orchestra. Recently recorded Bonze *The Nightingale* and God *The Flood* (Stravinsky) with the Philharmonia (Robert Craft) and appeared as Raimondo in the film *Lucia* based on Donizetti's opera. Future plans include *Der Freischütz* for ENO

and Sarastro for WNO, *Roméo et Juliette* with BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Arkel *Pelléas et Mélisande* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera and *Die Meistersinger* at La Monnaie.



## Paul Gyton

*Dr. Crabbe*

Born Surrey, choral scholar at choir schools of All Saints Margaret Street, London and St Mary's, Reigate. Studied singing at Royal College of Music with Wilfred Brown and

Hervey Alan and violin with Ralph Nicholson. Joined WNO 1977. For WNO roles include Don Basilio *The Marriage of Figaro*, Peterman *Monsieur Cauliflower*, Michelis *The Greek Passion*, Giuseppe *La traviata*, 1<sup>st</sup> Prisoner *Fidelio*, Abbé *Andrea Chénier*, Parpignol *La bohème*, Mosquito *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Executioner *Salome*, Innkeeper *Falstaff*, Ambrogio *The Barber of Seville*, Guide *Carmen*, Young Prisoner *From the House of the Dead*, Young Nobleman *Count Ory*, Trojan Man *Idomeneo*, Blind *Die Fledermaus*, Knight *La favorita*, Don Riccardo *Ernani*, Borsa *Rigoletto*, Captain *Simon Boccanegra* and Amelia's Servant *Un ballo in maschera*.



## Ann Howard

*Auntie*

Born London, worked in pantomime (Principal Boy) and musical comedy. Chorus ROH gaining award to study in Paris.

Roles include title-roles *Carmen* and *Samson et Dalila*, Azucena *Il trovatore*, Ortrud *Lohengrin*, Fricka *Das Rheingold* and *Walküre*, Mescalina *Le grand macabre*, Helen *La belle Hélène*, Auntie, Katisha *The Mikado*, Kate *Kiss me, Kate*, Witch *Hansel and Gretel*, Czipra *The Gipsy Baron* for ENO; Azucena, title-role *La Grande-Duchesse de Gerolstein*, Second Official *The Doctor of Myddfai* for WNO; Brangäne *Tristan und Isolde*, Old Lady *Candide*, Marcellina *The Marriage of Figaro*, Venus *L'Orione* for Scottish Opera; Amneris *Aida* for ROH; Hostess *Boris Godunov*, Mrs. Danvers *Rebecca* for ON; Auntie



for Metropolitan Opera, New York, Bavarian and Vienna State Operas; Old Lady and Emma Jones *Street Scene* for Lisbon and Turin; Stepmother *Into the Woods* for London West End. Has sung extensively in France, Canada and USA where roles included title role *Italian Girl in Algiers*, Eboli *Don Carlos* for Baltimore Opera; Klytemnestra *Elektra* for Fort Worth and title-role *La Grande Duchesse*, L'Opinion Publique *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Caliban *The Tempest* for Santa Fe.



## Nicola Howard

*2<sup>nd</sup> Niece*

Studied Royal Academy of Music and subsequently joined Opéra de Lyon, where roles included Ecuyée in the world première of Debussy's *Rodrigue et Chimène*. Has since sung

title-role in the Henze opera project *Anna Bella* at the Montepulciano Festival, the Countess *Le nozze di Figaro* for Bloomsbury Theatre, London; title-role *Rape of Lucretia*, Mary Warren *The Crucible*, Carolina *Il matrimonio segreto*, Belinda *Dido and Aeneas*, Emmy *The Basement Room*, Lauretta *Gianni Schicci*, Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte* for Royal Academy of Music; Micaela *Carmen* for Clonter Opera. This season she has sung Pamina *Die Zauberflöte* for Scottish Opera. Concert work includes Handel *Messiah* and Haydn *Creation* at Royal Albert Hall (Sir David Willcocks), oratorio concerts in USA and recitals at St Martin-in-the-Fields and Purcell Room.



## Neil Jenkins

*Rev. Adams*

Born Sussex, studied Cambridge and Royal College of Music. Roles include Almaviva *The Barber of Seville*, Herod *Salome*, Valzacchi *Der Rosenkavalier*, Sellem *The Rake's Progress*, Arnalta

*L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Shuisky *Boris Godunov* for WNO; Nadir *The Pearl Fishers*, Goro *Madam Butterfly*, Monostatos *The Magic Flute*, Shepherd *Oedipus Rex* for Scottish Opera; Schoolmaster *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Triquet *Eugene Onegin*, Podestà *La finta giardiniera* for Opera North; Eumaeus *The Return of Ulysses*, Apollo *Orfeo* for ENO; Cat/Milkman *Higglety Pigglety Pop!*, Tchekalinsky *The Queen of Spades*, Marquis *Lulu* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Sir Philip *Owen Wingrave*, Vitek

*The Makropulos Case* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera; Nika Magadoff *The Consul* for Netherlands Opera; Lord Puff *The English Cat* for Alte Oper, Frankfurt and Edinburgh Festival; Solimano *Zaide* for Teatro la Fenice, Venice and Teatro Comunale, Florence; title-role *Oberon* for Opéra de Lyon and Teatro la Fenice, Squeak *Billy Budd* for Grand Théâtre, Geneva. Future plans include Sellem, Father Confessor *Dialogues of the Carmelites* for WNO; Vitek for Glyndebourne Festival Opera.



## Caroline Lamb

*Choreographer*

Studied Dartington College of Arts and London Contemporary Dance School, working now as freelance choreographer, dancer and actor especially working to further the opportunities for Welsh choreographers. Opera choreography includes *Carmen* for Vancouver Opera; *Parsifal*, *La traviata* and *La Favorita* for WNO. Caroline has also worked extensively as a movement director, her most recent work including *Takes Two To Tango*, *Under The Bed*, *The Silver Sword* and *The Secret Seven Save The World*, all for Sherman Theatre, Cardiff. Choreography for TV include *Revival*, *Harvest Moon* for BBC; *Celebration*, *The Gregory Brothers*, *Parti Haf*, *Dawn Cwtwm*, *Y Ferch Dawel*, *Hen Win Yr Wyl* for HTV/SAC. Recent performance work includes two major feature films - *Restoration* and *Amy Foster*. Much of her choreographic work is for her own company Striking Attitudes which is a cross-artform company. This year she is making a large scale work *Three Parts Iced Over* for her company which will premiere at Riverside Studios, London and tour. Future plans include choreographing *Girlzwholikeboyz* for The Sherman Theatre's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, working as presenter for HTV's *Moneyspinners* and lecturing work for *Bodyworks*.



## Donald Maxwell

*Balstrode*

Born Perth, Scotland, studied geography at Edinburgh University. Roles with WNO include Ankarström *Un ballo in maschera*, Shishkov *From the House of the Dead*, title-role *Rigoletto* (all also for Vancouver Opera), Iago *Otello* (also in Nancy, Brussels and Paris), Count *The Marriage of Figaro*, Don Alfonso *Così fan tutte*.

title-role *Falstaff* (also in New York, Milan, Tokyo, Paris, Vienna), Golaud *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Scarpia Tosca*, Pandolfe *Cinderella*, Somarone *Beatrice and Benedict*, Shadbolt *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Nick Shadow *The Rake's Progress* and Sharpless *Madam Butterfly*; Baron Zeta *Die Lustige Witwe*, Bartolo *The Barber of Seville*, Rambaldo *La Rondine* for ROH; title-role *Der fliegende Holländer* for Opera North; title-roles *Wozzeck*, *Falstaff* for ENO; Balstrode in Buenos Aires; Regista *Outis* (Berio) for La Scala, Milan; *Scarpia* for Macau Festival; Rudy Link *The 60<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (world première) Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris. Performs extensively in light music as member of The Music Box. Future plans include Artistic Director of 1999 Buxton Festival, Faninal *Der Rosenkavalier* for ROH and further performances of *Outis* at La Scala, Milan and Théâtre Musical de Paris, Châtelet.



## Stefan Mayer

*Set Designer*

Born Stuttgart, Germany; 1976/77 work-experience at Württembergisches Staatstheater Stuttgart, Germany, studied set-design at Kunstakademie Stuttgart (Jürgen Rose). 1980/81 Assistant Designer in Düsseldorf, Bochum and Zürich; scholarship for lighting design at Yale University, USA. Set designer for production at venues including Frankfurt, Bochum, Düsseldorf, Zürich, Netherlands and New York. 1988-92 Set designer for Stadttheater Freiburg, including collaboration with Jürgen Kruse. 1992-95 Head Set designer at Schauspiel Frankfurt and since 1995 at Schauspielhaus Bochum, Germany (Leander Haußmann). Work includes set design for Volksbühne Berlin; *Wozzeck* (producer: Peter Stein) for Salzburg Festival; *Turandot* for Komische Oper Berlin; and most recently *Ein Sportstück* (producer: Christoph Nel) for Schauspielhaus Hamburg, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (producer: Christine Mielitz) for Volksoper Wien and set-design and producer *Bremer Freiheit* for Schauspielhaus Bochum.



## Charlotte Page

*1<sup>st</sup> Niece*

Studied Royal Academy of Music. Roles include Gretel *Hansel and Gretel* for Welsh National Opera; title-role *La belle Hélène* for Court Opera at Holland Park Theatre and in Brighton,

Adele *Die Fledermaus*, Norina *Don Pasquale* for Crystal Clear Opera; Frasquita *Carmen* for Central Festival Opera; Pamina *Die Zauberflöte* for The Opera Company; Zerlina *Don Giovanni* for Pimlico Opera; *The Roswell Incident* for Music Theatre Wales and Mélisande *Pelléas et Mélisande* for Atelier Lyrique, Orléans; Phyllis *Iolanthe* for D'Oyly Carte Opera; *Gretel* for Opera Northern Ireland; First Niece for ROH in Savonlinna. Other roles include Mi *Das Land des Lächelns*, Flora *The Turn of the Screw*, Despina *Così fan tutte*, Nora *Riders to the sea*, Adina *L'elisir d'amore*, Boy Philip *The Basement Room*, Second Lady *Die Zauberflöte*, Cherubino *Le nozze di Figaro*, Second Witch *Dido and Aeneas*; Yum-Yum *The Mikado* for D'Oyly Carte Opera and a concert tour in Tokyo.



## Carlo Rizzi

*conductor*

Born Milan, studied Milan Conservatoire, Bologna and at Accademia Chigiana in Siena. Musical Director

of WNO since 1992 conducting most recently *Simon Boccanegra*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Fidelio* and *Boris Godunov*. Since his debut in 1982 he has conducted in Italy (including the reopening of Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa), Britain, Australia, France, Germany, The Netherlands and Switzerland. In 1992 debut at ROH with *La Cenerentola*, followed by many others including *Madama Butterfly*, *L'italiana in Algeri*, *Otello* and Donizetti's *Elisabetta* at the Royal Festival Hall. In 1993 Metropolitan Opera, New York debut with *La bohème*. In 1994 debuts with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Brussels and Deutsche



Staatsoper, Berlin with *La traviata*. Most recently *Madame Butterfly* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Turandot* for San Francisco Opera; *Rigoletto* for Opéra Bastille, Paris; *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *La traviata* for Metropolitan Opera. He has recorded *La traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Faust*, *La Cenerentola* and *Un ballo in maschera* with Teldec Classics. Future plans include *Otello* for Netherlands Opera; *Tristan und Isolde* and *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* for WNO.



## Peter Savidge

*Ned Keene*

Born Essex, studied Cambridge and Guildhall School of Music. Roles include Schaumard and Marcello *La bohème*, Falke *Die Fledermaus*, Harlequin *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Figaro *The Barber*

*of Seville*, The Count *The Marriage of Figaro*, Raimbaud *Count Ory*, Alfonso *La Favorita*, Ping *Turandot*, Lieutenant of the Tower *Yeomen of the Guard* and Goryanchikov *From The House of the Dead* for WNO; Ned Keene, Travel Agency Clerk *Death in Venice*, The Baron *Chérubin*, Lescaut *Manon* for ROH; Macheath *The Threepenny Opera*, Giuseppe *The Gondoliers*, Storch *Intermezzo*, Figaro, title-role *Don Giovanni*, Marcello, Danilo, The Count, Nardo, Ned Keene, Valentin *Faust*, Rambaldo *La Rondine*, Zurga *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, Sharpless *Madam Butterfly*, title-role *Eugene Onegin* for Opera North; seven baritone roles in *Death of Venice* for Opéra de Nancy and Liège, Valentin for New Israeli Opera; Figaro for Singapore Opera; Belcore *L'elisir d'amore* for Opéra Comique, Paris; Don Alphonso for Opéra de Nantes, Junius *The Rape of Lucretia* for Montpellier Festival, Don Alfonso *Così fan tutte* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera. Appears frequently on the concert platform. Recordings include Mr Gedge *Albert Herring* for Collins Classic. Future plans include appearances in Strasbourg and Lausanne.

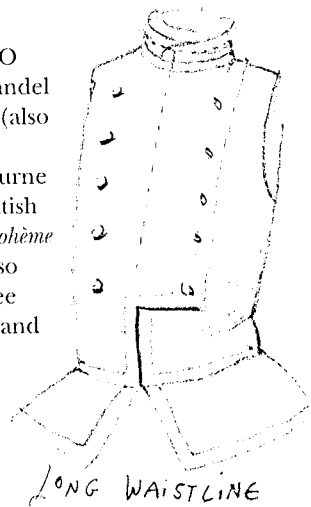


## Julian Smith

*conductor*

Studied Cambridge, WNO debut *Rigoletto*. Became subsequently Chorus Master and Head of Music. Has conducted all the major Puccini operas for WNO: *Manon Lescaut*, *La bohème*, *Tosca*, *Madam Butterfly*, *La fanciulla del West*, *Turandot*. New productions for "bel canto" operas for WNO include *I Puritani*,

*Norma*, *La Sonnambula* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Other operas for WNO include *Otello*, *Falstaff*, *Rodelinda* Handel (also televised), *Tamerlano* Handel (also at Edinburgh Festival). Has also conducted *La bohème* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera and *Norma* for Scottish Opera. Work abroad includes *La bohème* for Australian Opera in Sydney (also on video). Recordings include three recital discs with Suzanne Murphy and the Orchestra of WNO. Has conducted English and Scottish Chamber Orchestras, Bournemouth Sinfonietta and BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Works frequently for TV, has written music for TV and film. He is Music Adviser to the Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, auditioning world-wide to select competitors.



LONG WAISTLINE



## Peter Stein

*Producer*

Born Berlin, studied Frankfurt and Munich. Became Assistant Director at the Munich Kammerspiele in 1964. 1970-85 Artistic Director for Schaubühne in West Berlin. Stein's reputation as one of the world's leading theatrical directors is founded on his 15 years at the Schaubühne. A realist with preference for ensemble acting, he was especially praised for his interpretations of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* (1984), *The Cherry Orchard* (1989) and Racine's *Phedre* (1987). O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* could be seen at National Theatre, London in 1987. Became Director of Theatre at Salzburg Festival in 1991, directing *Julius Caesar* (also at the Edinburgh Festival) and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Returned in 1996 to Edinburgh Festival with *Uncle Vanya*. Directed *Libussa* Grillparzer for the 1997 Salzburg Festival. With *The Cherry Orchard* in 1997 and *Die Ähnlichen* Botho Strauss in 1998 at Edinburgh Festival. Directed *Hamlet* in Moscow in 1998. First opera production *Das Rheingold* 1976 in Paris. Has since directed *Otello*, *Falstaff* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* for WNO, *Moses und Aron* for Netherlands Opera, and *Wozzeck* for the Salzburg Easter Festival.



## Janice Watson

*Ellen Orford*

Studied Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Roles include Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, Pamina *Zauberflöte*, Tatyana *Eugen Onegin*, Adele *Le comte Ory*, Marguerite *Faust* for WNO; Liu *Turandot*, Micaela *Carmen*, Countess Almaviva *The Marriage of Figaro*, Gilda *Rigoletto* and Pamina for ENO; Musetta *La bohème* for ROH; Pamina for Bastille in Paris; Countess Almaviva for Opéra Lyon; Vitellia *La clemenza di Tito* for Flanders Opera; title-roles *Daphne* and *Arabella* at the Santa Fe Festival and for San Francisco Opera. Concert engagements include appearances with the Scottish Chamber, Bournemouth Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Symphony and London Philharmonic Orchestras. Recent engagements include the City of London Sinfonia (Hickox), the Boston Symphony Orchestra (Norrington), the London Symphony Orchestra (Haitink, Chailly) and the London Philharmonic Orchestra (Haitink). Recordings include Ellen Orford for Chandos (receiving Grammy Award) and Helena A *Midsummer Night's Dream* for Philips Classics. Future plans include Ellen Orford for Vienna State Opera and the Netherlands Opera; Micaela for Lyric Opera of Chicago and Metropolitan Opera, New York; Fiordiligi for ENO; title-role *Jenifa* and Eva *Die Meistersinger* for San Francisco Opera.

# Orchestra of Welsh National Opera

## Leader

John Stein

## Assistant Leader

Simon Lewis

## 1st Violins

John Stein  
Jane Atkinson  
Simon Lewis  
Martin Kegelmann  
Robert Tonkin  
Catherine Hings  
Rolette de Montet  
Susan Plessner  
Peter Lilley  
Ruth Bass  
Rachel Maisey  
Roger Foxwell/  
Caroline Clarke

## 2nd Violins

Antony Tarlton  
Donald McNaught  
Laurence Kempton  
Olivia Gribble  
Jill Meredith-Hamer  
Josephine Vos  
Ann Jones  
Lois Westcott  
Luke Roskams  
Marilyn Shewring

## Violas

Philip Heyman  
Margaret Lynch  
Tegwen Jones

## Domini Lipman

Stephen Lloyd  
Louise Brodrick  
Hazel Shaw/  
Geoff York  
Barry Friend/  
Michael Leaver

## Cellos

Dewi Watkins  
Christopher Hodges  
Arthur Davies  
Simon Davison  
Alexandra Robinson  
Andrew Elliott

## Double Basses

John Law  
Mikeal Price  
Mary Condliffe  
Peter Fry  
Simon Phillips

## Flutes

Jonathan Burgess  
Elizabeth May

## Oboes

Murray Johnston  
David Probert

## Clarinets

Leslie Craven  
Peter Fielding

## Bassoons

Stephen Marsden  
Christopher Vale  
Kim Murphy

## Contra Bassoon

Christopher Vale

## Horns

Angus West  
Donald Clist  
David Shillaw  
Ian Russell

## D Trumpet

Dean Wright

## Trumpets

Glenn Coleman  
Martin McHale

## Tenor Trombones

Roger Cutts  
John Hendy

## Bass Trombone

Aneuryn James

## Tuba

Sean O'Neill

## Harp

Meinir Heulyn

## Celeste

Russell Moreton

## Timpani

John Abendstern

## Percussion

Jennifer Rutland  
Philip Girling  
Andrew Cookson

## STAGEBAND

### Violin

Peter Lilley

### Double Bass

Mary Condliffe

### Clarinets

Leslie Craven  
Peter Fielding

### Percussion

Andrew Cookson

### Orchestra and Concerts

#### Manager

Peter Harrap

### Assistant Orchestra and

#### Concerts Manager

Sophie Heppel

### Assistant to Orchestra

#### Management

Peter Lilley

### Orchestra

#### Attendant

Tony Smith

### Pit Manager, Assistant

#### Librarian

Philip Stead

*'The Welsh National is now  
the only opera company in  
Britain of international  
standing. Any chance to see  
it should be taken.'*

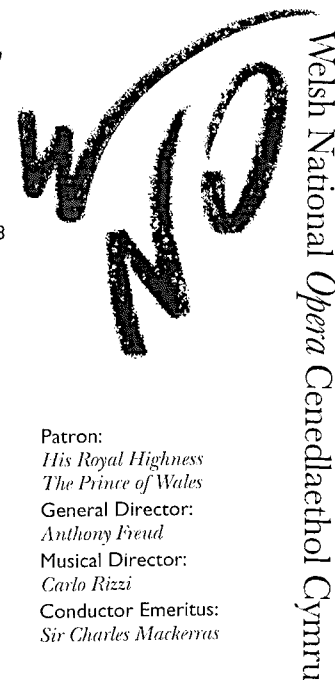
THE DAILY TELEGRAPH, 23 MAY 1998

*'Welsh National Opera...is  
probably, pound for pound,  
Britain's best opera  
company'*

THE TIMES, 13 JUNE 1998

*'...the best opera in the land  
this year came from WNO...  
this is one company that  
really is on the crest of a  
wave.'*

THE GUARDIAN, 30 DECEMBER 1998



## Patron:

*His Royal Highness  
The Prince of Wales*

## General Director:

*Anthony Freud*

## Musical Director:

*Carlo Rizzi*

## Conductor Emeritus:

*Sir Charles Mackerras*

## Welsh National Opera

was founded in 1946 and is a permanent company of 250 people, made up of orchestra, chorus, principal singers, music staff, production, technical and administrative staff. Its aims are:

- **To produce and tour world-class opera**  
WNO exists to produce, perform and tour thrilling and entertaining world-class opera.
- **To break down barriers**  
WNO works to break down barriers in order to reach a large and diverse public combining excellence with accessibility. We work to promote the medium of opera, and to reposition it as a popular, inclusive art form available to all.
- **To develop talent**  
WNO is a dynamic and intergrated ensemble of artists, technicians and administrators bubbling with creative ideas, working to attract, and develop the best artistic talent.

The Company receives many invitations to perform abroad. Within the last ten years visits have been made to New York, Milan, Paris, Tokyo and Wiesbaden, enlarging the Company's international reputation and providing opportunities to promote Wales.

## Chorus of Welsh National Opera

### Chorus Master: Antony Walker

#### Sopranos

Lurelle Alefounder  
Margaret Baiton  
Paula Bradbury  
Mary Davies  
Alexandra Hann  
Rosie Hay  
Yolande Jones  
Anna Margolis  
Margaret Morgan  
Nicola Morgan

#### Mezzos

Dorothy Hood  
Patricia Ann Hughes  
Helen Knight  
Fiona Lamont  
Marion McCullough  
Norma Millar  
Anne Morgan  
Sarah Pope  
Valerie Seymour  
Susan Vaughan-Jones

### Assistant Chorus Master: Graham Jackson

#### Tenors

Michael Clifton-  
Thompson  
Philip Daggett  
Ieuan Davies  
Paul Gyton  
Charles Lewis  
Philip Lloyd Holtam  
Ralph Mason  
Osvaldo Valente  
Gary Watkins  
Dewi Wyn

#### Basses

John Gilbert  
Ralph Hamer  
John King  
Philip Lloyd-Evans  
Peter Massocchi  
James Miller-Coburn  
Jack O'Kelly  
Gareth Rhys- Davies  
David Tagg  
Owen Webb

## EXTRA CHORUS

#### Sopranos

Cheryl Edwards  
Nicola Hollyman  
Rhian Owen  
Edith Pritchard  
Rachel-Louise  
Stonehouse

#### Mezzos

Amy Black  
Molly Pope  
Judith Tinston  
Kate Woolveridge

#### Tenors

Mark Cartwright  
Michael Clarke  
Robert King  
James Lewington  
Gareth Lloyd

#### Basses

Ashley Bremner  
Alun Jenkins  
Geraint Miles  
Michael Pearn  
Timothy Rhys-Evans

# Welsh National Youth Opera

WNYO offers an on-going programme of active involvement in all aspects of opera for young people between the ages of 16 - 21 years. Forty youngsters from our Cardiff and Swansea branches of Youth Opera performed an adaptation of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* in WNO's Orchestra Hall. They were accompanied by members of the WNO orchestra. Here are some of their comments:

## Richard Pollock - Onegin

It seemed impossible. How was a small company to stage such a complex work as *Eugene Onegin* in only seven days? Could young minds and voices provide the energy and stamina necessary to convey the sensation of the opera to such a select audience?

I certainly began with doubts - this being my first opera - but the total dedication, strength of teamwork and wealth of raw talent within the group produced performances which no one could discredit. The flexible directions from Harry allowed the performers to show their individuality and personal interpretations of the characters.

I looked towards the ambiguity of Onegin. Why does he so coldly reject Tatyana's adoration and taunt his friend Lensky so unnecessarily? Is his love for Tatyana to receive the favour of the court as she suspects or has the killing of Lensky truly awoken his heart to new emotion?

To have the chance to examine a character so closely and integrate it with the other principals allowed me to learn a great deal not only musically but dramatically. The personal and group achievement was tremendous - enough for me to consider an operatic career.

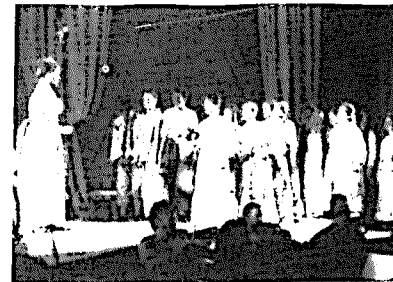
## Elizabeth Donovan - Tatyana

Since joining the group in September 1996, WNYO has continued to develop my interest in the performing arts and music theatre in particular, convincing me to pursue a career in opera by auditioning for a place at music college. After small roles in previous youth opera productions, I auditioned and got the part of Tatyana. I was



thrilled when I found out and felt that my efforts had been rewarded after learning all ten pages of the audition piece. Throughout the week we were treated and worked like professionals. There were times when I didn't think I could cope vocally but with constant support and commitment from the Youth Opera staff I managed to survive.

The highlight of the week for me was the sitzprobe. To sing with members of WNO's own orchestra accompanying us was a real treat and brought the music to life. I can't describe how I felt each night when I first walked onto the stage, and how I felt each night as I walked off - memories that I'll cherish for the rest of my life, and the same mix of feelings that will return with every opera that I hopefully perform in the future. But, the best thing is to know that I can return from college each year and do it all again.



## Katherine Allen - Olga

I was delighted to end my second year in the group by playing the role of Olga in our production of *Eugene Onegin*. It was my first role in a full-scale production and I particularly enjoyed developing the character of Olga, initially in my own music lessons, and then alongside other members of the company with the help of the WNYO staff. I found that the whole process became more and more exciting as the week progressed when we began working with the set, costumes, lighting and orchestra.

The experience was especially rewarding as our rehearsal period closely resembled the structure of the rehearsals as followed by a professional company. Experiencing the way an opera is rehearsed from the very beginning has given me an idea of what it is like to work within the field. We were also given the chance to visit other departments as part of the project. I worked on gaining sponsorship for the production with another group member which broadened my knowledge of what happens 'behind the scenes'. I was even able to put my A level Welsh to good use when I made my Welsh television debut for S4C's coverage of the opera!

The support we received from our group leaders was fantastic and I am grateful for such a brilliant opportunity to gain invaluable experience with a world class company. I am already looking forward to next year.

The WNYO production of *Eugene Onegin* was funded by Farmers and Dairymen Ltd.

Photos by Hugh John

# The Welsh National Opera Business Alliance

'Value for everyone'

The WNO Business Alliance was launched with the aim of creating a network of supporting companies in the cities to which Welsh National Opera regularly tours and so that education and community work could be developed nationally and locally. In return for support WNO offers Alliance members benefits that range from priority booking and corporate hospitality of the highest quality to association with special events in the community and discounted, or free, offers to opera performances and concerts for employees.

- *Standard Membership* - provides access to three evenings at the opera each year, the chance to support WNO's community & education work, employee benefits, as well as an annual business lunch;
- *Group Membership* provides companies with the opportunity to enjoy Standard Membership benefits in up to six of the regional Alliance groups. This level also offers access to our London performances;
- *Premier Membership* - provides the closest relationship with WNO, offering six evenings at the opera a year, the chance to support WNO's community & education work, employee benefits, an annual business lunch, as well as the opportunity to sponsor an evening's performance at half price;
- *Associate Membership* - provides the opportunity to support philanthropically.

**Alliance members are listed here and we are grateful to them all.**

## Premier Members

British Steel plc, Burges Salmon, Cogent Elliott Ltd, The Principality

## Standard Members

Albert E Sharp  
Bank of Wales Plc  
Barclays Cymru/Wales  
British Gas Wales/Cymru Home Energy  
British Telecom  
Cabletel  
Castle Leisure Ltd  
Chesilvale Ltd  
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Lloyds Bank Wales and West Region  
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Midland Bank  
Morgan Cole Solicitors  
Natwest Cymru/Wales  
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Richard Morgan & Company Limited  
Rowley Dickinson  
Rubery Owen Holdings Ltd  
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Swalec  
Symonds Group  
TACP Consultancy  
Willis Cronn

If you would like to know more about the Welsh National Opera Business Alliance, please contact Fiona Corridan, Development Department, Telephone 01222 464666

# Welsh National Opera Sponsors and Supporters

The organisations listed here have all come into a close relationship with the Company in the last twelve months and are making a crucial contribution to our financial stability.

## Core Funding

GARFIELD WESTON FOUNDATION, THE ERNEST COOK TRUST, THE JOHN ELLERMAN FOUNDATION, THE JOHN COATES CHARITABLE TRUST, JENOUR FOUNDATION, THE MILLICHOPE FOUNDATION, G C GIBSON CHARITABLE SETTLEMENT, JOSEPH STRONG FRAZER TRUST, THE ESMÉE FAIRBAIRN CHARITABLE TRUST, THE INVERFORTH CHARITABLE TRUST, MOORES FAMILY CHARITY FOUNDATION, THE HEADLEY TRUST, LEONARD CHADWICK CHARITABLE TRUST

## New Productions

FRIENDS OF WNO, *Billy Budd* 1998  
PRUDENTIAL CORPORATION PLC, *La clemenza di Tito* 1997  
ATLANTIC PLASTICS LIMITED, *The Coronation of Poppea* 1997/8  
AMOCO (UK) EXPLORATION COMPANY, *Hansel and Gretel* 1998

## Seasons on Tour

AMOCO (UK) EXPLORATION COMPANY, All London Festivals of Opera  
MANWEB PLC, Llandudno Summer 1998

## Concerts & Concert Tours

TESCO, National Concert Tour of Wales 1997, 1998, 1999  
HTV, 3 Concert Series Cardiff 1998  
PALSER GROSSMAN, Cardiff Free Open Air Concert 1998  
ST DAVID, Cardiff Open Air Concert 1998  
FIRST HYDRO, Caernarfon Castle Concert 1998  
WALES TOURIST BOARD, Caernarfon Castle Concert 1998  
WELSH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, Caernarfon Castle Concert 1998  
PETER MOORES FOUNDATION, National Opera Studio Residency & Concert 1999

## Performances

3M UNITED KINGDOM PLC, BRITISH STEEL PLC, COUTTS & CO, KPMG, GROSVENOR WATERSIDE, LLOYDS BANK PLC, LAND AUTHORITY FOR WALES, ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS HOLDINGS PLC, SENIOR ENGINEERING

## Education and Community

CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION, THE PAUL HAMLYN FOUNDATION, THE ATLANTIC FOUNDATION, THE GWYNETH MOXON CHARITABLE TRUST, FOUNDATION FOR SPORT AND THE ARTS, ELF OIL, STENA LINE LIMITED, NATWEST INVESTMENTS, MARKS & SPENCER, BURGESS SALMON, MANWEB, PETER AND BABS THOMAS, FARMERS & DAIRYMEN, THE DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES MEMORIAL FUND, AMOCO (UK) EXPLORATION COMPANY, WNO BUSINESS ALLIANCE.

## Support in Kind

COGENT ADVERTISING, PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS, BOWRINGS, WALES IN LONDON, PHOENIX DIGITAL



First Hydro is an award winner under the Pairing Scheme for its support of Welsh National Opera's Caernarfon Castle Concert. The Pairing Scheme is a Government Scheme managed by ABSA (Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts).

## Working in the Community and with Young People



Luke Goss, composer, with pupils from Ysgol Pendalar, Special School, Caernarfon, at a percussion workshop.

Accessibility is one of Welsh National Opera's fundamental priorities and the Community and Education Department runs a comprehensive programme of activities which allows both young people and adults to discover the magic of opera. Workshops in schools, residencies, talks, lectures and full scale community opera projects are all included and with this outreach programme and special marketing initiatives we hope to access as many sections of the community as possible. The work of the department is supported by business and by trusts and foundations, most recently **The Paul Hamlyn Foundation** for the overall programme.

### Workshops and projects in schools

WNO's Schools Education Officers runs a programme of work alongside the main scale tour. The aim is to organise opera education projects in primary and secondary schools that relate to the attainment criteria set out in the National Curriculum for music, drama and, where appropriate, design. All projects involve close liaison with class teachers to ensure that the work is fully integrated and most include a number of visits to each school, providing a greater depth of experience for the pupils and teachers and ensuring long term benefits for the school. WNO chorus and orchestra members are included as often as possible in the projects.

Projects linked to WNO's productions of, *Hansel and Gretel* and *La bohème* are being planned for secondary and primary schools during the Autumn and Spring terms. Operakit is a new project for primary schools using a new work commissioned by the Education Department and is funded by the **Foundation for Sport and the Arts**. The children, aged 9, 10 and 11 will rehearse and

perform with professionals whilst developing their own music and design concepts. Support from the **Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund** will enable us to mount the project in our touring cities over the next 18 months. This autumn the project will take place in a primary school in Birmingham.

### Peter Grimes

A three day course open to young people in South Wales, aged 16-25 is being organised in conjunction with the Education Department at the New Theatre, Cardiff. The youngsters will be able to apply for one of the 25 places on the course, which will be held in February 1999 at Llanofor Hall Arts Centre, Cardiff.

### Welsh National Youth Opera

The Department has established a project for young people, growing from a pilot scheme in Cardiff, entitled Welsh National Youth Opera. It offers the opportunity to learn the skills of writing and performing as well as providing the platform for taking part in productions. The Youth Opera has a strong link with the main company and allows members the chance to meet and work with internationally known performers and production staff. WNO has obtained funding from the Arts for All Lottery Grants (ACW) to continue the scheme in Cardiff and Swansea. We are seeking additional funding to set up the scheme in other touring venues.

### G.N.V.Q.

WNO is participating in the Performing Arts and Entertainment Industries G.N.V.Q. National Programme. A two day course was held for G.N.V.Q. teachers, based on specific G.N.V.Q. units. Through practical and participatory activities, the teachers explored the process of planning and putting on a production with guidance from WNO staff. The first student workshops took place in March focusing on artistic planning, marketing and development.

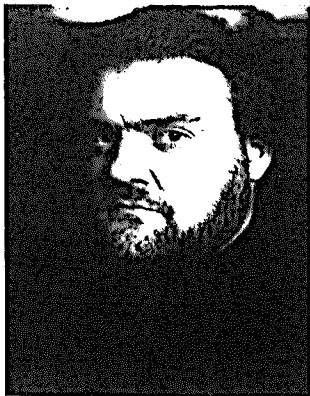
### Family Days and the Touring Exhibition

An Arts for All Award from **J Sainsbury plc** has enabled WNO to create and tour an interactive exhibition which can go to places impossible for the main company to reach. The award also allows WNO to go into the outlying areas of the main touring cities with a one day free family workshop. We invite up to 70 people to create their own opera through music, drama and design. No experience is necessary and the workshop is open to absolutely everyone. If you would like more information on the work of the Community and Education Department please contact us on 01222 464666 for a copy of our Newsletter.

|                       |                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Berwyn Davies</b>  | Head of Community and Education |
| <b>Joanne Bromley</b> | Community and Education Officer |
| <b>Harry McIver</b>   | Community and Education Officer |
| <b>Richard Steer</b>  | Opera Kit Administrator         |

Mae uned Addysg a'r Gymuned yn awyddus i ddatblygu ei waith trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf, rydyn wedi cynnal nifer o brosiectau dwyieithog llwyddiannus yng ngogledd orllewin Cymru. Mae parhau a'r polisi hwn a defnyddio Cymry Cymraeg y cwmmi a staff allanol sy'n siarad Cymraeg yn rhan o amcanion yr uned. Os hoffech fwy o wybodaeth, cysylltwch a Berwyn Davies yn yr uned Addysg a'r Gymuned.

# The Welsh National Opera Partnership



*"Together we can  
make opera"*

Founding Patron, Bryn Terfel

Members of the Welsh National Opera *Partnership* enjoy a very close relationship with the Company and the *Partnership Fund* supports a new production for the Company each year, most recently the acclaimed *Jenufa* in 1998

Founded in 1994, the *WNO Partnership* was seen as a vehicle for encouraging philanthropic gifts to the Company from individuals who felt strongly about supporting the future of opera. Since then it has become clear that this special group has a role within the Company which is more important than ever envisaged. Its members really care about WNO and work to promote its reputation as a world class opera company.

Membership levels start from £300pa and are given as charitable donations to WNO, enabling additional sums to be reclaimed from the Inland Revenue.

Another way to help us to continue to provide opera for future generations, is by remembering WNO in your will. Legacies can enable us to work with the young and disadvantaged, develop the careers of talented young singers, and assist in maintaining the Company's high artistic standards through investment in the ensemble of the chorus and orchestra and new productions. We are happy to meet anyone who *has* made, or wishes to consider making a legacy to WNO.

If you would like more information about legacies, joining the *Partnership* or making a donation to WNO, please contact:

Amanda McMurray, Development Department, Welsh National Opera  
John Street, Cardiff, CF1 4SP  
Tel. 01222 464666 Fax. 01222 461139

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## Friends of Welsh National Opera

The Friends of WNO organisation was formed in 1974 to support the work of Welsh National Opera and encourage the general public's appreciation of opera. There are now over 4,000 committed supporters, who are greatly valued by the Company. Friends' Branches throughout England and Wales, supported by the Friends' Office at WNO Headquarters, organise events, talks, parties and opera trips to WNO and other companies. Sponsorship of new productions is a vital part of the Friends' activities and over the past eleven years they have raised in excess of £350,000 for this purpose. *Billy Budd* was the ninth new production sponsored by the Friends. They have now embarked on a round of fund-raising for their next sponsored production *Così fan tutte*.

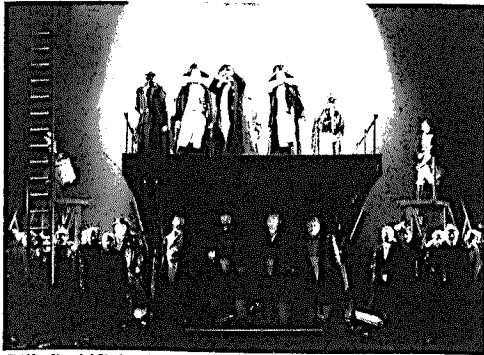


Photo: Bill Cooper

*Billy Budd* Principals and Chorus of WNO.

Membership privileges include:

- Priority booking for WNO performances
- Free advance mailing of booking information
- Magazine mailings prior to each season
- Open dress rehearsals
- Social events with members of the Company
- Branch activities which include a range of educational and social activities
- Discount on recordings sold at WNO stalls

### MEMBERSHIP CHARGES:

(figures in brackets represent concessionary prices for Senior Citizens, Under 25s and UB40s.)

GROUP 1: areas centred around Cardiff, Bristol, Birmingham, Oxford, London and Southampton - Single £20 (£15) Joint £25 (£20)

GROUP 2: areas centred around Swansea, Liverpool, Llandudno and Leicester - Single £15 (£10) Joint £20 (£15)

For further information please contact Maureen Lawrence, Friends' Administrator, John Street, Cardiff CF1 4SP.  
Tel (01222) 464666 ext. 306/161 (answerphone).

## Cardiff Theatrical Services Ltd

*from a fishing trawler for Cardiff Bay to Madam Butterfly in Japan.....*

The opening of the Leisure Complex at Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff. Tarmac Building Ltd.



Photo: Graham Matthews

Cardiff Theatrical Services is a wholly owned subsidiary of Welsh National Opera, offering a wide range of production skills to the entertainment industry in the UK and abroad. Based in Cardiff within easy reach of the M4 and Cardiff Central Station this first class facility incorporates metal fabrication, welding, joinery, engineering, painting, carving and set dressing.

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For further details of the services CTS has to offer please contact:

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General Manager  
Cardiff Theatrical Services Ltd  
Unit 1, The 125 Business Park  
Off Tyndall Street  
CARDIFF  
CF1 5BP

Tel: 01222 499977  
Fax: 01222 481275

*Madam Butterfly*-Tokyu Bankamura Inc., Japan  
Designer: Ralph Kohai



## WNO Restaurant

The WNO Restaurant is situated in the Princess of Wales Building, John Street, Cardiff.

As well as being open to the public for lunch on weekdays from 12.30pm - 2.00pm, it is also available for evening conferences, meetings, parties, receptions etc, and has a licensed bar.

For booking information contact David Wood on 01222 464666.

## Room Hire

Rooms are available for hire for rehearsals and auditions etc.

For further details contact Jenni Jones on 01222 464666.

## Board of Directors

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## Theatre Information

1. The management reserves the right to change the cast or the performance in the event of any unforeseen circumstances.
2. Smoking is not permitted in the auditorium.
3. If you are unfortunate enough to arrive late, you may not be permitted into the auditorium until the interval or a suitable break in the performance.
4. Both photography and the use of tape recorders are prohibited in the theatre.
5. Details of local safety requirements are available on request from the theatre managements in each building.

## The Arts Councils



## Local Authority Contributors to Welsh National Opera

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Welsh National Opera is a Registered Charity No.221538  
Programme edited by Simon Rees

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# Welsh National Opera Cenedlaethol Cymru



## Cavalleria rusticana & Pagliacci

Sung in Italian with English surtitles *Mascagni / Leoncavallo*  
Conductor Julian Smith/Carlo Rizzi Producer Elijah Moshinsky

## Tristan und Isolde

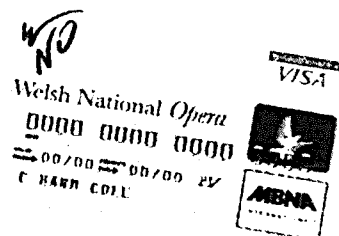
Sung in German with English surtitles *Wagner*  
Conductor Carlo Rizzi Producer Yannis Kokkos

## The Magic Flute

Sung in English *Mozart*  
Conductor Jean-Yves Ossonce/Anthony Negus Original Production Göran Järvefelt

|                               |                |                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Cardiff New Theatre           | 01222 87 88 89 | 4 May - 5 June   |
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| Birmingham Hippodrome         | 0121 622 7486  | 22 - 26 June     |
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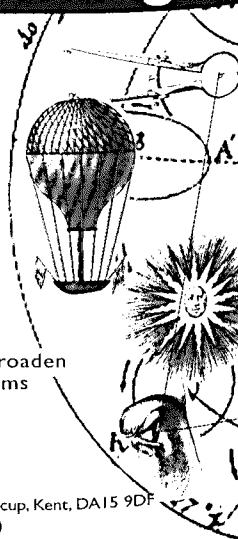
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FRIDAY 2 APRIL 2.00PM

## Good Friday St Matthew Passion

Bach Choir

English Chamber Orchestra

David Hill Director

Neil Jenkins Evangelist

Gerald Finley Christus

Jennifer Smith soprano

Richard Edgar-Wilson tenor

Sarah Fryer contralto

Stephen Roberts bass

The Bach Choir return to Symphony Hall, with new conductor David Hill, for their annual Good Friday performance of Bach's sublime and epic masterpiece.

The performance will end around 6.00pm and there will be an extended interval between the two parts into which the work falls during which refreshments may be enjoyed in the foyers of Symphony Hall.

MONDAY 24 MAY 7.30PM

A spectacular Venetian reconstruction

## Lo Sposalizio

The 1600 Ceremonial wedding of Venice to the Adriatic

The Kings Consort

The Choir of King's Consort

Robert King Conductor

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