CHARLES WUORINEN 1938–2020

HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES

LIBRETTO BY JAMES FENTON

HEATHER BUCK soprano
STEPHEN BRYANT bass–baritone
MATTHEW DI BATTISTA tenor
DAVID SALSBERRY FRY bass
BRIAN GIEBLER tenor
WILBUR PAULEY bass
MICHELLE TRAINOR soprano
NEAL FERREIRA tenor
HEATHER GALLAGHER mezzo-soprano
CHARLES BLANDY tenor
AARON ENGBRETH baritone
THOMAS OESTERLING tenor
STEVEN GOLDSTEIN tenor

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT AND CHORUS Gil Rose, conductor

DISC 1 (80:54)

ACT I

[1] Scene 1 In the Sad City of Alifbay 10:42
[2] Scene 2 A Story 2:20
[3] Scene 3 Enter Two Men 7:11
[4] Scene 4 On the Road 3:17
[5] Scene 5 To the Valley of K 1:16
[6] Scene 6 In the Dark 0:33
[7] Scene 7 In the Valley of K 2:25
[8] Scene 8 Meeting Mr. Buttoo 2:59
[9] Scene 9 The Floating Gardens 7:58
[10] Scene 10 On the Houseboat 2:28
[12] Scene 12 The Story Tap 9:38
[13] Scene 13 Flying to the Moon 3:05
[14] Scene 14 Wishwater 5:37
[15] Scene 15 The Story He Drank 1:56
[16] Scene 16 Flying to Gup City 9:17
[17] Scene 17 War is Declared 7:08

DISC 2 (52:35)

ACT II

[1] Scene 1 Rescue the Princess! 6:59
[2] Scene 2 To the Twilight Strip 7:30
[4] Scene 4 They Were Being Pulled Slowly Forwards 12:47
[5] Scene 5 Meanwhile, at the Citadel of Chup 5:39
[6] Scene 6 At the Door of P2C2E House 5:29
[7] Scene 7 Mr. Buttoo’s Rally 4:33
[8] Scene 8 Back Home 2:14
[9] Scene 9 Haroun Wakes in His Bedroom at Dawn 3:46
By Mark Lamos

FILLING THE SEA OF STORIES

I can’t quite remember how I came to direct the premiere of Haroun and the Sea of Stories, though I was thrilled to be asked, and I was eager to work with Charles Wuorinen, whose music I very much admired. I came aboard early in the composing process, which is always exciting for a stage director on a new opera. And as a fan of James Fenton’s, when he agreed to write the libretto—in rhyming verse, no less (Salman’s book is in prose), I sensed the piece would have strong “bones” which Charles could write to, and which I could stage with some assurance. James, Charles, and I discussed in very general terms how much we loved the book and what we felt the libretto needed to relate, since the book is picaresque and chock full of incident, detail, and surprises.

The finished libretto almost immediately inspired Charles to commence composition, and I was happy that James was able so deftly to mirror the novel’s many tones, especially its playfulness and wistfulness. As I read it, images tumbled into my head, so I began collaboration with the superb design team: Riccardo Hernandez on sets, Candace Donnelly on costumes, and Robert Wierzel on lighting. It was a blessing that we’d worked together before and so had a shorthand and an ease together. Projection designer Peter Nigrini joined us as a newcomer and blended right in to the flow of ideas, images, and deeply dramaturgical thoughts the designers had about the novel. None of them had heard the score yet—Charles was still working on it—but we had the libretto and the novel in hand, and this generated enough ideas to get us going. The research was a joy to do; we could use it to give free reign to our fancies, and we were determined to fill the stage with color and exuberance and texture. India! Fantasy!
Periodically I’d be invited to visit Charles and he would play what he’d composed so far. I enjoyed these get-togethers. He proved easy-going, opinionated, and very witty. Ribald too—especially when we uncorked the gin and vermouth and made liberal martinis. We had a running joke: he’d play a passage for me, and I’d yell, “Tunes, Wuorinen! Give me tunes!” And without missing a beat or a note, he’d continue banging out cascades of non-tonal, rhythmically challenging music and yell, “I don’t do tunes!”

Salman was living mostly in New York City and still under the threat of fatwā, so there was something that felt revolutionary in making a piece adapted from and inspired by his work. As I recall, he was impossible to reach; he had to remain hidden. I was dying to talk with him, though—we all were. Well, Howard (Charles’s partner) called me one day and said, “Salman is coming to lunch, you must join us.” As I approached their home, I noticed (being an inveterate consumer of espionage and detective novels) a group of workmen doing ... something ... to the front steps. Mostly, they were watching me as I approached. They’d not been there before, and by this time I’d become a relatively frequent visitor to Charles’s and Howard’s home. They looked at me suspiciously as I, looking suspiciously at them, slowed down. Were they waiting to snatch Salman away before he could get inside, I wondered. (The fatwā had inspired a good deal of worry, tension, and indeed fear all ’round. It seemed very brave of Salman to venture out.) I noticed a gleaming black sedan parked right in front of the house, as well. Its motor purred but the windows were black, so whoever was inside was invisible.

Charles, Howard, and I waited. And waited some more. Finally the doorbell rang, and there he was. We shared a delightful lunch, and he was clearly thrilled that the opera was going to come about. He hoped somehow to be able to attend, but at that time it seemed doubtful.

Charles, Howard, and I waited. And waited some more. Finally the doorbell rang, and there he was. We shared a delightful lunch, and he was clearly thrilled that the opera was going to come about. He hoped somehow to be able to attend, but at that time it seemed doubtful. The lunch was collegial, and I was particularly happy to note that the mysterious workmen on the steps were gone by the time Salman had to depart. Another black car whisked him away.

The score, like the libretto, was completed on time, and New York City Opera, as usual, had fielded a stunning array of young, eager, attractive singers who came to the first rehearsal note—and word—perfect. The score is exceptionally challenging, as you will hear. When I told the veteran mezzo Joyce Castle of my admiration for the cast’s perfection, she nodded knowingly and said, “That’s how American singers are. Europeans,” she sniffed, “... aren’t! They take a lot of boring time to learn everything.”

I enjoyed rehearsing the piece, and scenes staged themselves with relative swiftness, thanks to my wonderful assistant David Grabarkewitz and the crack NYCO production team, who kept us neatly on schedule. The wonderful Heather Buck, pitch perfect as a sublime Haroun, led a cast of singing actors who went out of their way to capture the absurdity and energy of the creatures and the people in the opera.

When costumes, set, projections, and lighting came into the process, Charles seemed very happy. The final thrill came on opening night at the State Theater when, almost unexpectedly, Salman himself stepped onstage to join all of us taking a bow. The packed audience and everyone involved in making the piece roared with joy at his appearance. Tears flowed too, I recall.

I hope this recording will bring further life to Haroun. It richly deserves many revivals.

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Mark Lamos directed the world premiere production of Haroun and the Sea of Stories at New York City Opera in 2004.
By Clifton Ingram

To read Haroun and the Sea of Stories is to start in the middle of things, albeit not in classical *in medias res* as many literary warhorses do. (Think: Homer’s *Odyssey*, “The Three Apples” from *Arabian Nights*, or Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, where we must rely on the story-within-the-story to learn about our characters’ experiences.) *Haroun* does begin *ab ovo* ("from the egg"), from the beginning of the story, in a more or less traditional way. But storytelling can be tricky enough when told start-to-finish. *Haroun*’s reliance on nested narratives allows the stories-within-the-story to echo and reinforce each other, ultimately resonating their meaning to stronger effect. For example, here’s one way to parse our young hero’s interconnected goals throughout the narrative:

In order for our young hero Haroun to save his family, he must first restore his father’s Gift of Gab.

In order to save his father (restore his power and confidence), Haroun must save the Land of K from the corrupt politician Snooty Buttoo.

In order to save the Land of K, Haroun must first find and save the Sea of Stories (thereby restoring his father’s storytelling ability to defeat Snooty Buttoo).
In order to restore the Sea of Stories, Haroun must travel to the Land of Chup and defeat the Prince of Silence, Khattam-Shud.

Simple, right? Maybe not. There is a holistic quality in how the nested narratives—the adventures within the adventure—are joined and layered. They rely on each other for the final victory of storytelling—in the end, they must defeat Khattam-Shud, as the telling of this defeat is what ultimately defeats Snooty Buttoo, not to mention the home-wrecking Mr. Sengupta—which is more a triumph of effect and feeling than any logical conclusion to the story. Here, the *deus ex machina* that saves the day is the act of storytelling itself, which is both a whimsical notion and somehow plausible in an abstract sense. It is not so much about following every twist and turn of the plot, but about the fun to be had with the optimistic openness of a child protagonist along the way. Even more simply put, Haroun’s adventures do not need to make sense to be meaningful—even if the novel does both, in its own way.

No doubt, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a tale about storytelling. Salman Rushdie’s very choice of title emphatically hits home that this is one of “those” meta-narratives, a heady “story-about-the-nature-of-stories” story. And there is much going on in and behind the text and throughout the libretto of James Fenton’s deft adaptation of Rushdie’s 1990 novel. It is a veritable verbal playground for an experienced composer like Charles Wuorinen to set an opera. But for all its adult depth, Rushdie’s novel reads more like a children’s fairytale—why? Indeed, the literary atmosphere of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is saturated with tongue-in-cheek punning, intertextual tips-of-the-hat, and all-around whimsical wordplay. It is the kind of bookishly clever storytelling that reminds us of those childhood chimeras—like Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* or Norton Juster’s *The Phantom Tollbooth*—the ones that we revisit out of nostalgia as adults, only to find a familiar fantastic landscape from our sepia-tinged memories rife with previously missed meanings, often of surprisingly mature content, in contemporary technicolor.

One point here is that the reading (and re-reading) of the story changes the story itself, that by the very act of reading we are always—already inadvertently projecting ourselves into the text. Another point is that seemingly benign “literary nonsense” can easily prove to be quite the opposite. The textual reversals and inversions of reality’s grey heaviness often end up carrying their own special weightless seriousness. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* does so by means of faulty cause-and-effect, madcap misappropriation and misunderstanding, new-fangled neologism, and pantomime-like portmanteau. *Haroun* is a message in a bottle for growing minds: the type of Disney or Pixar-esque animated romp that we would call “fun for all ages.” But beyond the simple pleasures of the text, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* contains all the ingredients necessary for a good parody or satire—and can be easily read as one, as seems to be Fenton’s and Wuorinen’s desire in shaping their opera.

But this is all really just to say that *Haroun* is about the multi-faceted power that stories hold. Their imagination-fueled potency of possibility is activated not only by the telling of the tale, but also by its reception. Haroun’s own nemesis, the nefariously despotich Khaattam-Shud, speaks to this power during his explanation for poisoning the Sea of Stories with all the twisted arch logic expected of a James Bond villain. According to this Arch-Enemy of All Stories, the world is not meant for entertainment and imagination, for Fun. Instead, Khaattam-Shud believes, “The world is for controlling. Inside every single story, there lies a world, a story world, that I cannot rule at all.” Khaattam-Shud, like a true tyrant, fears that which he cannot control. This is not surprising, of course; as Rashid Khalifa tells his son Haroun, Khaattam-Shud “is the Prince of Silence and the Foe of Speech … And so at the end of everything we use his name. We say: it is finished. It is over. Khaattam-Shud: The End.” Haroun’s father is describing a rigid and humorless fundamentalism in regard to the telling and interpretation of the very stories that the autocratic villain seeks to eliminate. This illuminates perhaps a more significant element about cultural storytelling: how important the stories we are allowed to tell is to culture-creation. And make no mistake, *Haroun* was written in the face of much oppression for Rushdie.
The value of freedom of expression to society is ultimately being examined in *Haroun*. This freedom determines how we as witnesses are able to access the different meanings of our own lives by proxy, literally or otherwise. After all, ultimately this freedom determines what we share and learn from each other. And so, perhaps the dominant thrust of this fanciful tale is that the more types of stories we have, the more bountiful we are able to find our lives' meanings. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* then becomes about what music critic Peter G. Davis aptly describes as “free imagination trapped in a world of oppressive thought control.” Through this lens, *Haroun* is a tale about the triumph of imagination over autocracy.

The steadfast composer Charles Wuorinen, who has remained loyal to 12-tone serialism for much of his long career, had the following to say about his writing the *Haroun* opera and staying true to the original novel:

“I wanted to try to emulate the character of the book and have it both ways. I mean, in the world of serious music, there’s a very strong populist push these days, and that’s something that I want no part of, but that fact doesn’t need to get in the way of pure entertainment.”

Wuorinen’s devotion to the serial technique is in some ways a political one, as serialism is all too often considered an overly academic and “unmusical” invention of early 20th-century atonal pioneers. Using serialism therefore might seem contradictory to some as a means to write an opera about the triumph of freedom of expression. But for Wuorinen the tried-and-true technique seems more a means of salvation, as it necessitates a constant innovation of his craft, a way for the composer to avoid the too easily consumable, of getting stuck in a rut. And Wuorinen’s contempt for “populist” neo-Romanticism is very much on record. In this light, Wuorinen’s setting a whimsical story like *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* with the 12-tone method feels like a thrown gauntlet, a challenge to those that would dictate another’s artistic and creative choices—a statement that “I’m doing it my way,” regardless of a music scene’s political pressures.

For all its constant shifting of textures and densities, we can easily find the holistic in the opera. The role of the tyrannical Khattam-Shud is by no coincidence also sung by the same tenor that performs Mr. Sengupta, the clerk who has stolen Soraya (Haroun’s mother) away from Rashid and family. The story’s ultimate villain, who aims to destroy the Sea of Stories, is the same as the more worldly villain that has come between Haroun’s parents and sent Rashid into a powerless depression at the start of the drama. With their many echoes and parallelisms, the nested narratives of *Haroun* contain their own allegorical tale for the reader to find and use.

The most important nested narrative of all is the context in which Salman Rushdie wrote his fourth novel — that is, the narrative of Rushdie’s own private life and how it is interconnected with the already-nested stories of *Haroun*. For those not as familiar with Rushdie’s work, the Bombay–born author was launched into literary success with his second novel, *Midnight’s Children* (1981), which won the Booker Prize with its uniquely sci-fi blend of the Sea of Stories is kaleidoscopically opulent at times, never resting long on one idea, full of energy and hopefulness for the possibility around the next corner, much like its youthful protagonist. The restless music is charged with what the composer finds so attractive about Rushdie’s novel, “an admirable absence of self-pity and bitterness … a social and political message against people who want to shut everyone up and strangle the imagination.” And in the same way that the whole is greater than a recognition of its parts in following the plot of *Haroun*, Wuorinen suggests that the opera’s ever-mutating maximalist effect is more important than locating the music’s internal logic: ‘There is a [pitch-class] set underneath, though if anyone can find it, I’ll give them a cigar. The overarching shape ultimately was given to me by the drama.’ Wuorinen’s explanation sounds a bit like Iff the Water Genie’s explanation of P2C2E (Processes Too Complicated to Explain) to Haroun. Iff’s message here might be that there are things that cannot be explained, that a steadfast hope for experience to show the way might be the best option—a subliminal message to Rushdie’s own son for the struggles ahead.

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magical realism with postcolonial and historical fictions. This combination creates a type of fiction that speaks truths about the reality that it is altering, and paradoxically it does so through this very artifice, as the fantastic fabrications are at the very root from which the fiction diverges from reality in the first place.

In February of 1989, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwā due to controversy regarding Rushdie’s third novel, The Satanic Verses, forcing the author into hiding for fear of his life (he would remain in hiding until 1998). The strain would prove enough to divide his family (like Haroun’s family is divided). A few years after the publishing of Haroun in 1990, Rushdie would be divorced from his second wife, American novelist Marianne Wiggins. It seems Rushdie wished to explain this unfortunate change in the family’s circumstances to his then 11-year-old son Zafar through the novel. Indeed, Haroun is based on the type of stories that Rushdie would improvise for Zafar at bath and bed times. In this way, Haroun and the Sea of Stories is a “message in a bottle” to Rushdie’s son, for him to read and remember his father from afar and through time as he grew older. In essence, a story that could change with a growing mind. And so, the acrostic poem of the book’s dedication, which is notably used as text both to open and close the opera by Fenton and Wuorinen, is perhaps the greatest key to unlocking your own meaning in the opera Haroun and the Sea of Stories.

Zembla, Zenda, Xanadu:
All our dream-worlds may come true.
Fairy lands are fearsome too.
As I wander far from view
Read, and bring me home to you.
ACT I

[11] Scene 1 In the Sad City of Alifbay
SORAYA
Zembla, Zenda, Xanadu:
All our dream worlds may come true.
May come true.
They may come true.
All our dream worlds may come true.
HAROUN
That was my mother singing
In the sad city of Alifbay
And the smoke of the sadness poured away
Poured away
From all the sadness factories
Sadder than song
Sadder than song
Sadder than the seas where the glumfish swam
And something went wrong
One day
Something went wrong
And cut the thread of my mother's song.
SORAYA
Zembla, Zenda, Xanadu
Zembla, Zenda...
HAROUN (speaking)
As if someone had thrown a switch!
My father noticed none of this.
He was too busy
Telling stories every day
Hour after hour.
Myth and magic, wicked uncles,
Cowards, heroes, catchy tunes,
Brand-new sagas, ancient legends,
Gangsters in yellow check pantaloons.
RASHID
Oh I am the Ocean of Notions.
I am the Shah of Blah.
The Source of the Sea of Stories
Is roughly speaking where we are.
I'm the guru of the Gulf of Gumption
With a hundred-mile attention span—
A heck of a teller
A treat of a teller
A million-volume version of a man.
Boccaccio's Decameron
Is nothing to the likes of me.
A Thousand and One Arabian Nights
Are but a triviality
So a story couldn't come out of thin air.
The river comes from the mountain...
RASHID
Correct!
HAROUN
The rain comes from the sky...
RASHID
Spot on!
And the stories come bubbling out of me...
HAROUN
Any more of this nonsense and I'll scream!
RASHID (speaking)
The story water comes out of an invisible tap installed by
one of the Water Genies.
Of course you have to be a subscriber.
HAROUN
And how do you do that?
RASHID
By a P2C2— a process too complicated to explain.
How does a stroke of genius
Strike on the stroke of three?
By a P2C2
HAROUN
P2C2
BOTH
P2C2E!
RASHID
It's a complicated business
Which one day you will learn.
It's a wonder!
It's an enigma!
But you will have your turn
(If my boy)
If I stand you a subscription
Will you do the same for me
For a P2C2
HAROUN
Me, too, see through
MR. SENGUPTA (to Soraya)
Supreme fiction indeed.
I'll give him a supreme fiction one of these days.
Excuse me if I mention
Excuse me if I dare
Excuse me but your husband
Has his head stuck in the air.
And what are all these stories?
And what are they to you?
(My dear)
What's the use of stories
That aren't even true?
HAROUN (overhearing)
What's the use of stories that aren't even true?
What a terrible question!
Father, where do stories come from?
Everything comes from somewhere
So a story couldn't come out of thin air.
The river comes from the mountain...
RASHID
Correct!
HAROUN
The rain comes from the sky...
RASHID
Spot on!
And the stories come from the Great Story Sea
And I shall never drink it dry.
I drink the warm story waters
Then I feel full of steam
HAROUN
Ridiculous!
MR. SENGUPTA (oxides to Soraya)
My car is waiting.
Come with me my dear.
My dearest.
RASHID
And the stories come bubbling out of me...
HAROUN
Any more of this nonsense and I'll scream!
RASHID (speaking)
The story water comes out of an invisible tap installed by
one of the Water Genies.
Of course you have to be a subscriber.
HAROUN
And how do you do that?
RASHID
By a P2C2E— a process too complicated to explain.
How does a stroke of genius
Strike on the stroke of three?
By a P2C2
HAROUN
P2C2
BOTH
P2C2E!
RASHID
It's a complicated business
Which one day you will learn.
It's a wonder!
It's an enigma!
But you will have your turn
(If my boy)
If I stand you a subscription
Will you do the same for me
For a P2C2
HAROUN
Me, too, see through
THE P2C2E!

RASHID

Now why should your mother have written me a letter? Why couldn’t she have spoken herself?

Let’s see:

“My dear Rashid, my husband as was, You are only interested in pleasure But a proper man would know That life is a serious business. You have your head in the clouds—”

HAROUN

That’s what Mr. Sengupta always says. That sounds like Mr. Sengupta!

RASHID

What do to, son What to say, where to go. This always telling stories This is the only work I know.

HAROUN

But what’s the point of it? What’s the use of stories that aren’t even true? (Rashid hides his face and weeps.) If I could catch those words I spoke And take them back again I’d pay whatever price it took Not to have seen your pain. To turn the clock back a minute or less To catch the word on the wing I’d pay whatever price it took Not to have seen you suffer. To have my dagger here for you

MRS. SENGUPTA

They’ve gone. They’ve gone together. It was you neglecting your wife gave him the chance And he took it like the rat that he is! Oh! Oh!

RASHID

That was my clock. Why did you smash my clock?

HAROUN

Oh No. Drops letter, which Haroun picks up.

HAROUN

Tell us a story Making it sentimental And gentle Or gory! Tell us a story Of caliphs and eunuchs and ogres Or Of Romans in tunics and togas Shouting MEMENTO MORI! Tell us a story Of paynim knights and damozels Or Of fishnet tights and mam’selles Inflammatory. Tell us a story Of the dragon, the hippogriff and the centaur And other such mythological impedimenta As are obligatory— Tell us a Story Now! (pause) If you please

RASHID

Now let me see, in the Valley of Hum In the days of who-the-devil was it…

CHORUS

This opening is inauspicious. Please improve.

RASHID

In the Valley of Hum in the days of Ha…

CHORUS

This exposition is exiguous. We have nothing to go on. Give us some facts.

RASHID

In the Ha of Hum…

CHORUS

This is minimalism

RASHID


CHORUS

Verging on subliminalism. You have exhausted our patience With these equivocations. Have some rotten eggs in return. Crowd pelts Rashid.

RASHID (solus)

Well, what’s the use? I had it all once And now it seems I’m through But who cares? Who’s there to care
If I’ve run out of juice?
I might as well put my head in a noose.
What’s the use of stories that aren’t even true?
Oh it was all my imagination.
I had one once
And now it’s flown into the blue.
But who cares? I’ve lost the caring part of me,
My instinct and my art.
I’m just a flake.
I might as well jump in the lake.
What’s the use of stories that aren’t even true?
I’m done.
My wife thinks herself well shot of me,
I’m an embarrassment to my son.
I’ve lost the thread.
I’ve lost the plot of me.
I might as well be dead
And through.
What’s the use of stories that aren’t even true?
—

MRS. SENGUPTA
I tell you something, Mr. Khalifa.
Independence is a beautiful thing.
No more Mrs. Sengupta for me!
From today, call me Miss Oneeta only.
(Sings her torch song, with diminishing confidence.)
I’m empowered!
Bright as a frying pan that I myself
Have recently scoured.
I’m empowered!
The woman I once was
Oh that bloody woman was perfectly obviously
A bloody coward.
Now I’m empowered
I’m not afraid to live alone.
I don’t sit waiting by the phone
Nor do I cry myself to sleep
(Or not as much as I used to)
And—you know— my existence has not soured.
I’M EMPOWERED!
(Bursts into tears.)
O! O! What is to become.
RASHID
What is to become indeed.
What is to become of all of us.
I’ve lost the gift of the gab
And the strangest thing has happened to Haroun.
He seems to have lost his powers of concentration.
Eleven minutes is as long as he can last.
After eleven, niente, nada, nix.
MRS. SENGUPTA
It’s his pussy-collar-jee.
RASHID
I see.
MRS. SENGUPTA
You follow my drift.
RASHID
Well, no. Not your drift, as such.
Explain please.
MRS. SENGUPTA
His mother left at eleven o’clock precisely.
That was when you broke all the clocks.
It’s pussy-collar-jee!
HAROUN
(overhearing)
That isn’t true.
Or maybe it is true.
I seem to stumble
After eleven minutes
And even when I count to eleven
My mind begins to wander.
What lies beyond eleven
Is wrapped in mystery.
I’m stuck in time like a broken clock.
I have no future.
Enter two men
RASHID
Who are you?
And why are you looking at me askance?
TWO MEN
We are two men in mustachios
And yellow check pants.
RASHID
I see in for the high-jump.
Tell me what this mission means.
Cut the crap and spill the beans.
TWO MEN
Supposing a teller of stories
Got work from a powerful man
To tell the public stories
As only a storyteller can
And this powerful man had a rival
Who paid the old guy on the side
To pretend to forget all his stories—
RASHID
It’s not true!
TWO MEN
And the silly old story-teller went and lied
And the powerful man grew angry
Cos the story-teller had taken a bung
So he sent out his trusted henchmen
To cut out the story-teller’s tongue—
What a pity
What a horrible pity
What a horrible pity that would be!
RASHID
I deny it all.
It is true that I have been indisposed of late
But at our next appointment
In the Valley of K
I shall be terrifico
Magnifico.
Splendidifico.
TWO MEN
Better you are
Better you are
Or out comes that tongue from your lying throat.
What a pity
What a horrible pity
What a horrible pity that would be.
(Spoken) And in case you think us incapable of such an
outrage, here’s one we prepared earlier.
Handing Rashid a human tongue
HAROUN
My fault again.
I started all this off.
What’s the use of stories that aren’t even true?
I asked the question
And it broke my father’s heart.
And now it’s up to me to put things right.
Something has to be done.
Something has to be done.
And the trouble is— I haven’t a clue in my head.
Scene 4  On the Road

CHORUS
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus and come with us.
Vegetables goats and chickens
Sacks of rice and what the dickens
Leaking parcels, bags of rye—
Fling them in and pile them high
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus and come with us.
Gentlemen of many parts,
Travelling salesmen, unravelling tarts,
Hucksters, fixers, confidence tricksters,
Muckers, suckers, city slickers—
Get on the bus.
Unsavory monks
Get out of your bunks—
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus
With us.
Don’t make a fuss.
Don’t bust a truss.

BUTT
You seem a tip-top type, young man.
My good name is Butt
Driver of the Number One
Super Express mail-coach
To the Valley of K.
At your service, sir!

HAROUN
To the Valley of K?
Hey, if you mean what you say
And you really are at my service
Then there is something you can do.

BUTT
It was a figure of speech
But but but
I shall stand by my figure of speech.
Butt’s a straight man
Not a twister.
What’s your wish
My young mister?

HAROUN
Now let me see...
From the town of G
There runs a way
To the Valley of K...

BUTT
Correct!

HAROUN
And from the Pass of H
To the tunnel of I
There’s a hairpin bend...

BUTT
There are twenty bends
And that’s where many a journey ends.

HAROUN
But when you come through the tunnel
To the Valley of K—
Or so my father tells me—
There’s a view to take your breath away
And no man can be sad
— Or so says my dad—
Who sees that view
When the fields are gold
The mountains silver
And the sky is blue.
Just give us two front seats
And cheer up my dad with that view.

But but but
The hour is late.
We’ll never be there before dark.
But but but
So what— let’s try.
Let the sad dad have his day
All aboard for the Valley of K!

[15] Scene 5 To the Valley of K
CHORUS
Driver, driver, not so fast.
Every moment could be our last.

BUTT
The snow line! Icy patches ahead! Hurrah!

CHORUS
If you try to rush or zoom
You are sure to meet your doom.

BUTT
Crumbling road surface! Hurrah!

CHORUS
All the dangerous overtakers
End up safe at undertakers.

[16] Scene 6 In the Dark
Black.

BUTT (spoken, amplified, with reverberation)
Like I said. Tunnel.
At the far end, Valley of K.
He is the Prince of Silence
And the Foe of Speech. Everything ends.
Everything must come to an end.

CHORUS
No man can be sad— Or so says my dad—
Who sees that view
When the fields are gold
The mountains silver
And the sky is blue.

[17] Scene 7 In the Valley of K
HAROUN
So it was all true.
The fields are gold with saffron.
The mountains are silver with snow
And the skies are blue.

RASHID
Thanks for fixing this up, son.
But I admit
I thought we were all fixed up good and proper.

HAROUN
Khattam-Shud?
What was the story you used to tell?

RASHID
Khattam-Shud is the Arch-Enemy of all stories,
Even of language itself.

HAROUN
Almost the same
As the bus driver’s name.

BUTTOO
Almost the same
As the bus driver’s name.

BUTT
Like I said, Tunnel.
At the far end, Valley of K.

CHORUS
Driver, driver, not so fast.
Every moment could be our last.

BUTT
The snow line! Icy patches ahead! Hurrah!

CHORUS
All the dangerous overtakers
End up safe at undertakers.

CHORUS
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus and come with us.
Don’t make a fuss.
Don’t bust a truss.
Get on the bus with us.

[18] Scene 8 Meeting Mr. Buttoo
SNOOTY BUTTOO
Mr. Rashid—
Esteemed Mr. Rashid—
A legend comes to town:
The Shah of Blah deigns to make his way
To the Valley of K.
A pleasure to meet you.

HAROUN
Well, excuse me—

RASHID
Respected Mr. Rashid.
Bearers will carry your bags.
Why doesn’t father bop this Buttoo on the nose?

RASHID
But you must go a long, long way
To find Angel Fish.

HAROUN
Never mind Angel Fish.
I can’t even see to the tip of my—

RASHID
Phoo! Who made that smell?
Come on. Admit.

HAROUN
It is the mist.
We seem to have rowed
Into the Mist of Misery.
It is the Misery makes the Mist.

BUTTOO
That boy is crazy for make-believe
Like the folk of this foolish valley.
My enemies tell bad stories about me
And the ignorant people lap it up like milk.
So I have turned to you, Mr. Rashid.
You shall tell happy stories
You shall tell praising stories
And the people will believe you
And they will vote for me!

HAROUN
All of the people will vote for me
Whether they like or no—
The muddy peasant with his ruddy wife,
The butcher with his bloody knife,
The nice boy on the way to school,
The ice boy with his ice-chopping tool,
Now the waves and wind are gone
But the mist is lingering on.
Father, father, help your son.
Think of the happiest times you can.
Think of happiness gone by.
Think your happiness across the sky!
The mist disappears and the moon comes out.

Buttoo
Touche, touchy Mr. Rashid!
It was a joke only,
A passing lightness,
A cloud blown away on the breeze.
Of course we have the highest expectations
Of your performance tomorrow
And all the praising stories
That will redound to our credit.
Of course we have...
Don’t we?
Now as for you, young man,
We have given you the turtle room.

Haroun
Thank you, it is very pleasant.

Buttoo
Very pleasant, indeed!
Inappropriate young person,
This is Arabian Nights Plus One.
“Very Pleasant” doesn’t cover it at all.
Supermarvelloso, perhaps.
Incredidable, and wholly fantastick!
All the best belongs to me!
Belongs to me!
Belongs to me!
The biggest vest!
The biggest treasure chest!
The biggest bathroom in the East or West!
Everything best belongs to me
By right!
Good night!

Night music to indicate the passing of time. Haroun and Rashid are in their bedrooms, unable to sleep.

Rashid
It’s no use.
I won’t be able to tell my stories.
I’m finished, finished for good.
“Only praising tales” indeed.
I am the Ocean of Notions.
I am the Shah of—
Well, I’m not some office boy for Snooty Buttoo to boss about.
But what am I saying?

Haroun
Still singing about my mother.

Rashid
Who’s there?

And if they were neither happy nor sad
But muddled and unsure
The colours would run in the Moody Land
And every outline became obscure.
Oh father, father, take my hand
Let us spread some joy in the Moody Land
And clear the Mist of Misery.

Scene 11

Rashid
Now I know how sad he is.
“Only a story” indeed!
The Shah of Blah would never have spoken like that
In the good old days.
And now the mist is getting worse.

Lightning, Thunder

Garsmen (Chorus)
Oh Oh Oh, down we go!

Haroun
Okay. Everybody listen.
Stop talking. This is very important.
Not a word. Zip the lips
On a count of one two three.
One!
(I must try to calm them down
Or we’ll definitely drown.)
Two!
(I must calm myself as well
And not let Buttoo break the spell.)
Three!

[10] Scene 10 On the Houseboat
Buttoo
Welcome to my houseboat,
The largest and best on the lake.
I have called it Arabian Nights Plus One
Because even in the Arabian Nights
You will never have a night like this.
For you, erudite Mr. Rashid
Here is the peacock room,
And here on the shelves you will find
The whole collection of tales known as
The Ocean of the Streams of Story.
If ever you run out of material
You will find plenty here.

Rashid
Run out? What are you saying?
I call you deplorable.

HAROUN

Are you really one of those genies
My father told me about?

IFF
Supplier of Story Water from the Great Story Sea.
Precisely the same. No other. It is me.
Or rather it is I.
I is it.
Hence this visit.
I regret to report
The gentleman your father
No longer requires the service.
He has discontinued narrative activities
Thrown in the towel
Told his last story
To the last vowel.
And hence my presence
For the purpose of disconnection of his story tap—
To which end, kindly return my tool.

HAROUN
Not so fast.
I don't believe you.
How did he send the message?
I've been with him almost all the time.

IFF
He sent it by the usual means—
A P2C2E.

HAROUN
And what is that?

IFF
Obvious.

It's a Process Too Complicated to Explain.
How does the Story Water
Come from the Story Sea
By a P2C2

HAROUN
P2C2

BOTH
P2C2E!

IFF
It's a most mysterious business
And hard to deconstruct.
It's a riddle.
It's a conundrum.
But it's utterly
ineluctable
If you think of my department
You can think straight through to me
By a P2C2

HAROUN
No! Not he too!

BOTH
A P2C2E!

IFF
Something to do with thought-beams.
We listened to your father's thoughts—

HAROUN
And you got the wrong end of the stick
My father has definitely not given up.

IFF
Well, those are my orders.
If you have any queries
Please address them to:
P2C2E House
Of all the winged creatures
Known and unknown to man.

HAROUN
I see a lion with a human head
And curly beard and hairy wings,
I see a monkey fly from tree to tree,
Angels and flying saucers, stranger things
Than ever I’ve heard said.
I see a school of levitating fish
Gulping the air and heading for the sky
And all these birds which seem to turn to me
And offer me the wings to fly—
Fly where my heart could wish
And offer me the wings to fly
Go heading for the open sky
Fly where my heart could wish.

Swim like a bird.
Fly like a fish.
Go heading for the open sky.
So, I’ll choose that one—
The one with the funny crest.

IFF
So, it’s the Hoopoe for us.
A significant choice!
Throws miniature Hoopoe out of window.

HAROUN
What was that for?
IFF
Wait and see.

(A huge Hoopoe arrives.)

HAROUN
That’s odd, that floating feeling.
Just like on the mail coach ride.
And this Hoopoe with its feathers
Reminds me a lot of old Butt.
Butt with his quiff of hair.
Butt’s hair seemed feathery
And these feathers seem hairy.
No bird could fly so fast.
Is this a machine?

BUTT THE HOOPOE
But if I was?
Do you have some objection to machines?
But but but
You entrusted your life to me—
Am I not worthy of a little respect?
A machine
Is entitled to some self esteem
Or so it seems
To me.

HAROUN
You seem to be reading my mind.

BUTT AND IFF
By a P2C2E.

How does a hurtling hoopoe
Speak by telepath-ee?

Gup City
Kahani.

HAROUN
Mr. Iff, take me at once to Gup City!

IFF
Oh, what a pity.
Gup City is banned, off limits, strictly restricted.

HAROUN
In that case you’ll have to go back without this
And see how they like that.

IFF
Okay okay okay I give in.
You’ve got me bang to rights.
But if we’re going, let’s go now.

HAROUN
You mean—now?
IFF
Now means now
If you have something to do
Do it now.
Thinking of tying a shoe?
Tie it now.
Don’t wait to slip
And trip on the street
—that is complete—
 rantingly.
Think what advantage you gain
Doing it now
If you have somewhere to go
Go there now.
Though it is as far as the crow flies, fly now.

[1/3] Scene 13 Flying to the Moon

HAROUN
You seem to be reading my mind.

BUTT
But but but certainly.
You entrusted your life to me—
Am I not worthy of a little respect?
A machine
Is entitled to some self esteem
Or so it seems
To me.

HAROUN
You seem to be reading my mind.

BUTT
But but but certainly.
And I am speaking to you by telepathy.

HAROUN
And how do you do that?

BUTT AND IFF
By a P2C2E.

How does a hurtling hoopoe
Speak by telepath-ee?
By a P2C2

P2C2

P2C2E!

IFF
See there.
That is the second moon of Earth—
Kahani.

HAROUN
But but but
How can the earth have a second moon?
It would have been discovered!

BUTT
Speed, speed—
It is the Speed of the moon
Kahani.

Speed of the moon
Speed of the moon
Necessary
Needful speed
Shine like a spoon
Fly like a steed
Luminary
Lunar speed
Speed that conceals
Speed that reveals
Speed of hand and foot and thigh
Voom! Varoom!
Away we zoom!

Speed of a glance or a glint in the eye
Speed of the moon
Speed of the moon
Necessary

Needful speed
Be heedful Haroun
Of the speed of the moon
Heedful of the needful speed
Heedful of the needful speed.

Rushing towards them is a sparkling and seemingly infinite expanse of water.

IFF
The Ocean of the Streams of Story—
Wasn’t it worth travelling
So far and fast to see?

BUTT
Three two one zero!
They land on the Moon Kahani.

Scene 14 Wishwater

HAROUN
It’s a trick.
There’s no Gup City here—
No point in being here at all.

IFF
Hold your horses.
Cool down.
Keep your hair on.
Everything will be explained.

HAROUN
But this is the Middle of Nowhere!

IFF
This is the Deep North of Kahani
And here we may find Wishwater.
No, that’s not right. Not quite. I wish—what could I wish? My wishes fly before me Like a school of flying fish. I see my father pleading Saying: do this one thing for me... What thing? What can that be? Maybe my father telling stories every day Made my mother run away. I wish she would come back. No... that’s a different track... I wish—what would I wish? My wishes fly before me Like a school of flying fish— Flashing Dashing Disappearing Like a school of flying fish.

IFF
Eleven minutes— Just eleven minutes and his concentration goes Ka-bam, ka-blooy, ka-put.

HAROUN
I know. I have failed.

BUTT
Wishes are not such easy things. Don’t bully the boy. You, Mister Iff, are upset Because of your own mistake. Because we must now go to Gup City after all And there will be harsh words.

Harsh words and hot water for you. Stop taking it out on the boy. IFF
But but but... Okay, okay Gup City it is. Unless of course You’d like to hand over the Disconnecting Tool And call the whole thing off. Haroun shakes his head miserably.

BUTT
But but but You’re still bullying the boy. Cheer him up man Cheer him up. Give him a happy story to drink. HAROUN Not another drink. What are you going to make me fail at now? IFF Cheer up, Haroun And look at all the colours of the sea. It is a liquid tapestry Of breath-taking complexity. This is the Ocean of the Streams of Story. Every tale that has been told is here And every tale that has yet to be invented And if you’re very careful You can dip a cup into the ocean And fill it with a single story— A single pure stream of story Like so.

Go on now. Knock it back. Guaranteed to make you feel A-number-one. Haroun takes a cup, dips into the sea, and drinks a story.

[115] Scene 15 The Story He Drank PRINCESS An outlandish knight from the north country came And he came for to rescue me And the four-headed lion did shake its mane Most grisly for to see. Oh have you seen the noble knight And have you heard his tune? It is the fairest knight in the land And his name it is Sir Haroun. Oh yes I’ve seen the noble knight A-pricking o’er the plane And the sun did on his helmet shine As on a mountain after the rain.

HAROUN
Let down, let down your flaxen hair And I shall climb to thee And I shall your jailer bold And I shall your rescuer be. PRINCESS And so I let down my flaxen hair And he began to climb. But then... I felt a hairy leg And EEEK it was a spider all the time! Eek my dearest—you have into a spider turned! Attacks Haroun with knife
Shorn the shape the shadow shows.
In the shadow of the moon
darker than the deepest wood
you shall know, if you go, haroun,
hattam-shud, hattam-shud—
you shall know
If you shall go
hattam-shud
hattam-shud.

haroun
look at all the birds.
The sky is filling up with birds.

iff
Something serious has happened.
All units have been called back to base.

haroun
Listen.
Listen to the beating of their wings.
Listen to the song of the birds.

chorus of birds
Halcyon blue
Halcyon blue
We're flying through the halcyon blue
On a thermal
On a high
Like mackerel in a mackerel sky.

 iff
Wake up, snap out of it.
Let's have you.
What happened?
Did you save the Princess?

haroun
I was saving her.
But then I turned into a spider.

iff
Turned into a spider
In a Princess Rescue Story?
I can't believe it.
Never in all my born days.

haroun
I'm glad to hear it
Because I was thinking
That it wasn't the most brilliant way
To cheer me up.

but
It's the pollution.
Something or someone has been putting filth
Into the Ocean of the Streams of Story.
If the stories get polluted they go wrong.

iff
And if the poison has come as far as the Deep North
Then Gup City could be close to crisis.

but and iff
Top speed ahead!
This could mean war!

haroun
War with whom?

but
With the Land of Chup
On the dark side of Kahani.
This looks like the doing of the leader of the Chupwalas—
The Cultmaster of Bezaban himself.

haroun
And who is that?

but and iff
His name is Khattam-Shud.

haroun
Too many fancy notions
Are turning out to be true.
Tell me more about Khattam-Shud.

iff
Khattam-Shud is the Arch-Enemy of all stories,
Even of Language itself.
He is the Prince of Silence
And the Foe of Speech.

haroun
Exactly what my father told me.

but and iff
On the far side of the moon
Darker than the deepest wood
In a permanent of gloom
Lives the Master Khattam-Shud.
And the dark Chupwalas go
Fearful of his least command
And their sombre legions know
Deeds done by his dreadful hand.
Everything must have an end.
Die, decay and decompose.
Friendship falter, falter friend.

shorn the shape the shadow shows.
In the shadow of the moon
darker than the deepest wood
you shall know, if you go, haroun,
hattam-shud, hattam-shud—
you shall know
If you shall go
hattam-shud
hattam-shud.

haroun
Look at all the birds.
The sky is filling up with birds.

iff
Something serious has happened.
All units have been called back to base.

haroun
Listen.
Listen to the beating of their wings.
Listen to the song of the birds.

chorus of birds
Halcyon blue
Halcyon blue
We're flying through the halcyon blue
On a thermal
On a high
Like mackerel in a mackerel sky.

haroun
What's that?

but
A floating gardener of course.
Look—he floats, he runs, he hops.
No problem.

mali
Who are you, stranger?

haroun
I am haroun khalifa
From the sad city of alifbay.

mali
I am mali,
Floating Gardener First Class.

haroun
Please
What does a floating gardener do?

mali
Untwisting twisted story streams.
Also unloping same.
Weeding. In short: gardening.

and sprats have wings
And pterodactyls have similar things
To bring them through
The tropopause
And pare their nails and clip their claws.
Halcyon blue
Halcyon blue
We're flying home through the halcyon blue
On a thermal
On a high
Like mackerel in a mackerel sky.

haroun
I am haroun khalifa
From the sad city of alifbay.

mali
I am mali,
Floating Gardener First Class.

haroun
Please
What does a floating gardener do?

mali
Untwisting twisted story streams.
Also unloping same.
Weeding. In short: gardening.

iff
Top speed ahead!
This could mean war!

haroun
War with whom?
Now the lagoon is damask grey
And now an amber silk
And now the lagoon is a purple velvet
Dipped in a bath ofasses’ milk.
Stare in the depths of the water.
Stare in the depth Haroun.
This is the biggest kaleidoscope
On the bright side of the moon.
These are the colours of thought.
These are the colours of dreams.
These are the colours of storylines.
These are the story streams.
Now the lagoon is red.
Now the lagoon is blue.
Now the lagoon is everything
Everything a lagoon should be—
Topaz, quartz, chalcedony—
Doing everything a lagoon should do,
Everything, Haroun for you.
The crowd bustling about.
General Kitab appears and the
crowd falls silent.
GENERAL KITAB
Words fail the king.
He cannot speak to you.
CHORUS
Words fail his Majesty?
This is most unusual.
GENERAL KITAB
You tell them, Prince Bolo.
(Weeps.)
PRINCE BOLO
They have seized her!
They have seized the Princess Batcheat
My bride to be.

They servants of the Cultmaster Khattam-Shud...
CHORUS (softly)
Khattam-Shud.
BOLD
Have made off with my future wife.
Churls, varlets, dastards, hounds!
By gum, they shall pay for this!
Will they not pay for this, General Kitab?
Will they not pay through the nose for this?
GENERAL KITAB
My liege, it is the most blasted business.
The Princess is now a prisoner
In the citadel of Chup,
The ice-castle of Khattam-Shud.
CHORUS (softly)
Khattam-Shud.
GENERAL KITAB
We have sent messages
To the Cultmaster Khattam-Shud—
CHORUS (softly)
Khattam-Shud.
GENERAL KITAB
Oh will you stop interrupting?
We have sent messages
Concerning the vile poison being injected
Into the Ocean of the Streams of Story
And the abduction of the Princess.
We demanded that he stop the pollution
And return the King’s daughter within seven hours.
Neither demand was met
And I have to inform you
That a state of war now exists

[1:17] Scene 17 War is Declared
CHORUS
Now the lagoon is blue.
Now the lagoon is green
And now the lagoon is strawberry jelly
And something in between.
ACT TWO

[21] Scene 1  Rescue the Princess!
Outside the Palace, exactly as before. Chorus and singers frozen in the same positions.

CHORUS
Khattam-Shud!
GENERAL KITAB
And now, herald, let my word go forth.
Bring the spy before the people!
FIRST HERALD
Bring the spy before the treacle!
SECOND HERALD
Bring the pie before the treacle!
THIRD HERALD
Fling the pie before the treacle!
HAROUN
Fling the pie before the treacle?
This could get messy!
GENERAL KITAB
You are right.
Officer, bring the spy before the people.
Footsteps approaching. Rashid is brought on with a sack over his head.
HAROUN
That looks like my dad.
It is my dad.
RASHID
Sir, there seems to be some mistake.
PRINCE BOLO
Tell us your story. 
I love a good story— 
Especially if I come into it. 
Tell us a Prince Bolo story. 
RASHID
Oh very well then. 
It was like a dream 
I was asleep, and 
I flew to the Twilight Strip. 
It was dark and the trees were dripping. 
PRINCE BOLO
How utterly gripping! 
RASHID
And there was the whole Chupwala Army 
Encamped in their black tents 
In fanatical silence. 
PRINCE BOLO
Those black tents 
Are making me tense— 
Go on. 
RASHID
I made my way 
Among those dull pavilions 
Among those millions of scullions 
Scouring their skillets 
Outside their billets 
When suddenly 
I heard the sound 
Of a young woman singing. 
PRINCE BOLO
How wonderful! 
RASHID
It was without doubt 
One of the most appalling experiences of my life— 
A voice like a parakeet 
In heat— 
Like so. 
(He imitates the voice.) 
CHORUS
Batcheat! 
He has heard the Princess Batcheat!
PRINCE BOLO
Princess Batcheat. 
My love, my bride to be! 
So this is a Prince Bolo Story after all. 
Proceed, pronounce, for pity’s sake. 
RASHID
No sooner had the princess and her handmaidens 
Come into view 
Than a posse of Chupwalsas 
Leapt from the bushes 
And bagged the lot of them 
Kicking and screaming 
PRINCE BOLO
And you did nothing? 
You did nothing to save them? 
RASHID
Me? I did nothing? 
You mistake your man... 
Ahem... I, ah, I... 
PRINCE BOLO
Well then... 
RASHID
Sire, swift as a sunbeam 
I surveyed my situation. 
It was insupportable. 
An unspeakable peril. 
Not only was I in my nightshirt and unarmed. 
I was also outnumbered twenty-five to one. 
PRINCE BOLO
Those odds are trifling. 
RASHID
Exactly what I thought 
Until I heard something 
That made my blood run cold— 
So cold, I decided 
There wasn’t a moment to lose. 
I must seek help at once. 
Prince Bolo, sire, 
Are you sitting down? 
PRINCE BOLO
Of course not, I— 
RASHID
Be prepared for the worst. 
As the Chupwala soldiers 
Hauled the Princess away 
Kicking and screaming 
I heard one say: 
“The great Feast of the Idol Bezaban 
Is coming soon. 
Let us offer this Guppee Princess 
As a sacrifice. 
PRINCE BOLO
Now there is not a second to lose! 
Assemble the armed forces— 
All the pages, 
Every Chapter, 
Every Volume. 
To war! To war! 
For Batcheat, only Batcheat! 
GENERAL KITAB
For Batcheat and the Ocean! 
CHORUS
For Batcheat and the Ocean! 
RASHID
Sire, I shall lead you to the Chupwala tents. 
HAROUN
I’m coming too. 
RASHID
No, son. 
This could be dangerous. 
HAROUN
All the more reason for sticking together. 
It’s a Princess Rescue Story. 
It’s a deed of derring-do. 
It’s a case of death or glory. 
A priori. 
It’s my cue. 
RASHID
Though the upshot may be gory 
We shall have to see it through.
As they come to the Twilight Strip
Heart Shadow—
The night is brushing you
Brushing like a raven’s wing
A fearful thing
To feel.

IFF
Heart Shadow—
The wind is rushing through
Rushing like a swollen stream
And yet it seems
Unreal.

MALI
It feels like a memory
Buried somewhere beneath the snow.
It feels like a memory
Of something somehow lost long ago.

MALI, BUTT, AND IFF
Heart Shadow—
That loss is crushing you
Crushing you before you start
Making you lose heart—
Heart Shadow.
You’re feeling Heart Shadow.

They land on the Twilight Strip.

CHORUS
Hush for a moment.
This is the Twilight Strip.

On these dark shores
No birds sing.
No wind blows.

Feet falling on the shingle
Fall silently.
The air smells stale
And stenchy.
The bushes cluster around
And leafless trees
Like sallow ghosts.
All is still and all is cold.
The darkness is biding its time.

RASHID
The further they lure us
Into the darkness
The better for them.
And they know we will come
Because they are holding Batcheat.

HAROUN
I thought that Love
Was supposed to conquer all
But it seems that Love
Makes monkeys of us—
Makes mincemeat of the lot of us.

PRINCE BOLO
Now is the hour
When you must lead us to the tents of the Chupwalas.
Great matters are afoot.
We must save the Princess.

HAROUN
Yes, father, you must save the Princess
And I
I shall go down to the Old Zone

CHORUS
It’s a well-known category
It’s a tale that’s tried and true.
It’s a Princess Rescue Story
A priori
It’s our cue.

[2:2] Scene 2 To the Twilight Strip

BAGHA
Saving Batcheat! What a notion.

GOOPY
What matters now is saving the Ocean.

BAGHA
That’s the plan to set in motion.

GOOPY
Find the source of the poison potion.

BAGHA AND GOOPY
The Ocean’s the important thing.
Worth more than the daughter of any king.

HAROUN
Sounds like mutinous talk to me.

BAGHA AND GOOPY
What’s a Mutinus? Who he be?

HAROUN
What a chattering, clattering, quarreling crew
Sailing through the halcyon blue—
Floating gardeners, Pages, Barge-birds,
Plentimaw Fish
Plentimaw Fish
Plentimaw Fish in the Story Sea.

CHORUS
Chatter chatter chatter
What’s the matter if we chatter
If we chatter chatter chatter on our way?
Chatter chatter chatter all day?
What’s the matter with our patten
With the clatter of our scattar gun
Rattling
Battling
Fray?

HAROUN
You’ll give the game away!

CHORUS
Better to give
Better to live
Giving the game away.

HAROUN
What an absurd armada!
How can we ever succeed?
There isn’t even any light
To see the enemy by.
We’re on a suicide mission.
Batcheat will perish
And the Ocean will be ruined forever.

BUTT
But but but
Don’t be depressed.
You’re suffering from Heart Shadow.
Everyone gets it

As they come to the Twilight Strip
Heart Shadow—
The night is brushing you
Brushing like a raven’s wing
A fearful thing
To feel.

IFF
Heart Shadow—
The wind is rushing through
Rushing like a swollen stream
And yet it seems
Unreal.

MALI
It feels like a memory
Buried somewhere beneath the snow.
It feels like a memory
Of something somehow lost long ago.

MALI, BUTT, AND IFF
Heart Shadow—
That loss is crushing you
Crushing you before you start
Making you lose heart—
Heart Shadow.
You’re feeling Heart Shadow.

They land on the Twilight Strip.

CHORUS
Hush for a moment.
This is the Twilight Strip.

On these dark shores
No birds sing.
No wind blows.

No voice speaks.
Feet falling on the shingle
Fall silently.
The air smells stale
And stenchy.
The bushes cluster around
And leafless trees
Like sallow ghosts.
All is still and all is cold.
The darkness is biding its time.

RASHID
The further they lure us
Into the darkness
The better for them.
And they know we will come
Because they are holding Batcheat.

HAROUN
I thought that Love
Was supposed to conquer all
But it seems that Love
Makes monkeys of us—
Makes mincemeat of the lot of us.

PRINCE BOLO
Storyteller
Now is the hour
When you must lead us to the tents of the Chupwalas.
Great matters are afoot.
We must save the Princess.

HAROUN
Yes, father, you must save the Princess
And I
I shall go down to the Old Zone...
BAGHA AND GOOPY
Never thought it would be so bad.
We have failed you. We feel sad.
I feel terrible. She feels worse.
We can hardly speak in verse.

HAROUN
Stay here and keep watch.
Goodbye.
The water is growing thicker.
It’s like looking into molasses
Through dark glasses.

MALI
These are the waters of neglect.
These are the seas of disgrace.
Give me a year and
I could clean this place.

HAROUN
But we haven’t got a year.
We haven’t a moment to waste.
MALI
I’ll go ahead and I will clear
A channel through.
You can stop a cheque.
You can stop a leak or three.
You can stop traffic, but
You can’t stop me.
MALI (to Mali)
Poison?
A little poison? Bah!
A little acid? Pah!
I’m a tough old bird.
It won’t stop me.
You can stop a cheque.
You can stop a leak or three.
You can stop traffic, but
You can’t stop me.

HAROUN
Nobody wants to.
We’re out to stop the Cultmaster.

IFF
If the source of the Sea of Stories
Is at the South Pole.
Then that’s where Khattam-Shud will be.

HAROUN
To the South Pole.
To the South Pole.

BUTT
Full speed ahead to the South Pole.

BUTT
Speed that conceals
Speed that reveals
BAGHA AND GOOPY
We’re going the right way! We can tell!
Before it was filthy! Now it’s Hell!

HAROUN
(to Mali)
Doesn’t the poison hurt your feet?
MALI
Poison?

BAGHA AND GOOPY
We’re going the right way! We can tell!
Before it was filthy! Now it’s Hell!

HAROUN
Stay here and keep watch.
Goodbye.
The water is growing thicker.
It’s like looking into molasses
Through dark glasses.

MALI
These are the waters of neglect.
These are the seas of disgrace.
Give me a year and
I could clean this place.

HAROUN
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You can stop a leak or three.
You can stop traffic, but
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HAROUN
Nobody wants to.
We’re out to stop the Cultmaster.

IFF
If the source of the Sea of Stories
Is at the South Pole.
Then that’s where Khattam-Shud will be.

HAROUN
To the South Pole.
To the South Pole.

BUTT
Full speed ahead to the South Pole.
And those must be the poison tanks
And yet it all seems Shadowy
As if the whole thing were made of shadows.
(Enter Khattam-Shud.)

And who is this skinny, scrawny, Measly, weaselly, snivelling clerical type?
Can this be the terrible Cultmaster himself Or could it be his shadow?
He reminds me of someone.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Spies. What a melodrama.
A Water Genie from Gup City
And a young fellow from down there
If I am not mistaken.

HAROUN
I know him.
I've met him somewhere before.

KHATTAM-SHUD
What brought you here, young man?
Stories, I suppose.
Well, look where stories have landed you now.
What started out as stories
Has ended up as spying
And you know what happens to spies, don't you?
Excuse me if I mention
Excuse me if I dare
Excuse me but this young man Has his head right in the air.
What started out with stories
Has got him in a stew—
Young man!
What's the use of stories that aren't even true?

HAROUN
I know. You're him.
You're Mr. Sengupta and you stole my mother.

IFF
Haroun, lad, it's not the same guy.
This is the Cultmaster of Bezaban, Khattam-Shud.

HAROUN
But I thought he was back in his Citadel!

KHATTAM-SHUD
He is. I am. That is, I am his shadow.
We've split in two
So I can poison the Ocean here And defeat the Guppies there.

Come, young Haroun, And let me show you my poison-blenders.
We need all the poisons we can make
For every story to be ruined in a different way.
And I have discovered
That for every story there is an anti-story.
Put the two together
And they cancel each other out.
Every day we release new poisons.
Soon, now, soon
The Ocean will be dead—
Cold and dead—
And my victory will be complete.

HAROUN
But why do you hate stories so much?
Stories are fun.

IFF
How can we pull ourselves anywhere When we are being pulled in the Web of Night?

Look down
Look down at the Ocean.

HAROUN
It is as cold as death.

Look at it now.
Look at it now.
The oldest stories ever made—
Look at them now.
We let them rot.
We abandoned them
And now they are utterly spoilt.
The Web of Night is removed. They are surrounded by Chupwalas.

HAROUN
We have stopped.
We must be on the edge Of Perpetual Darkness. They are taking us to the flagship Of Khattam-Shud.
They are led onto the ship.

BUTT
But but but You must not take that—
That's my brain!
The Chupwalas remove Butt's brain.
KHATTAM-SHUD
Foolish child,
The world is not for fun.
The world is for controlling.
Inside every single story
Is a world, a story world,
That I cannot rule at all.
Beyond my control!
Can you imagine it?
Can you imagine what that means to me?
It spoils everything!

Mali is heard whistling.

KHATTAM-SHUD
What was that?
I gave the strictest instructions
Nobody should ever whistle.

VOICE OF MALI
You can chop a flower-bush
You can chop a tree
You can chop liver but
You can’t chop me.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Intruder. Intruder alert!

HAROUN
Hooray, Mali!

VOICE OF MALI
You can chop and change
You can chop in ka-ra-tee
You can chop suxy but
You can’t chop me.
(I said)
You can’t chop me.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Switch on the darkness!

HAROUN
Come on now Haroun—
It’s your turn now or never.

KHATTAM-SHUD
This is control.
This is control.
Kill all the intruders.
Kill all the intruders.

HAROUN
Let’s see what a Bite-a-Lite can do.
( Brilliant light. Groaning and shrieking of Chupwalas.)
Now if I just grab that brain-box.
But how does it connect up?
Like so?

BUTT (making strange noises)
You must sing a-down-a-down
And you call him a-down-a—

HAROUN
I’ve driven it mad.
Let’s see...

BUTT
Look, look! A mouse. Peace, peace!
This piece of toasted cheese will do it.

HAROUN
Third time lucky, I hope.

BUTT
So what took you so long.
Let’s go. Va-va-va-voom! Away we zoom!
My princess, my love—
Where are you? Are you still alive?

KHATTAM-SHUD
Listen a moment.
You’ll soon hear where your girlfriend Batcheat waits.

BATCHEAT
Oooh I’m talking ‘bout my Bolo
And I ain’t got time for nothin’ else.

RASHID
I’m sure I know that song
But the words seem different.

BATCHEAT
Lemme tell you ‘bout a boy I know,
He’s my Bolo and I love him so.

BOLO
She sings? My Batcheat sings?
Then hush my friends and hearken to her song.

BATCHEAT
He won’t play polo,
He can’t fly solo,
Oo-wee but I love him true.

Our love will gro-lo,
I’ll never let him go-lo—
Got those waiting for my Bolo blues.

BOLO
Beautiful. That’s so beautiful.

BATCHEAT
His name aint Rollo,
His voice aint low-lo,
Uh-HUH!
But I love him fine,
So stop the show-lo,
Pay me what you owe-lo.
I’m gonna make that Bolo
Mine
YESSIR!
I’m gonna make that Bolo— aaggh, mmmff—
Khattam-Shud appears at the window, his hand over Batcheat’s mouth.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Prince Bolo, General Kitab,
I have heard your idle boasts
But before I let anyone lay hands on me
I shall sew up the lips of the Princess Batcheat
And put a stop to this racket for good
By sacrificing her to the colossus of Bezaban.

I have the needle here!
I have the thread.

PRINCE BOLO
Someone help me. Help save the Princess Batcheat!

CHORUS
Well…

BATCHEAT
I’m gonna MAKE THAT BMFFF!!!
I’m gonna make that Bolo— aaggh, mmfff—
Khattam-Shud appears at the window, his hand over Batcheat’s mouth.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Prince Bolo, General Kitab,
I have heard your idle boasts
But before I let anyone lay hands on me
I shall sew up the lips of the Princess Batcheat
And put a stop to this racket for good
By sacrificing her to the colossus of Bezaban.
I have the needle here!
I have the thread.

PRINCE BOLO
Someone help me. Help save the Princess Batcheat!

CHORUS
Well…

BATCHEAT (breaking free for a moment)
I’m gonna MAKE THAT BMFFF!!!

BOLO
Is that a voice or what is it?

RASHID
It must be a what-is-it
For it isn’t a voice.
Rumbling noise in distance.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Maybe this time I can do better than that.

BUTT AND IFF
Remember
The harder you wish
The better it will work.
Your heart’s desire
Will be as good as yours.

KHATTAM-SHUD
I wish— what will I wish?
My wishes fly before me
Like a school of flying fish.
I wish this moon to turn
I wish this moon to turn in such a way
Today
Right now
So that the sun will shine
Shine on the Dark Ship
Shine on the dark Chupwalas one by one
Shine on, oh sun
Shine on the bad

Shine on the good
Shine on the work of Khattam-Shud
Shine on the poisoned sea
Shine on my friends and shine on me.
I wish— this is what I wish.
My wishes fly before me
Like a school of flying fish.
I wish the sun to rise
Shine on the dreads Chupwalas with their negative eyes
Shine on the Dark Ship on the poisoned sea
Shine on my mother wherever she be
Shine on my friends, shine on my dad, and shine on me.
The sun rises and the Dark Ship is destroyed.

Scene 5
Meanwhile, at the Citadel of Chup

CHORUS
War! War! War! War!
War between the lands of Chup and Gup!
War between the lands of Gup and Chup!
A battle to the death!
A battle to the dying breath!
A struggle for the triumph of the forces of the good!
A struggle for the overthrow of Khattam-Shud!

Bottle music.

PRINCE BOLO
Where are you, Khattam-Shud?
Come on out.
Your army has been defeated
On the plains of Bat-Mat-Karo
And Batcheat
My golden girl

My princess, my love—
Where are you? Are you still alive?

KHATTUM-SHUD
Listen a moment.
You’ll soon hear where your girlfriend Batcheat waits.

BATCHEAT
Oooh I’m talking ‘bout my Bolo
And I ain’t got time for nothin’ else.

RASHID
I’m sure I know that song
But the words seem different.

BATCHEAT
Lemme tell you ‘bout a boy I know,
He’s my Bolo and I love him so.

BOLO
She sings? My Batcheat sings?
Then hush my friends and hearken to her song.

BATCHEAT (appearing at a window in a tower)
He won’t play polo,
He can’t fly solo,
Oo-wee but I love him true.

Our love will gro-lo,
I’ll never let him go-lo—
Got those waiting for my Bolo blues.

BOLO
Beautiful. That’s so beautiful.

BATCHEAT
His name aint Rollo,
His voice aint low-lo,
Uh-HUH!
But I love him fine,
So stop the show-lo,
Pay me what you owe-lo.
I’m gonna make that Bolo
Mine
YESSIR!
I’m gonna make that Bolo— aaggh, mmfff—
Khattam-Shud appears at the window, his hand over Batcheat’s mouth.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Prince Bolo, General Kitab,
I have heard your idle boasts
But before I let anyone lay hands on me
I shall sew up the lips of the Princess Batcheat
And put a stop to this racket for good
By sacrificing her to the colossus of Bezaban.

I have the needle here!
I have the thread.

PRINCE BOLO
Someone help me. Help save the Princess Batcheat!

CHORUS (looking at their fingernails)
Well…

BATCHEAT
I’m gonna MAKE THAT BMFFF!!!

BOLO
Is that a voice or what is it?

RASHID
It must be a what-is-it
For it isn’t a voice.
Rumbling noise in distance.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Maybe this staple-gun will do the trick!
Or you’ll burst like a stuck balloon
I can heartily recommend you
My talented son, Haroun—
You’re a tonic!
You’re bionic!
My talented son, Haroun.
CHORUS
Hats off to you, Haroun.
Hats off to you, Haroun.
PRINCESS BATCHEAT
When they drag you off and gag you
And they bind your every joint
CHORUS
Stop!
PRINCESS BATCHEAT
In a Princess Rescue Story
Which seems to have lost its point,
CHORUS
Stop!
PRINCESS BATCHEAT
When you suffer a dread enforcement
And you feel you’re about to swoon
I can offer a warm endorsement
Of my punctual friend Haroun, Haroun—
CHORUS
Stop!
PRINCESS BATCHEAT
When you suffer a dread enforcement
And you feel you’re about to swoon
I can offer a warm endorsement
Of my punctual friend Haroun, Haroun—
CHORUS
Stop!
PRINCESS BATCHEAT
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Of my punctual friend Haroun, Haroun—
CHORUS
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CHORUS
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Of my punctual friend Haroun, Haroun—
CHORUS
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Of my punctual friend Haroun, Haroun—
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And you feel you’re about to swoon
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And you feel you’re about to swoon
I can offer a warm endorsement
Of my punctual friend Haroun, Haroun—
CHORUS
Stop!
PRINCESS BATCHEAT
When you suffer a dread enforcement
And you feel you’re about to swoon
I can offer a warm endorsement
Of my punctual friend Haroun, Haroun—
CHORUS
Stop!
Whatever favour you desire
And we promise to grant it if we can.

RASHID
Well, Haroun, Any ideas?

HAROUN
It’s no use asking for anything
For what I really want
Nobody here can give me.

THE KING
I think we can give you what you want.

HAROUN
And what would that be?

THE KING
After a great adventure
Everyone wants a happy ending.

HAROUN
A happy ending, yes.
But not only for me.
I come from a sad city
From the sad city of Alifbay.
I should like a happy ending
Not just for my adventure
But for the whole sad city, too.

THE KING
Haroun, Haroun
Happy endings come
But not till the end of the story.
I think—ahem—
That you and your father here
Have forgotten something.

HAROUN
Now, what could that be?

RASHID
Oh my goodness!
Snooty Buttoo!
It had quite gone out of my mind.
Come, Haroun, there is no time to lose.

[27] Scene 7  Mr. Buttoo’s Rally

CHEERLEADERS
Vote Buttoo
Vote Buttoo
Who’s the one for you?
Not just one, Buttoo!

MR. BUTTOO
All the people will vote for me
Whether they like or no—
The muddy peasant with his ruddy wife,
The butcher with his bloody knife,
The nice boy on the way to school,
The ice boy with his ice-chopping tool,
The master of the silver band,
The lowly crematorium hand —
All the people will vote for me
Several times in a day.
None of them will get away
Until they vote for me!

CHEERLEADERS
Vote vote vote
For you know who.
Vote Buttoo.
Vote Buttoo.
Vote Buttoo, or else!

BUTTOO (aside to Rashid)
And you, Mr. Rashid.
You're on now. And you'd better be good, or else...

TWO MEN IN MUSTACHIOS
What a pity
What a horrible pity
What a horrible pity that would be.

RASHID
Ladies and gentlemen
The great Shah of Blah
The Ocean of Notions himself —
That is, myself —
Is about to tell you a story
And the name of the story I am going to tell is
Haroun and the Sea of Stories.

CHORUS
Tell us that story!
Tell us that story!

HAROUN
So you didn't forget...
You're back on line.

RASHID
There was once a young boy
In the sad city of Alifbay
Where the smoke of the sadness poured away
Poured away
From all the sadness factories...

Continues telling story in dumbshow.

BUTTOO
I don't like the sound of this.
I don't like the mood of this.
I don't like the tense of this.

CHORUS (listening to Rashid)
No-o-o-o.

BUTTOO
I don't like the drift of this—
Something slipping away from me.
I don't like the shift of this—
Someone calling it a day for me.

CHORUS
Ah-a-a-ah! No-o-o!

MEMBER OF CHORUS
Mister Buttoo
Khattam-Shud!

BUTTOO
Alright everyone—
That's enough story-telling.
Now everyone go down to the polling-station
And vote for me!
Vote for me!
CHORUS
No no no.
We will not vote for you.
We will not speak by rote for you.
We will not pull a coat for you
Or push out the boat for you
Any more.

BUTTOO
How can this be?

CHORUS
Because we are free—
Or if not yet we shall be soon
Thanks to the efforts of Haroun.
We shall be free of you for good.
Snooty Buttoo is Khattam-Shud.

They chase him away.

[Scene 8] Back Home

RASHID
Here we are, son,
Back here again in Alifbay.
I wonder what we'll find.
Hallo? Anyone there?

HAROUN
Miss Oneeta, Miss Oneeta.

MRS. SENGUPTA
O too fine!
You are back. You are back.
What celebrations we will have,
What sweets there will be to eat!

HAROUN
Why, what is there to celebrate?
MRS. SENGUPTA
Well now, for me
I have really said goodbye to Mr. Sengupta.
I'm finally and truly empowered
And I am free as a bee.
And as for you...
You know...
Someone else has said goodbye to Mr. Sengupta too.

RASHID
Soraya! My dear wife!

SORAYA
I know, I made a mistake.
I went—I don't deny.
I acted like a fool
Or worse
And with that sniveling, drivelling
Mingy, stingy
Measly, weaselly clerk.

RASHID
I won't — I don't deny.
I acted like a fool
Or worse
And with that sniveling, drivelling
Mingy, stingy
Measly, weaselly clerk.

But now he's done for
Done for good.

HAROUN
Khattam-Shud.

SORAYA
That is right, Haroun, my son.
Mr. Sengupta is Khattam-Shud.

RASHID
Welcome home Soraya
Welcome
Welcome home.
Scene 9 Haroun Wakes in His Bedroom at Dawn

SORAYA’S VOICE
Zembla, Zenda, Xanadu
All our dream worlds may come true
May come true
They may come true
All our dream worlds may come true.

HAROUN
Where am I? Who was that?
Oh
That was my mother singing.
I must be home after all.
I was afraid it was all a dream.
(Picks up toy Hoopoe.)
And my friend, my friend the Hoopoe,
So small now you can fit in my hand.
Please understand
My friend
It’s good to know
You will be here if I should need you.
You’ll be ready to go.
But I’ve had enough adventures for a while.

HOOPOE’S VOICE
But but but...

SORAYA’S VOICE
Fairy lands are fearsome too
Fearsome too
Fearsome too
Fairy lands are fearsome too.

HAROUN
What’s all this?
I have a new clock
New clothes and presents.
Of course, it must be my birthday.
Time is on the move again.

RASHID AND SORAYA
As I wander far from view
Read and bring me home to you
Home
Home
Bring me, bring me home to you.

HAROUN
Everything rhymes.
Everything chimes.
Yes, time is on the move again!

Finis

Charles Wuorinen, one of the world’s great composers, was an influential presence over the course of a lifetime in music. His portfolio included three operas, nine symphonies, and twenty concertos, in addition to works in almost every instrumental and vocal genre. He was recognized with the Pulitzer Prize in Music and a MacArthur Fellowship, among many other awards and honors.

At the time of his death in March 2020, Wuorinen had completed 279 compositions. His final work was his Second Percussion Symphony. Among his last works are Sudden Changes for Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony, Exsultet (Praeconium Paschale) for Francisco Núñez and the Young People’s Chorus of New York, his Second String Trio for the Goeyvaerts String Trio, and a duo for viola and percussion, Xenolith, for Lois Martin and Michael Truesdell.

The premiere of his opera on Annie Proulx’s Brokeback Mountain in 2014 was a major cultural event worldwide. “Representatives of more than 100 international media outlets and more than a dozen opera companies were present at the Teatro Real (an absolute record for opera in Spain) for the Brokeback premiere.” (Opera News)

Wuorinen’s previous opera Haroun and the Sea of Stories (1997–2001), based on the novel of Salman Rushdie, was premiered by the New York City Opera in fall 2004. In reviewing the work for New York Magazine critic Peter G. Davis wrote, “the score for Haroun will dazzle any receptive ear with its incredibly broad palate of finely tuned sounds and its irrepressible vitality—a singularly apt musical response to a sophisticated children’s novel that has very adult things to say about a free imagination trapped in a world of oppressive thought control.”

Though Wuorinen composed vocal works throughout his career, with his large-scale setting of Dylan Thomas’s A Winter’s Tale (1991) he began to devote increasing attention to works...
for the voice. These include Fenton Songs, Ashberyana and Alphabetic Ashbery, and It Happens Like This, a staged cantata for singers and large ensemble on poems of James Tate. In addition to his work in opera Wuorinen has also composed a variety of works for dance. These include five orchestral works for the New York City Ballet: Five (Concerto for Amplified Cello and Orchestra) choreographed by Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, Delight of the Muses, choreographed by Peter Martins; Martins also staged The Requihy for Igor Strawinsky and three works inspired by scenes from Dante’s Commedia: The Mission of Virgil (Inferno), The Great Procession (Purgatorio), and The River of Light (Paradiso). At the behest of the NYCW Wuorinen also made a two-piano arrangement of Arnold Schoenberg’s Variations for Orchestra Op. 31.

Percussion was always one of Wuorinen’s major interests, and he composed several works that have become classics of this medium: including Janissary Music (1966), Ringing Changes (1970), the Percussion Symphony (1976) for 24 players, Metagong for two pianos and two percussion, and the Marimba Variations (2009), commissioned by a consortium of 21 players. Nearly all of his orchestral scores feature elaborate use of percussion.

Wuorinen’s career started very early. Although temporarily distracted by a love of astrophysics, by the age of 6 he had set his sights on becoming a composer, writing little imitations of Mozart and Bach which he played on the piano. Always excelling academically, Wuorinen’s first professional performance took place in 1954 with the John Harms Chorus in New York’s Town Hall. In 1954 he also won the New York Philharmonic’s Young Composer’s Award. By 1960 Wuorinen began creating some works in his own unique voice, including the Variations for piano, a virtuoso work which the composer premiered himself, and various works for chamber combinations, orchestra, and chamber orchestra. Notable among these is a series of chamber concerti for cello, flute, violin and oboe written for friends and colleagues.

Over his career Wuorinen developed strong connections with many extraordinary performers including Peter Serkin—for whom he wrote three works with orchestra (Fourth Piano Concerto, Flying to Kahani, Time Regained) and several solos (Scherzo, Adagio, Intrada); cellist Fred Sherry (Five, three sets of unaccompanied Variations, Fast Fantasy, An Orbicle of Jasp); pianist Ursula Oppens (The Blue Bamboula, Ora); and the Brentano String Quartet for whom Wuorinen wrote his Fourth Quartet and Second Piano Quintet (with Serkin).

His works have been recorded on nearly a dozen labels including several releases on Naxos, Albany Records (Charles Wuorinen Series), John Zorn’s Tzadik label, and a CD of piano works performed by Alan Feinberg on the German label Col Legno.

Wuorinen’s works are published exclusively by C.F. Peters Corporation. He is the author of Simple Composition, used by composition students throughout the world.

An eloquent writer and speaker, Wuorinen lectured at universities throughout the United States and abroad, and served on the faculties of Columbia, Princeton, and Yale Universities, the University of Iowa, University of California (San Diego), Manhattan School of Music, New England Conservatory, State University of New York at Buffalo, and Rutgers University.

Wuorinen was also active as a performer, an excellent pianist and a distinguished conductor of his own works as well as other twentieth century repertoire. His orchestral appearances included those with the Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the American Composers Orchestra.

In 1962 he co-founded the Group for Contemporary Music, one of America’s most prestigious ensembles dedicated to performance of new chamber music. In addition to cultivating a new generation of performers, commissioning and premiering hundreds of new works, the Group was a model for many similar organizations which have appeared in the United States since its founding.

Wuorinen was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
Heather Buck has been praised by Opera News as “the kind of performer who makes it all look easy,” and is best described by opera critic David Shengold as “a lithe and impactful actress with an uncommonly beautiful soprano for the high-lying and testing repertory she serves.” Her operatic repertoire ranges widely, from creating such roles as Haroun in Charles Wuorinen’s Haroun and the Sea of Stories at New York City Opera, Alma Beers in Wuorinen’s Brokeback Mountain at Madrid’s Teatro Real, and Ku in Paola Prestini’s Gilgamesh; to singing US stage premieres of Helmut Lachenmann’s Little Matchgirl, Wolfgang Rihm’s Proserpina (title role), and Pascal Dusapin’s Faustus, the Last Night (Angel); to enjoying standard repertoire such as Beatrice et Bénédict (Héro, Opera Boston), Der Freischütz (Annchen, Opera Boston), L’Elisir d’Amore (Anina), Pearl Fishers (Leïla), The Magic Flute (Queen of the Night), and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Tytania).

Other operatic highlights include Philip Glass’s Orphee (Princesse), André Previn’s A Streetcar Named Desire (Stella), Dusapin’s Medeamaterial (Medea), Carlisle Floyd’s Wuthering Heights (Isabella Linton), Robert Aldridge’s Elmer Gantry (Lulu Baines), Dominick Argento’s The Boor (The Widow), and a staged production of Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater.

In concert, Heather appeared both at the Kennedy Center and Trinity Wall Street in Glass’s Symphony No. 5, Beijing’s National Center for the Performing Arts in Mahler’s Symphony No. 2, Marinsky Theater in Tan Dun’s Water Passion after St. Matthew, the Concertgebouw in Dusapin’s Faustus, the Last Night, Boston’s Symphony Hall in Handel’s Messiah, Ottawa’s National Arts Centre with the NAC Orchestra in Mozart’s Mass in C Minor, and Avery Fisher Hall and Carnegie Hall with the American Symphony Orchestra. Other appearances include Bernstein’s Songfest (Trinity Church, Time’s Arrow Festival), Esa-Pekka Salonen’s Five Images After Sappho (Utah Symphony Orchestra), Jacob Druckman’s Counterpoise (Los Angeles Symphony New Music Group), Orff’s Carmina Burana (San Antonio Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Symphony of Northwest Arkansas), George Crumb’s Ancient Voices of Children (Spatola Festival), Barber’s Knoxville, Summer of 1915 (Westchester Philharmonic), Kaija Saariaho’s Leino Laulut (US premiere, Orchestra of the League of Composers), and Louis Karchin’s Four Songs on Poems of Seamus Heaney (world premiere, Orchestra of the League of Composers, and Bowling Green New Music Festival).

Discography includes Aldridge’s Grammy Award-winning Elmer Gantry and the world premiere recording of Floyd’s Wuthering Heights with Florentine Opera; Argento’s Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night and The Boor with Odyssey Opera, Dello Joio’s The Trial at Rouen with BMOP and Odyssey Opera, and Glass’s Symphony No. 5 with Trinity Wall Street.

Stephen L. Bryant’s distinguished career in concert and opera has earned him a Grammy nomination and taken him around the world, with acclaimed performances in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. In the 2018–19 season, he performed in Charles Wuorinen’s opera Haroun and the Sea of Stories, based on the novel by Salman Rushdie, with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. In July 2019, he sang as a soloist with the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, in Tan Dun’s Water Passion after St. Matthew, Mr. Bryant’s 2015–2016 season included Tan Dun’s Water Passion after St. Matthew at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and with the Brussels Philharmonic, the roles of Cecco and Raimondo in Wagner’s Rienzi with the National Philharmonic, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the Bridgeport Symphony, and the title role in Mendelssohn’s Elijah with the Hartford Chorale.
A premier interpreter of the works of Academy Award–winning composer Tan Dun, Bryant created the role of Dante in the world premiere of the opera Marco Polo and was nominated for a Grammy for “Best Opera Recording” for the opera’s release on Opus Arte. He reprised the role for productions at London’s Barbican Centre (broadcast by the BBC), the Bergen International Festival, and with de Nederlandse Opera. He has also performed Water Passion after St. Matthew with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Internationale Bachakademie Stuttgart, MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony, and on tour in the Netherlands; and Tan Dun’s Orchestra Theatre II with the Hamburger Symphoniker. His other recent concert appearances include Mendelssohn’s Elijah with the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra; Handel’s Messiah with the Indianapolis and Pittsburgh symphonies; Mozart’s Requiem with the Washington National Opera Orchestra under the auspices of the Defiant Requiem Foundation.

Stephen L. Bryant has appeared in numerous roles with New York City Opera, most recently in productions of A Quiet Place and Intermezzo. Other opera performances include Mr. Gobineau in The Medium at Spoleto Festival USA; Robert Gonzales in Stewart Wallace’s Harvey Milk, and the Bonze in Madama Butterfly with San Francisco Opera; Capulet in Roméo et Juliette with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Michigan Opera Theatre, Chautauqua Opera, and Toledo Opera; George Milton in Of Mice and Men with Arizona Opera; and Indiana Elliot’s Brother in Thomson’s The Mother of Us All with Santa Fe Opera.

Matthew DiBattista, a tenor described as “brilliant” by Opera News, is continually in demand on some of the world’s most prestigious stages, having performed opera and concert works throughout the United States and Europe. He has sung with such conductors as Charles Dutoit, Seiji Ozawa, Keith Lockhart, Sir Andrew Davis and Andris Nelsons. Known for an exceptionally varied repertoire, Mr. DiBattista has performed over 60 different roles to date spanning the entire operatic repertoire. He has been on the roster of the Metropolitan Opera and performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Glimmerglass Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Cincinnati May Festival, Florida Grand Opera, New Orleans Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Opera Omaha, Tulsa Opera, Opera Boston, Virginia Opera, Opera Colorado, Tanglewood Music Center, Long Beach Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Minnesota Orchestra, Michigan Opera Theatre, Odyssey Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Dayton Philharmonic, Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra, and has appeared for eight out of nine straight seasons as a principal artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

Mr. DiBattista has taught voice and masterclasses at Boston University, the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, DeSales University, Lehigh University, and Boston College High School. He maintains a private voice studio in Boston.

A recent Grammy nominee for Best Performance in Opera for his portrayal of the Witch in Hänsel und Gretel with Michigan Opera Theatre, he can be heard as soloist in Ned Rorem’s Our Town (New World Records) and as the title role in Kamran Ince’s Judgment of Midas (Albany Records).

David Salsbery Fry, bass, has been praised for his “extremely sensual and almost impossibly deep tones” by concerti and is the grand prize winner and reigning laureate of the Bidu Sayão International Vocal Competition. A tireless advocate for new music, in the 2016–17 season alone he created roles in three world premiere operas: Scott Wheeler’s Naga, Louis Karchin’s Jane Eyre, and Chaya Czernowin’s Infinite Now (“World Premiere of the Year” in the 2017 Opernwelt critics survey). In 2019, he premiered the role of “S”, the Head of the Shin Bet, in Adam Maor’s The Sleeping Thousand at Festival d’Aix-en-Provence. He has also performed in four workshops for the Metropolitan Opera and given the world premiere performances of several solo and chamber works, including the song cycle ten songs of yesno by Osnat Netzer.
Other notable engagements include Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for St. Petersburg Opera, Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for Vero Beach Opera, Truffaldino in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Tanglewood, Arkel in * Pelléas et Mélisande* and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* in Tel Aviv, his Mostly Mozart debut in Stravinsky’s *Renard*, and Olin Blitch in *Susannah* with Opera at Rutgers.

Mr. Fry studied at Juilliard, the University of Maryland, and Johns Hopkins, and apprenticed with the Santa Fe Opera. He has written about the opera industry for *Classical Singer*, *The Liberated Voice*, *Opera and Disability*, and is a featured contributor to Claudia Friedlander’s *The Singer’s Audition & Career Handbook* and James Harrington’s *Building a Career in Opera from School to Stage: Operapreneurship*. David is a proud member of the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA).

This is Mr. Fry’s second recording for BMOP/sound. He can also be heard as the narrator in Charles Russell’s *Cymbeline*.

More on Mr. Fry’s life and career can be found at davidsalsberyfry.com and in the October 2015 issue of *Classical Singer*.

Brian Giebler, American tenor, praised for his “lovely tone and deep expressivity” by the *New York Times*, has established an impressive career singing virtuosic and eclectic repertoire “with shine and clarity” (*Opera News*). Whether performing Handel’s *Semele* with Harry Bicket and The English Concert or Stravinsky’s *Threni* with Franz Welser-Möst and the Cleveland Orchestra, “Brian Giebler use[s] his high-placed tenor with great skill” (*Opera Magazine*). His debut solo album *A Lad’s Love* was released in 2020 on Bridge Records. “The sweetness of Giebler’s impressive high tenor” and his “expressive and elegant phrasing” (*Cleveland Classical*) have been heard recently with Boston Baroque, Boston Early Music Festival, Prototype Festival (Adam in Julian Wachner’s *REV 23*), Grand Rapids Symphony, Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Naples Philharmonic, Syracuse Symphoria, Mark Morris Dance Group, TENET, Apollo’s Fire, Handel & Haydn Society, the Oratorio Society of New York, and regularly with the Trinity Baroque Orchestra, among others. Mr. Giebler has won awards at the Bethlehem Bach and American Traditions competitions, and took second-place in the 2018 Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition at Carnegie Hall. An active crossover artist, “the dashing Giebler, whose voice would make anyone melt” (*BroadwayWorld*), received critical acclaim and a Gregory Award nomination for his “faultless high tenor” (*Seattle Times*) in the role of Marius in *Les Misérables* (Seattle, WA). In 2018, Mr. Giebler revisited the role of Jack in *Into the Woods* with Charlottesville Opera, where he was lauded for “his spotless tenor vocals (that were) a highlight of the production” (*BroadwayWorld*). www.briangiebler.com

Wilbur Pauley, in four decades as a professional entertainer, has accumulated credits in a variety of musical and theatrical disciplines. His work in classical music extends from medieval liturgical dramas to contemporary operatic premieres, including roles in *The Ghosts of Versailles* at The Met, *McTeague* and *Amistad* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Atlas* and *Where’s Dick?* at Houston Grand Opera, and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* at New York City Opera. Mr. Pauley has appeared internationally at Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Teatro Nacional in Lisbon, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Triennale in Cologne, and other European festivals in Edinburgh, Spoleto, Ravenna, Ilmajo and Salzburg. Some of his numerous North American engagements have included Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco Symphony, Glimmerglass Opera, Philadelphia Orchestra, Edmonton Opera, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, Brooklyn Philharmonic, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has sung for nineteen seasons at Lyric Opera of Chicago.
Michelle Trainor, soprano, "gave one of the most satisfying performances of the evening...her voice is richer and more expressive than ever," hailed Opera News, for her portrayal of Brangain in Boston Lyric Opera’s The Love Potion, and the Wall Street Journal acclaimed that she “displayed a powerful, penetrating soprano as Brangain.” At Tuscia Opera Festival in Viterbo, Italy, she was praised by Filippo Tadonlini for her “intense and full-bodied vocalism”. Notable recent appearances include Michigan Opera Theatre, Nashua Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Emmanuel Music, and Odyssey Opera.

Equally at home with concert repertoire, Ms. Trainor has performed works such as Mozart’s Requiem, Mass in C Minor, Solemn Vespers, and his Missa brevis in B Flat, as well as Mahler’s Symphonies No. 2 and 8, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, Haydn’s Missa in Angustiis, and Vaughan Williams’s A Sea Symphony. Ms. Trainor made her Carnegie Hall debut as a soloist in Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 with Canterbury Choral Society.

Neal Ferreira, who has been praised for his “rich, powerful voice” and “bravura-filled stage presence,” is a nationally recognized lyric tenor based in Haverhill, MA. Dubbed a “Boston mainstay” by the Boston Globe, he recently appeared with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Hall as Tamino in The Magic Flute, with Emmanuel Music as Macbeath in Benjamin Britten’s version of The Beggar’s Opera, and with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood as Parpignol in a concert performance of La bohème under the baton of Maestro Andris Nelsons.

A much sought-after interpreter of new music, Ferreira’s successful performance as the Visitor in Boston Lyric Opera’s production of Philip Glass’s In the Penal Colony was called “poignant” by The Wall Street Journal and “perfect” by Opera News. He originated the role of Ferdinand in the world premiere performance and recording of Joseph Summer’s The Tempest with the Shakespeare Concerts, and he is also featured on the premiere recording of James MacMillan’s chamber opera, Clemency.

Mr. Ferreira has also appeared with Florida Grand Opera, the Glimmerglass Festival, Opera Colorado, Virginia Opera, Odyssey Opera, Anchorage Opera, Syracuse Opera, American Repertory Theatre, and Guerilla Opera.

Heather Gallagher’s prior engagements include the world premiere of The Nefarious, Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke and Mr. Hare (Margaret, Boston Lyric Opera), The Threepenny Opera (Betty; Jenny cover; BLO), Carmen (Mercedes; Carmen cover, BLO), and Patience (Lady Saphir, Odyssey Opera). Other credits include Hansel and Gretel (Hansel, BLO), The Merry Widow (Sylviane/Dodo), Werther (Käthchen; Charlotte cover), and The Love Potion (Isol’s Mother) with Boston Lyric Opera; The Daughter of the Regiment (Marquise, Opera North), Trouble in Tahiti (Dinah, Metrowest Opera), Les lettres de Werther (Charlotte, Boston Opera Collaborative), Sumeida’s Song (Asakir, Boston Opera Collaborative), and the title role in Carmen with Metrowest Opera. Ms. Gallagher is a Boston Lyric Opera Emerging Artist Alumna and a recipient of BLO’s 2016 Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence, in addition to First Place in the 2015 Peter Elvins Vocal Competition and First Place in Metrowest Opera’s 2014 Competition. For more information visit www.LiveInHG.com
Charles Blandy has been praised as “a versatile tenor with agility, endless breath, and vigorous high notes” (Goldberg Magazine) and “breathtaking” (The Boston Globe). He has appeared as the Evangelist in Bach’s St. Matthew Passion with Emmanuel Music along with regular appearances in their Bach Cantata series; and in Bach’s B minor Mass with the Apollo Chorus of Chicago, Orchestra Iowa, and the American Classical Orchestra (NYC). He has sung Handel’s Messiah with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Portland Baroque Orchestra, and American Bach Soloists. With Emmanuel Music he performed in John Harbison’s The Great Gatsby, Stravinsky’s Rake’s Progress, Mozart’s Abduction from the Seraglio and Magic Flute, and Handel’s Ariodante. Other appearances include: Boston Early Music Festival, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Handel and Haydn Society, Exsultemus, and the Charlotte Symphony. He studied at Tanglewood, Indiana University, and Oberlin College. He is originally from Troy NY. charlesblandy.com

Aaron Engebretson enjoys a varied solo career in opera, oratorio, and recital, and devotes considerable energy to the performance of established music and contemporary premieres. He has been featured as a guest soloist on stages from Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Boston’s Symphony Hall, to international appearances from Sapporo Japan’s Kitara Hall to Le Theatre de la Ville in Paris and the AmBul festival of Sofia, Bulgaria. He has been a guest of the Tanglewood, Ravinia, Rockport and Monadnock music festivals as well as many of the country’s finest symphony orchestras. Nominated for two Grammy Awards for Best Operatic Recording for his work with the Boston Early Music Festival and Radio Bremen (Thésée and Psyché, by Lully), he is in high demand as a recording artist. With Gil Rose and BMOPOdyssey Opera, Mr. Engebretson is featured on numerous recordings, from Virgil Thomson: Four Saints in Three Acts to A Water Bird Talk on Dominick Argento: The Boar, Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night, A Water Bird Talk.

Thomas Oesterling is heard frequently on the opera and concert stages of New England. The Boston Globe praised him for the “sweetness, awe and clarity” of his singing of Uriel in Haydn’s Creation under the baton of Robert Shaw. As Eisenstein in Die Fledermaus for Commonwealth Opera, he was acclaimed for having “played Eisenstein to the height of comic foppishness, bringing to bear a voice equally at home in the most serious and demanding repertoire.” In addition to Eisenstein, his roles include Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni, Count Almaviva in The Barber of Seville, Alfredo in La Traviata, and Acis in Acis and Galatea, which he recently performed with Ensemble Courant at UNC Chapel Hill. Mr. Oesterling is a proponent of new music, having participated in the New England premieres or revivals of many new works, including Lee Hoiby’s The Scarf and James Yannatos’s The Rocket’s Red Blare with Intermezzo Opera; and Leonard Bernstein’s A Quiet Place, Robert Sirot’a Cabaret Songs, and the world premiere of The Fall of the House of Usher by Phillip Glass at the American Repertory Theatre.
Steven Goldstein, New York-born tenor, enjoys a career both on the opera stage and as an actor in theater and films. He has performed with BMOP in their productions of Haroun and the Sea of Stories and The Fisherman and His Wife, as well as with Odyssey Opera in La Belle Hélène and Patience. Steven has sung many roles with companies including Squeak (Billy Budd), Harry (La Fanciulla del West), Third Jew (Salome), Scaramuccio (Ariadne), and Bardolfo (Falstaff), all with the Seattle Opera; Monostatos (Die Zauberflöte) and First Jew (Salome) with LA Opera; Don Basilio (Le Nozze di Figaro) with Vancouver Opera; Victorin (Die Toten Stadt), Don Curzio (Nozze), and Borsa (Rigoletto) with New York City Opera: Pedrillo (Die Entführung aus dem Serail) with Israeli Opera; as well as with Cleveland Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Gotham Chamber Opera, Tanglewood Music Festival, Bard Summerscape Festival, and the Metropolitan Opera where he debuted in 2011 as one of the Servants in Capriccio. He has also created roles in many new contemporary pieces, including works by Libby Larson, Gerald Busby, and James Sellars.

Gil Rose is a musician helping to shape the future of classical music. Acknowledged for his “sense of style and sophistication” by Opera News, noted as “an amazingly versatile conductor” by The Boston Globe, and praised for conducting with “admiral command” by The New York Times, over the past two decades Mr. Rose has built a reputation as one of the country’s most inventive and versatile conductors. His dynamic performances on both the symphonic and operatic stages as well as over 75 recordings have garnered international critical praise.

In 1996, Mr. Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP has won fourteen ASCAP awards for adventurous programming and was selected as Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra to receive this distinction. Mr. Rose serves as the executive producer of the GRAMMY® Award–winning BMOP/sound recording label. His extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Evan Ziporyn, and many others on such labels as Albany, Ars, Chandos, Cantaloupe, ECM, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound.

In September 2013, he introduced a new company to the Boston opera scene, Odyssey Opera, dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire. Since the company’s inaugural performance of Wagner’s Rienzi, which took the Boston scene by storm, Odyssey Opera has continued to receive universal acclaim for its annual festivals with compelling themes and unique programs, presenting fully staged operatic works and concert performances of overlooked grand opera masterpieces. In its first five years, Mr. Rose has brought 22 operas to Boston, and introduced the city to some important new artists. In 2016 Mr. Rose founded Odyssey Opera’s in-house recording label with its first release, Pietro Mascagni’s Zanetto, followed by a double disc of one-act operas by notable American composer.
Dominick Argento in 2018 and the world premiere recording of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 2020.

From 2012 to 2019, he was the Artistic Director of the longstanding Monadnock Music Festival in historic Peterborough, New Hampshire. Mr. Rose conducted several premieres as well as cycles of the symphonies of Beethoven and Mendelssohn. He made his opera stage directing debut in two revivals of operas by Dominick Argento as well as conducting, directing, and producing a production and world premiere recording of Ned Rorem’s opera *Our Town* in the historic Peterborough Townhouse.

Mr. Rose maintains a busy schedule as a guest conductor on both the opera and symphonic platforms. He made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 he debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony at the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and National Orchestra of Porto. In 2015, he made his Japanese debut substituting for Seiji Ozawa at the Matsumoto Festival conducting Berlioz’s *Béatrice et Bénédicte*, and in March 2016 made his debut with New York City Opera at the Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center. He has since returned to City Opera in 2017 (as Conductor and Director) in Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall and 2018 conducting a double bill of Rameau & Donizetti’s settings of *Pigmalione*. In 2019, he made his debut conducting the Juilliard Symphony in works of Ligeti and Tippett.

As an educator, he has served on the faculty of Tufts University and Northeastern University, and has worked with students at a wide range of colleges such as Harvard, MIT, New England Conservatory, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of California at San Diego, among others.

The *Boston Modern Orchestra Project* is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A unique institution of crucial artistic importance to today’s musical world, the *Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP)* exists to disseminate exceptional orchestral music of the present and recent past via performances and recordings of the highest caliber.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span nine decades. Each season, Rose brings BMOP’s award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory’s historic Jordan Hall in a series that offers the most diverse orchestral programming in the city. The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP’s distinguished and adventurous track record includes premieres and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison’s ballet *Ulysses*, Louis Andriessen’s *Trilogy of the Last Day*, and Tod Machover’s *Death and the Powers*. A perennial winner of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the orchestra has been featured...
at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston CyberArts Festival, the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization’s history to receive this distinction.

BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge’s Club Oberon and Boston’s Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2004 to 2012.

BMOPsound, BMOP’s independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP’s extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today’s most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of a 2020 GRAMMY® Award for Tobias Picker: Fantastic Mr. Fox, eight GRAMMY® Award nominations, and its releases have appeared on the year-end “Best of” lists of The New York Times, The Boston Globe, National Public Radio, Time Out New York, American Record Guide, Downbeat Magazine, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical “night at the symphony.” Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOP/sound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.

FLUTE
Sarah Brady*
Rachel Braude
Ashley Addington (piccolo)

OBEO
Jennifer Slowik*
Nancy Dimock

CLARINET
Michael Norsworthy*
Jan Halloran
Gary Gorczyca (bass clarinet)

BASSOON
Ronald Haroutunian*
Jensen Ling
Margaret Phillips (contrabassoon)

HORN
Kevin Owen*
Alyssa Dely
Neil Godwin
Alex Stening

TRUMPET
Terry Everson*
Eric Berlin

TROMBONE
Hans Bohn*
Victoria García-Daskalova

BASS TROMBONE
Christopher Beaudry

TUBA
Takatsugu Hagiwara

PERCUSSION
Robert Schulz*
Craig McNutt (timpani)
Nicholas Tolle
Jonathan Hess

HARP
Ina Zdorovetchi

PIANO
Linda Osborn

VIOLIN I
Gabriela Diaz*
Megumi Stohs
Susan Jensen
Gabriel Boyers
Zenas Hsu
Yumi Okada
MaeLynn Arnold
Colin Davis

VIOLIN II
Katharine Winterstein*
Colleen Brannen
Piotr Bukacz
Lilt Hartunian
Alyssa Wang
Nivedita Samnath
Annegret Klaus
Paola Caballero

VIOLA
Peter Sulski*
Noriko Futagami
Emily Rome
Alexander Vavilov
Samuel Kelder
Abigail Cross

CELLO
Rafael Popper-Keizer*
David Russell
Jing Li
Katherine Kayaian

BASS
Anthony D’Amico*
Bebo Shiu
Katherine Foss
CHARUS
Mariah Wilson, Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master

SOPRANO
Lauren Cook^ Celeste Godin^ Kathryn McKellar^ Kay Patterson

MEZZO-SOPRANO
Tascha Anderson^ Alexandra Dietrich^ Elena Snow^ Mauri Tetreault

TENOR
Colin Campbell (Third Herald)
Jeremy Fisher (Announcer)
Michael Merullo (Second Herald)
Wes Hunter (Man in Mustachio and Yellow Check Pants)

BARITONE
Allyn Court (First Herald)
Benjamin Pfell
Nathan Rodriguez (Man in Mustachio and Yellow Check Pants)
Cody McDonnell

KEY
*Principals
^Birds

Charles Wuorinen
Haroun and the Sea of Stories
Producer: Gil Rose
Recording and postproduction engineer: Joel Gordon
Assistant Engineer: Peter Atkinson
SACD authoring: Brad Michel
Haroun and the Sea of Stories is published by Edition Peters.
Haroun and the Sea of Stories was recorded on January 20–21, 2019, at Jordan Hall in Boston, MA.
BMOP extends gratitude to Gordon Getty for helping to bring this project to fruition. Gordon Getty would like to thank BMOP for the opportunity to support their recording of this marvelous opera by his dear friend Charles Wuorinen.

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