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CLASSICS

2 CD

FOR YOU



An Opera by **Michael Berkeley**
Libretto by **Ian McEwan**

Music Theatre Wales

Michael Rafferty Conductor

FOR YOU

MICHAEL BERKELEY / IAN MCEWAN

DISC 1

ACT 1

1	Scene 1: The Rehearsal Room	[9.58]
2	Scene 2: The Frieths' London house	[10.55]
3	Scene 3: The Frieths' London house	[7.48]
4	Scene 4: The Frieths' London house	[4.41]
5	Scene 5: Charles's Study	[10.31]
6	Scene 6: Charles's Study	[12.28]

Total Timings [56.23]

DISC 2

ACT 2

1	Scene 1: The Hospital	[14.35]
2	Scene 2: Charles's Study	[16.18]
3	Scene 3: The Hospital	[15.28]
4	Scene 4: The Rehearsal Room	[19.04]

Total Timings [65.28]



ALAN OPIE BARITONE
CHRISTOPHER LEMMINGS TENOR
RACHEL NICHOLLS SOPRANO
HELEN WILLIAMS SOPRANO
JEREMY HUW WILLIAMS BARITONE
ALLISON COOK MEZZO SOPRANO

THE MUSIC THEATRE WALES ENSEMBLE

MICHAEL RAFFERTY CONDUCTOR

FOR YOU

Opera in two acts by **Michael Berkeley**
Libretto by **Ian McEwan**

Commissioned by **Music Theatre Wales**

COMPANY

Charles Frieth, composer and conductor
Robin, Charles's assistant (doubles as Junior Doctor)
Joan, a young horn player (doubles as Nurse and WPC White)
Antonia, Charles Frieth's wife (doubles as WPC Black)
Simon, Antonia's friend and doctor
Maria, the Frieths' Housekeeper

Conductor

Alan Opie (baritone)
Christopher Lemmings (tenor)
Rachel Nicholls (soprano)
Helen Williams (soprano)
Jeremy Huw Williams (baritone)
Allison Cook (mezzo soprano)

Michael Rafferty

THE MUSIC THEATRE WALES ENSEMBLE

Flute
Oboe/cor anglais
Clarinet/bass clarinet
Bassoon/Contra Bassoon
Horn
Trumpet
Trombone
Percussion

Joanna Shaw
Owen Dennis/Joseph Sanders
Duncan Prescott
John Orford
Richard Dilley
Torbjörn Hultmark
Emma Boyd
Julian Warburton

Harp
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
Double bass

Ruth Potter
Miranda Fulleylove
Philippa Mo
Rose Redgrave
Robin Michael
Kenneth Knussen

The world premiere of *For You* was presented in association with the Royal Opera House as part of the ROH2 programme in the Linbury Studio Theatre on 28 October 2008.

The production was directed by Michael McCarthy and designed by Simon Banham and Holly McCarthy. Photographs of the original production included in this booklet were taken by Clive Barda.

'For You', opera in two acts by Michael Berkeley and Ian McEwan.

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For You was a co-production with Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon



Act 1

The opera opens with the chaotic sounds of tuning as Charles Frieth, pre-eminent composer and prodigious womaniser, prepares to rehearse one of his early works. He begins to conduct and muses on how this music no longer touches him. As his frustrations rise, he is struck by a wrong note. Charles accuses and berates the horn player, Joan, while his assistant, Robin, fears that this will be another of his episodes – “humiliation, forgiveness, then seduction.”

At home, Charles’s wife Antonia is visited by her doctor, Simon, a long-standing friend. She is ill and needs further urgent tests, but she is terrified of another general anaesthetic. There is a deep unspoken attraction between them. Unnoticed, Maria, the Frieths’ Polish housekeeper, watches the end of their conversation. Left alone, she reveals her passionate idolisation of Charles and her contempt for Antonia and Simon.

Robin enters. He resents working for Charles and tries ordering some coffee from Maria, but she’s having none of it. She is proud and sings about her homeland with a melody that is a recurring theme in the opera but is here treated like a folk-song.

Charles arrives home in a state of excitement, accompanied by Joan. He has written a 32-bar cadenza for horn to be inserted into his new work, *Demonic Aubade*, due to be rehearsed tomorrow. Robin will have to stay up all night writing out the parts. Charles flatters Maria, who can barely contain her excitement, and asks her to bring supper for two to his studio. She is all too willing to serve the great man. Charles then asks for a word with her in private. He enquires how Antonia is and becomes disturbed when Maria reveals that Simon has visited the house. She finally declares that the Doctor loves Antonia and leaves Charles alone to reflect on his situation. Jealous but sickened, too, by his own behaviour, Charles decides to change his ways and calls Maria back to witness his promise that Joan will be his last fling. Unfortunately, Maria believes he is making a promise to *her*. She is almost delirious with delight.

Charles’s Studio. Charles can’t understand why he isn’t able to make love and persuades Joan to try again. Maria bursts in with supper, separating the lovers and tidying the bed around them. She is followed by Robin, who has found a problem with the music he’s been asked to copy, and then by Antonia, with a bag packed for hospital, and closely followed by Simon. Everyone is experiencing confusion and pain – mixed with a degree of self-righteousness.

Act 2

The Hospital. As Antonia comes round from the operation she remembers the beginnings of her love for Charles. He sits in the shadows listening. He loves her and is full of remorse, and when he tries to convince her of this she reveals how hurt she has been. Charles becomes agitated and accidentally knocks over a monitor, just as the Doctor and nurse arrive. Simon and Charles finally confront each other. As Simon asserts his authority, Charles states his claim over his wife and storms out.

Charles’s studio. Maria and Robin are once again arguing about Charles. Maria declares he is a god amongst men. Just then Charles returns from the hospital and sees that Robin hasn’t finished writing the parts. He dispatches Robin and bemoans the frustration and anguish his faithless marriage has caused, joking that if murder was amongst her household duties he’d send Maria to the hospital! When he goes on to ask if she has ever contemplated marriage her world is turned upside down. She is convinced he is asking her to marry him and starts to imagine a time when he will be hers alone, with the past wiped clean.

The Hospital. Antonia is still weak and Simon warns the staff not to leave Charles alone with her. He too struggles with his own guilt. Antonia wakes up and seeing Simon at her bedside it seems that at long last they can share their love. Simon leaves and as Antonia drifts off to sleep Maria emerges from the shadows, wearing Charles’s coat. To a wild variation of the music of confusion, she turns off Maria’s life support and departs, leaving the coat behind.

The Rehearsal Room, next morning. Charles begins conducting his *Demonic Aubade*. This is the work he has aspired to all his life. It is his artistic zenith and personal credo, a mixture of vision and hubris. As it reaches its climax Simon arrives, accompanied by two police officers with the coat. Charles is cross about the interruption and can’t believe what they are saying. It just doesn’t make sense. As he is arrested for his wife’s murder he realises what must have happened. He begs Maria to reveal the truth but it is too late.

Now she finally has him all to herself.

OBSESSION: BERKELEY AND MCEWAN'S FOR YOU

The thirty-year-old friendship between composer Michael Berkeley and author Ian McEwan first bore fruit in their 1982 oratorio, *Or Shall We Die?* McEwan has said how drawn he is to the lyrical and expressionistic emotion of Berkeley's music while the composer has long admired the economy of McEwan's writing, which he felt would be ideally suited to writing an opera libretto; discussions about an operatic partnership were ongoing over the years, culminating in *For You*, commissioned by Music Theatre Wales who premiered the work in 2008.

'Opera', Berkeley maintains, is uniquely suited as an art form to 'the exploration of the inner light and darkness of human beings', for music, more than any other artistic medium, can 'point up an inner turmoil of realised and frustrated desires'. It is perfect for the issues addressed in Berkeley's previous operas as well as in McEwan's novels and stories – how the predicaments that human beings face subsequently colour their lives. In Berkeley's first opera, *Baa Baa Black Sheep* (1993), we see Kipling's blighted childhood experience which was then translated in his adult work into themes of revenge; in his second opera, *Jane Eyre* (2000),

Rochester's actions as a young man have appalling consequences, not only for the woman upstairs, his mad wife, and for Jane, but also in his own blinding, while in *For You*, Maria's obsessive and deluded love leads to tragedy all round. This theme is also at the heart of his next operatic project, McEwan's novel *Atonement*, to a libretto by the poet, Craig Raine – another story predicated on a dreadful mistake.

In *For You* McEwan and Berkeley decided to explore sexual obsession, overweening self-regard and the abuse of power. But it is also about the more subtle gratification that can be obtained through ingratiation and intrigue. Two sources helped fashion McEwan's impressive and highly effective libretto: *Doktor Glass*, a novel by the Swede Hjalmar Söderberg, where a doctor, in love with the wife of a patient, abandons his ethical principles, and *Leporella*, a short story by the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig in which a maid, having interpreted her master's offhand comments as a declaration of love, undertakes a terrible action to, in her mind, free him. In *For You*, the story of the opera is of a similar calamitous, deluded love, which causes Maria to do something truly horrific for which all the other characters will suffer.

It was important to both creative partners that the opera should have arias, duets and larger ensembles, but which flowed from one to the other rather than as set numbers. The central character, the composer, Charles Frieth, was conceived as a bass/baritone role, although due to the withdrawal of the original singer through illness, the premiere performances (as on this recording) were sung by a baritone, Alan Opie, for whom Berkeley made a number of adjustments. The opera is in two acts in which the action moves forward at a gripping pace. Act 1 introduces the main protagonists, deftly delineating their characters through their music. Once each character is established, the compositional process is essentially monothematic, new ideas being derived organically from what has gone before and during the second act, music from the first is reworked. The vocal writing merges naturalistic recitative and arioso with the set pieces. Each individual has their own leitmotif and orchestral colour; for instance Charles's down-trodden assistant, Robin, is a light, fussy tenor with busy, humorous music to match.

Berkeley has commented that McEwan's words naturally suggested musical ideas to him. Among these, three in particular provide important recurring reference points during the opera, the first at the beginning where an orchestra is tuning up; Berkeley

decided he wanted this music to be 'composed' rather than improvised; it continues seamlessly into the action and subsequently is used as a musical image of chaos and confusion. The second is a melody heard at its fullest as a quasi-Polish folksong sung by Maria in Act 1, Scene 2, a phrase or fragment of which occurs at pivotal moments in the drama. Finally there is a falling two-note phrase, most often in semitones, accompanying the words 'For you' or 'For me'. The orchestra too has a major role in colouring and commenting on the dramatic action and the inner thoughts of the characters. Both acts build to the sextets that conclude them, and these, together with the duets between Simon and Antonia, and Charles's masterwork, *Demonic Aubade*, are constructed through the use of passacaglias, albeit ones in which the ground bass lines are deliberately slightly out of phase between the instruments, thus creating a fractious edge to the music. Another aspect that is abundantly apparent is Berkeley's wide general knowledge of opera: the Act 2 sextet alludes to the final scene in *Don Giovanni*; the concept of the Polish folksong had its origin in Janáček's *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*, whilst the reference to Mozart's *The Magic Flute* in Act 2 prompts an appropriate quotation. Indeed the opera is also Mozartian in its portrait of the frailty of human beings.

At the opening of Act 1, the angular, snappy, dissonant music (with augmented 4ths to the fore) of the orchestral introduction establishes the character of Charles – this monster of a man and serial adulterer – whose arrogance, aggressiveness and bullying is all too evident in the music. Later in the opera Charles's frailty is also revealed. Antonia and Simon are introduced by still, elegiac music synonymous both with the emotional emptiness of her and Charles's marriage and the early more consonant musical language of her husband in their days of happiness. Through her lyrical, more diatonic music she is established as a strong, dignified woman, who has not succumbed to being unfaithful to her Charles despite his many dalliances. When Simon explains that she needs surgery, her fear is caught by a sinewy ostinato-like phrase in the orchestra, superbly suggestive of the anaesthetic creeping through her veins. Simon's pent up feelings for Antonia are equally apparent in his proscribed musical line as gradually the music swells into a duet between them of ardent, albeit unspoken love.

Maria, the last principal character takes centre-stage in Scene 3, the unnerving phrase for cor anglais accompanying her first words subtly suggesting her mental instability. This is confirmed in the opening part of the next scene when she

reveals her obsessive infatuation for Charles as the music, again with the dark hues of the cor anglais prominent, mirrors her delusion that 'all his music would be for me'. Shortly after, another aspect of her character is revealed through the 'Polish' folksong, which shows a touching softness and the fact that she is literally and metaphorically an outsider (though working from within). She is also cunning, as in Scene 4, when, in an Iago-like economy of the truth, she mentions the word 'bed' to Charles, thus putting ideas into his mind which he misinterprets, a passage where the vibraphone is used to sinister effect. Meanwhile the characters of Robin (Charles's effete musical assistant and would-be composer) and Joan, the horn player who becomes Charles's latest conquest, are also brought skilfully to life. In the closing sextet, initially to melancholic music the characters express their individual pain and confusion, the voices surging to a resounding chorale-like climax at the words 'Silence and deceit', before turning almost hysterical as the music of chaos engulfs them to leave the drama literally up in the air.

As if picking up the threads of the story, Act 2 begins with the orchestra playing the final bars of the previous act. The atmosphere of the sterile, oppressive hospital room with its machines flashing is conjured by pulsing staccato harp and

piccolo notes. In some of the most poignant and tender music in the opera, Antonia recalls the first flush of love between her and Charles who, as is clear from the music, is now vulnerable and genuinely fearful of losing her. When Antonia refers to Charles's early oboe concerto Berkeley quotes a phrase from his own youthful concerto for the instrument – a logical and apt conceit.

During this act Berkeley and McEwan created two sections which are deliberately used to contrast and offset the tension of the main drama. In the second scene Robin sings an insouciant aria, light and airy, to music that Berkeley imagines he might write in comparison to Charles. There is also a catalogue of percussion instruments (another tongue-in-cheek reference to *Don Giovanni*) in which Charles submits the hapless Robin to a psychological display of humiliation evoked by a menacing, syncopated and jazzy rhythmic accompaniment, which all too vividly presents a further musical manifestation of Charles's abuse and enjoyment of his power and position.

After the crucial exchange between Maria and Charles when, not only does she think he is urging her to kill Antonia, but that he is proposing marriage, Maria's lambent aria, accompanied by the sensuous colour of alto flute and harp, aches

with bitter-sweet music. Her murder of Antonia is accompanied by the flaying music of chaos. Finally the opera comes full circle when Charles rehearses the work he believes is the summation of his art, *Demonic Aubade*, in which both McEwan's words and Berkeley's music respond to the mystery of artistic creativity. Summoning up all his energies Berkeley composes an aria of impassioned power in which Charles's hubris is laid bare; the music emerges out of the dark depths of the orchestra and slowly uncoils, rising to two intense climaxes. As the drama reaches its ironic denouement Charles's vulnerability is revealed again, for with his realisation that Antonia really is dead, he is distraught; his love for her was indeed genuine. He pleads with Maria to explain the truth, but in a masterly stroke, Berkeley sets her words to the music of her previous aria making it abundantly clear that she has him exactly where she wants him – trapped. His tragedy is that he could not help himself; like Don Giovanni he is now in hell and is dragged off in handcuffs. The opera ends with Maria's sinister triumph as she (quoting the stage directions) 'nonchalantly and knowingly' hums the Polish folksong.

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LIBRETTO

ACT 1

1 SCENE ONE

Lights down. The discordant sounds of the orchestra warming up. Violins on open strings, sudden runs on brass, woodwind etc. Slowly, this tangle begins to organize itself. As it does so, Charles Frieth comes upstage, baton in hand, towards the orchestra. He is an eminent composer in his midsixties, now rehearsing one of his own early works. From the shadows he is joined by his secretary, Robin. Lingering in the background is Maria, the Frieths' Polish housekeeper.

[1.42]

Charles Don't tell me. I know that look of yours. How long do I have them?

Robin Only twenty minutes more. No longer, or we have to pay them overtime. Maestro, you know the rules are very strict.

Charles Damn your rules man.

Robin They are not my rules.

Charles I said damn your rules.

He raises his baton.

This has been a long morning. I'm tired and unhappy. My temper is beginning to fray. Let us try again, from letter D, the tutti marked piano ...

He mops his brow with a towel and lets it fall into Maria's hands. He conducts, the music finds its course.

Tenderly ...
Tenderly ...
And now attack!

Charles comes away, lost in thought, confiding while the music continues.

It does not touch me, this music of my younger self, when my name was unknown and I lived on nothing but sex and cigarettes and fast food, when I was in love again every other week. I hear it clearly, each intricate part,

I understand it, even admire it, but I cannot feel its passion, the longing, the sharp hunger, the lust for newness of that young man. It does not touch me now. The car is ready, Sir! The usual table, Maestro? The Minister of Culture is waiting. A famous man with a rich wife—but the dimmed perception, the expiring powers, stamina, boldness, vigour wilting under the weight of years. The long descent to uselessness. Every man's fate, how banal it is, and still it makes me angry, the clock that's beating me to extinction. Stop! Enough! How can I make it stop?

He has returned to the orchestra.

And stop and stop and stop!
God fucking damn, I called a halt. Am I standing here for nothing, waving my arms?

Through this, the orchestra comes to a slow, untidy halt. Silence.

I am not entirely deaf or stupid. There was a note, a wrong note, a broken note, an F sharp that should have been a G, a hot needle in my ear.

It was the French horn. You, yes you, my dear.

[7.56]

Joan stands, holding her instrument. Anxiously, Robin comes forward.

Robin Charles, she is a most promising player.

Charles You my dear. Yes, you.

Joan I did my best with what you wrote.

Robin Not this. Please God, not this again—

Charles Have you ever played that thing before?

Joan The note was high, almost beyond the instrument's range.

Robin Humiliation, then forgiveness, then seduction.

Charles Do you know which end to blow through?

Joan I'll try again. Please let me try again.

Trio

[8.06]

{Robin}
{Charles, she is a most distinguished player.
{Not this. Please God, not this again—
{Humiliation, then forgiveness, then seduction.
{Charles}
{You my dear. Yes, you.
{Have you ever played that thing before?

{Do you know which end to blow through?
{Joan}
{I did my best with what you wrote.
{The note was high, almost beyond the instrument's range.
{I'll try again. Please let me try again.

Joan leaves, distraught. Charles leaves separately. Robin remains with the orchestra.

2 SCENE TWO

The sitting room of the Frieths' London house. Charles's wife, Antonia, watches as Simon Browne, a surgeon, drink in hand, admires a wall of paintings.

Antonia It was kind of you to see me at home.

Simon I'm here as an old friend, not as your doctor.

Antonia I should be taking my turn in your waiting room.

Simon Another chance to see these beauties—
Ancher, Munther, O'Keeffe. And you ...

Antonia Yes, some say these women painters were on the verge of greatness. But Simon, look at me. I'm so full of fears. Another operation. I cannot bear it. Must it be so soon? I need to ask you—is there no other way?

Simon A resection, and a biopsy to put our minds at rest. A relatively simple procedure. Trust me when I tell you, there is no other way, and we must act now.

He pauses.

Is it your old fear that's haunting you?

Antonia Yes. It's ridiculous, I know. My old fear, the anaesthetic, the general anaesthetic. The word 'general' sounds so sinister to my ear.

Simon Perfectly safe these days. How many times must we go through this?

[3.19]

Antonia I dread that moment of oblivion, that rehearsal for death. The cheerful porter with his trolley coming to collect me from the ward. I think of Charon, the boatman, taking me across the River Styx. The corridors, fluorescent ceiling lights, the elevator to a special little room, the calming voices, the cannula inserted, the chemical poison, the coldness racing up my arm with such violent speed, and then, nothing, nothing.

Simon Exactly, nothing, and nothing to fear, and when you wake ...

[5.40]

Unnoticed, Maria comes in with a tray.

Antonia If I wake. What did the poet write of death? The anaesthetic from which none comes round.

Simon Best not to think of Larkin at such times.

Antonia I know you think I'm a neurotic woman.

Simon I think you are an unhappy woman.

He pauses.

Where's Charles? Does he know? I heard his concerto on the radio. I don't pretend to like his music. The notes seem plucked at random, and what a din! A choir of tomcats! But I'm a simple type who prefers Vivaldi.

Antonia He's working late.

Simon Again?

Antonia Working late again. Working is the word that we cling to, Working is our household euphemism. We live a privileged life of lies.

Simon (*softly*) You must pack a case. I'll come back for you tonight if I can find a bed that's free.

He goes towards her, hesitates.
Too much to say.

Antonia Yes. Too much to say.

Simon Impossible to say it.

Antonia Impossible. And no need.

Simon Because you know.

Antonia We know.

Simon Only silence.

Antonia Silence will say it all.

Simon takes his coat.

Simon I'm late. I must leave you. A doctor's duty.

Antonia The hospital? At this hour?

Simon A reception at the Garrick in honour of a retiring surgeon. The glinting tray of canapés, an indecent multitude of colleagues,

oily speeches of passionate insincerity. I think we can all agree, this is not an age of plain speaking.

Antonia, you must not worry, it will work out well.

Antonia You must go.

As they turn, they notice Maria.
Simon nods to her and leaves.

[10.02]

Antonia Maria. How long have you been standing there?

Maria I just came in this moment with refreshments for your visitor.

Antonia I did not hear you.

Maria The door was open, the doctor was just leaving.

She sets down the tray.

Will it be two for dinner tonight?

Antonia I shan't eat tonight. I'll be in my room, and don't want to be disturbed.

Antonia leaves.

3 SCENE THREE

Maria Yes, I agree, a privileged life of lies, But no one asks for my opinion— Maria, who cooks his intimate late-night dinners, who launders the love-stains from his sheets, removes the cup with its bloody lipstick cicatrix, who sees it all, the misery uncoiling because in this house no one speaks. Oh, the worthless, worthless women he wastes his time on.

She complains, she whines about his misdemeanours, the little crime she longs to commit herself. But she prefers virtuous hollow fidelity, and sour long-suffering so she can feel superior, and tragic, while her illness is her only career. She won't even kiss the good doctor panting at her heels ... But she married the most exciting man in the world. A lion among hyenas.

A genius, they say. I say, a god. The room he enters fills with golden light.

It's the details that possess me—the manly angle of his jaw, the dark hairs curling on his wrist, the pale hand that holds the baton,

the penetrating gaze of dark brown eyes, a voice of warmth and power ... She married him, she has his name, but she cannot keep him from other women. Ah, if only, if only ... I would give him what he wants—I think I know.

Indeed I know his needs—the little sensuous cruelty he likes to inflict, and anal and oral, and strange positions. Yes, me, Maria!

To drive all other women from his life! Then all his music would be for me, and I would make him joyous! Delirious! Ecstatic! Mine, and mine alone!

[3.48]

Robin enters.

Robin Oh, Maria, it's only you. I wondered who was in here. Be a sport and make some coffee. I've had such an awful day with Charles. What a piss-pot pompous fool he is, a bully, a fraud, a mediocrity. Oh God, I'm beginning to sound like him myself.

A pot of coffee, and a cheese plate?

Furious silence

... with pickles?

Maria You know where the kitchen is. I'm not paid to fetch and carry for you.
And don't leave a mess!

Robin Is everyone from Poland like you?

Maria In Poland we speak our minds.

Robin I always meant to visit, but now you've put me off.

Maria relents and brings the tray to where he sits.

Maria

[4.47]

Aria

Oh, Robin, you should go. It's so beautiful and sad. We have virgin forests of the kind you lost in England five hundred years ago, where wolves and eagles hunt, and clear rivers you can put your lips to and drink.

Robin How romantic! I've heard the cities are rather grim, and in between are treeless potato fields.

Maria The conquering armies from east and west forgot to crush that lingering beauty, though they almost crushed our spirits. But now we are free there's a newer sadness in our hearts. The lovely town where I grew up, is falling silent, becoming old. We, the young, are fleeing west—the plumbers, nurses, carpenters, should be making a new Poland—but money has lured us away.

Robin Don't blame money, blame yourselves. If you really care about your hometown, go back there, or stop complaining.

Charles (*offstage*) Robin! I need you. Goddamnit man, where are you?

Robin Not again! Will I ever get a moment's peace!

Maria So resign, or stop complaining.

Enter Charles. Someone is with him,

but we cannot quite see.

4 SCENE FOUR

Charles (*exultant, manuscript in his hand*) Ah! Robin, the master of elusiveness! Always hiding when I need you. Tomorrow's rehearsal, the orchestral parts, are they all done?

Robin I did them all last week.

Charles There's an insertion I need to make. You'll have to work all night. Thirty-two bars for solo horn ... floating, tumbling, sweetly falling, gently sustained by muted strings ...

Joan comes forward.

Joan A thing of pure beauty, In a moment of wild inspiration this afternoon!

Robin (*aside*) A moment of pure beauty in bed—an insertion he needed to make!

Joan So exciting! We had our differences, then we made it up in a flash.

Now we have a working relationship.

Charles And Maria, you dear, you wonderful woman, without whom this house would fall apart, we need champagne, and supper for two, in the studio.

Maria Jugged hare or goulash? Venison or bream? Pommés purées or sautéed? Beetroot in a crust of salt? Figs in port with lavender ice cream?

Charles I don't care. Just bring it. My Demonic Aubade, wild summation of all I know, all I've ever felt, brought to new expression, a new dawn in thirty-two bars. Dear boy, history will count you privileged to write out these parts.

Joan Not since Britten, not since Mozart, did the horn have such a friend.

Robin To work till breakfast on my evening off—I humbly thank you from the bottom of my worthless heart.

Maria (*aside*) 'You dear, you wonderful woman, without whom' ... I'm in a dream, I can hardly stand. He's sending me a message over the head of this ambitious tart.

Charles A player of such sensitivity and skill, such a gentle touch. I feel she understands me.

Joan For you, I'll always give of my best.

[3.43]

Charles Maria, a word in private if you please.

Maria Oh my heart ...

She follows him out.

Robin Humiliation, forgiveness, seduction in a single afternoon—oh, the predatory vigour of the newly old, spending the last of their small change.

5 SCENE FIVE

Charles's study.

Charles How was Antonia today? Did she see anyone? Did she go out? Was she unhappy?

Maria No more than usual. She moped in that restless way of hers, tried to read, watched the TV for half an hour, drifted round the house. But her spirits lifted when her good friend came, the doctor.

Charles He came again? Simon with the soft-eyed bedside manner. Did he stay long?

Maria I don't like to say this, It's not my business ...

Charles But it's mine, so tell me—

Maria I tried not to notice, I don't like to spy. They were standing close, he took her hand, she gazed at him, he talked about a bed ...

Charles A bed? He talked about a bed? By what strange logic am I feeling sick?

Maria He likes her ...

Charles Likes?

Maria He's fond ...

Charles Fond? You mean ...

Maria I mean he loves ...

Charles He loves her!

Ah, the knowing medical touch.
And she ...

Maria Is still young. She's lonely,
she thinks she's beautiful,
she thinks she's ill,
she's full of sorrows.

He gestures her away

Maria leaves

[2.37]

Charles Full of sorrows because
I neglect her for my work,
and for my ... for my pursuits.
There's no justice in my anger,
but nor can I deny it.
Under my nose, in my house,
a man meddling with my wife
in the name of medicine!
I'll show him some double standards

with my fists!
That smooth-faced bastard,
that cheat, that liar, that
professional disgrace!
Am I going insane?
I know enough to know the blame is
also mine.
'Still young', 'lonely', 'full of sorrows',
yet the woman waiting through
there is my fifth this year, perhaps
the sixth.
Reliable, loving Antonia,
this was always our arrangement.
But have I got the strength of will
to stop?
I hate the doctor, and I hate myself.
Maria, I need you. Maria!
(Have I got the strength? I need
someone to shame me into keeping
my word).

Maria enters

Maria, I've made an important
decision.
Be my witness to this promise.
That girl you saw will be my last.
I make this promise now,
in front of you.

Maria You are making this promise
to me?

Charles Yes, to you. You know me well.
I'm making this promise to you.
She is the last, I swear to you.
I'm counting on you
to hold me to my word.

Charles leaves.

Maria I could tell myself it's a dream,
a psychotic interlude, pure desire
warping my senses,
wish fulfilment running wild—
but I know what I know.
Like all men, he barely understands
himself.
Now at last he realizes
what I've always known.
He's made his promise,
And he's almost, almost, almost mine.

[8.21]

Interlude

☐ SCENE SIX

*Charles's studio. He and Joan are on
a bed among a tangle of
sheets—becalmed.*

Joan They say an erection never lies.
But this is also eloquent,
when you shrink before my touch.

Charles I do not understand,
I just do not understand.

Joan You think I'm ugly, or too
demanding.

Charles That's not it at all.
You're beautiful, and I love
your demands. Please don't get dressed.
This has never happened to me before.

Joan That's what men always say.
Perhaps you're too old?

[1.30]

Charles Don't say that. Don't
get dressed.
Come and sit beside me here.
That's right. And kiss me, kiss me.
You see. That's better.
I'll make it up to you, I promise.

They continue to embrace and kiss.

Joan Yes, that's better. Yes, I see.
I'm sorry for my angry words,
I love your kisses, and
I'm beginning to feel you now ...

Charles My darling, everything will
be fine.
My appetite is as strong as ever ...

[3.25]

Maria bustles in, bearing a tray.

Maria For you ...
Beetroot baked in salt,
venison to follow,
Just as you ordered ...

Charles This is kind of you, but ...

Maria Figs in port, a hearty wine,
perfect for a working dinner,
for busy musicians who never know
when to stop.

*She fusses round them, determined
to separate them, plumping
up pillows, arranging a table for
Charles and Joan to eat in bed.*

Charles Maria, this is kind of you,
but you should have knocked.

Maria The tray was heavy and my
hands weren't free.
Shall I open the wine?

*She takes the bottle. A knock at the
open door.*

Charles Now who the hell is this?

Robin enters

[4.40]

Robin Ah, Maestro, you're busy.
Never mind.
There's a problem with the score.
Four bars missing from the strings.

Charles Four bars missing?
Don't talk rot!
For goodness sake, the violins repeat.
Are you blind? Can't you see the
mark?

Robin There is no mark, and my eyes
are good.

[5.12]

*Antonia enters with suitcase,
followed by Simon.*

Charles My God! Now this. She's
leaving me for the doctor and his
bed.

Antonia approaches.

Antonia We agreed you'd never bring
your work home.
Is this the flute whose husband owns
a bank,
or the harp with the autistic son,
or the cello with the house in Wales?

Joan None of these. I am the horn.

Antonia Of course. The horn of plenty.

Joan That's cheap.

Antonia No, my dear, it is you who are cheap.

Has he offered you yet your solo of thirty-two bars?

And promised a concerto?

Angrily, Joan gets out of bed.

Joan (to Charles) Is this how it goes? Is this how it always goes?

Antonia You are but one variation on a theme.

[8.07]

Sextet

(Charles beseeching Antonia; Simon trying to draw her away; Robin addressing Simon; Joan furiously getting dressed; Maria aside.)

{**Charles**—I'm losing you, and I'm to blame.

{**Antonia**—Home and hospital—scenes of pain.

{**Robin**—Oh, the sorrow that follows the arrogance of fame.

{**Simon**—This is not an age for speaking plain.

{**Joan**—Offering thirty-two bars to a woman again!

{**Maria**—He's made his promise, I'm making my claim.

Tutti

Silence and deceit,
ambition and defeat,
love, music, loyalty, self-delusion—
these are the elements of fatal
confusion.

ACT 2

1 SCENE ONE

Hospital. Around Antonia's bed are leads, tubes, life-support machines. The steady rhythm of the heart monitor sets the pulse of her thoughts as she begins to stir.

Antonia (half asleep) She said nothing at all,
and waited for him to come back.

She wakes

Aria

On the border of memory and dreaming
I saw a couple on a London bridge
in an early evening snowstorm.

Hand in hand, wild in love,
with plans and hilarious cries
they strolled to the other side.

And oh what care they gave each other,
such intensive care in bed.

His work, her money, their freedom—
with no idea how grown-up life
could uninvent their love.

Then at last the idea came
with a roar of delighted applause
and with loud praise, and giddy fame,
profiles, parties, open doors.

And he grew to the shape of a lion,
his musical ambition swelled,
while she shrank to the size
of a household mouse.

Travel, concerts, hotels,
women in far-off places—
the world grew noisier and sad.
His work wouldn't tolerate children—
the house was silent and cold.
And I said nothing at all,
and waited for you to come back.

Fade up a low spot to reveal Charles in a chair, in his overcoat.

[5.45]

Charles Antonia, I remember that
snowstorm on the bridge when we
crossed the river to my first concert
at the Festival Hall, and as we walked
we were singing from *The Magic Flute*,

Mann und Weib und Weib und Mann—
my God, how happy we were.

He goes to her bedside.

Antonia Your oboe concerto, so
graceful and free—
you told me it was a love letter in music.
And when the crowds could let you go
we drank champagne on a riverside
rooftop—
the city below was silent
and white.

Charles That terrace belonged to a
millionaire whose name is lost to me.

Antonia And we danced on the snow ...

Charles Drunk on music and love.

Sudden shift

Antonia (aroused) Then you fucked
the oboist, just one month later.
So began the endless succession—
what we kindly called your 'work'.

Charles Antonia, don't think of these
things when you've just come out of
major surgery.

Antonia After such butchery, what
better time?

Charles I can't ask you to forgive me
for things I did so wilfully. After all
these years, one more apology
would be an insult.

Antonia (subsiding) For once you
speak the truth.

Charles All I ask is your patience,
give me time to earn your trust, time
to show you, not in words but actions,
that I have come back.
Let's cross another bridge together.

Antonia My limbs are heavy, I feel I'm
sinking, but by morphine's clear light
I see it now.
I think you know there's a man who
loves me.

Simon and a nurse enter, unobserved.

Your jealousy and pride have been
provoked.
This is not sorrow, or a change of heart,
but blind possessiveness, the lifelong
habit you have of taking what you
think is yours.

Charles (rushes to her bedside) Don't
say that!

My darling, I want to show you how
I have changed. I've made my
decision,
I've made a solemn promise ...

[11.31]

*Accidentally, Charles knocks a
monitoring machine to the floor.
Simon and the nurse rush forward
to pull Charles away.*

Simon Come away from those lines!
What are you thinking of? Are you
trying to kill her?

Nurse Her life depends on these
machines.
You must not come so close.

*The nurse tends to Antonia, who is
falling asleep.*

Charles We were just talking of
treachery,
and I believe we were talking of you.

Simon (moving Charles towards the
door) Leave her now.
She needs her rest. You should go.

Charles I have to speak to her.
We need to be alone.

Nurse Please ... please, no
violence here!

Simon You need to be alone; she
needs to sleep.
She's my patient, I know what's best
for her.

Charles Yes, I've heard that's what
you think.
Do you know there are ethical codes
for doctors and their patients?
And in my house,
there are rules of hospitality,
which you, my friend, have abused.

Simon And on my wards I have the
final word.
I've asked you to leave. Shall I call
security?

Charles (*furious, leaving*) A weak
man hides behind authority—
It seems she's in your care.
But listen doctor—
don't you dare exploit your position,
or I'll have you sacked. Whatever
you say,
she's my wife and she belongs to me!

[14.10]
Interlude

2 SCENE TWO

*The Frieths' London house. Charles's
studio. Maria is tidying up. Robin
sits at a table surrounded by music
manuscript in piles. On the floor,
discarded balled-up sheets.*

Robin Sixteen hours of writing out
parts—
thirty-two bars for his latest
squeeze, then he wants to change
the orchestration,
now he's unhappy with the strings—
I'm so tired these notes are
swimming before
my eyes like drunken fish.
The rehearsal starts this afternoon.
My kingdom for a computer
program—
but the old fool won't allow it.

Maria Count yourself lucky to be
working for a genius.

[1.00]

Robin Aubade—a beautiful name for
a poetic form—
the poet sweetly greeting the rising sun,
then parting sadly from his lover,

or tenderly begging her to stay.
But here comes 'Demonic Aubade'—
the great composer torments the
dawn with his fashionable racket.
At his age he should be thinking of
the sunset.

Maria Pure jealousy. You want to be a
composer—
I've seen the torn up pages in your
filthy room.
But you know in your heart you have
no talent.

Robin Does this mean that once
again you refuse to pour me a little
cup of coffee?

Maria I have better things to do. This
is an important day, the important
rehearsal for his most important
piece. Destiny is calling him, history
drives him forwards and he needs
my help. He's relying on me ...

Robin To iron his shirts—you poor
deluded slave.

*Enter Charles, straight from the
hospital, still in his overcoat, still angry.*

[4.17]

Charles Not finished? Have you been
asleep?
How much longer are you going to be?

Robin I need another half an hour.

Charles I want you to go to the
rehearsal rooms now—
make sure the percussion has
been delivered.
It's urgent—remember the disaster
we had last time.

Robin (*keeps writing*) How can I ever
forget?

Maria relieves Charles of his coat.

[5.15]

Charles Clash and suspended
cymbals, tam-tam, roto-tom,
timpani, bass drum, temple blocks,
mark tree, side drum, vibraphone—
make sure they are all in place.

Robin But they're waiting for these
parts ...

Charles When I say now it's now
I mean—
you can finish when you return.
Don't sit there man, get going!

*Robin leaves. Charles paces
restlessly. Maria pours him coffee
from a flask and waits.*

Duet

Truly, Maria
I'm surrounded by fools on this
crucial day when my mind should
be clear ...

Maria (*aside*) Oh my love, I could
comfort him now.

Charles ... clear of this anguish, this
weight of sorrow.
If only I could live without a woman ...

Maria (*aside*) He means without
his wife.

Charles I should never have married
her, and tied myself up in lies.

Maria (*aside*) He dares not tell the
truth about our love.

Charles How can I wipe away the past,
how can I persuade her that I love her?

Maria (*aside*) He's ashamed of his
wretched marriage,
and now he must tell her that he

loves me.

*They come face to face. Maria offers
the cup, he waves it away.
Was the operation a success?*

Charles Oh yes, a success.
Antonia will not die—
the good doctor has done his work,
but I could wring his neck, that
loathsome snake.

Maria (*aside*) Angry with the doctor
for saving her worthless life!

Charles If murder was among your
household duties I'd send you to the
hospital now. Hah!

Maria (*aside*) To succeed where the
doctor failed,
and end her misery!

Charles But I know that I'm a
hypocrite and a fool ...

*Calmer now, Charles is picking up
some manuscript papers. Half
distracted, he glances at Robin's
work as he starts to leave.*

Let me put to you a simple
question—

Maria, have you ever thought of marriage?

Maria You're asking me! Oh no, I mean, but yes, but no, but yes, I mean, my answer is of course, it's yes of course, a simple yes.

Charles I did not mean to embarrass you. Just think carefully, is all I have to say. Most carefully. Not only of the hurt that's done to you—be careful of the pain that you might cause. Remember my example.

He leaves.

Maria picks up Charles's coat and hugs it to her.

Maria

[10.25]

Aria
When I hear your voice I feel the pangs of greedy craving. I know you suffer as much at least—we share the hunger before the feast. You set the matter out so well—

the command concealed behind a laugh, and then you put your question to me—do you think I did not answer clearly? My life was as dull as housework, days forgotten in repeated chores, lifting, wiping, cleaning—now at last my tasks have meaning. Let me lift your weight of sorrow undo the lies, wipe clean the past. My household duty is obedience—my answer dear is a loving yes. But I must bind you to me before you change your mind, make of love a gorgeous cage where you, my sweet, can gently age.

3 SCENE THREE

The hospital. Antonia in the ICU. The machines as before. The nurse and a junior doctor are tending the patient as Simon enters.

Junior Doctor All her signs are good. She's stable, but she's weak, her pulse is thready.

Nurse It's too soon to send her to the ward.

Simon Then we'll keep her here another day ... before you go I want to tell you this: her husband is certain to come back, and when he does you must let me know at once. His state of mind is dangerous—

Nurse This morning when he went towards her bed I thought that he would kill her.

Junior Doctor The whole hospital is talking of it. Hard to believe of such a famous man.

Simon Jealous fantasies, greed about her wealth, the pressures of the creative life, even a psychiatric disorder—who knows—these may all be stupid stories, but we'll take no chances—do not leave him alone in here.

The nurse and junior doctor leave.

I cannot leave him alone with her—but who will ever forgive this abuse of professional power, or cure my feverish sickness of deceit? When I performed the tricky operation I knew I was saving her for myself,

I've told no one of our connection, that I've loved her and waited seven years. Love has made me a specialist in fraud, senior consultant in deception. Now he wants to take her back, stake a forceful claim to what he fears he'll lose. He'll wheedle, threaten, repent, atone—I dare not leave him alone with her.

[3.38]

Antonia (*stirring*) And waited for him to come back ...

Simon Antonia ...

Antonia He'll never change my mind. I've told him. He knows ...

Simon Yes, he knows, and he wants you back.

Antonia He cannot touch me now that I'm with you.

Simon With me—that's what I've longed to hear. But Antonia, are you fully awake? Do you know what you're saying? Do you know where you are?

[4.45]

Antonia I'm drifting high above an endless plain that's green to the curved horizon. I'm moving towards you, from misery to warmth, from coldness to truth, from silence to joy.

Simon No need for silence.

Antonia So much to say.

Simon Yes. So much to say.

Antonia And at last we can say it.

Simon The misery is over.

Antonia Because we know.

Simon We know.

Antonia Only joy.

Simon Joy will say it all.

Repeats, overlapping. They kiss. Unseen by them, a dark figure in a black coat moves downstage in low light.

I'm needed in theatre. I'll come back soon.

They kiss again.

Antonia I'll sleep now, my darling. But come when you can.

Simon leaves.

[7.54]

Antonia (*falling asleep*) On the borders ... On the borders of dreaming and waking I saw a couple ... I saw a couple falling in love ...

Maria moves quietly upstage.

[9.08]

Maria What agony, to stand in the shadows listening to this conniving pair—her hateful pride dressed up as virtue and he a compulsive liar by his own confession. How dare they call it love, this cringing, timid, dishonest affair. How can it measure against my own?

She goes towards the bed.

Only the rich sleep so deeply,
so sweetly unconcerned.
The final impediment to bliss.
My instructions were clear,
and I'm not strong enough to resist
the power of their logic.
My household duty
is to uproot the weeds—

[12.00]
*She wrenches out leads from the
life-support machines. Slowly,
deliberately, she lets Charles's coat
slip from her shoulders to the floor.*

No one saw me arrive,
no one will see me leave.

Maria melts back into the shadows.

Antonia (*softly*) I'm cold, so cold,
The house grows silent and cold.
And I can say nothing at all while I
wait for you to come back,
while I wait for you, while I wait ...

[15.05]
*The monitor flatlines; the rising din of
an orchestra tuning up.*

4 SCENE FOUR

*The rehearsal room. The tuning-up
continues. The A is sounded and
taken up. Charles comes onstage
towards the orchestra, baton in hand.
Robin is with him. Maria is to one
side with a fresh towel for her master.*

[1.04]
Charles Is all the percussion here?

Robin Every last item safely delivered.

Charles You've got rid of that horn
player?—
I've forgotten her name.

Robin Yes, her replacement is that
bearded fellow.

Charles takes up his position.

Charles Ladies, gentlemen,
I'm deeply honoured that your famous
orchestra will give the world premiere
of Demonic Aubade.

*The orchestra applauds. Charles
raises his baton, the piece begins
while he describes it.*

[2.42]
Aria
A dust-reddened sun lifts itself
over the cold desert rim.
Soon we feel the harshness of the rays,
the searing white heat of creation
like the imagination striving in its
birth pangs. Straining to give life.
This music too is a rising sun,
ever more fiery as it proceeds
until we must avert our gaze ...
and find shelter. The sun becomes
the face of God at which we may
not stare.

Charles comes away from the orchestra.

The light of artistic creation is also
blinding.
The artist can't see the suffering
he causes to those around him. And
they'll never understand the purity
of his goal,
how the heat of his invention won't
melt the ice in his heart.
He must be ruthless!
No religion, no purpose except this:
make something perfect before you die.
Life is short, art is for all time—
History will forgive my sins because
My music outstared the sun.

[8.10]
*Simon enters unobserved, with two
uniformed policewomen, White and
Black. Charles returns to the orchestra
as the Aubade reaches its climax.*

Charles It lifts! It soars!

Black Is he the one?

Simon This is the man. This is her
husband.

White, Black If you don't mind, sir.

Charles Nothing can withstand its
power!

White, Black We'd like a word.

Charles Its fury and its heat!

White, Black This won't take long.

The orchestra comes to a ragged halt.

Charles How dare you intrude like this!

Black They told us we would find
you here.

White Is this yours?

Charles You've found my coat. How

very kind. Give it to my man, then,
ladies, kindly leave.

White, Black We have some
questions for you.

The exchange becomes fast and stormy.

Charles Questions? Questions?
Questions?

Do you realize where you are, and
who I am?

White Did you leave it at the bedside
of your dying wife?

White, Black, Simon This coat you
say is yours!

Charles Dying? Did you say dying?

Black You left in a hurry. Were
you disturbed?

Black, White, Simon You ran for
your life!

Charles Dying? I don't understand.

Simon Did you kill her because it was
me she loved?

White, Black, Simon Your jealous
frenzy!

White Was it her money you wanted?

White, Black, Simon Your vicious greed!

Black A nurse and doctor saw you
making an attempt upon her life
attempt upon her life.

White, Black, Simon You can't deny it!

Robin Surely there's been a
misunderstanding.
Why don't you sit down.

[10.36]
Maria (*aside*) Every minute brings
him closer to me.

Charles Am I going mad?
What is this talk of killing and dying?
How can I answer your questions
when my wife is not dead?

Simon What odious pretence of
ignorance!

Black (*as White applies handcuffs*)
Not dead! A good defence.
You can put it to the judge.

White Not dead—a matter of
opinion, perhaps!

Hah hah! This way, my friend.

She begins to lead him away.

Charles (*softly beseeching*) Please tell me Antonia is not dead.

Black You'll find no one who can tell you that she was not murdered in her hospital bed.

Charles Murdered ...
Who could murder sweet Antonia?

[12.23]
He has come face to face with Maria.

No ... no ...

Maria remains silent.

But why?

White This way now sir. Our car is waiting for you.

Maria For you, my sweet. For you.

White and Black begin to lead Charles away.

Charles Maria! You must tell them the truth!

Maria The truth is this. I know you better than you know yourself.

I know your prison years will teach you how to love.

I'll make your cage a happy one.
In the desert of empty time, my visits will be your sweet oases.

[14.29]

Charles Are you completely mad?
Tell them the truth!

Maria Like heroes in a prison movie, we'll press our hands together against the thickened glass.

Charles Mad! completely mad?
This is the killer. Arrest her!

White, Black This way now.

Maria And when at last they set you free, and you are old and frail I'll take you home with me and care for you, and care for you.

Charles I am not the killer. Please listen to me!

White, Black, Simon, Robin, Maria
The lonely years in your happy cage,
the sweet oasis of her (my) visit.

Maria This is the gift I brought—

White, Black, Simon, Robin, Maria
For you!

Charles I am ...

Maria I am the only lover.

White, Black, Simon, Robin, Maria
For you!

Charles I am already ...

Maria And I will wait—

White, Black, Simon, Robin, Maria
For you!

Charles I am already in hell.

White, Black, Simon, Robin, Maria
She (I) will wait for you.

[17.00]
Charles is led away.
Maria remains.
Ends

BIOGRAPHIES

MICHAEL BERKELEY Composer

Michael Berkeley was born in 1948, the eldest son of the composer Sir Lennox Berkeley and a godson of Benjamin Britten. As a chorister at Westminster Cathedral, singing played an important part in his early education. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music and later with Richard Rodney Bennett. In 1977 he was awarded the Guinness Prize for Composition; two years later he was appointed Associate Composer to the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Since then Michael's music has been played all over the globe and by some of the world's finest musicians.

Major works of the 1980s include *Gregorian Variations*, conducted in England and America by André Previn and the oratorio *Or Shall We Die?* (1982), to a text by Ian McEwan. The 1990s began with the *Clarinet Concerto* and Berkeley's first opera, *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, based on the childhood of Rudyard Kipling to a libretto by David Malouf (Opera North). *Secret Garden* was premiered by the LSO under Colin Davis. In 1998, the

BBC Proms commission *The Garden of Earthly Delights* was played by the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain under Mstislav Rostropovich. Berkeley's tenure as Composer in Association to the BBC National Orchestra of Wales brought commissions for three new works; the second of these, the *Concerto for Orchestra*, was first heard at the 2005 Proms. This piece, as with most of his significant orchestral work, much of his chamber music and his operas, is available on CD as part of the Chandos Berkeley Edition.

Berkeley's second opera, *Jane Eyre*, with a libretto by Malouf, has been produced in the UK, Australia and America. *For You* is Berkeley's third opera, for which he has also created a version for a larger orchestra opening in Rome in Autumn 2010. Future plans include a song cycle for Claire Booth and the Nash Ensemble, which will be followed by his next opera, *Atonement*. From 1995 to 2005, Berkeley was artistic director of the Cheltenham International Festival of Music and he has also programmed music for both the Sydney and Spitalfields Festivals. He currently presents BBC Radio 3's 'Private Passions' and is Chairman of the Governors of The Royal Ballet.

IAN MCEWAN

Librettist

McEwan's works have earned him worldwide critical acclaim. Among them are the Somerset Maugham Award in 1976 for his first collection of short stories *First Love, Last Rites*; Whitbread Novel Award (1987) and Prix Fémina Etranger (1993) for *The Child in Time*; and Germany's Shakespeare Prize in 1999. He has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction five times, winning the award for *Amsterdam* in 1998. His novel *Atonement* received the WH Smith Literary Award (2002), National Book Critics' Circle Fiction Award (2003), Los Angeles Times Prize for Fiction (2003), and the Santiago Prize for the European Novel (2004). In 2006, he won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for his novel *Saturday*. *On Chesil Beach*, was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2007 and his novel *Solar* was published to great critical acclaim in 2010.

MICHAEL RAFFERTY

Conductor

After a short career as a research physicist, Michael Rafferty switched to music initially as a violinist and later as conductor. He is cofounder and Joint Artistic Director of Music Theatre Wales and has conducted all its productions. He has conducted Britten's *Church Parables* (Opéra National du Rhin), the Canadian premiere of Birtwistle's *Punch and Judy*, John Hardy's orchestral score to the film *The Life Story of David Lloyd George*, Vevan Weston's *Songs from a Prison Diary* (Le Mans Jazz Festival) and performances with ensembles including the BBC Concert Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players, Orchestre Symphonique de Mulhouse, Norway's BIT 20 Ensemble, Musikfabrik of Cologne, The Composers' Ensemble and PM Music Ensemble. Altogether, he has conducted the works of more than 80 living composers and 40 opera productions. Many of his performances have been broadcast on radio and TV and he has made several CDs including Michael Berkeley's earlier opera *Jane Eyre* which was released by Chandos. Recently, he conducted the premieres of operas by Huw Watkins and Eleanor Alberga (Music Theatre Wales) as well as the premiere of a film score *The Cabinet of*

Dr Caligari by Lynne Plowman (London Mozart Players). Future operatic performances include the UK Premiere of Philip Glass's *In the Penal Colony*.

MICHAEL MCCARTHY

Director

Michael is co-founder and Joint Artistic Director of Music Theatre Wales, Dramaturg of FIVE:15 (Scottish Opera) and Artistic Director of Operatoriet (the contemporary opera studio for Norway).

As a director he has staged productions for MTW, Scottish Opera, Den Nye Opera, Glyndebourne Touring Opera, Den Norske Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Opera Vest, The Fires of London. Alongside his work as a director Michael has specialised in supporting the development of new operas and opera composers, principally through his work with Operatoriet but in more recent years also with Scottish Opera and Music Theatre Wales. Future productions include *La Traviata* for Den Nye Opera in Bergen and *In The Penal Colony* (Philip Glass) for MTW.

ALAN OPIE

Charles Frieth – Baritone

Baritone Alan Opie is a regular guest at the Metropolitan Opera New York, La Scala, Wiener Staatsoper, Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Santa Fe Festival, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, English National Opera and Royal Opera House Covent Garden. At ENO he was nominated for the 'Outstanding Achievement in Opera' Olivier Award for his performance of Falstaff.

His most recent performances include *Madama Butterfly* with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; *Candide* with Teatro San Carlo in Naples; *Falstaff* with l'Opéra du Rhin and at the Washington National Opera; *Rigoletto* with Opera North and Opera Company of Philadelphia; and *Tosca* with Canadian Opera Company in Toronto.

His extensive concert work has included performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in San Francisco and Dallas; Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* in Dallas and Carnegie Hall; Britten's *War Requiem* in Washington, Vaughan Williams's *Sea Symphony* in Los Angeles, Elgar's *The Kingdom* with the Halle Orchestra in honour of the 150th anniversary of Elgar's birth and *Apostles* as part of the BBC Proms 2007 season.

Alan Opie's operatic appearances have included a spectrum of leading roles for the Bayreuth Festival, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, Paris Opera, and Theatre Musical du Chatelet as well as for the opera houses of Chicago, Los Angeles, Amsterdam, Brussels, Florence, Cagliari, Spoleto, Strasbourg and Oslo among others.

Alan Opie has recorded for CBS, EMI, Hyperion, Chandos, and Decca. Releases include 'Alan Opie Sings Bel Canto Arias,' Britten's *Gloriana*, *Albert Herring*, *Peter Grimes* for which he received a Grammy Award, *Death in Venice* and *The Rape of Lucretia*; the title role in Dallapiccola's *Ulisse*; Tonio in *I Pagliacci*; Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*; the role of Smirnov in Walton's *The Bear*, *Ernani*, *Il Trovatore*, the title role in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* under Sir Georg Solti for which he received his second Grammy Award.

CHRISTOPHER LEMMINGS

Simon / Junior Doctor – Tenor

Christopher Lemmings studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama under Johanna Peters and Margaret Lensky, and currently studies with Michelle Wegwart. He has appeared at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, as Caliban in

Thomas Adès' *The Tempest* (also for BBC television, at the Theater Lübeck and at the Opéra du Rhin, Strasbourg), Stingo in Nicholas Maw's *Sophie's Choice* and Scaramuccio *Ariadne auf Naxos*; and for Glyndebourne On Tour as Lechmere *Owen Wingrave*, Tito *La Clemenza di Tito*, Belmonte *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. He created Bartholomew in Sir Harrison Birtwistle's *The Last Supper* at the Staatsoper, Berlin, a role he repeated for the Glyndebourne Festival and on tour with the London Sinfonietta.

Christopher Lemmings created Robin in *For You*, and with a strong reputation for his work in Twentieth Century and Contemporary music, has also appeared as Molqi *The Death of Klinghoffer* (also at the Finnish National Opera), Hotel Porter *Death in Venice* and Lechmere *Owen Wingrave* for Vara Radio at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam; Beauty *The Triumph of Beauty and Deceit* with Birmingham Contemporary Music Group at Carnegie Hall New York (also with the Los Angeles Philharmonic); Clarence in Batistelli's *Richard III* at the Opéra du Rhin, Strasbourg; Stoikus *Golem* and Sellem *The Rake's Progress* for Anges / Nantes Opera; Die zweiter junge Offizier *Die Soldaten* with the Ruhrtriennale, Bochum, and at the New York Lincoln Centre Festival; and Dov *The Knot Garden* in a joint production between the Royal

Opera House and Music Theatre Wales to mark the centenary of Tippett's birth.

Concert work has included performances with the English Chamber Orchestra, the Northern Sinfonia, the Norwegian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra. His recordings further include *Reverend Auden Songs* with Chamber Domaine and a disc of lesser known music by the Italian born film composer Nino Rota.

RACHEL NICHOLLS

Joan / Nurse / WPC White – Soprano

Born in Bedford, Rachel Nicholls is one of the most versatile sopranos of her generation, with a huge repertoire ranging from JS Bach and Handel to Schoenberg and Errollyn Wallen. She made her BBC Proms debut in 2008 singing Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music* and returned in 2009 for *The Mask of Orpheus – The Arches*. Other festival appearances have included Bremen, Edinburgh, Hereford Three Choirs and La Folle Journée, Tokyo.

In opera and concert, conductors she has worked with include Martyn Brabbins, Stephen Cleobury, Christian Curnyn, Colin Davis, John Eliot Gardiner,

Valery Gergiev, Martin Gester, Richard Hickox, Roger Norrington, Jean-Claude Malgoire, Simon Rattle, Steven Sloane, Masaaki Suzuki and David Willcocks. She has appeared with the Royal Opera, London, the Atelier Lyrique de Tourcoing, English National Opera, the Early Opera Company, Longborough Festival Opera and Scottish Opera, as well as with orchestras such as the BBC Concert Orchestra, the Bochum Symphony Orchestra, the Britten Sinfonia, the CBSO, the London Mozart Players, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the OAE, the Philharmonia, Le Parlement de Musique, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

She created the role of Joan *For You* with Music Theatre Wales, and her operatic repertoire further includes Marzelline *Fidelio*, Ginevra *Ariadante*, Armida *Rinaldo*, Ginevra *Ariadante*, Dorinda *Orlando*, Nerone *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, Donna Elvira *Don Giovanni*, Elettra *Idomeneo*, Tatyana *Eugene Onegin* and Helmwige *Die Walküre*.

Her broadcasts include Dvorak *Stabat Mater*, Schoenberg *String Quartet No. 2* and *Flashmob – The Opera* (BBC), and with Bach Collegium Japan, she has recorded the *B Minor Mass* and

two volumes of *Cantatas*. Other recordings include *Orlando*, *Silla*, *Hummel Mass in D Minor*, two volumes of *Music by Cecilia McDowall* and Paul Spicer's *Easter Oratorio*.

HELEN WILLIAMS

Antonia / WPC Black – Soprano

Helen Williams was born in Merseyside and studied at the Royal Northern College of Music.

She has sung regularly at Glyndebourne, making her Festival debut in 1988 as Sashka in Osborne's *The Electrification of the Soviet Union*. She subsequently sang *Emmie Albert Herring* on Glyndebourne Festival Opera's tour to Italy. Other engagements at this time included performances with Opera Factory and at the Buxton Festival. More recently she has been seen as Dalinda *Ariadante*, Amor *Orpheus and Eurydice* for ENO, Naiad *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Scottish Opera, Yvette *La Rondine* at Covent Garden, the world premiere of *Hey Persephone!* at Aldeburgh and the Almeida Festival, 2nd Niece *Peter Grimes* with the ROH, Covent Garden in Finland, Vaughan Williams *The Poisoned Kiss* with the LSO, Flaminia *Il Mondo della Luna* with Opera Zuid in Holland, Suppés *Galatea* at Buxton, First Lady *The Magic Flute* and First Flowermaiden *Parsifal* with Scottish Opera,

Helena *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Polissena *Radamisto* at Opera North.

Recent engagements include Rodelinda and Ginevra *Ariadante* for Opera Theatre Company throughout Ireland and the UK, Rodelinda in New York, Frasquita at Royal Albert Hall, a recording of *Carlo di Borgogna* for Opera Rara, recordings with Diana Montague and Bruce Ford for Chandos, Queen of Night and Eurydice *Orpheus and Eurydice* at ENO, Micaela *Carmen* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera, Queen of the Night with Opera North, 2nd Niece *Peter Grimes* at both Netherlands Opera and the Royal Opera House, the televising of Francesca Zambello's production of *The Little Prince* for BBC, Avril Ainger *Love Counts* at the Almeida Festival and in Modena and title role *Semele*, Mistress Ford *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and Agathe in Messager's *Veronique* for the Buxton Festival.

JEREMY HUW WILLIAMS

Simon – Baritone

The Welsh baritone Jeremy Huw Williams studied at St John's College, Cambridge, at the National Opera Studio, and with April Cantelo.

In France he has sung the roles of Olivier *Capriccio*, Papageno *Die Zauberflöte*, George *Of Mice and Men*, Guglielmo *Così fan tutte*, Shchelkalov *Boris Godunov*, Baritone *Hydrogen Jukebox* and title role *Till Eulenspiegel* by Karetnikov for L'Opéra de Nantes, and Sebastian *The Tempest* for L'Opera du Rhin in Strasbourg and Mulhouse. In Italy he has sung the role of Nixon *Nixon in China* at the opera house in Verona and the Ferryman *Curlew River* at the opera houses of Pisa and Trento. In Greece he has sung the role of Chou En-lai *Nixon in China* for Greek National Opera. In Belgium he has sung the role of Marcello *La Bohème* for Zomeropera. In Austria he has sung the role of Dr Pangloss *Candide* at the Konzerthaus in Vienna, a role that he repeated at the Musikfest Bremen in 2009 and will sing in Munich and London. In the USA he has sung the role of Lukash *The Good Soldier Schweik* for Long Beach Opera.

In Wales he has sung the roles of Guglielmo *Così fan tutte*, Escamillo *Carmen*, Germont *La Traviata* Marcello *La Bohème* and Le Dancaire *Carmen* for Welsh National Opera and the roles of Serezha *The Electrification of the Soviet Union*, Tarquinius *The Rape of Lucretia*, Choregos *Punch and Judy*, Mangus *The Knot Garden* and Dr Simon Browne *For You* for Music Theatre Wales. In Ireland he has

sung the role of Teddy *The Silver Tassie* for Opera Ireland. He will sing three roles in 2010 for Scottish Opera, Andrew *74 Degrees North*, Father *Zen Story* and Epstein *The Letter*.

He won the classical music category in the 2008 Creative Wales Awards and was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by Glyndwr University in October 2009 for services to music in Wales.

ALLISON COOK

Maria – Mezzo-Soprano

One of the new generation of British Mezzo-Sopranos, Allison Cook is beginning to develop an impressive international reputation, with recent highlights including repertoire as diverse as a critically-acclaimed world premiere of Michael Berkeley's *For You* with Music Theatre Wales, the title role in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* in Aix en Provence, Baba the Turk *The Rake's Progress* in Portugal, and the title role in Bizet's *Carmen* for Glyndebourne. Recently, she sang the role of Amastre in Handel's *Serse* for Opera Theatre Company, Ireland, the role of Geschwitz for the Royal Opera's 2009 production of *Lulu*, and a gala of *Zarzuela* with the Münchner Symphoniker this summer.

Her European success has been built on performances such as the world premiere of Peter Eötvös' *Le Balcon* at Aix-en-Provence, Soeur Mathilde *Les dialogues des Carmélites* in Opéra National du Rhin, and appearances at the Savonlinna Festival and BBC Proms. She sang the role of Orlofsky *Die Fledermaus* for Glyndebourne, and the title-role in John Browne's *Babette's Feast* and Kate Julian *Owen Wingrave* for the Linbury Studio of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Her international appearances have included Knappe and Blumenmädchen *Parsifal*, and Garcias *Don Quichotte*, both at L'Opéra de la Bastille, Paris, conducted by James Conlon, Der Komponist *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Opéra National du Rhin, as well as the roles of Valetto and Fortuna in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* in Aix-en-Provence, conducted by Marc Minkowski. Other appearances have included Vienna, Amsterdam, Toulouse, Opéra National de Paris, and Opéra de Nancy, where she appeared as Der Trommler *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*.

Allison made a welcome return to the podium of the BBC Proms in 2008, as part of the Vaughan-Williams 50th Anniversary celebrations, in his *Serenade to Music* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Andrew Davis.

MUSIC THEATRE WALES

Music Theatre Wales is the UK's leading contemporary opera company. Ever since the company's formation in Cardiff in 1988, Music Theatre Wales has been a pioneering force, dedicated to creating, performing and touring ground-breaking chamber opera – a mix of acknowledged masterpieces of the recent past and works the company has commissioned from the very best composers and writers. The company also runs a composer development scheme, nurturing new talent in writing opera and supporting the creation of dynamic new work.

Music Theatre Wales has created almost 30 productions and presented 14 world premieres. The company has worked in partnership with many different organisations across Wales, the UK and internationally and in 2002 MTW became the first ever Associate Company to the Royal Opera House. This creative collaboration has made possible a wide range of work in the Linbury Studio Theatre.

Joint Artistic Directors: Michael McCarthy and Michael Rafferty
Executive Director: Carole Strachan
Artistic Administrator: Catriona Chatterley

www.musictheatrewales.org.uk





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