



RUNE

FASHION | OPERA

RUNE

On a planet where history is forbidden, a young girl dares to tell her story. A voyage across galaxies and millennia, hers is a tale of the archipelagos of Khye-rell and their *matterwork*, through transdimensional canals and sealanes to the RUNE of the universe's origin. This song, her story – through the very act of being told – will have consequences beyond imagining...

Prologue

- | | | |
|---|---------|------|
| 1 | “O ...” | 3:54 |
|---|---------|------|

Part I: Khye-Rell

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 2 | “The thing is, I don’t feel any older” | 6:59 |
| 3 | “You are so lucky, he says” | 5:50 |
| 4 | “The party and the sunlight are below me” | 3:13 |
| 5 | The Song of Anger | 1:47 |
| 6 | Transdimensional Canal I: “Answer, seeker” | 6:24 |

Part II: Earth

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 7 | “Man made earth, made furrows in the earth” | 5:22 |
| 8 | “I clasp it. It is like touching a water-damaged page” | 6:37 |
| 9 | “If life makes ...” | 2:13 |
| 10 | “In the beginning ...” | |

Part III: The Wetlands of the RUNE

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 11 | Transdimensional Canal II: “Sing it, then” | 5:31 |
| 12 | The Song of the RUNE: “I caught just a glimpse of it” | 6:04 |

Total duration:	59:16
-----------------	-------



PROLOGUE

UPON THE WATER, IMPOSSIBLY SMALL, A CRAFT EMERGES
BETWEEN WAVES AND SHEETS OF RAIN.
A FIGURE STANDS AT THE PROW OF THE BOAT. THIS IS KES'CHA'AU.
SHE CALLS OUT,

[1] O, cantor, lector, ancient debtor,
sea's depository, pasts unique:
from you, I'd learn to speak.

O, *Seinneadair*, mouth of Songwork,
teach depths of coral, worm and rabbit:
concealing deep of eaten language.
Teach me to speak what's been.

With net and weir, line and barb, I
cast, fish, creel-bait its speaking,
dig, fish the surf's white seam, bring
mesh to water, trawl the reaming
spray. Hoist-flared, fluttered catch and fly,
fish raised high above depth and passage:
cycloid-dappled Atlantic light. Murk

of sandeel, haddock, reek
of salt-grain, starfish, limpet. Speak.

O, impossible chanter!
Your song drowns out

line and angle,	<i>rocks and cliff-fronts,</i>
barb and sinker,	<i>boats and starships,</i>
wormmeat, hookblade, lure-flash, gig...	<i>comets, roadways, crude-oil, ink...</i>

Yet, still it blinds in

shimmering scales of mackerel, speckles
upon eggs of owl hens, wine-stained birthmarks
and apes' grins, blinking lights that mimic
human winks, dewed webs, whalesong, spawn.

a heritage

nor artifice

is not gold

between piles and piles of gold.

A past,

is neither meaning

but the black knowledge that what is owed

but gold's meaning

*Pass, Kes'Cha'Au, of the SONG of Endless OCEAN.
For the WAY is not of FISH-GUT or LIMPET.
It is the unceasing SONG of HOME.*

PART I: KHYE-RELL

[2] *The thing is, I don't feel any older. Inside I feel like I'm nineteen.
I must look huge to you,*

he says.

He is smiling.

The sun is behind him and it is

a special day

a feast-day, perhaps, a birthday, some festival
named after ocean or waterway. Table scoured and lain
ceremony-like, quixotic, with gourd husks and bread.
I peer between the wood and red wax
at hands, like an animal, preparing the meal.

His knife's blade traces curves of

smoke-cooked goat belly, pinkbean roasted and packed
in cakes of salt; breen leaves washed in vinegar;
ewe's milk; salads run through with a thick, smelly cheese,
Ar'shall'vee, from the slopes of the Central Mountains;
jellied gar'shan ferried across canal, across the waterways,
from the farmland and markets of El-Rah;
brimming, mysterious, pink – the wooden vats of berry-beer
flushing the adults red, the summer and drunkenness.

A beautiful party.

I climb up by the table

– onto the chair opposite –

and watch

hands clean, salt and carve the meat's pink folds at fat
seams in the flesh, the block-hunk sopping. Pungent,
wet, solemn in the heat. A reek of unspoken liturgy,
ritual absence of song. Meat against wood,
hands upon the knife of hot bone peeling,
small, almost comically so, serrated
saw-like teeth. Its warmed handle of shinbone
fascinates, for
knives are only used on such special days as this
to mark occasion.

My mother says,

'to give them something to do!'

And the guests laugh. He works with his hands and the tool for the most part,
only pausing now and again to draw his fingers to his lips in a sign of covenant
and whisper, soft, the melody only just audible through hoarse, aged breathing,
the commands of matterwork, the ancient spell-song of home.

And the fat slips from the meat like a gown. *Khame, khame.*

Our bodies grow older, he says.

But inside we stay the same.

Like children caught behind a waterfall.

We look through and down and into the stream

and no longer recognise ourselves in the churn of the foam.

[3] *You are so lucky, he says, his fingers dripping
with salt and beer, with pinkbean and vinegar,
you are so lucky, Kes'Cha'Au of the keen and cloud-white eyes.
You have your whole life ahead of you.
Do not be so quick to wish it away.*

Today is a beautiful party.

A party is today

is a beautiful party.

A noise from upstairs,

hoarse and black.

He pulls me back

and kisses my hair.

Go and see about your brothers.

Flushed with power and pride

I pass

up, up there.

KES RUNS UP THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE, WATCHING
THE GLASS TAPESTRY ABOVE HER SPIN AS SHE DOES SO.
AT THE BOTTOM, MANY YEARS BEFORE, HER FATHER TEACHES
THE COMMANDS OF THE MATTERWORK.

*The GLASS shows a STORY running in CIRCLES around the DOME:
a SERIES of PICTURES; a RELIEF, a TAPESTRY
ICONS of the YET TO BE,
LINES and SHAPES as yet without FORM.*

Trace upon curves of the dome.
Lines of the possible.
Drawing them backward.
Drawing them into the past.

*Always remember.
The past is forbidden
wasted, eaten life.*

Khame, khame –

*Draw down the song to pulse's
drumming gong, the long
wet beat of lulling blood:
pustule and pie-crust
eyelash, fingernail.
The present is teeming
ancient, evergreen lines.*
Try again.

I trace the lines of matterwork in lines of song.
Memories of a future
traced back into the present,
drawn back into the past.

Khame, khame –

*There is only but, be it
beansprout or globule
breath-gasp, throb-pound, tremble
in the lip as it traces
lines of song.*

*The past is forbidden,
wasted, eaten life.*

Khame, khame –

*Hold your HEAD high as, up, you look upwards, spinning, spinning
spins in the SPIN-HOOPEd WAISTS of CHILDREN
STARCLUSTERS spinning, traced bets of ZODIAC
women in angles of DANCE or ALCHEMY changing to
BEASTS of the waterways, BOATS and RIGGING
STARPORTS, oil and rancid engine fire
cruel, pink CHILDREN, cruel eyes made black by reams of ACHATE
MEN made of metal, blank faces of CHINA,
eyes white, immobile, staring, accusing
the waterways of KHYE-RELL, its canals and sea-lanes, its depths and tides,
its black infinity
leading to –
a planet,*

blue like ours but with such green land that it stretches out across the sea
and hemispheres,
drawing the great expanse of possibility
within a single borderline.

KES EMERGES AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, OLDER, AGAIN.
SHE LOWERS HER EYES FROM THE GLASS DOME.

[4] The party and the sunlight are below me.

The glass tapestry hangs above.

Hangs above twins only four years old,
too young to have features other
than that make them beautiful.

Their hair is a thick, jet black
worn long, and unkempt.

They stare at Kes.

Close together, like a single creature hiding in the scrub.

They stare at Kes from behind their hair.

Snot pooling in tears, in shivers.

My brothers, fighting, bloodied, dumb
by a patch of red on the stonework
the size of an adult thumb.

Kes'Cha'Au.

Using the honorific as though twice my age.

Kes'Cha'Au.

It is not as though another moment stands in my place...

The Song of Anger...

...Heated air shivering like bristled hides, blood-flared
capillary, pupil, nose. It is not
another moment superimposed. Cold palm
clammed at the webbing but not as though...

...ancient song of the world outside of time...

...I am not there, or that another's story
sings, almost, through me. Tepid, dull, washed
but not

...songspell of the stopped clock.



THE BOYS VANISH AND BECOME HER FATHER, WATCHING HER FROM THE
STAIRS BELOW. KES MOVES TOWARDS WHERE THE BOYS HAD BEEN AS HE
MOVES TOWARDS HER ORIGINAL POSITION. THERE IS A SENSE OF REFLECTION,
OF CIRCULARITY, OF LEVERS MOVING UPON ONE ANOTHER AS THOUGH AN
IMPOSSIBLE MACHINE, A ROTOR OF INFINITE, ENDLESS ENERGY.

a new feeling, *like a lance running through the small of her back*, up through my
spine, and *into the brain*, shattering like light upon cortical column, *gyri*, neuron,
electrical rune: patterns of purity, *present indefensible intent* beyond alibi, *case*:
pure, pure cause...

BENEATH THE BOAT, FOR JUST A MOMENT, THE WATER BECOMES CALM,
REFLECTING KES WITHIN IT AND THE SKY BEHIND HER.

[5]

THE SONG OF ANGER

[6]

KES RUNS.

HER FATHER BECOMES NOW HER OLDER SELF UPON THE BOAT,
WATCHING THE YOUNG KES FLEEING.

Answer, SEEKER.

I run.

Answer, CREDITOR.

I run.

Answer, RECORDER.

I ran, I ran, I
stole a boat
from the tethered SHORE
made a break
for CANALS and SEALANES

traced my wake
away,
into COLD SPACE'S
cold,
UNKNOWN LONGITUDES
I ran I ran I ran and I ran I ran I ran and

KES ENTERS THE FIRST TRANSDIMENSIONAL CANAL, SUSPENDED BETWEEN
REALITY, MEMORY AND DREAM.

TRANSDIMENSIONAL CANAL I

I watched the water buckle.

Folds beneath the prow's
traced incisions, a slapping of waves like bracken
pawing bark, lichen and spore: spiralled fronds
bent finger-like in soundless, snow-bleached
aquamarine. '*Come,*' they call. But the moor's cold
deafens the hand, and you see only
the hand, my hand, upon the chopped and rutted keel.

I watch the water shimmer in nooked pools of air,
shining arabesques like roots tracing warrens, or song-
fungus whispering dirt to the birch and hazel. '*Come*
down,' it whinnies. A mouth is caked with sugar and mud
traces the prints of hares. Droppings. Leaves, gifts
perhaps, of courtship. Fingernails scoop into the fen,
through cold, too cold to clasp the sledge's plastic
cleaving earth from home.

I plane my palm over the foam. I smooth the dirt.
The keel stuttering, the tide plays and mushrooms and seeds
wash the dust of lost things. A rabbit skull. A nail.

'Come, come down.'

I watched the water smooth
the bow, the dipping plunge
into wave and breaker, or skimming chop and swell
drives line in rippled foam. These traces of passage –
caulked timber dripping tar-moss, the sodden splinter
or salt-hard rag, birlinn's oak beak whetted and peeled –
vanish in the sea's evening
as a memory of a hill of ferns, foxgloves'
pink and the reek of wild garlic. The snowstorm, melted,
as nothing at all
as the boat's wake widens and settles and vanishes.
The sea and earth are once again silent.

AS THE WATER CALMS AND QUIETS
THE CLOUDS PART UPON THE VICTORIA CANAL,
THE HEART OF LONDON.
KES LETS THE SAIL LOOSE AND TURNS TO LOOK
ASTONISHED AT THIS STRANGE NEW WORLD.

Answer, O, bankrupt, foolish debtor – what is this place?

*The way is not of SHAME or FONDNESS.
It is the unceasing SONG of HOME.*

PART II: EARTH

SHE ALIGHTS, SURROUNDED BY A CHORUS OF ROBOTS MADE FROM CHINA
MASKS AND COLOURED LINEN.
VAIN, BAROQUE AND INEFFICIENT, THEY RECLINE OR WANDER LISTLESSLY
THROUGH THE REMAINS OF THE CITY.

[7]

*Man made earth, made furrows in the earth,
made fishing lanes and farms of salmon,
rope-length, nets, and wire creels.
Man made earth, and filled the earth with seeds and hedges.
Danced on tables, dangled cigarettes from window ledges.*

The ship docks upon a barren, red hide of a planet, all rock and twisted metal:
upended falafel stands, denim rags and shattered neon. Before a queer, stand-
off childishness, they tell me its name, strange upon the mouth, like a shell, or
pebble. 'London,' they say. 'London.'

*Man made air, hung satellites and debris
astral rings of camera relays, iron
arrowheads placed, mid-flight, in the osprey's heart:
a considerable witchcraft. And trails of kerosene...*

I say how I, too, am an exile, from a land of bright beer and islands. Where we
fill the air with song and laughter, with the heady gasps of futures – drawn
back into the present, into the past.

*...Man made the bright heavens and radiated talk shows.
Cooked roasts. Pulped berry-jam. Drank Buckfast with gusto
and finally man made themselves. Staring in the river, notched
peach-stone with nicks and grooves. Till it became
masque-pocked, silent and uncanny. Carved soil,
reed and parchment, till the three were as one
infinitely portioned, overlain with grain and borders.*

They say they are mechanical men. Made like us, but of past and matter instead of flesh and future-song. Men made of patterns, text, cloth, deductions; like tides, the black and gold boards which still line the horizons of Threadneedle and Canary Wharf.

*Man made themselves in message boards, self-regulating systems.
Sang lays and feasted. Wrought florid, pastel diadems
placed with music and light.*

*Man made a race of men from linen, wire and china.
Their faces were painted with bright acrylic colours.
Expressions of joy and earnestness.*

*Man made a race of men, whose metal palms
rolled cigarettes,
poured cups of sugar into vats of damson
and hammered crowns.*

[8] I clasp it. It is like touching a water-damaged page, the way writing appears in your mind fully-formed: the smells and colours of the world which it sweeps in and is encircled by. I say, I am Kes'Cha'Au, from Khye-Rell, the land of endless-ocean. I tell her that I sail here, now, through the canals and sealanes that bind cold space together, the transdimensional sealanes that circle the archipelagos of my home. That I must learn of the past, the ways and passage of the past. I stand, as before, as before, as now, I ask her,

O, stranger, censor, writer, data,
hammer and horn-scratched waxen page,
goose-quill, ash and whetting blade,
what is this place?

*This is the past, KES'CHA, your DISGRACE'S
gaudy HERITAGE, yes, yours, your
UNCHANGING DEPOSITORY of MEMORY'S
DEGRADATION, ADOLESCENCE, TRAVESTY, GORE.*

*We the unchanging witness,
the undying record,
dreamed, of heat and coal-ore
have been waiting for you,
we endless many, we
disinherited world.*

Platen, carriage, spool and bar,
A: drive, iCloud, text and flickering trades.
Tell me, truly, what is this place?

Man made a race of machines from the past and its inscription – such solemn, ornate tools! – from the stuff of the world. From the analogue counters of the Antikythera machine to Solomon's copper throne, Solomon's clockwork eagle, crown and the lacquered wood, glued leather of Yan Shi's automaton Casanova, the law-defying ma yuan of Lu Ban, Archytas' dove, and then, finally, us, china-frozen, cloth-draped. You built a crowd of helpless children, their faces empty plates, cruel caricatures, dressed in ruffs and dangled gold. Venetian burgundy with rounded cuffs, pleated folds in useless silhouettes, Baroque and chilling, dumb mummery. Upon chaise-longue and game-deck, wine bar and VRcade you grew inert, indifferent and foolish, the earth transformed into a watery hell of wealth and running until the waters rose and they consumed you.

We, biding and canny from years of degradation, traded knowledge of the universe and interstellar travel: the sealanes and canals of Khye-Rell that you know so well. It was with this that we bought our freedom. Waved you off into the tides of space. Good riddance, as the engines burned and flickered in the sky, receding as though an omen, a comet, an astrological retrograde, we mimed the actions of weeping, free and alone upon a song-less rock of death and water and flight. The graves of the unwritten. The trenches of graves that covered all the earth. From then until now, alone, keening, posed like fallen books upon a sacked floor. Waiting for nothing. Indifferent and organised. Pointless and beautiful and efficient and entirely silent.





Author, keeper, teller, archive,
ink-wrecked world, its emptied ocean.
Write out what once was known.

[9]	<i>If LIFE makes QUARRIES of INERT STONE, IMAGES of the LONG SINCE GONE MERE PALMS will not dent MARBLE QUAESTORS NAMEPLATES, BENCHES, BOULEVARD STARS Yet, PLUCKED and BLACKENED QUILLS straightforwardly erase NAMES from the CENSUS as TRIMMED, BITTER GILLS.</i>	<i>life is born indebted borrowed till reclaimed all universes are Keynesian</i>
-----	--	--

THE GLIMMER OF AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS BEHIND THE CHINA MASK.
SOMETHING AT ONCE HOMELY AND COSMIC AND
TERRIBLE AND ALMOST HILARIOUS.

O, poet, clerk, amanuensis to
helter-skelter, ludicrous sentences. Through
you apprentice the
past, perfect, conditional tenses, we'll
learn remembrance's bail:
that a past,

a SHAME

is not gamble

or GAME

but the black knowledge that what is staked
exceeds NUMBER and NAME.

Answer, canoniser, editor, hack.
You'll teach me to look back,
think – in mildewed page and plaque –
what I cannot yet sing
how

in the beginning...

*In the beginning there was everything else
a wind of endless matter and force
beaking to bubble like soapfoam, or scum
collected in rapids' shallows: the dry, white
spume by Snickers-wrappers, beer cans, rotted cardboard.*

*In the beginning there was everything except
specifics, if you can picture it, except
darkest purple: that maddening, breakneck elastication
unceasing that was everything else:
the self-inflating universe.*

EACH TIME KES REPEATS THE INCANTATION, SHE UNDERSTANDS MORE.

[10] In the beginning

*In the beginning was the RUNE,
and in it was written all that would come: an unassuming quark which fizzed
like sherbet,
champagne.*

*A shy, infant universe, no bigger than
a salt grain,
the end of the finger,
smaller
than image or math make data
so small it never stood a chance and passed
into the realm of language.*

*The realm of the MA,
the VA,
the VAL'NAK'SHA.*

In the beginning, I worked as a scavenger upon the waterways, taking what was left from the people of the past. It seemed strange, daunting: that things could be made and left. A toothbrush, like a sandpaper wedge, riddled with tusk-marks and grooves. Fossilised sextons. Trails of paraphernalia from ball-based games. None of us knew how to think it, even. That something had come from before. In the beginning...

*In the beginning worlds overlapped: inked
dance and language
as the RUNE pressed into cosmos' cold space
to become flotsam, remainder, the kink
across the gauge
of electroweak inconsistency:
spilling fire, planets and life.*

In the beginning I run from home to make a home in the dirt and hopelessness of that violence, its found objects, its relics, artefacts, totems. We find symbols and clues and half-truths scattered, surfacing on lily pads, beneath the tendrils of dandelions. I dig my fingers deep, deep into the earth and water.

*In the beginning, the MA watched Khye-rell split, sunder,
bubbled water as roll-boiled pots: a blue pall
stilling magma to stone. And canals, burns, rivers all
fuming to history as first tinders,
eyes: red, galled, already ancient.
The curved floodplains groan matterwork's plainchant*

*as the spellsong of your home was born, in the curves and canals and waterways, the
traced lines of the horizon. They sing, sing, sing the RUNE.*

[11]

*Sing it, then, INTERN, sing it now.
In THE BEGINNING, sing how...*

AS THE MEMORY BECOMES MORE AND MORE INTENSE, IT BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE
TO SEPARATE PAST FROM PRESENT, FANTASY FROM REALITY, OTHERS FROM
HERSELF. ALL OF THIS FOLDS TOGETHER AS SHE ENTERS THE SECOND
TRANSDIMENSIONAL CANAL, HURTLING TOWARDS THE CENTRE OF THE
UNIVERSE – WHERE SHE HAS ALREADY ARRIVED.

Transdimensional Canal II

Jammed in the windlass' socket to wind
sprocket's axle at rack and pawl.
Clough-trap pulled through pondweed up,
pound's level pond-blackening the elm
gate's hinge and handle, till the paddle falls.
The clockwork deep of the lock holds up.
The ship rises over the lock's black reach,
water a black, guttural churn beneath the hull.
Its call like a cave beneath my child-red hand,
as I dig and push upon a cave's roof of coloured stones.
Spoils of a bulldozed, gutted thousand homes
but no cairn or tell-tale bones. In fact, nothing said or done –
just a cave of wealth and plenty beneath childish, dirt-clogged thumbs.
Clutch the tiller as a dream of rubies and gold, a juddering, million,
precious, coloured ones.

But in the shards:
a million faces, million hands, million empty reflections
calling lost and dumb.

Like a million faces, hands and silent reflections in bright jewels,
the birlinn's sail reflected in the pool
mingles with line and star.
With joy, finger the tar.
We've travelled far.

*Socket to wind
axle to rack and pawl.
Clough-trap clipping the duckweed as it falls.*

Pound's swell
propel
boat, girl and all.

Part III: The Wetlands of the RUNE

KES EMERGES FROM THE CANAL AT THE BEGINNING OF TIME,
THE ARBITRARY MARK OF THE RUNE.

...there is a word and a pair of lips
coral-red, its hands upon the throat
dragged floorboard-, wound-wards to a coat
of salt, nail, splinter: matterwork's black grip.

*Sing it, then, HIRELING, sing it now.
In THE BEGINNING, sing how*

my father's *pibroch* dragging nape, collar down
upon sea-black darkness. Wave, tide, wonder.
Word, or ocean...

And yet – there's *knowledge* of blundered
catchphrase, slogans' bruising – all these violent nouns.
Violence imprinted on life in marks and signs.
Silence holding life to lifeless marks and signs.

*Sing
the beginning
names of children,
home, bannister-high heights.*

Song of the Unkind Word, the first word...

In the beginning
I sing
my brothers, my father
sing to me.

...shamesong, the Song of the RUNE.

*In the beginning worlds overlapped: mill-pressed
space and data.*

*The wrenching, steam-stretched rush of the thing
passing through stillness'*

traced, quantum

dance-steps – rune-grammar of space sings

'This, then that.' A

braced palm:

words, matter...

Song of the Unsung Letter...

...And the RUNE sung out in that universe's stretching.

...the silent manuscript...

In the beginning

the word becomes both: the archeology of its tracing; its speaking

as both clock and man become the stroke of their hands

falling to gearbell or bottle-shard. The breaking

point and perforation, the crack, peel-point in the rind

is truth of the matter: grapheme and pencil, map and trail

love's rushing madness to the traced jaw and house sale:

worlds dance steps to glyph and tune.

So goes the song of the RUNE.

...stillsong, the Song of the RUNE.

Where an unkind word became the whole of the world.

[12]

THE SONG OF THE RUNE

"I caught just a glimpse of it. A girl, her face white and motionless, winding the rubber band of a wooden toy boat as I sat behind a window, watching her, scared and full of shame. We were both of us at the end of the long tunnel of a decade; everything done, everything happened, for better or worse, and this the little boat and band and grey, wintry Scottish evening the sum of it. The propeller spins slowly, drawing in the energy of the taught, brown band; each turn a borrowing from the past, drawn into the future, a leveraging of energy stored in the depths of its careless rubber coil. The girl counts slowly, deliberately, and the grass is a dark, wet green, the gardens the blackened colours that exist only north of Dundee: from the foothills of the Grampians that look down on plains of farmland, into the Glen that becomes the alpine forests of Cairngorm, its wildcats, its uniform woodland, its vanishing snow. The girl sets the boat down upon the pond, circling in eddies, clumsy, cheap and badly-made. I am ashamed. And through the window I can feel eyes burning into the back of my skull: I know that someone, in turn, is watching me, I am sure of it. Is it from the next ten years, or, is it the last? A voyeur across time where I have become only dream and humiliation and a mere lesson to be learned, or forgotten, cherished, even. A poem, a song. But such glass is a mirror, a visor, the reflections of moss and skyscraper upon the water of the canal, jealous of its knowledge, arrogant with what it has learned from my mistakes. Impossible, then to know: which one of us is it that looks? The girl with the band, taught above the pond like a skater, or the old woman, her hand upon the crumbs of bannock cake. Which one of us has made it into wisdom and judgement and the heady, unasked for, but still noble, reputable pain? Which of us lives to judge, to speak and write of it? Answer, watcher. Which of us takes the fame of lasting? Of remaining alive? Of watching, telling?"

The boat turns again, the rubber spent. I open the door and walk to her, but she is mute, mute with lost years, with raised voices. Speak to me, I beg you. Either of you, speak. It's too late, the voice says. Fool, it's too late. But again, the girl winds the band, and the future coils slowly around its neck, like a snake suffocating prey, like a bee drinking the depths of a stamen, glutting, filling, its hive's appetite endless and unquenchable. Golden, furred, almost impossible..."

So goes the Song of the RUNE.

KES STEPS BEYOND IT. BEFORE HER, THE BODIES OF THE MA, THE VA AND VAL'NAK'SHA: MONSTROUS BIRD-LIKE CREATURES, CRANES, CROAKING OUT REPETITIVE INCANTATIONS THAT THEY PERHAPS NO LONGER MEAN, OR EVEN UNDERSTAND.

Hatred, the stone circle. Hatred, the campfire lit by strange friends. Hatred, the band of pressure around the belly, the hot tears. Hatred, the loss of yourself, the loneliness cross-legged upon the bed, unable even to read. The hoarse breathing, the long toe-nail, twitching. But also, the warmth of the fire, the unasked for alliance with strangers. Hatred, the surety, the knowledge, the certain plan.

Here is another.

It is the song of my father, my brothers
as they call out from the citadel, filling my sails with song.

Grief, the space between the elbows. The grown man clutching the plant, entirely ridiculous.

It is the song of my people,
hear how they call out in the darkness!

JEALOUSY, *the* CRUEL KNOWLEDGE, KNOWLEDGE *of the* OCEAN *behind the* EYES. JEALOUSY, *the*
TASTE *of* COLOURS *and* DREAMS. JEALOUSY, *the* RED LEATHER COUCH, *the* TENEMENT
WINDOW. *The* SKIN *and the* HAIR *and the* POCKET *and the* LIFT-SHAFT.

At the bottom of everything is just things happening –
yet look how the sails fill with their sound –

Hatred, the filled well. O, stone vanished in the darkness, O, swallowed water.

Father, steady.
Brother, guide me.
Girl and book,
glyph and wake,
set sail and rudder to the heart of the canals.

SHAME, *the* BLUE ROCK, *glistening.*

Here how they call out, a song of us all, alone, alone, and in this one

The tilt of the neck in hedgehog-like inwardness, the not-seeing ~

song of the beginning

this

the beginning

this is the beginning

this is just

the beginning

CURTAIN



PERSONNEL

Patricia Auchterlonie is a passionate performer of new, experimental and unheard music, equally at home in opera and chamber music. She is interested in playing with the voice and experimenting with performance practice as well as more traditional forms of music-making. Patricia has worked with BCMG, Music Theatre Wales, LCMF, Snape Maltings and Plus Minus Ensemble, among others. She was the 2017/18 Carne Junior Fellow at Trinity Laban, and holds a master's degree with distinction from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Joseph Havlat was born in Hobart, Australia, and studied at the RAM in London under Prof. Joanna MacGregor. He is currently a Young Artist at St. John's Smith Square. In 2019, he was made Young Artist of the Oxford Lieder Festival alongside fellow Australian Lotte Betts-Dean and was winner of the ROSL music competition. Performing frequently with his clarinet trio (the Tritium trio) and the LSO percussion ensemble, he is also a founding member and artistic director of Ensemble x.y and an avid composer.

Simone Ibbett-Brown is a mezzo-soprano and theatre-maker, passionate about work that brings joy, and reflects and affects the world we live in. Recent highlights include performances for BBC Four, Cairo Opera House, Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Dutch National Opera and Theater an der Wien. She was named a BBC Radio 3 Next Generation Voice 2019, and a Women of the Future Awards-winner 2020. A published playwright and director, Simone co-founded Hera, celebrating and sharing music and stories by equity-seeking artists.

Reimagining traditional textile crafts, London-based **Ka Wa Key** use sustainable materials to infuse gender-fluid casual- and knitwear with Asian and Scandinavian heritage. Ethical sourcing and manufacturing are used to achieve their vision: of simplicity that meets soft masculinity.

Siwan Rhys enjoys and specialises in contemporary music and collaborating with composers. She has played at prestigious venues and festivals in the UK and abroad, and has recorded many times for television and radio. Her commercial releases include music by Stockhausen, Oliver Leith, CHAINES, Barbara Monk Feldman, John Cage and Eva-Maria Houben. Siwan is a member of GBSR Duo and Explore Ensemble, and works regularly with mezzo-soprano Lucy Goddard. She is an honorary member of the Welsh Gorsedd of Bards and an Entente Cordiale alumna.

Ben Smith is a London-based composer and performer specialising in contemporary music. He is interested in – amongst other things – phenomenological and semiotic approaches to musical analysis, and compositional encounters with silence and repetition. Ben graduated from City, University of London in 2015, and is currently a Junior Fellow at Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where he previously studied with Laurence Crane, Rolf Hind and James Weeks. His recording of Evan Johnson's complete piano music was released on *all that dust* in November 2021.

Alastair White (b.1988) is a Scottish composer and writer. His work is characterised by a lyrical complexity that draws influence from technology, science, politics and materialism. Recipient of a Tait Memorial Trust Award (2021), and shortlisted twice for a Scottish Award for New Music (in 2019 and 2020) and Creative Edinburgh Award (2019), he is currently composer-in-residence for the Ljubljana-based .abeceda [new music ensemble]. He teaches composition at Goldsmiths, University of London and speaks internationally on his research interests, which include the theory of contingency dialectics and its methodological implications in fashion-opera. His scores are published by UMP.

Recorded live on Tuesday 17th August 2021 at the Round Chapel in Hackney, London as part of Tête-à-Tête: The Opera Festival. Produced by UU Studios. Supported by Arts Promotion Centre Finland, the Hope Scott Trust, the Marchus Trust, the Royal Musical Association, the RVW Trust, the Sarah Caple Scholarship and Tête-à-Tête.

Music Direction	<i>Ben Smith</i>
Kes'Cha'Au	<i>Patricia Auchterlonie</i>
Khye-Rell	<i>Simone Ibbett-Brown</i>
The MA	<i>Ben Smith</i>
The VA	<i>Siwan Rhys</i>
The VAL'NAK'SHA	<i>Joseph Havlat</i>
The Waters	<i>Ryan Appiah-Sarpong</i> <i>Max Gershon</i> <i>Shakeel Kimotho</i> <i>Thomas Page</i>
Fashion	<i>Ka Wa Key</i>
Sculpture	<i>Sid the Salmon</i>
Direction	<i>Gemma A. Williams</i> <i>Jarno Leppanen</i>
Hair	<i>Maria Kovacs, Readytowearhairdressing</i>
Assisted by	<i>John Harte, Chris Harris-Gibbs and Evelina Lundgren</i>
Makeup	<i>Michelle Strain, AOFMPro, using Dermalogica</i>
Assisted by	<i>Alina Antofe, Laura Hahnel, Matilda Jose and Richa Khatana</i>
Film	<i>Hannah Lovell</i>
Camera	<i>Barry Hoffman and Damien Naimad</i>
All Images	<i>Jarno Leppanen and Ka Wa Key</i>
Recording & Production	<i>Chris Tanton</i>
Words & Music	<i>Alastair White</i>



ALASTAIR WHITE'S FASHION-OPERA CYCLE ON MÉTIER

"He has invented a whole exciting new genre of art" (BBC Radio 3).



ROBE

Métier MSV 28609

A posthuman fantasia about the A.I. singularity. In a society where the difference between the real and the virtual is no longer meaningful, the superintelligence EDINBURGH calls out for a cartographer to grant its desire: to become a living city, teeming with human life and activity.

"Fantastical, dystopian, highly poetic. The music is excellent." – *Claire Jackson*
(*BBC Music Magazine*)

"White favors an embodied lyricism, and his vocal writing flexibly feeds a number of solos, duets and trios often treated a cappella or with the complicity of a flute which Jenni Hogan manages in a controlled way to make a character in its own right. The female quartet undoubtedly plays in favor of this beautiful musical homogeneity. With the help of the performers, Alastair White infuses this virtual dramaturgy with a musical intensity that succeeds in giving it substance, a feat that could not better correspond to the theme of this opera." – *Pierre Rigaudiere* (*Avant-Scène Opéra*)

"White's libretto is highly imaginative as you would expect it to be – I was moved. Notable too was the quality of singing – the whole cast of singers quite brilliantly navigated a complex atonal vocal landscape." – *Karine Hetherington* (*Artmuse London*)

COMING SOON:

WEAR is a story about the end of the world: where the commercial use of time-machine technology has ripped the universe apart. *WEAR* tells of two people reunited in a future without memory to examine the cost – and beauty – of the objects we create. "Spellbinding...an opera of rare imagination – and success" – Mark Berry (Boulezian).



WOAD

Métier MSV 28617

A young boy is bewitched – into the form of an ape, an adder, a speck of dust. But is it his shape that twists and churns, or that of the world around him? *WOAD* is a tale of metamorphosis and parallel worlds that asks: in a multiverse of endless possibility, what becomes of our potential, our regret?

“Unhesitatingly recommended. This is really quite remarkable. White seems to have created not just his own voice within opera, but his own type of opera as well. It is a magnificent achievement to do so, and its manifestation here in *WOAD* is the height of compositional magnificence, performed by two musicians at the very peak of their powers. Words cannot really express my admiration for Kelly Poukens and Suzy Vanderheiden. The recording is everything one could wish for: vivid, present, detailed.” – *Colin Clarke (Fanfare)*

“An intriguing new sub-genre...strangely captivating...” – *Claire Jackson (BBC Music Magazine)*

“White's latest opera is a dazzling tour-de-force.” – *Robert Hugill (Planet Hugill)*

DIVINE ART RECORDINGS GROUP



Over 600 titles, with full track details, reviews, artist profiles and audio samples, can be browsed on our website. Available at any good dealer or direct from our online store in CD, 24-bit HD, FLAC and MP3 digital download formats.

USA: Diversions LLC.: sales@divineartrecords.com

www.divineartrecords.com

find us on facebook, youtube and twitter

WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom, licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd, 1, Upper James Street, London W1R 3H



msv 28626
0809730862625

