

ED HUGHES
WHEN THE FLAME DIES

LIBRETTO BY ROGER MORRIS
NEW MUSIC PLAYERS
CARLOS DEL CUETO, conductor

WHEN THE FLAME DIES

Opera in one act by Ed Hughes

Libretto by Roger Morris

Live concert performance

1	Can't write	2.09
2	My love is dead	2.04
3	If only	4.16
4	Before you pull the trigger	3.10
5	Eternal Orpheus	3.46
6	Interlude 1 (electronic)	1.41
7	I am Orpheus	3.44
8	I am forever the singer	4.34
9	You wanted her dead!	3.36
10	Interlude 2 (instrumental)	3.43
11	Our perfect hours	3.49
12	Aren't you going to answer it?	5.50
13	There are no memories	2.19
14	The rising of the sap	6.12
15	Killer in the poet's mask	1.48
16	The candle is burnt out	5.50

Total	duration	57.24
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Live concert performance by the New Music Players

Poet (baritone)	Edward Grint
Princess Death (mezzo-soprano)	Lucy Williams
Orpheus (tenor)	Julian Podger
Eurydice (soprano)	Emily Phillips
Raymond (counter-tenor)	Andrew Radley

New Music Players

Flute	Rowland Sutherland	Violin	Susanne Stanzeleit
Clarinet	Fiona Cross	Violin	Adam Summerhayes
Trumpet	Edward Maxwell	Viola	Bridget Carey
Horn	Richard Steggall	Cello	Andrew Fuller
Percussion	Owen Gunnell	Double Bass	Lucy Shaw
Harp	Federica Mossone	Piano	Richard Casey

Conductor **Carlos del Cueto**

Projection design: Will Reynolds
Cameras: Simon Weir & Ian Habgood
Sound and technical support: Danny Bright
Cover photograph of Loren O'Dair: Bob Prosser

Video artists: Loren O'Dair & Peter Kirk
Sound design consultant: Antony Pitts
Sound engineers: Morgan Roberts & Simon Weir
DVD director: Simon Weir

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This recording is in memory of Peter Hughes (1942-1992)
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Synopsis

The Poet receives a phone call offering a commission to write a new play to be performed at a prestigious theatre. He is quick to decline the commission because he is in mourning for his recently dead lover. He cannot even think of working, he says. But it's clear that he is flattered by the honour. By the end of the call, he promises to think about it, and makes a note of the details. Strangely, the caller doesn't give a name.

Despite his earlier protestations, the Poet begins trying to work. However, he cannot get past simply stating the fact of his lover's death. He screws up the paper and throws it away.

The Poet confronts himself in the mirror and agonises, self-accusingly, over his lover's death.

The door bell rings. The Poet is visited by a beautiful woman, dressed in black – The Princess. Mysteriously, she seems to know all about the Poet, particularly about the details of his father's suicide. She asks the Poet what he wants and he says to be re-united with his dead love. She says there is a way to achieve this – through death. She gleefully encourages him to put a gun to his head and pull the trigger – the same gun that his father used to kill himself, which the Poet has kept all these years. However, just as he is about to shoot himself, she stops him and says that there is something she wants to show him.

The Princess gives the Poet a vision of all the books he has yet to write – the creative work he has ahead of him.

She then lights a candle, saying that they will “play a game”. Before the candle burns out, the Poet must choose between Love and Art. The Poet chooses Love, but the Princess says the candle hasn't burnt out yet. There is still time for him to change his mind.

As part of the game, the Princess encourages the Poet to invoke Orpheus. Orpheus appears. The Princess offers the Poet a magical poppy petal. The Poet takes the poppy petal, falls asleep, and begins to dream.

The legend of Orpheus is retold. The Poet wakes and blames Orpheus for causing Eurydice's death. They argue violently. In despair the Poet summons the Princess again. He demands more poppy petals. The underworld invades the apartment. The Princess claims the Poet as her own. The Dead call to the Poet. The Poet emerges from a trance as the figure of his Dead Love appears to him.

The Princess reminds the Poet of the books he still has to write. The future books are displayed, but gradually start to vanish. The candle is burning out. The moment when the Poet must make his final decision is approaching. His Dead Love has appeared in front of him, all he has to do

is say the word – choose Love – and they will be reunited. But at the final moment, the Poet, in agony, rejects his love. Orpheus and Eurydice drag the Dead Love back into the Underworld.

The apartment is restored to the everyday. The Poet rails against the Princess. She calmly offers him paper. The Poet begins writing.

Roger Morris, 2012



Resurrecting Cocteau in Reverse - James S. Williams

Perhaps no other artist probed so consistently, and in so many different forms and media, the profound and mysterious relations between life and creativity as did Jean Cocteau. He was, by his own admission, afflicted by an insurmountable 'difficulty of being'. Since in his view all creative work was an exhalation *from within* (i.e. the self) rather than inspired *from without*, it was necessarily biographical and part of a continuous 'life project' – one, however, beset by permanent tensions and contradictions.

When the Flame Dies, which begins with The Poet in impossible mourning for his dead lover Raymond, captures perfectly this essential feature of Cocteau. It is a fascinating fusing of life and art, real people and fictional characters. Raymond Radiguet was the boy prodigy, author of *Le Diable au corps* (*The Devil in the Flesh*), who died tragically from typhoid in 1923 at the age of twenty. From the moment they met in June 1919, Cocteau, almost twice his age, devoted himself exclusively to Radiguet whom he regarded immediately as his Master and the future of literature. Their time together was a providential 'experiment' to create something 'heavenly', and it transformed Cocteau's imaginary universe: the Poet was now a visionary. It was never fully clear what the precise nature of their intimate relationship was, yet Cocteau became suicidal following Radiguet's death (he was too distraught even to attend the funeral). He was now lost in the wilderness, and it would take him several long years of opium addiction and a temporary return to the Church before he was able to move on emotionally and artistically, though he probably never truly got over losing Radiguet.

One of the major signs of Cocteau's renewal was the play *Orphée* (1926), the first of his many successful updatings of classical myth. Mixing tragic and often scandalously comic elements (it was also a satire on Dada), it presented Orphée as a weak poet relying on a strange inverted form of Centaur for inspiration. The figure of the glazier Heurtebise carried clear echoes of Radiguet – a guardian angel who embodied love and salvation yet who could just as suddenly disappear. It was also linked to a poem written by Cocteau around the same time entitled 'L'Ange Heurtebise', which describes the spiritual and homoerotic fantasy of possession by a 'heavy male' sceptre – both a violent creative spirit and a young male lover. In the play, Heurtebise arguably loves – and is loved by – Orpheus through the intermediary of Eurydice, though this cannot be proved.

The opera by Ed Hughes and Roger Morris gives at last a dramatic voice to Raymond who can now express his personal anguish. The fact that the role is for a counter-tenor while that of Cocteau is for a baritone offers a neat, ironic touch since Radiguet was extremely masculine, often aggressively so, certainly in comparison with Cocteau. The opera also makes reference to Cocteau's father who shot himself in the head when Cocteau was just eight – an event that would later be replayed in the scene of the Poet killing himself in the 1932 film, *Le Sang d'un Poète*, the first part of Cocteau's 'Orphic trilogy'.

What makes the opera so different from this film, and also from Cocteau's much darker 1950 film *Orphée* (in part a bitter self-portrait by Cocteau as he sought to work through his self-doubts as an artist now turning sixty and facing critical indifference), is that here the beloved is explicitly male and bears Radiguet's name, thus breaking away radically from conventional heterosexual retellings of the Orpheus myth. Here, the figure of Cocteau is presented with a choice: whether to bring his lover back from the Underworld or to choose art and immortal fame by summoning Orpheus, his ancestor and double. For Cocteau, of course, there was never any choice when it came to Radiguet who represented the possibility of an ideal union of absolute love and creativity. Yet this bold move on the part of Hughes and librettist Roger Morris creates a tightly sprung coil of dramatic tension powerfully articulated in existential and aesthetic terms around the many sets of Cocteau-like mirrors and doubles (Cocteau and Raymond, Cocteau and Eurydice, Cocteau and Princess Death, Cocteau and Orpheus).

When the Flame Dies draws on a number of other familiar Cocteau themes, including duty (the duty of love as sacrifice), destiny, beauty, domination and withdrawal. There are also exciting parallels with Cocteau's iconic imagery in the opera's elegantly simple and effective visual design. The endlessly proliferating forms of the video projection bleeding out over the frame of a large overhanging mirror are a beautiful rendering of the mirror as portal to the Zone, that strange no-man's land between life and death in the film *Orphée*. The recurring visual motif of the multiple hands in feverish activity presents an ambivalent image: are they trying to enter or to escape? Is this an image of neurotic breakdown or frenzied inspiration? The lack of a clear sense and direction is pure Cocteau, as are the sudden unexpected events like the smashing of a pane of glass (the internal cracking of a mirror in *Orphée* is accompanied by Cocteau's voice-over quip: 'Mirrors would do well to reflect more'). The falling red petals hark back to Cocteau's last film, *Le Testament d'Orphée* (1960), the final stage of his Orphic trilogy, where they will be resurrected into life again through the miracle of reverse motion photography.

Hughes's score, brilliantly performed by five exceptional singers and the New Music Players, conveys the strange forces and fields, currents and counter-currents, operating in both versions of Cocteau's *Orphée*. The result is a subtle flux of multiple tensions, moods and intensities, of fast-changing tempos, rhythms and counterpoints oscillating between searing expressions of naked emotion and more gentle, contemplative passages. The excellent libretto announces itself in monosyllables of utter torment (The Poet's anguished cry: 'No! No! No!'), yet is also punctuated by moments of human levity in its deliberately bare and direct use of language. The stunning interlude sequence – a symphonics of static noise and interference – is accompanied visually by sound waves dancing in the mirror, like a live seismograph of the emotional cataclysms taking place. Such a combination of pre-recorded electronic extracts and disruptive found sounds creates an appropriately eerie echo chamber of sonic disturbance.

The orchestral score of the film *Orphée*, featuring stylised rearrangements of Gluck's opera *Orfeo ed Eurydice*, was composed by Cocteau's regular collaborator, Georges Auric, one of the members of the group Les Six whom Cocteau personally championed in the late 1910s/early 1920s. The arresting theme used for the set-piece passages through the Zone starts off boldly with driving chords and then appears to slow down in its variations and become suspended, hovering in the air as if working against the brooding percussive undercurrents that evoke the wind of Time. Yet even if the music for the Zone seems at times to backtrack or split up sideways, it is still always moving forwards (Cocteau will not experiment with the possibility of reverse sound until *Le Testament d'Orphée* where some lines of dialogue are recorded backwards). In the opera, however, during the aria where Princess Death sings her poignant eternal refrain, she does so with and against a pre-recorded track of her mezzo voice playing in reverse. This dazzling reverse double movement matches the intense play of symmetry and repetition in the film *Orphée*, in particular the final return from the Zone when Orphée (Jean Marais) is transported back to the domestic bedroom and Eurydice in a slightly altered mirror reflection of the first descent. The effect was produced by means of reverse-motion photography: Heurtebise (François Périer), his arms outstretched, appears to push Orphée backwards, though in fact Orphée was moving on a different plane in a pre-filmed back projection.

In the spirit of Cocteau yet no mere back-tracking, *When the Flame Dies* is an original and daring work for our times executed with rare urgency and precision. Whereas the film ended on a note of genuine disappointment (Orphée is released back into the world of humans and their 'mire'), Hughes' and Morris's remarkable opera has a life-affirming forward projection. Its potent flame will burn brightly for generations to come.

James S. Williams is the author of *Jean Cocteau* (Reaktion Books, 2008).

Orpheus, Orphée, and When the Flame Dies - Michal Grover-Friedlander

When the Flame Dies pays homage to Cocteau's interpretation of the Orphic myth in his film *Orphée* (1950) even as it reclaims the myth for opera. *When the Flame Dies* follows Cocteau's deviation from the myth though it replaces the artistic gift of poetry with that of music and song.

In the opera, song hovers between the worlds of the living and the dead. The Poet's voice conjures and revives Orpheus – his ancestor, mythic double, and aggrandized self-reflection. In one of the opera's most beautiful moments the poet shows how he possesses the Orphic power to summon the dead. Contrary to the Greek myth, it is Orpheus rather than Eurydice who returns from the underworld. The revival of Orpheus is a brilliant twist that complicates both the relationship between Orpheus and Eurydice and the signification given to singing.

Once summoned, Orpheus sings that “all are doomed to repeat Orpheus” but that no one but him could ever bear such a fate. Indeed, in both *Orphée* and *When the Flame Dies*, the artist possesses dubious powers and is in constant struggle with his source of creativity. In Cocteau's film, because Orphée can no longer write, he seeks inspiration from cryptic messages heard over a car radio. The car belongs to the character Death, and its messages are poems transmitted from the other world by Orphée's dead rival via the intermediary of Death. In *When the Flame Dies*, Death seduces the poet by showing him what he could become and the works he has yet to write.

In the myth, Orpheus uses his artistic powers to bring back his beloved. In the two modern renditions creativity and love are locked in strife, and the artist must choose one or the other: “The choice is yours, of course. To die, and in death join the one you love. Or to live a loveless but creative life.” Death is here a central character with a crucial influence on Orpheus's fate and his love for Eurydice. Both in the film and the opera, Orpheus and Eurydice are thus not the only couple; likewise, both works center on two rather than one single artist.

An important innovation in Cocteau's reinterpretation of the myth is the idea of a *Zone*, a passage between the world of the living and that of the dead. To characterise existence in the Zone he employs the cinematic trick of reverse motion. Transposed by Hughes, the Zone receives a specific temporal or a-temporal character: it is an eternal present, where one is among neither the living nor the dead. It is the time that it takes for the flame to die, the time that is given the poet to decide between love and art: “There are no memories. There is no past. No first, no last, only now. You are locked in the eternal now. There are no regrets. There is no pain. There is only now, the eternal refrain. You are no longer with the living. You are not yet with the dead. You are here, now, held by the candle's flame, in a moment outside time.”

Michal Grover-Friedlander is the author of *Vocal Apparition: The Attraction of Cinema to Opera* (Princeton 2005) and *Operatic Afterlives* (Zone Books 2011)





LIBRETTO

[1]

POET No! No! No! No!
[Telephone rings]
Hello? Yes... speaking...
That's very kind, thank you, I appreciate...
Yes... sudden... a shock...
So much to offer - thank you for your call
goodbye...
What you ask is not possible...
I can't write... not yet, not ever...
A commission? For a play? I see...
Which theatre?
Is that so? I do beg your pardon but I didn't catch
your name.
You are? Of course - yes - it would be.
That's true. A great honour. But...
I... I don't know... It feels too soon...
I'll think it over.
You're very kind. You didn't tell me...
...your name?

[2]

My love is dead.
How can I look at myself in the mirror?
How can I face the man I've become?
It wasn't my fault. I didn't wish it.
Sickness took my love.
A painful death, a horrible sickness.
I wasn't there to wipe the fevered brow.
But it wasn't my fault.

Why can't I look at myself in the mirror?
Why do I see a murderer's eyes?
A cortege drew the coffin away,
So I was told by friends who saw it
I couldn't bear to be there that day.
It wasn't my fault. I didn't wish it.
How can I look at myself in the mirror?
How can I face the man I've become?

[3]

If only...
Do I know you?
PRINCESS I first came into your life the day
your father died.
You were just a child.
How you cried to see a stranger guide your
father's hand to suicide.
POET Cried? I don't remember crying.
I remember playing... I remember...
...the blood, the gun, my mother's tears
and then I went outside to play quite happily
that day.
PRINCESS I'm sure you must have cried.
POET Cold, cold; your touch... is cold.
PRINCESS I wonder...
Darling, may I see the gun?
POET The gun?
PRINCESS The gun your father blew his brains
out with.
POET I don't have it.
PRINCESS Please don't lie.
POET Why would I keep such an object?
PRINCESS How could you bear to part with it?
What do you desire, my friend?
POET To be an artist.
PRINCESS I could be your patron or your
muse, you choose.
POET You clearly are very...rich!
PRINCESS Am I not beautiful? Now, show me
the gun, Poet.
How your father loved his gun.
Would you like to hold it?
Come now, your love is dead.
This may be the way to see your love again.
Take the gun.
All you have to do is put the gun against your
head.
POET My love is dead, I cannot live.

[4]

PRINCESS Before you pull the trigger I have something to show you.

Do you like them? They could be yours...

Works you have yet to create.

Poems, plays, paintings, photographs, films, the art, the vision.

Yours, look, there, upon the spine, whose name?

The choice is yours, of course, to die and in death join the one you love,

or to live a loveless but creative life.

POET I want to live, but I want to love.

PRINCESS Perhaps you'll love again, I know you men.

POET There can be no love greater than the love I lost.

I want that love.

PRINCESS Let's play a game.

This burning candle keeps your love alive.

When the flame dies you must decide -

POET What must I decide?

PRINCESS Love, or fame.

POET I choose love.

PRINCESS The flame still burns, this choice may yet be overturned.

POET I want my love returned.

PRINCESS We must turn away from the past.

Isn't that what Orpheus taught us?

POET Why Orpheus?

PRINCESS He knew one look from him would mean instant, eternal death for Eurydice.

POET Yes, but he was overpowered by love.

PRINCESS It was weakness.

Getting his wife back would only get in his way.

Death by poet's glance.

POET What if I refuse to play?

PRINCESS Oh, you'll play, my friend.

Call his name.

POET Whose?

PRINCESS Orpheus, who else?

POET Orpheus.

PRINCESS Not like that!

You have to honour him.

[5]

POET Eternal Orpheus.

More voice than man.

Poet, priest, charmer of beasts.

Mystic adventurer.

Who dared to venture into death's dominion.

Singer of songs to soothe the living and stir the dead.

Divine Orpheus, beloved of two Gods,

the wild, unruly, and the rational,

your disciple summons you.

PRINCESS One petal from a blood red flower.

Imbued with soothing power.

Let this petal pass your lips,

across the boundary of your kiss.

Surrender to its melting bliss,

then feel the limits of existence stir

as two worlds bleed into a blur.

[6]

INTERLUDE 1 (Electronic)

[7]

ORPHEUS I am Orpheus,

silencer of birds.

Snakes unravel to hang upon my words.

All have heard of Orpheus, Poetry's lord.

My pen is mightier than any sword.

My voice is richer than any purse.

POET A pity that your gaze is cursed.

ORPHEUS No, not cursed. It had to be.

An artist's gaze brings death - you'll see.

That is our eternal tragedy.

There can be no Orpheus without Eurydice.

What do you want from me?

POET To go where you have gone.

To see my dead love again.

ORPHEUS That's easy. All you have to do is die.

POET I don't believe that lie, and besides, I want to bring back love alive.

ORPHEUS Ah! That's a rather harder thing you ask.

Not even I was equal to that task.

It was not enough to be the greatest poet of
eternity.
The gods wanted more of me.
More than vocal purity -
More than perfect prosody or lyric virtuosity.
To have, to hold but not to see...
my love, my Eurydice, was their demand of me.
I could not look upon her face.
One look condemned her to that place.
Now every poet of every age
must re-enact the drama that I played
and pay the price I paid when I was torn and
flayed
by a wild avenging rage.
Are you not afraid?
POET What must I do?
ORPHEUS What can you do? You are not
Orpheus.

[8]
ORPHEUS I am forever the singer.
EURYDICE I am forever the song.
ORPHEUS In the realm of the living I linger.
To the realm of the dead she belongs.
EURYDICE/ORPHEUS The candle burns, the
clock hands turn, the flower of death unfurls.
ORPHEUS I am forever the singer, my voice
forever in song.
I am forever the bringer of words that are fluid
and strong.
The candle flickers, the clock hands quicken,
the shadow of death beckons.
PRINCESS Hear me, Eurydice.
ORPHEUS I am forever a river, flowing in
spate.
EURYDICE The candle glows, the clock hands
show; time hastens death to the Poet.
ORPHEUS My words forever deliver delight
and forever elate.
Life swims through me at a pace, I am forever a
giver of gifts to the whole human race.
EURYDICE The candle burns, the clock hands
turn, the flower of life is spurned.
PRINCESS Come to me Eurydice. Join me,
Eurydice.

EURYDICE/ORPHEUS I am forever the singer,
in the realm of the living I linger. I am forever
the song. To the realm of the dead I belong.

[9]
POET You wanted her dead!
ORPHEUS Come here, Poet.
I looked death in the face.
I felt death's embrace.
I journeyed to that fateful place.
I shared in death's grace.
My privilege is hard won. Do as I have done
then talk to me of Eurydice.
I'm tired of your hypocrisy.
You are the killer in the poet's mask,
You caused your lover's death;
your one desire your love's last breath.
POET No!
ORPHEUS Face the truth. You're in love with
youth.
When youth gives way to age,
love then becomes a cage.
Chains of habit tie you down.
The loving look becomes a frown.
Better that your love should die than linger on,
a lie.
A dead lover is forever cherished.
Love stays strong, though flesh has perished.
Conveniently, your love died young.
No doubt your heart was wrong.
Yet while your grief is nourished, your art has
strangely flourished.
You love in your own fashion.
Yours is a calculating passion.
The mirror is a thief. It takes the years and
leaves the grief.
Count the ravages of its theft and wonder how
long have you left.
Who wants to see an aging face in the mirror's
captive space?
Beauty is on youth conferred.
Therefore younger lovers are preferred.
What? No denial? You smile.
It helps my art, to understand the human heart.
Consider now the burning flame.

Do you still choose love not fame?
And still you yearn for your love's return?
But your love is like the candle burning,
and upon returning we may assume normal
aging will resume.

Youth's beauty soon a fading bloom.
And be prepared for love's demands,
for flowers and gifts and holding hands.
Artist or lover is the choice.

The mouth that kisses has no voice.

POET I choose...

ORPHEUS You hesitate. Before you make your
answer, wait.

Love's virtues now I shall enumerate.

Love is the duty that you owe to life.

POET That's it? No rhyme?

ORPHEUS Not that time.

POET Would you care to elaborate?

ORPHEUS No. I have no doubt you'll work it
out. To you it will be clear -

You're a clever man I hear, and now, good day,
it's time for me to go my way.

[10]

INTERLUDE 2 (Instrumental)

POET I am the killer in the poet's mask!

Mine is a cold and calculating passion!

My one desire: my love's last breath!

Better that my love should die!

EURYDICE Love is the duty that you owe to life.

POET Love is the duty that I owe to life.

PRINCESS Better that your love should die!

POET Better that my love should die!

Princess!

I need more - more - more...

I saw Orpheus!

PRINCESS Oh yes? And how was he?

POET He was a monster!

PRINCESS A monstrous ego, certainly.

It's always the same with these creative types.

POET He said I wished my loved one
dead.

PRINCESS And how did that make you feel?

POET Guilty.

PRINCESS There was some truth in his charge,
then?

POET No! I want my loved one back.

PRINCESS Is that your final word?

The candle burns low. But is not yet burnt out.

There is still time for you to change your mind.

POET I need more time. The flower gives
me time.

PRINCESS True. The flower takes you out of
time.

That is perhaps the greatest of its gifts.

POET Please.

PRINCESS What will you give me in return?

POET I shall dedicate my work to you

PRINCESS And so you have changed your
mind? You now choose art over life?

POET No! I mean, give me the petal and I
will decide.

PRINCESS My friend! You must learn to treat it
with respect.

[11]

PRINCESS We owe to you our perfect hours,
Life lived at the speed of flowers.

You free my thoughts from life and death,

beguile away a decade with a breath.

We stand for centuries staring at a stain,

listening for mysteries in the dripping rain.

You are the breast at which we feed. Our hunger,
our desire.

Opium, opium.

Heedless and happy are we with you;

our bond with death we smilingly renew.

You are patient and forgiving;

and we more loyal to you than the living.

You are my mistress and my wife,

my sweet eternal death in life.

You are patient and forgiving

we are more loyal to you than to the living.

You are my mistress and my wife,

my sweet eternal death in life.

[12]

[Telephone rings]

PRINCESS Aren't you going to answer it?

Hello? My dear! How lovely to hear your voice.
Yes, he's here. Would you like to speak to him?
It's for you.
It's your father.
You have nothing to say to your father? After all
these years?

POET He's dead.

PRINCESS Well, if you're going to hold that
against him...

He won't speak to you.

He's very upset.

He says there's something he must say to you.

POET I don't care what he wants to say.
He took himself out of my life.

PRINCESS I'm sorry my friend. He won't relent.

POET There was no one there. The line
was dead.

PRINCESS What do you wish, my friend?

POET To see my love again.

PRINCESS One petal from a blood-red flower,
imbued with a soothing power.

Let this petal pass your lips,
across the boundary of your kiss.

Surrender to its melting bliss.

Then feel the limits of existence stir
as two worlds bleed into a blur...

POET More!

PRINCESS These are my gifts.

My gifts for you.

You have taken my gifts.

Now you are mine!

[13]

PRINCESS There are no memories.

No first, no last, there is only now.

You are locked in the eternal now, no regrets,
no pain, there is only now, the eternal refrain.

You are no longer with the living.

You are not yet with the dead.

You are here, now, held by the candle's flame,
in a moment outside time.

It is the dead, calling to you.

POET Is it really you?

Can this be true?

You... are alive!

[14]

RAYMOND What must the tree feel at the rising
of the sap?

The agony of life returned.

Springtime is the season of suffering.

Winter is numb.

In winter, the leaves fall painlessly.

It is springtime now,

I feel the agony of life returning.

My blood pounds, the hammer blows of
crucifixion.

A riot wreaks havoc in my flesh.

My sinews strain against this new invasion -
life, the invading army laying siege.

I press my ear to my arm and hear the tumult
of assault;

the thunder and roar of conflagration, rampage
and rape.

In the dark starless night beneath my skin,
explosions ignite into cataclysm.

I am reborn to a life of suffering and memory.

Life marauds through me leaving ruin in its wake.

Life is a wound and pain.

PRINCESS See what you have done?

He doesn't want the life you would inflict upon
him.

POET Life is sometimes painful. I know
that.

I would not bring him back to that, if he does not
consent.

PRINCESS What say you?

RAYMOND I consent.

My love is... the torment that I willingly endure.

I will suffer every torment - every minute -
happily, for you.

My love is the pain I embrace for you.

My love is the Hundred Years War raging in my
right hand.

I will endure it for you.

My love is the red constellation of pain flaming
in my chest.

I will not complain, if I have you.

Let the claws of disease tear my face asunder.

That pain is nothing next to my love for you.

Let them place fishhooks in my skin and pull.

Your touch will soothe me.
Just say you love me, and I will bear it all for you.
PRINCESS There. You have your answer.

It's down to you, now.

And now I see the candle is almost burnt out.
The time has come for you to decide.

RAYMOND Just say you love me and I will
return with you.

PRINCESS Would you forego all this for a
lover's kiss?

Every moment you delay, distracted by this boy's
beauty,

removes another masterpiece from your future.

POET Stop!

PRINCESS The only way to stop it is to turn
your back on him.

[15]

EURYDICE/ORPHEUS You are the killer in the
poet's mask!

Yours is a cold and calculating passion!

Your one desire: your love's last breath!

Better that your love should die!

PRINCESS Your books Poet! The time for
deciding is almost past.

Will you consign your future to the past?

RAYMOND Just say you love me and I will
return with you.

EURYDICE/ORPHEUS He cannot say it. It is his
destiny not to say it.

He must not say it. It is his duty not to say it.

POET What is my duty?

EURYDICE/ORPHEUS Love is the duty that you
owe to life.

POET What is my duty?

ALL Love is the duty that you owe to life.

[16]

PRINCESS The candle is burnt out.

You cannot delay any longer.

I must have your decision now.

RAYMOND Just say the word.

Just say you love me and I will return with you.

PRINCESS Soon, soon it will be too late.

Your choice is simple:

Either the books or the boy.

POET Forgive me. Forgive me, I choose...

Why did you not let me say the words?

You let them take him from me!

That wasn't the choice I meant to make!

You mistook what I meant to say!

PRINCESS My friend. I gave you gifts.

Now it is your turn to give something back.

POET I know you. You are death.

PRINCESS How did you know?

POET You have the hands of a midwife.

PRINCESS And you have the face of a
murderer.

Now work. In the company of death, all you can
do is work.

FIN





Personnel

Ed Hughes *Composer* Studied at Cambridge (UK) with Robin Holloway and Alexander Goehr, and at Southampton (UK) with Michael Finnissy. Commissions include City of London Festival (an opera to a libretto by Glyn Maxwell, *The Birds*, for The Opera Group and I Fagiolini), Brighton Festival, Bath Camerata, Glyndebourne/Photoworks, Tacet Ensemble and London Sinfonietta. Performances have included City of London Festival, Buxton Opera House, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Linbury Studio Theatre, Jerusalem Music Centre, Salamanca Festival, Sydney Opera House/Festival, MettaTheatre at Grimeborn, a number of BBC Radio 3 live broadcasts, and ROH2/Opera Genesis (who first developed this work). His work has been described as 'complex...distinctive, original and yet approachable' (Richard Casey). His music is published by UYMP. He is a Senior Lecturer in Music at the University of Sussex.

www.edhughes.org.uk

Roger Morris *Libretto* Writing as R.N. Morris, Roger is the author of a series of historical crime novels: *A Gentle Axe*, *A Vengeful Longing*, *A Razor Wrapped in Silk* and *The Cleansing Flames*. His latest novel is *The Mannequin House*, published in December 2012. He collaborated with Ed Hughes on the musical theatre piece *The Devil's Drum*. He has been shortlisted for a number of awards including the CWA Gold Dagger and his books have been translated into many languages and published around the world.

www.rogermorrison.co.uk

William Reynolds *Lighting, Video and Projection Designer* William trained at the Motley Theatre Design School. Lighting designs include *The Two Worlds of Charlie F* (Theatre Royal Haymarket & UK Tour), *Daredevas* (Southbank Centre), *Nuit d'électronique et d'Opéra* (Theatre Royal de Wallonie, Belgium), *The Magic Flute* (Palestine Tour), *The Company Man* (Orange Tree Theatre). Set and lighting designs include *Waiting and Sexing the Cherry* (Southbank Centre), *Saturday Night* (Arts Theatre), *Moonfleece & Tender Napsalm* (UK Tour) and *La Bohème* (Palestine Tour). Projection designs include *Testament* (Dublin Theatre Festival), *Prima Donna* (Sadlers Wells), *The Gambler* (Royal Opera House) and *Das Rheingold* (National Reisopera, Holland).

www.williamreynolds.org.uk

Edward Grint *Poet* British Baritone Edward Grint is a recent graduate of the International Opera School at The Royal College of Music and a former choral scholar of King's College, Cambridge. Edward was awarded the Second Prize at the 3rd International Singing Competition for Baroque Opera Pietro Antonio Cesti in Innsbruck. He currently studies with Peter Savidge. Edward's roles include Count Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Isacio (*Riccardo Primo*) (London Handel Festival), Guglielmo (*Così fan Tutte*) and Zaretsky (*Eugene Onegin*) (Ryedale Festival). Engagements for 2013 include Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*) and Adonis (*Venus and*

Adonis) for the Innsbruck Baroque Festival, and the role of Brother in the world premiere of Mendonça's *The House Taken Over*.
www.edwardgrint.com

Lucy Williams *Princess* Lucy previously sang the role of Princess at the 2010 Grimeborn Festival, and recorded Hughes's *A Buried Flame* for Metier CD *Dark Formations*. Lucy studied English Literature at Oxford University and then trained as a singer at the Royal Northern College of Music and privately with Laura Sarti. Lucy has sung for Scottish Opera, BBC Singers, Opera Rara and was a soloist for Tarik O'Regan's *The Ecstasies Above* with the Brodsky Quartet and the Brighton Festival Chorus. She is currently based at the Stadttheater Klagenfurt in Austria.
www.lucyawilliams.com

Julian Podger *Orpheus* Julian Podger is much in demand in England and abroad as a soloist. Highpoints include part of the Bach cantata pilgrimage with John Eliot Gardiner and appearances with Andrew Parrott and the Taverner Consort at the Ansbach Festival. He has specialised in the role of Evangelist for Bach's Passions, with performances in Bratislava, Tallinn, Riga, and with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Concert appearances include the Royal Albert Hall and Barbican, Salzburg, Vienna and Barcelona. Operatic ventures have taken him to Tokyo as 'Orfeo', to Venice, Melbourne and the Edinburgh Festival as 'Ulissee' (both Monteverdi), to the Boston Early Music Festival and to London and York as 'Daniel' in The Play of Daniel with Andrew Lawrence-King. He is a member of Gothic Voices, and continues to direct Trinity Baroque which he founded.
www.trinitybaroque.com

Emily Phillips *Eurydice* Emily trained at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama after gaining a Music & Media degree at Sussex University. She currently studies with Gary Coward. Recent operatic roles include: Julia Bertram in Dove's *Mansfield Park* for Hampstead Garden Opera, First Boy (*Die Zauberflöte*) for Longborough Festival Opera Young Artists and Puck and Tytania (cover) in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Co-Opera Co. Forthcoming engagements include the role of 2nd Nenella (*Gioielli della Madonna*) for Opera Holland Park, Belinda (*Dido & Aeneas*) for Barefoot Opera, and the Dew Fairy (*Hansel & Gretel*) for Pop Up Opera.
www.emilyphillips.weebly.com

Andrew Radley *Raymond* British countertenor Andrew Radley read music at Clare College, Cambridge and studied at the Royal Academy of Music and the Paris Conservatoire. Past engagements have included Orindo (*Admeto*) for Göttingen Handel and Edinburgh Festivals; the title role in Flavio and Joachim's *Susanna*, Early Opera Company; Didymus (*Theodora*), London Handel Festival; Edward in Arne's *Alfred*, Classical

Opera Company and Arsamene (*Xerxes*), Iford Festival Opera. Recent and future highlights include Nireno (*Giulio Cesare*), Opera North, *St John's Passion*, Il Fondamento, *Dorian Gray*, Den Jyske Opera, and his Welsh National Opera debut as Hamor (*Jephtha*). Andrew's first solo CD *Conversazioni* has been recently released on Avie Records to great critical acclaim.

www.andrewradley.com

Carlos del Cueto *Conductor* Mexican conductor Carlos del Cueto is assistant conductor at English Touring Opera, a BBC Performing Arts Music Fellow, and Junior Fellow in Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music. He has a PhD in Music from Clare College, Cambridge, where he was CUMS conducting scholar and chief conductor of the Cambridge University Symphony Orchestra. Carlos has conducted The Hallé, the Manchester Camerata, the New Music Players, and will be working with the London Sinfonietta this summer. He has assisted Sir Mark Elder, Sir Roger Norrington, Mark Shanahan, Roger Hamilton, James Holmes, and Jeremy Silver, among others.

www.carlosdelcueto.com

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www.newmusicplayers.org.uk managed by www.lizwebbmanagement.org.uk

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7 I am Orpheus	3.44
8 I am forever the singer	4.34
9 You wanted her dead!	3.36
10 Interlude 2	3.43
11 Our perfect hours	3.49
12 Aren't you going to answer it?	5.50
13 There are no memories	2.19
14 The rising of the sap	6.12
15 Killer in the poet's mask	1.48
16 The candle is burnt out	5.50

total CD duration 57.24

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World première recording
Libretto by Roger Morris

Poet (baritone) Edward Grint
Princess Death (mezzo-soprano) Lucy Williams
Orpheus (tenor) Julian Podger
Eurydice (soprano) Emily Phillips
Raymond (counter-tenor) Andrew Radley
NEW MUSIC PLAYERS
conductor: Carlos del Cueto

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