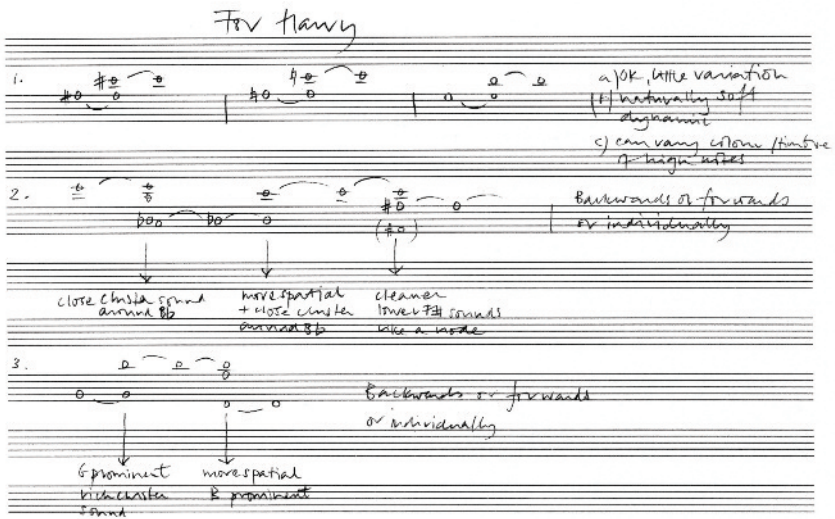
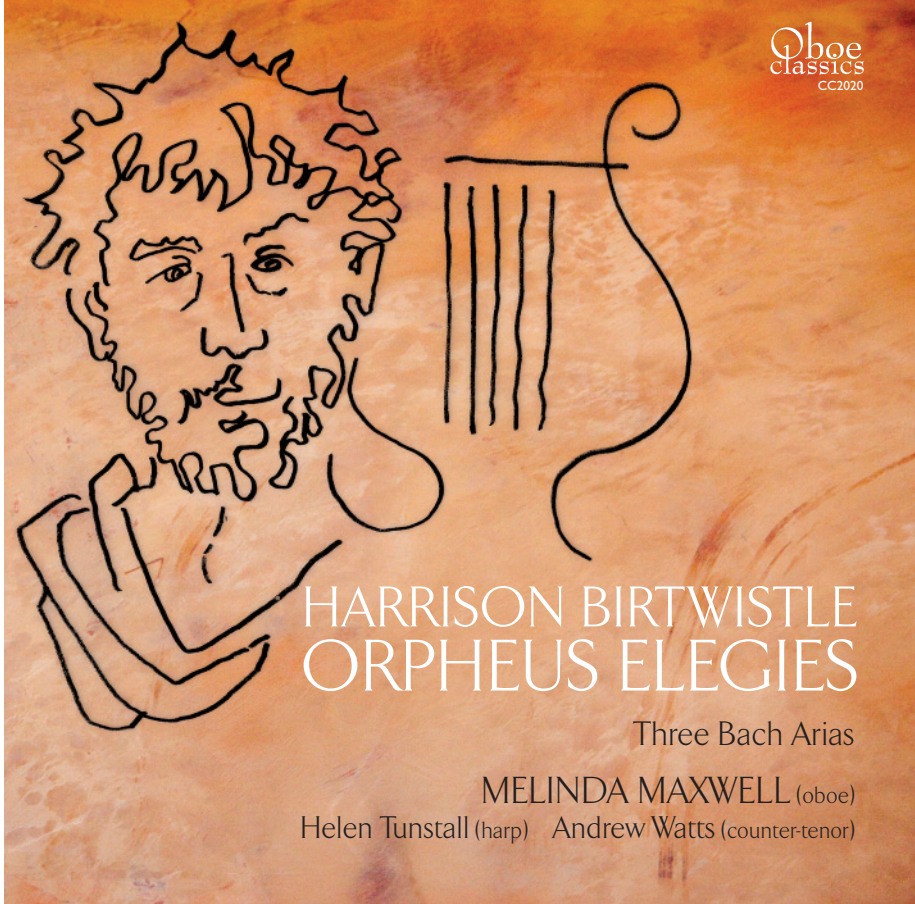


Some of the multiphonics suggested by Melinda Maxwell to Harrison Birtwistle. Number 1 became part of Elegy 1 (CD track 1), numbers 2 and 3 became part of Elegy 7 (CD track 18).



HARRISON BIRTWISTLE
ORPHEUS ELEGIES

Three Bach Arias

MELINDA MAXWELL (oboe/cor anglais)
Helen Tunstall (harp) Andrew Watts (counter-tenor)

with Claire Seaton (soprano). William Stafford and
Tom Verity (clarinets/bass clarinets) and Ben Fullbrook (marimba)

Recorded at All Saints Church, East Finchley, London on 28/29 August 2008 (Elegies) and 25 September 2008 (Bach)
Production, Editing: Mike Purton
Engineering, Mastering: Tony Faulkner

Oboe by Marigaux, cor anglais (english horn) by Howarth
Harp by Horngacher
Project kindly assisted by the Royal Northern College of Music
Cover portrait of Birtwistle/Orpheus by Celia Maxwell Scott
Rilke translations by Jochen Voigt
Music published by Boosey and Hawkes

Melinda Maxwell would like to thank Harrison Birtwistle for his interview, and his support in attending rehearsals and performances; Sally Cox at Boosey and Hawkes for her help in printing out the score; and Jochen Voigt and Celia Maxwell Scott for their skills and time.

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ORPHEUS ELEGIES (2004)

1	**Elegy 1**	2:42	10	**Elegy 26**	1:06	19	**Elegy 22**	1:30
2	**Elegy 3**	1:54	11	**Elegy 15**	0:38	20	**Elegy 25**	0:55
3	**Elegy 4**	1:37	12	**Elegy 18**	0:42	21	**Elegy 23**	1:25
4	**Elegy 14**	1:39	13	**Elegy 5**	1:05	22	**Elegy 9**	0:56
5	**Elegy 2**	1:12	14	**Elegy 13**	4:54	23	**Elegy 24**	0:44
6	**Elegy 6**	0:58	15	**Elegy 21**	1:14	24	**Elegy 16**	0:26
7	**Elegy 8**	0:57	16	**Elegy 12**	0:39	25	**Elegy 20**	2:35
8	**Elegy 11**	3:03	17	**Elegy 17**	1:58	26	**Elegy 19**	1:27
9	**Elegy 10**	1:32	18	**Elegy 7**	1:31			

Melinda Maxwell (oboe), Helen Tunstall (harp) all tracks; Andrew Watts (counter-tenor) tracks 4, 8, 10, 14, 17, 20 and 25

THREE BACH ARIAS, arr. Harrison Birtwistle (2004)

27 **Seufzer, Thränen, Kummer, Noth** 4:33
from the *Cantata Ich Hatte viel Bekümmernis, BWV 21 (1713)*

28 **Weh der Seele, die den Schaden** 4:51
from the Cantata *Herr, deine Augen sehen nach dem Glauben, BWV 102 (1726)*

29 **Komm, lass mich nicht länger warten** 4:08
from the *Canata Erschallet, ihr Lieder, BWV 172 (1714)*

Melinda Maxwell (oboe, cor anglais in track 29), Helen Tunstall (harp), William Stafford (bass clarinet in tracks 27 and 29, clarinet in track 28), Tom Verity (clarinet in track 28, bass clarinet in track 29), Ben Fulbrook (marimba), Claire Seaton (soprano, tracks 27 and 29), Andrew Watts (counter-tenor, tracks 28 and 29)

Total Time: 53:06

INTRODUCTION BY MELINDA MAXWELL

The myth of Orpheus and his music has occupied Sir Harrison Birtwistle (universally known as Harry) for most of his life, and the *26 Orpheus Elegies* for oboe, harp and counter-tenor are a further comment in miniature on that myth. They are a re-telling of the story, and the mystery and power that surrounds an imagined music of Orpheus; music that represents a combination of the ethereal - Apollo - and the earthly - Dionysius; music that seduced creation itself with its power of expression.

The *Sonnets to Orpheus* by Rainer Maria Rilke, known to Harry for a long time, gradually became part of the composition process, and as the music was being written certain words and phrases from those sonnets seemed to clarify and strengthen the meaning of the music.

Harrison Birtwistle and Melinda Maxwell, c1980

In time, Harry found that for some of the Elegies, a phrase was not enough. In Elegies 11, 13 and 14 (CD tracks 8, 14 and 4) the sonnets are set for voice in their entirety. The voice part is for counter-tenor and written for Andrew Watts. In Elegies 17, 20 and 26 (CD tracks 17, 25 and 10) portions of a sonnet are sung. For the remaining twenty Elegies, a phrase taken from a sonnet is written at the end of the instrumental music. For example, Elegy 12 (CD track 16) is fast, manic, rhythmic and repetitive, and the written words are the penultimate line of Sonnet number 5 from Rilke's first set: *"the lyre's bars do not constrain his hands"*. As an aside these words add further meaning to the music, and the music evokes the atmosphere of the words.

Early on in the compositional process, Harry asked me about unusual sounds on the oboe, sounds encompassing harmonics and multiphonics (combinations of sounds that speak together forming chords that have unusual pitch formations and are mostly non-diatonic). I played some to him and wrote down those he liked. He particularly liked pitches that transformed and hung into multiphonics In Elegy 7 (CD track 18) these sounds are used almost exclusively, to produce a music that is eerie and other-worldly, finishing with Rilke's words *"[He emerged like] ore from the stone's silence"*. In the very first Elegy (CD track 1) based around the note E, Birtwistle uses a double harmonic of an open fifth on E to splice, enrich and delve inside the sound, reaching further depths of expression. Rilke's words for this stark opening are *"A tree has risen. Oh pure transcendence!"*.

Three of the Elegies use metronomes, and these give out a mechanical, inevitable, sense to the music. Elegy 5 (CD track 13) uses two metronome pulses at slightly different speeds; Rilke's words are *"and with little steps the clocks tick by alongside our proper day."*.

The idea for the piece began in the late 1970s when Harry and I and the harpist Helen Tunstall were working at the National Theatre in London, and he expressed the wish to write a piece for oboe and harp. The first draft was written for the 2003 Cheltenham Festival, although not all the Elegies were completed and it was still a work in progress. Certain revisions and further additions ensued, and a longer version appeared in the 2004 Cheltenham Festival. Betty Freeman paid for the commission and Heinz and Ursula Holliger gave the world première with Andrew Wats at the Lucerne Festival in September 2004. The London première was given by myself, Helen and Andrew in October 2004 at the South Bank.

Throughout many rehearsals and subsequent performances in the UK and at the Holland (2006) and Bregenz (2007) Festivals, Harry offered further insights into our interpretations of phrase, nuance, pace and dynamics, and this recording is the culmination of this entire process. It is a piece full of contrasting voices, from music that is by turns warm, tender, almost wistful, and also bold, relentless, sometimes violent. Each Elegy speaks with its own voice, and such is the power of the composer's invention one feels that many more could follow.

ORPHEUS AND RILKE BY JEREMY POLMEAR

Sir Harrison Birtwistle has said of Orpheus that he comes with baggage, that everybody knows at least some of his story. What interests the composer is how he tells that story, what aspects of it he chooses to express.

Perhaps the best-known component of the Orpheus myth is how he nearly rescued Eurydice from the Underworld. However, this is but one of a whole collection of stories centred around the figure of Orpheus. He was the son of the Thracian king Oeagrus in what is now southern Bulgaria. His mother was the muse Calliope, the inspiration for Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. While a child he met the god Apollo, who was courting one of his sisters.

Orpheus: detail from an Athenian red-figure clay vase, about 450 BC. © bpk Berlin / Antikensammlung - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin'.

Some versions say Apollo was actually his father. In any case, Apollo was close to Orpheus, gave him a golden lyre and taught him to play it. His Mother taught him to compose verses to sing.

The most common account of Eurydice's death is that she ran into a nest of snakes while fleeing from Aristaeus, a son of Apollo, though Ovid says her death was a consequence of dancing with naiads on her wedding day. Orpheus played and sang laments and elegies of such power that gods wept, and advised him to travel to the Underworld, where he succeeded in placating Hades and Persephone to such an extent that they agreed to allow Eurydice to return to earth so long as he walked in front of her and did not look back. As soon as he reached the upper world he did look back, and Eurydice, still in the lower, vanished forever. (Plato says that he was never presented with the real Eurydice, but only with an apparition.)

The other specific story about Apollo concerns his death, though again there are different accounts. According to Aeschylus, Orpheus disdained the worship of all gods except the sun, which he called Apollo. One morning he went to worship Apollo, near an oracle of Dionysius, but was torn to death by Thracian Maenads (followers of Dionysus, literally 'raving ones'). In Ovid's version, the fury of the Maenads was because after the death of Eurydice, Orpheus had forsworn women and took only youths as his lovers. The Maenads first threw stones at him, but his music was so beautiful that the rocks would not hit him. Enraged still further, they then tore him to pieces. Another account of his death is that he killed himself from grief at the failure of his journey to rescue Eurydice.

His head and lyre, still singing, floated down the Hebrus river to the Mediterranean. His head was buried on Lesbos, his lyre was placed among the stars, the rest of his remains were buried below Mount Olympus, and his soul returned to the underworld, and to Eurydice.

Orpheus' reputation as the father of music and song in Greek Mythology is undisputed, but to him are also attributed many more diverse characteristics. He is said to have taught medicine, to have been a seer, to have practised astrology and other magical arts, and to have originated Orphic texts, describing a religion with a cycle of death and re-birth, release from which would come from an ascetic way of life combined with secret initiation rites. This perhaps accounts for a third version of his death - that Orpheus the demigod, who created the magic of music, was struck by lightning from Zeus for having revealed the mysteries of the gods to men.

It was perhaps the themes of the complex interaction between life and death, as expressed by the stories of both Orpheus and Eurydice that interested the Austrian writer and poet **Rainer Maria Rilke** (1875 – 1926).

The *Sonnets To Orpheus* just tumbled out of Rilke: most were written in the four days after February 2nd 1922, and all fifty-five within that month. Furthermore, Rilke also completed his Duino Elegies at this time, after more then ten years of creative struggle. By this time he had settled permanently in the Valais area of Switzerland after much trauma in World War I, and an existence of frequent upheaval. Perhaps the security of finally finding a settled home provided Rilke with a safe environment, allowing him to grapple with, and let out, the intense ideas and images of the Sonnets.


Vera Ouckama Knoop (1900-19)

Two other aspects of Rilke's personal life may be noted in connection with the *Sonnets to Orpheus*. The first involves someone he never met – an older sister, who died after one week of life. It is said that Rilke's mother would sometimes dress him in girl's clothing, and make him behave in girlish ways, as if trying to re-create her lost daughter.

The second person he did know. She was Vera Ouckama Knoop, to whom he dedicated the *Sonnets to Orpheus* as a 'Grab-Mal' – literally, a grave-marker. She was a friend of his daughter Ruth, and died in 1919 at the age of nineteen. She was a dancer, and there are frequent references in the Sonnets to the dancer as a creator of life, a parallel to Orpheus and his music.

Soon after writing these two major poems Rilke's health, which had never been strong, deteriorated, and he died of leukemia in 1926.

MELINDA MAXWELL TALKS TO SIR HARRISON BIRTWISTLE

Melinda Maxwell: *You have a pre-occupation with Greek mythology. What is it about the Orpheus legend that fascinates you?*
Harrison Birtwistle: What's useful in a way, apart from the interest in myth, is that it's about the power of music. Music is the subject matter. It's through music that the whole narrative, if you like, is driven. It was something that was given to Orpheus and something that was taken away from him.

MM: *Why was it taken away from him?*
HB: Because he assumed that he was becoming a role.....that he was getting too "big for his boots" and he was assuming the role of a god, that he had the power of Apollo. I don't know where the limits were

defined or whether they were ever defined, but I know it was taken away from him.

MM: *What is it about Orpheus do you think that interested Rilke and what is it about his Orpheus Sonnets that interested you?*
HB: It's interesting about the Duino Elegies which he spent years over and the Orpheus Sonnets which he wrote very quickly. I think he got into a lyrical vein. They're very hard poems but the imagery is wonderful. They're intriguing and I was drawn by the subject matter. I think Rilke was more concerned with Apollo and the idea of poetry.

MM: *How do the Elegies compare to other works by you based on the idea of Orpheus, for instance your opera?*
HB: It's the absolute opposite. The Mask of Orpheus is about the imagery and it's a masque in the sense that the text is interchangeable. You could write another setting but the essential narrative is not driven by the text but by the imagery. In the first place I had the idea about writing an opera about Faust and got quite a long way into it - and then I realised that the subject of Orpheus suited the whole venture much better in that it assumes a foreknowledge, it assumes that you can understand the imagery and the sequence of events even if you put them in a different order and you do it through imagery. The narrative element is a very simple thing in which you can then deal with repetition and show things in a different scale. It served the idea. I can't think of another subject in which you can deal with it like that.

Drawing by Celia Maxwell Scott

MM: *....and the Elegies, how would you describe them?*
HB: The movements in the *Orpheus Elegies* are like postcards with cryptic text.

MM: *The Elegies without voice, of which there are many, have fragments of text at the end of each of them. What is the role of these words?*
HB: If you set a text to music, the music that you make for the text becomes the music *of* the text, but then when you have the music of the text and you take the text away, it's music *about* the text and in a sense it becomes a thing in itself. You write as it were an accompaniment or a vocal line, there's a hierarchy presumably, there's the text and the vocal line, and then whatever you put with it, it then becomes music

of the text. It's directly related but at the same time it's something in itself. If you take it away without the text or it becomes an extension of it, it then becomes music *about* the text. It would be ridiculous to try to set all the sonnets, it would be nonsense. What I wanted to do was to write an ambitious piece for oboe and harp. I started writing it, alongside reading the text. I suddenly realised that the text had to have an existence within the thing but it couldn't be there all the time. I see the oboe as being Orpheus, and his instrument the harp, and the counter-tenor is like the narration, it's about the music and the presence of the music. I wanted the text to be there in the way that you might say Debussy used the long poem *L'Après Midi d'un Faune* by Mallarmé. The music is the atmosphere that he has derived from his idea of what he thinks the poem is about. You can't deny the existence of the text. I put it at the end of each Elegy in the way that Debussy put them at the end of his *Etudes*.

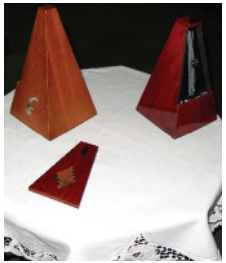
MM: *The musical language and texture of these pieces is infinitely variable. Each Elegy has its own distinct character.*
HB: That's something you can observe. There are different sorts of music in each Elegy. But at the same time you don't want it to be a surreal relationship, you want it to have that variation, that thing of difference, but at the same time you want it to have a unity. You can't suddenly open the door and you're in another century. It's a dual thing. You have to make something which is very contrasted and very different but at the same time have a sense of unity that goes across it that makes them be *one* thing. And of course one thing that makes that possible is the very restrictive use of instrumental colour in which there are only these two instruments.

MM: *One of the ways you generate texture is by the articulation of layers, threads, strands, and of melodic phasing. For instance, can you explain what is happening in Elegy 19 [CD track 26] where the melody is interrupted?*
HB: That one is about a death. It's like being struck, and then having less energy, less air, less wind if you like. The harp has the function of the death blows. The lines and melodies have their own independence. I think there might be within the piece, but it's not calculated, a sort of spectrum of something where you play very precisely together, even up to a point where you have the external thing of a metronome, the machine. There are some things where you play accurately together and others where you are completely free.

MM: *So there is a built-in element of chance? No two performances will be quite the same because the*

melodies that intertwine will always have a certain type of flow for each particular moment in performance.
HB: Yes, but its good isn't it? It's a pity that the audience is not party to it. It's a game that is devised for you, but the audience doesn't know. It's a private game. Your attitude in playing it is different....the thing of breathing. It has to have its own independence in which you're not waiting. It has a natural flow.

MM: *Some Elegies are rhythmically striking and full of energy, percussive in character, almost as if they are wound up and set off like musical boxes. Can you talk about these?*
HB: They are mechanisms, but in some of them you get two strict mechanisms. You can have a mechanism which is perfectly related and you can have a mechanism in which independently they are accurate but precisely where they fit doesn't really matter. [e.g. CD tracks 9, 13, 20 with metronomes, and tracks 2 and 24 without.]



MM: *What fascinates you about simultaneous independent tempi?*
HB: The metronome is outside. It's an external thing that you have to abide by. It's not even like a conductor because good conducting is somebody listening to the players, and leading, and it's a give and take thing, a good conductor is somebody listening to you and you watching them and the thing becomes one. But the metronome is the opposite. It's completely a-rhythmical.

MM: *Some Elegies use the eerie sounds of multiphonics and double harmonics. What do you like about these unusual oboe sounds? In the first Elegy [track 1] there are double harmonics where both notes slide between closed and open sounds producing a slightly ancient quality to the sound.*
HB: Yes, I like the primitive aspect of these sounds, where you play a note, something pure... It's just the quality of the note. It's like examining the note for itself.

MM: *There are other moments where certain multiphonics are used very abruptly and they sound quite raw and violent.*
HB: Some of them I use only a couple of times. It's like the note exploding, it becomes fragmented, it opens out. [e.g. CD track 14]

MM: *What type of musical landscape are you creating in these pieces? What is the structure? I know we can play them in any order so long as we begin with number 1 and finish with number 19.*
HB: There can be pauses between each but without relaxing. The tension must be kept across them. And there's another element which we haven't talked about yet, which is that some of them are like samples, they're not through composed, they're like fragments. There is something that Paul Klee describes called dividual and individual. We know what individual means, but dividual is not a word you'll find in a dictionary. Its Paul Klee's own word....it's *very* interesting this. A wallpaper pattern is dividual because you can take a piece from it and it still retains its essential identity. You have a bottle of wine, the bottle is individual, the liquid in it is dividual because you can drink some of it and it's still the same wine, but the bottle itself, if you break the neck, is individual. So there are two elements which are completely opposite. Now, the *quantity* of the wine is individual because if you take something from it it's not the same, but it's not something which is neither/nor. The world moves between these two things. So there are pieces within it that are neither a beginning nor an end. It's like something cut out of something. For example Elegy 24 [CD track 23], the one with grace notes, a bit Stravinskian, this is not a yes or a no, it's towards one thing or the other thing. This is something I've read, looked at, digested and I don't consciously think about any more. There's a mentality of Klee in these Elegy pieces. They are a collection of things that do different processes.

THREE BACH ARIAS BY JEREMY POLMEAR

Birtwistle arranged three arias from Bach Cantatas as companion pieces to the Orpheus Elegies, to be played at the première performances in Lucerne (with Heinz Holliger) and London (with Melinda Maxwell) in 2004. The choice of Bach, as Birtwistle himself has remarked, was both practical (to use the available players) and musical. There are baroque allusions in the Orpheus Elegies in the use of a counter-tenor; and the music of each Elegy, like a Bach aria, represents a single emotional state, and is not developed in the Classical sense.

Birtwistle's love of Bach is evident throughout. He leaves the solo parts mainly untouched, but adds clarinets into the accompaniment, playing a slightly mischievous role, and reminding us both of his own original instrument, and also of Alan Hacker's clarinet-orientated group, Matrix, for whom he wrote yet another Orpheus work, Nenia: *the Death of Orpheus* (1970).

TRACK GUIDE
BY JEREMY POLMEAR
ORPHEUS ELEGIES

Helen Tunstall, Melinda Maxwell; photo Jeremy Polmear

Rilke wrote his *Sonnets to Orpheus* in two parts. Part I has 26 Sonnets, Part II has 29. From these, Birtwistle chose 25, one for each Elegy (Elegies 10 and 19 use different parts of the same Sonnet). He numbered the Elegies in his score 1 to 26, with each referring to a particular Sonnet from among Rilke's 55.

Birtwistle specified that in performance, Elegy number 1 should be played first and Elegy number 19 last. The rest of the order he left to the performer's discretion. In the listing below, each track is identified with the CD track number, the Elegy number, and the Sonnet to which it refers, written as the part number (I or II) and the Sonnet number.

In the vocal Elegies, part or sometimes all of the Sonnet is sung, and the words are reproduced here. In the purely instrumental tracks, the Sonnet is identified by a single phrase from it. This phrase is written underneath the appropriate Elegy in Birtwistle's score.

The full version of the Sonnets is available in many translations, for example by M D Herter Norton, published by W W Norton & Co, Inc. On the web, www.polyamory.org/~howard/Poetry/orpheus_index.html has a convenient index, and German and English versions side by side.

Track 1 - Elegy 1, Sonnet I, 1

Da steig ein Baum. O reine Übersteibing! *A tree has risen. Oh pure transcendence!*

The sonnet links the growth of a tree to the creation of Orpheus' music. We hear its birth - pitch, rhythm, intervals, harmony, melody.

Track 2 - Elegy 3, Sonnet I, 21

Sie singts, sie singts! *...she sings it, she sings it!*

The sonnet begins 'Spring has come back', and likens the wakening from winter to a girl recreating what she has learned at school.

Track 3 - Elegy 4, Sonnet I, 22

Alles ist ausgeruht: *All is at rest:*

The sonnet describes the transient nature of human activity, of our flurries of action.

Track 4 – Elegy 14, Sonnet I, 19 (complete)

Wandelt sich rasch auch die Welt	Fast though the world keeps changing
wie Wolkengestalten,	like cloud figurations,
alles Vollendete fällt	all things completed fall
heim zum Uralten.	back to the primal age.
Über dem Wandel und Gang,	Over motion and change,
weiter und freier,	wider and freer,
währt noch dein Vor-Gesang,	your prelude endures,
Gott mit der Leier.	god with the lyre.
Nicht sind die Leiden erkannt,	Torment is not understood,
nicht is die Liebe gelernt,	love has not been learned,
und was im Tod uns entfernt,	and what removes us in death
ist nicht entschleiert.	is not unshrouded.
Einzig das Lied überm Land	Only the song high above
heiligt und feiert.	rejoices in blessed celebrations.

Track 5 - Elegy 2, Sonnet I, 17

Dieser erst oben doch biegt sich zur Leier. *Yet this bough on top at last arches into a lyre.*

The sonnet speaks of the challenge of creating a lyre from the branches of a tree, most of which snap.

Track 6 – Elegy 6, Sonnet I, 4

Aber die Lüfte... aber die Räume... *But the breezes... but the spaces...*

This is the final line of the sonnet. Before that, it speaks of the burdens of life, and of our fragility. The Earth is heavy.

Track 7 – Elegy 8, Sonnet I, 18

Sieh, die Maschine: *See, the machine:*

The sonnet makes much of the clanking and noise of machinery, but comments that although they can unnerve us, machines can also serve us.

Track 8 – Elegy 11, Sonnet I, 9 (complete)

Nur wer die Leier schon hob	Only who ate with the dead
auch unter Schatten,	in the realm of the shadows
darf das unendliche Lob	may with foreboding repay
ahnend erstatten.	the boundless praise.
Nur wer mit Toten von Mohn	Only who raised the lyre
aß, von dem ihren,	Of the poppy that's theirs,
wird nicht den leisesten Ton	Will never again loose
wieder verlieren.	the faintest tone.
Mag auch die Spieglung im Teich	Though the pond's mirroring
oft uns verschwimmen:	may often get blurred:
Wisse das Bild.	*Know the image.*
Erst in dem Doppelbereich	Only in the dual land
werden die Stimmen	Will the voices become
ewig und mild.	Eternal and mild.

L to R: Helen Tunstall, Andrew Watts, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Melinda Maxwell; photo Jeremy Polmear

Track 9 – Elegy 10, Sonnet I, 25

Schöne Gespielin des unüberwindlichen Schreis. *Beautiful playmate of the invincible cry.*

Of all the sonnets that Birtwistle selects, this is the most literal in its references to Vera Ouckama Knoop – of her dancing halted, her sickness, and her death.

Track 10 – Elegy 26, Sonnet II, 29 (last verse)

Und wenn dich das Irdische vergaß,	And when the world has forgotten you,
zu der stillen Erde sag: Ich rinne.	tell the quiet earth: I flow.
Zu dem raschen Wasser sprich: Ich bin.	To the rushing water say: I am.

Track 11 – Elegy 15, Sonnet I, 2

Und alles war ihr Schlaf. *And everything was her sleep.*

Here, Rilke asks why the 'singing god' created her not wanting to wake.

Track 12 – Elegy 18, Sonnet II, 18

Tänzerin: o du Verlegung alles Vergehens in Gang: *Dancer: you who turn the ephemeral into motion:*
The dancer as a creator of life.

Track 13 – Elegy 5, Sonnet I, 12

Und mit kleinen Schritten gehn den Uhren neben unserm eigentlichen Tag.
And with little steps the clocks tick by alongside our proper day.
This sonnet celebrates the forces of growth in the world.

Track 14 – Elegy 13, Sonnet I, 8 (complete)

Nur im Raum die Rühmung darf die Klage	Only in the realm of praise may Lament
gehn, die Nymphe des geweinten Quells,	walk, nymph of the spring of tears,
wachend über unserm Niederschlage,	watching over our weeping stream,
daß er klar sei an demselben Fels,	that it be clear at the rock,
der die Tore trägt und die Altäre. -	which carries the gates and the altars.
Sieh, um ihre stillen Schultern früht	See, around her shoulders dawns
das Gefühl, daß sie die jüngste wäre	the feeling that she may be the youngest
unter den Geschwistern im Gemüt.	among the sisters-in-spirit.
Jubel *weiß*, und Sehnsucht ist geständig, -	Rejoicing knows, and yearning means avowal, -
nur die Klage lernt noch; mädchenhändig	Lament alone still learns: with maiden hands
zählt sie nächtelang die alte Schlimme.	through nights on end she counts old evil.
Aber plötzlich, schräg und ungeübt,	But suddenly, unpracticed and aslant,
hält sie doch ein Sternbild unsrer Stimme,	she lifts a constellation of our voice
in den Himmel, den ihr Hauch nicht trübt.	towards heaven, undimmed by her breath.

Track 15 – Elegy 21, Sonnet II, 28

Denn sie regte sich völlig horned nur, da Orpheus sang.
For she only bestirred herself to full hearing when Orpheus sang.
Rilke hopes that the song can arouse the young dancer.

Track 16 – Elegy 12, Sonnet I, 5

Der Leier Gitter zwängt ihm nicht die Hände. *The lyre's bars do not constrain his hands.*
... when he, Orpheus, is beyond existence. Rilke reflects on the transience of song.

Track 17 – Elegy 17, Sonnet I, 6 (verse 2 and the first line of verse 3)

Geht ihr zu Bette, so laßt auf dem Tische	Going to bed, leave on the table
Brot nicht und Milch nicht; die Toten ziehts. -	no bread and no milk; they lure the dead. -
Aber er, der Beschwörende, mische	But he, the enchanter, may he blend
unter der Milde des Augenlids	behind his eyes' gentle lids
ihre Erscheinung in alles Geschaute;	their presence into everything seen;

Track 18 – Elegy 7, Sonnet I, 7

Erz aus des Steins Schweigen. *[He emerged like] ore from the stone's silence.*
Rilke praises music, likening it to life-giving wine.

Track 19 – Elegy 22, Sonnet II, 29

Im Gebälk der finstern Glockenstühle laß dich läuten.
In the timber-frames of gloomy bell-lofts let yourself chime.
This sonnet speaks of transformation, of being here and not here.

Track 20 – Elegy 25, Sonnet II, 27 (first line)

Gibt es wirklich die Zeit, die zerstörende? Does time, the wrecker, really exist?

Track 21 – Elegy 23, Sonnet II, 26

Ordne die Schreier, singender Gott! *Array the criers, singing god!*
... we are ripped from our moorings, buffeted by the wind.

Track 22 – Elegy 9, Sonnet I, 15

... Wenig Musik nur	*...just a little music,*

Rilke implores the silent maidens to dance the taste of fruit to reveal fragrance after fragrance.

Track 23 – Elegy 24, Sonnet II, 1

Einzige Welle, deren allmähliches Meer ich bin;	*Lone wave, whose slow swelling sea I am;*

Rilke considers his own breathing, and the breathing of the world.

Track 24 – Elegy 16, Sonnet II, 13

Sei immer tot in Eurydike -,	*Be forever dead in Eurydice -,*

This sonnet struggles with the conflicting emotions of Eurydice going to a better place.

Track 25 – Elegy 20, Sonnet I, 26 (last two verses)

Schließlich zerschlugen sie dich, von der Rache gehetzt,	In the end they broke you, driven by vengeance,
während dein Klang noch in Löwen und Felsen verweilte	while your sound still lingered among lions and cliffs
und in den Bäumen und Vögeln. Dort singst du noch jetzt.	and trees and birds. There you are singing still.
O du verlorener Gott! Du unendliche Spur!	Oh you forlorn god! You infinite path!
Nur weil dich reißend zuletzt die Feindschaft verteilte,	Only because hatred tore you apart
sind wir die Hörenden jetzt und ein Mund der Natur.	have we now opened our ears and become a mouth of nature.

Track 26 – Elegy 19, Sonnet I, 20

Sein Bild: ich weih's	*His image; I sanctify it*

Rilke consecrates a specific memory of seeing a horse, viscerally alive but hobbled, to the dead Orpheus.

THREE BACH ARIAS

Track 27 – Seufzer, Thränen, Kummer, Noth from *Ich Hatte viel Bekümmernis, BWV 21*
The singer expresses how the tragedies of living gnaw at her heart.

Track 28 - Weh der Seele, die den Schaden from *Herr, deine Augen sehen nach dem Glauben, BWV 102*
The singer warns how the true image of God in Man can become perverted.

Track 29 - Komm, lass mich nicht länger warten from *Erschallet, ihr Lieder, BWV 172*
A song of love between a Soul (soprano) and the Holy Ghost (counter-tenor).

BIOGRAPHIES

Sir Harrison Birtwistle was born in Accrington in the north of England in 1934 and studied clarinet and composition at the Royal Manchester College of Music, making contact with a highly talented group of contemporaries including Peter Maxwell Davies, Alexander Goehr, John Ogdon and Elgar Howarth. In 1965 he sold his clarinets to devote all his efforts to composition, and travelled to Princeton as a Harkness Fellow where he completed the opera *Punch and Judy*. This work, together with *Verses for Ensembles* and *The Triumph of Time*, firmly established Birtwistle as a leading voice in British music.

The decade from 1973 to 1984 was dominated by his monumental lyric tragedy *The Mask of Orpheus*, staged by English National Opera in 1986, and by the series of remarkable ensemble scores now performed by the world's leading new music groups: *SecretTheatre, Silbury Air* and *Carmen Arcadiae Mechanicae Perpetuum*. Large-scale works in the following decade included the operas Gawain and *The Second Mrs Kong*, the concertos *Endless Parade* for trumpet and *Antiphonies* for piano, and the orchestral score *Earth Dances*.

Birtwistle's works of recent decades include *Panic*, which received a high profile première at the Last Night of the 1995 BBC Proms with an estimated worldwide audience of 100 million. *Pulse Shadows*, a meditation for soprano, string quartet and chamber ensemble on poetry by Paul Celan, was released on disc by Teldec and won the 2002 Gramophone Award for best contemporary recording. *The Minotaur* received its première at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in 2008 and has been released on DVD by Opus Arte.

Birtwistle has received many honours, including the Grawemeyer Award in 1968 and the Siemens Prize in 1995; he was made a *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* in 1986, awarded a British knighthood in 1988 and made a Companion of Honour in 2001. He is currently Director of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Other recordings of Birtwistle's music are available on the Decca, Philips, Deutsche Grammophon, Teldec, Black Box, NMC, CPO and Soundcircus labels.

Melinda Maxwell was born in London and read music at York University and studied in Germany with Ingo Goritzki and Helmut Winschermann.

She has performed as soloist at many festivals including Edinburgh, Aldeburgh and Cheltenham and abroad at the Holland and Aarhus Festivals. She has given many recitals and is frequently heard on BBC Radio 3. Over the years many works have been written for Melinda, including *Music for Mel and Nora* by Simon Bainbridge, Nicholas Maw's *Little Concert* for oboe and chamber orchestra, *Pulse Sampler* by Sir Harrison Birtwistle. Simon Holt has written *Banshee*, *Sphinx,* and *Disparate* for solo oboe, which she premièred in October 2008 and was the first piece to launch the opening of London's new King's Place concert hall.

Melinda is also an accomplished composer. Among her pieces are *Pibroch* and *Song for Sidney* for solo oboe, a work for double-reed ensemble, *Crane Dance*, and various ensemble pieces with strings. Melinda's previous solo CD

Melinda Maxwell with Mike Purton, Producer; photo Jeremy Polmear

Melinda Maxwell in Manchester: Music for Oboe from the RNCM was released on Dutton Recordings and was CD of the month for BBC Music magazine.

In addition to her work as a chamber musician and recitalist, she is principal oboe of the Endymion Ensemble and the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and also performs regularly as principal with the London Sinfonietta, the Hilliard Ensemble, and for film sessions with the London Metropolitan Orchestra. She is also a member of the improvisation group Notes Inegales.

She has taught at the Royal Academy of Music and Trinity College in London and has been giving master-classes at the Dartington International Summer School since 1992. She also coaches at the Britten-Pears and National Youth Orchestra summer courses. She is Consultant in Woodwind Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

"Miss Maxwell was sheerly beautiful throughout..... so alive as to make one hold one's breath for every little happening" *The Times*

Helen Tunstall was born in London, and studied at the Royal College of Music with Marisa Robles and Fiona Hibbert. She is principal harpist of the London Sinfonietta, the chamber group Endymion, and the Orchestra of St. John's Smith Square, and leads a busy freelance career playing solo, chamber and orchestral music with all the major London orchestras and ensembles.

Performances in the year of this recording have included the BBC Proms, South Bank, Barbican, Aldeburgh, King's Place, Bregenz, Krakow and St Paul Minneapolis festivals, and appearances with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Lontano, Orchestra of St.John's Smith Square, London Sinfonietta, and Endymion.

She is a top London studio player recording classical, contemporary, film, TV and commercial music. As well as the *Orpheus Elegies*, her recent recordings include works by Tarik O'Regan for Collegium, chamber works by Silvina Milstein, *Among Angels* with The Sixteen, and songs with Chris Botti for the Columbia label.

She has worked on films such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Wallace and Gromit, Lord of the Rings, Batman, Secrets and Lies, Notes on a Scandal, The Golden Compass, Flushed Away,* and with artists such as Robbie Williams, Joni Mitchell, Bjork, Amy Winehouse, Il Divo, Leona Lewis, and for the *X Factor* on TV.

Helen is a professor at the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music.

Andrew Watts was born in Middlesex and studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Geoffrey Mitchell.

His operatic engagements include appearances with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, English National Opera, and Glyndebourne. Foreign engagements include the Staatsoper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper, Teatro La Fenice, and the Vienna, Dresden, Batignano and Montepulciano Festivals. His repertoire includes Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice*, Arsamenes in *Xerxes*, the title role in *Orlando*, the title role in Leonardo Vinci's *Artaserse*, the Sorceress and Second Witch in *Dido andAeneas*, Nutrice in *L'Incoronzione di Poppea*, Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Omar in *The Death of Klinghoffer*, and Bishop Baldwin in *Gawain and the Green Knight*. He has taken part in many world premières including two by Birtwistle - *The Last Supper* and *The Minotaur*.

Andrew Watts' concert engagements include appearances with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Los Angeles and Cleveland Philharmonic Orchestras, and at festivals in Salzburg, Lucerne, Lausanne and Edinburgh. His concert repertoire includes Judas Maccabeus, Jephtha, Solomon, Messiah, St John Passion, and the world premières of Unsuk Chin's *Cantatrix Sopranica* and Birtwistle's *The Shadow of Night* as well as the *Orpheus Elegies*.

He features on recordings for ASV of Boyce's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* and *David's Lamentation* with the Hanover Band, and was heard in Sally Potter's film *Orlando*. He broadcasts regularly, and television appearances include a cameo as Kathleen Ferrier in *William and Mary*.

Claire Seaton studied at the Birmingham School of Music and the Royal Academy of Music with Rae Woodland and Kenneth Bowen, and subsequently with Linda Esther-Grey. She joined Kent Opera during her final year at the Academy, was awarded the Wessex Glyndebourne Association Prize in 1998, and in 1999 made her Glyndebourne Festival Opera debut singing the role of Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*.

One of the country's most adaptable sopranos, Claire also enjoys remarkable success in the early music field where she has worked with ensembles such as The Tallis Scholars and the Gabrieli Consort, with whom she made her BBC Proms debut in Handel's *Dixit Dominus*. Claire's discography includes the soprano solos in Allegri's *Miserere* for Regent Records, the role of The Believer in Rutland Boughton's *Bethlehem* for Naxos, Brahm's *Deutsche Requiem* with Jeremy Backhouse and the Vasari Singers for Guild, and the world première of Jonathan Dove's *The far theatricals of day* with Nicholas Cleobury on Fleet Street Records. With Andrew Watts, Claire has recorded Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* as well as a solo disc on the same label.

William Stafford read music at the University of Manchester and undertook, concurrently, a four-year course at the Royal Northern College of Music, receiving both the GRNCM diploma and Gold Medal Award (the college's highest award in performance) in 2008. William was subsequently offered a place to study at the RCM. His prizes include the *Trevor Wye Prize* for wind chamber music at the RNCM.

An experienced orchestral musician, William has worked with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (principal), Hallé Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra and the Ulster Orchestra. In 2008 he joined the Countess of Munster Recital Scheme and now works regularly with the pianist Hiroaki Takenouchi. A committed chamber musician, William has performed with the *London Winds*, and the legendary oboist Maurice Bourgue.

Tom Verity is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music and Manchester University. He studied with Nicholas Cox and Barnaby Robson, and performed in masterclasses with Matthew Hunt, James Campbell and Alan Hacker. He was winner, among other prizes, of the College's concerto competition. He has performed with the Hallé Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Northern Sinfonia, the Britten-Pears Orchestra and Sinfonia Cymru.

A keen chamber musician, Thomas has received coaching from Sir Mark Elder, F. Gerard Errante, Christopher Rowland, Alasdair Tait, John McCabe and the Lindsay String Quartet. He has worked with composer Detlev Glanert to give the UK première of *Yakub Iki – Zeit des Wartens* in the RNCM's 'Secret Rooms' Festival. He has also worked with the Heath and Myrios quartets.

Ben Fulbrook was born into a musical family in London in 1984. He began his studies as a cellist; his secondary education was received at The Latymer School in Enfield, as a chorister, cellist and percussionist. It was during this time that he was also a member of the percussion section in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain.

Next came a four-year BMus course in percussion at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Upon graduation in 2007 Ben took up the post of Principal Timpanist for the Orquesta Filarmónica de Santiago, Chile (the Santiago Philharmonic Orchestra), before returning to London to establish a freelance career. He has played with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra and the London Philharmonic Orchestra amongst others. He also teaches at the Rikkyo School in England, and is a percussion coach/tutor for the London boroughs of Haringey and Enfield.