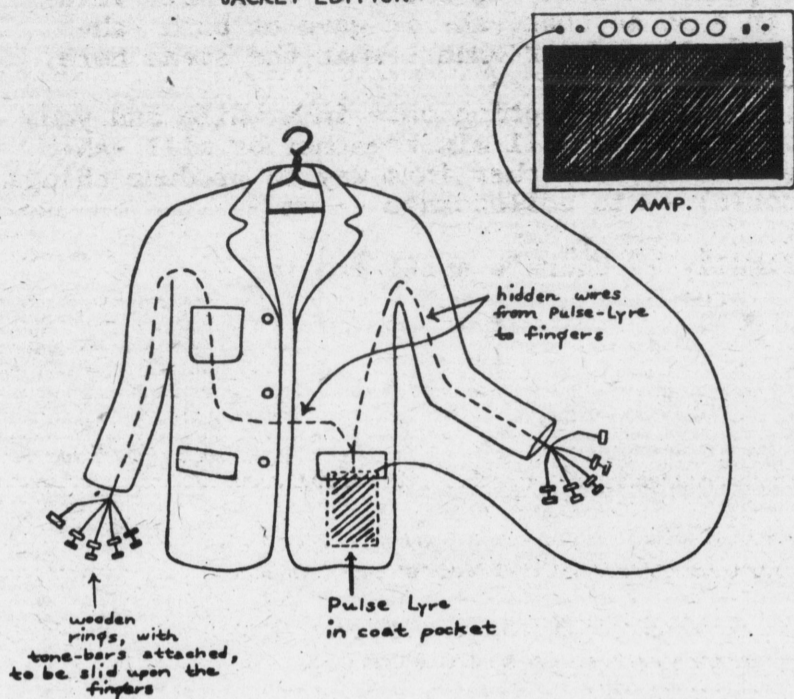


The Bardic Pulse-Lyre

JACKET EDITION



Each finger has two notes, one formed by the thumb touching the tone-bar on the finger-tip ring, another formed by touching the tone-bar on the ring between the 1st & 2nd finger joint.

Regular scale proceeds upward beginning with little finger of left hand, and ends, after 16 notes, with the forefinger of the right hand.

Bob Davis

The Saddest Song I Know

Bob Davis

PLAY OR TRANSMIT TO THIS RANGE OR RANGE DOWNT 3 MIN. 30 SEC.

OH, I HAVE DREAMED A DREA-RY DREAM, OH, WHO IS FREE FROM SORROW? FINE FLOWERS IN THE VAL-LEY & THERE SHE TOOK THAT SWEET BABE'S LIFE. SING SOR-ROW SING SOR-ROW IN THE DOW-Y DENS OF YAR-ROW YAR-ROW OH, I THINK I HEAR A BELL SAYS THE KNIGHT ON THE ROAD. OH, ITS RINGING YOU TO HELL & WOE BE-TIDE YOU WILD WOMAN. SOME WILL DEATH MAY YOU DEE! GO DOWN YOU IN THE RAG-ING SEA, OR HANG ON THE GALLOWS PIM. SHE TURNED HER HEAD A-ROUND, & THE TEARS THEY DID FALL DOON. SAY NOT SO TO ME RICH-ARD SAY NOT SO TO ME RICH-ARD FOR I'VE MADE A VOW & I'LL KEEP IT TRUE, BY THE DEEPEST HILLS IN CLYDE'S WATERS, THE WIND BLOW LED & THE SEA GREW ROUGH, SHE RING HER HANDS FULL SORE. LORD GREGORY THE HIS YELLOW HAIR & MADE A HEE-Y MOAN. OH, I WILL READ YOUR DREA-RY DREAM, ITS I WILL TELL YOUR SORROW, ITS I WILL TELL YOU THAT I WENT TO THIS DOCTOR I HEARD HIM SAY, BOTH LINGS IS BROKE-DOWN, YOU'VE SPENT YOUR BEST DAYS, GO BACK TO THAT COULDRINE THAT GOT YOU THAT WAY. BOTH LINGS IS BROKE-DOWN, YOU'VE SPENT YOUR BEST DAYS."

SOURCES

DREA-RY DREAM - JOHN JACOB NILES: COLLECTED IN JEFFERSON COUNTY, KENTUCKY, U.S.A., 1889. (CHILD 214 - THE BRAES OF YARROW)

FINE FLOWERS IN THE VALLEY - RICHARD DYER-BENNETT (CHILD 20 - THE CAVAL MOTHER)

THE DOWIE DENS OF YARROW - DAVEY STEWART, DUNFERMELINE, SCOTLAND; RECORDED BY ALAN LOMAX. (CHILD 214 - BRAES OF YARROW)

THE FALSE KNIGHT UPON THE ROAD - FRANK QUINN, CO. DUBLIN, COUNTY TYRONE, NO. IRELAND; RECORDED BY SEAN O'BOYLE. (CHILD 3 - FALSE KNIGHT UPON THE ROAD)

LORD GREGORY - Ewan MacColl, LEARNED FROM MARGARET LOGAN, WATSHIRE, ENGLAND. (CHILD 76 - LOSS OF ROCK ROYAL)

EARL OF ROBYNE - Ewan MacColl, LEARNED FROM HIS FATHER, AUCHTER-ROBER, PERTSHIRE, SCOTLAND. (CHILD 235 - EARL OF ROBYNE)

THE RICHIE STORY - Ewan MacColl, LEARNED FROM HIS MOTHER. (CHILD 232 - RICHIE STORY)

CLYDE'S WATERS - Ewan MacColl, LEARNED FROM HIS MOTHER & JEANIE ROBERTSON, ROBERTSON, ABERDEENSHIRE, SCOTLAND. (CHILD 216 - THE MOTHER'S MALISON)

THE THREE BABES - J. G. GREER, THOMASVILLE, NO. CAROLINA, U.S.A.; RECORDED BY FLETCHER COLLINS, 1941. (CHILD 74 - WIFE OF USHER'S WELL)

BOTH LINGS IS BROKE-DOWN - NINERD WORKMAN, MINES COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA, U.S.A.; RECORDED AT APPALACHIAN MUSIC WORKSHOP, HIGHLAND CENTER, NEW MARKET, TENNESSEE; OCT, 1972.

(ALL RIGHTS RESERVED)

© Bob Davis, 1979.

In the fall of 1968, during my first season as composer-in-residence at Simon Fraser University, I composed, in collaboration with Wilfrid Mennell, a playwright-director, a 4-channel version of Beckett's radio play, *Cascando*. The electronic studio at SFU was at that time probably the most sophisticated studio in Canada. After working in studios at Columbia and Warsaw Radio, both of which were small and somewhat limiting, I found it impossible to continue composing with the Princetonian precision in which I had been schooled. The SFU studio contained the most recent synthesizer designed by Don Buchla. I only vaguely understood what it did and realised that I would have to put aside my rigid preconceptions of how one sound should follow another. The sequencer, a device which could generate a series of sound events in a more or less random pattern and which at times seemed to have a life of its own, became for me a sort of window through which I could see/hear a universe of sounds I had never imagined possible. It was necessary for me to step back from these sequences of sound events, to control them in some other way: through the mix of one sequence with another in time and space.

1968 was a year of great upheaval: at SFU, Canada's Berkeley, 114 people were arrested for their part in the protest over the firing of the entire faculty of the Political Science and Anthropology department. Marcuse, Baba Ram Dass and others came to speak to us at peril to themselves; acid and mescaline abounded and apocalypse seemed to fairly shout out at us in the rarified atmosphere of Burnaby Mountain. The neo-fascist architecture of the university seemed to beg for anarchy and chaos and linear thought itself seemed doomed to extinction.

It was perhaps inevitable that I be introduced to a book *A Vision*, by W.B. Yeats (or rather, by the wife of Yeats; written automatically - that is, transcribed by her while in a trance), a book which deals with the cycles of mankind and civilisation, relating archetypal images to the phases of the moon, the phases of the moon to the birth and death of civilisation and the birth and death of civilisation to the theory of the gyres - a sort of double spiral which looks like a cross between a dna-helix and an hourglass. I understood perhaps ten percent of what I read and began to see (rather naively) relationships to many of Yeats' later poems. It was at this point that Wilfrid introduced me to Philippa Polson, a wonderful lady who taught linguistics at SFU and who had a special fondness for Yeats and a fine speaking voice. It seemed apocryphal that we should all meet and the studio, located in the bowels of the theatre, seemed the ideal location for the alchemical process. It was all very serious.

The work began in January, 1969: collecting relevant poems and appropriate sound-sequences. From that point, the work flowed easily and grew as if by itself. *Phases I* was completed in early spring, *Phases II* by mid-summer. By this time, Wilfrid (who had been of invaluable help in the assist of the mix and the use of the spoken texts), suggested that that *Phases* was really now mine and felt that I should continue to work on my own. I completed *Phases III* in the fall of 1969. At that stage I felt that I had reached a degree of over-sophistication in relation to the materials. I stopped work on the *Phases* and became involved with the medium of dance, hoping to complete the cycle with one more section at a later date when I had some distance from the piece. It was never completed. Philippa died rather suddenly a year later and as the years have passed I have felt increasingly that the work can only be finished internally - not only by me but also by anyone who internalizes the universe which the piece has opened up.

Phases is ideally suited to performance in the dark, without intermission. Each of the sections is very demanding of the listener and they seem to work best with a small group of people. If this implies a trip being laid out on an audience, perhaps so; the works are certainly a kind of journey. They were for me a process through which I grew and changed. I have left them behind. They are at their worst flawed, even crude at times; at their best, beautiful and reassuring. They are apocryphal if not apocalyptic. If I may indulge in any personal belief any more it would be this: the age of chaos is upon us; but, like an eclipse of the sun, it cannot last; the Darkness at its peak only increases our desire for the inevitable return of the Light.

Phases I : duration 40 minutes.

The analogy to this Phase is its beginnings in what Yeats called the complete plasticity of the new moon. Fragments of poems on sex and death and madness are contrapuntally combined with images from a remote and distant classicism, increasing in density towards the middle and clarifying in a reading of the *Second Coming* out of which a gigantic chord swallows up everything which has preceded and transforms all images. Winter and its discontents are overwhelmed by the coming of Spring.

Phases II : duration 25 minutes.

A northern summer night. The state between waking and dream-sleep. The full moon - for Yeats the phase of complete beauty. The hour of the wolf. Stream of consciousness, rudely awakened as the moon passes into the 15th phase.

Phases III : duration 20 minutes.

The waning of the moon. The fall. The clarity of frost. Intellectualisation. Sophistication. The (at times) violent passage of organic life into sleep. Humour. Fragmentation.

Phases IV : duration ?

The weakening of the moon. The saint, the fool, the martyr swept away into the chaos of new beginnings.