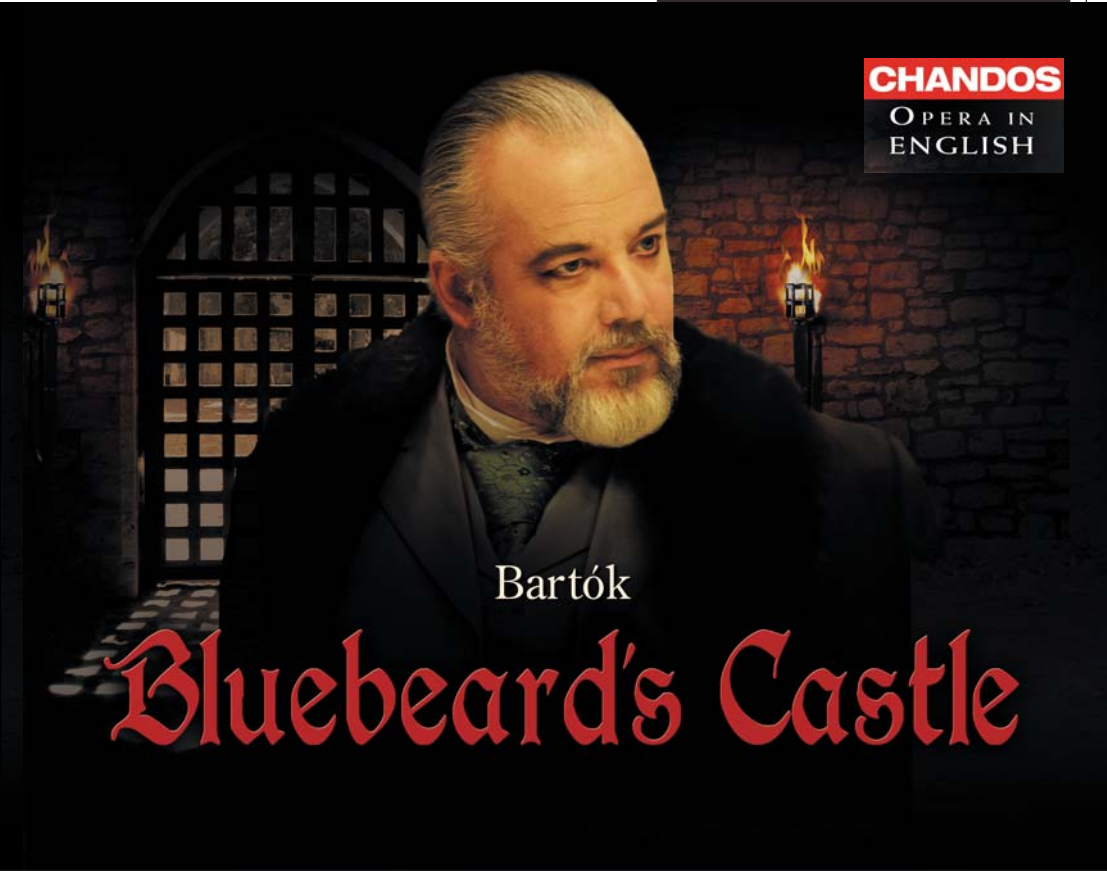




CHAN 3133



CHANDOS
OPERA IN
ENGLISH

Bartók

Bluebeard's Castle

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION





© Lebrecht Music & Arts Photo Library

Béla Bartók

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Bluebeard's Castle

Opera in one act

Libretto by Béla Balázs, English version by John Lloyd Davies, Prologue adapted for Opera North by Giles Havergal

Duke Bluebeard/Minstrel.....John Tomlinson *bass*
Judith.....Sally Burgess *mezzo-soprano*

Orchestra of Opera North

Richard Farnes

James Holmes *assistant conductor*



Prologue

- 1 Minstrel: 'Bluebeard's castle, a myth, a legend'

Time Page

2:19 [p. 58]

Opening

- 2 Bluebeard: 'Will you enter? Look around you'
3 Judith: 'Here I am in Bluebeard's castle'
4 Bluebeard: 'Tell me why you came here, Judith'
5 Judith: 'Ah! I can see seven doorways'

3:30 [p. 58]

3:31 [p. 59]

2:14 [p. 60]

2:11 [p. 60]

First Door – The Torture Chamber

- 6 Judith: 'Oh, I heard your castle sighing'
7 Bluebeard: 'What's there? What's there?'

2:40 [p. 61]

4:11 [p. 61]

Second Door – The Armoury

- 8 Bluebeard: 'What's there?'
9 Bluebeard: 'Trembling seizes all my castle'

2:35 [p. 63]

1:54 [p. 64]

Third Door – The Treasury

- 10 Judith: 'Glittering gold!'

2:17 [p. 64]

Fourth Door – The Secret Garden

- 11 Judith: 'Oh! Lovely flowers! Oh! Beautiful scents'

Time Page

4:49 [p. 65]

Fifth Door – Bluebeard's Kingdom

- 12 Judith: 'Ah!'
13 Bluebeard: 'Look! Brightness has filled my castle'

4:00 [p. 65]

2:58 [p. 66]

Sixth Door – Tears

- 14 Judith: 'Silent tranquil peaceful waters...'
15 Bluebeard: 'My last door will stay unopened'
16 Judith: 'Tell me truly, tell me Bluebeard'
17 Judith: 'I know what's behind it Bluebeard'

5:27 [p. 67]

1:39 [p. 67]

2:37 [p. 67]

4:07 [p. 68]

Seventh Door – Bluebeard's Former Wives

- 18 Bluebeard: 'Look upon the other women'
19 Bluebeard: 'Daybreak – when I found the first one'
20 Bluebeard: 'Midnight – when I found the fourth one'

2:37 [p. 68]

2:05 [p. 69]

5:20 [p. 69]

TT 63:07

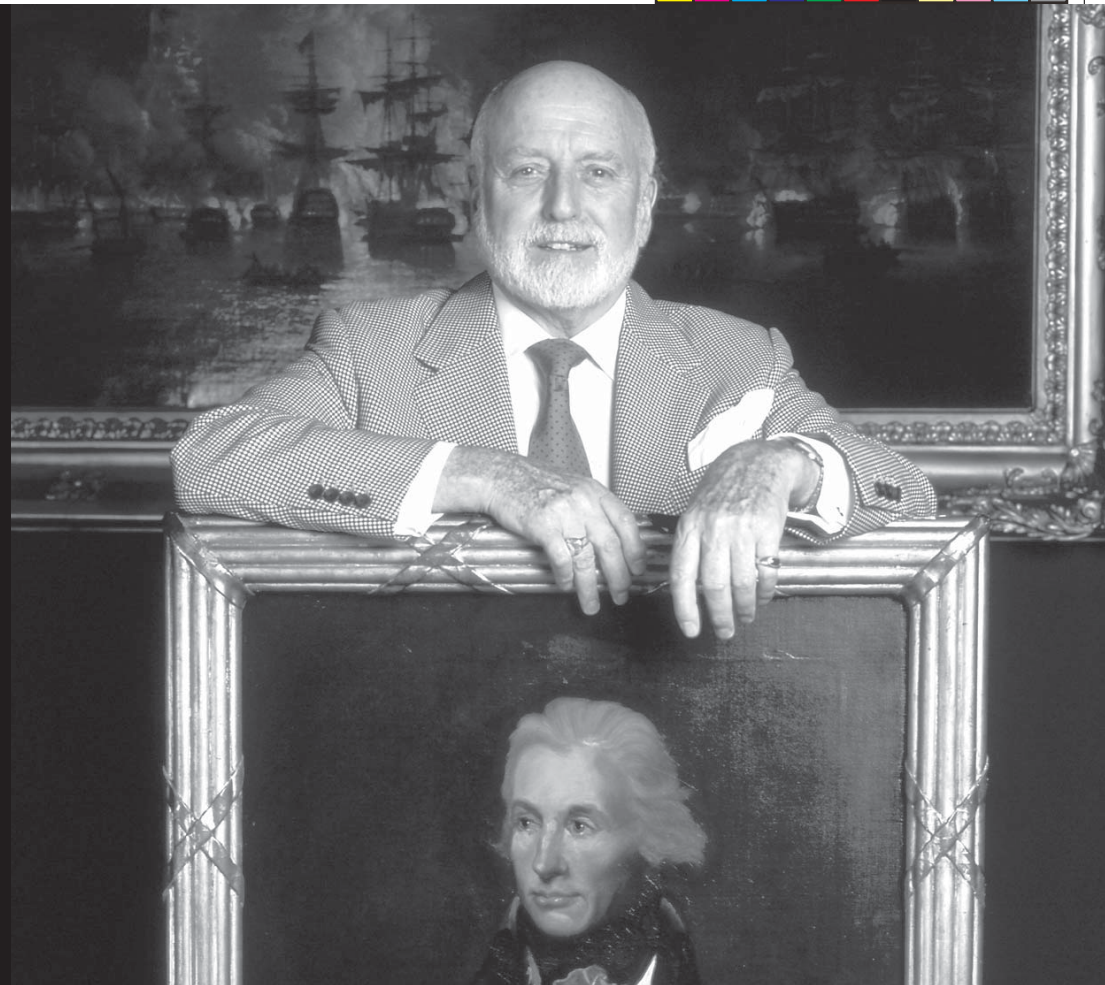


Following Berg's *Lulu*, we are delighted to be adding yet another twentieth-century masterpiece to our **Opera in English** series. Bartók's dark psycho-drama, *Bluebeard's Castle*, was recorded immediately following a semi-staging by Opera North in May 2005. All the brooding menace of this gothic tale is embodied here in the towering performances of Sally Burgess and John Tomlinson as Judith and Bluebeard, projected all the more powerfully by being sung in English, and wonderfully conducted by Richard Farnes.

Peter Moores

May 2006

Sir Peter Moores with a portrait of Admiral Lord Nelson
by Lemuel Francis Abbott, acquired for Compton Verney
© Lyndon Parker





'The castle is his soul'

Synopsis

Duke Bluebeard has brought his new wife Judith to his castle. Passionately in love with him, she has renounced all her family ties. Her curiosity is aroused by the seven locked doors in the castle, and she demands the keys. Bluebeard reluctantly gives them to her. In turn, Judith discovers his torture chamber, his armoury, his treasury and a secret garden. Behind the fifth door she sees Bluebeard's kingdom and behind the sixth a lake of tears. When he refuses to let her open the seventh door, she suspects that she will find the bodies of his previous wives. Finally, Bluebeard relinquishes the last key. Judith opens the door and finds three women, the brides of the morning, midday and evening of Bluebeard's life. Judith joins them, as the bride of the night, leaving Bluebeard alone.

* * * * *

Bluebeard's Castle is based on an old myth. In it, a rich and powerful man is seeking a wife. The disappearance of his previous wife remains mysteriously unexplained but, despite the

sinister nature of his reputation or appearance, he is able to convince society that he is a desirable bridegroom.

His home is far from that of his bride. She is young, innocent, and beautiful. Immediately after their wedding the man has to go away on urgent business. He leaves his wife the keys to his home, inviting her to have a good look around. Only one room is expressly forbidden to her, even though she holds its key along with the others. If she enters that room, some great sorrow will overtake her.

At this point in the story there are different versions. The wife decides to look in the forbidden room. She may have been encouraged to do so by another woman who wishes her harm. Or it is this very decision to look around – symbolising an attempt to discover more about her husband's true identity – that makes the husband disappear, and apparently ends their relationship. Inside the forbidden room, the wife is confronted with an image of horror, involving blood and a realisation that her husband has murdered or imprisoned his previous wives. Or she may learn that her husband has supernatural power.

Next, the husband unexpectedly returns home and sentences her to die by his own hand, or to be lost to him forever.

Until the twentieth century the Bluebeard myth normally concluded with the wife avoiding death or the loss of her husband. She either managed to delay her execution until help arrived or undertook a long, arduous quest to prove herself worthy of her partner. The husband was then either put to death or restored to her, free from what proved to have been a spell.

Important elements of a 'Bluebeard' myth can be found in Eve's choosing to eat the apple in the garden of Eden, in the classical Greek myths of Cupid and Psyche, and Zeus and Semele, and their medieval successor, the tale of Lohengrin. In these stories the bridegroom forbids questions about his identity and the wife breaks the taboo, losing her lover either permanently or during a long period of trial.

France has always been rich in Bluebeard stories. From Brittany comes the real life story of the lord Gilles de Rais (1404–40). He played a leading military and diplomatic role in Joan of Arc's triumphs during the Hundred Years War but retired at the age of twenty-eight to his estates to a life of satanism, alchemy,

buggery and murder (although of young children rather than adult women). The sheer excess of De Rais's crimes, and his volte-face from work for a saint to work with Satan, soon gave birth to the idea that he was the 'real' Bluebeard.

It was the French poet and critic Charles Perrault, whose 1697 *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé* (Stories or Tales of Time Past) contained the first widely read literary version of this tale, who named the bridegroom 'La Barbe Bleue' (Bluebeard), perhaps because in mythology the beards of the gods Bes, Indra and Zeus were blue, or because a blue beard signified night in the legendary battles of Darkness and Light to which the story obviously belongs. Drawing on many earlier influences, Perrault set forth the three strands of a myth – the wife-harming husband, the forbidden action or question, the bride's quest – strong enough to keep writers going for centuries. A Bluebeard tale became *de rigueur* in the literary collections of folk material (like that of the brothers Grimm) so popular in Europe and Scandinavia from the early nineteenth century onwards. *Mr Fox* and the wonderfully named *Captain Murderer* (as recounted by Charles Dickens in *The Uncommercial Traveller*) were British versions



of the story. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, with its red room where Rochester keeps his demented first wife (and who burns to death there), owes something to the Bluebeard myth too.

The first full-length opera about Bluebeard, *Raoul Barbe-Bleue*, was written at the start of the French Revolution by Michel-Jean Sedaine for André Grétry. Like a setting by Dalrymple that followed two years later, the story was neatly located in a favourite contemporary genre, the 'rescue' opera. Wagner's 1848 *Lohengrin* makes the medieval material even more of a Bluebeard story. Lohengrin is a powerful bridegroom of mysterious, quasi-divine origin from a distant land who forbids his new wife (Elsa) to ask his name and lineage. She is encouraged by another woman (Ortrud) to ask the forbidden question, which she does in the sealed room of the bridal chamber. Immediately there is an attempt on Lohengrin's life and blood is shed. Lohengrin now has to reveal his name and mission and leave Elsa forever, although his action leads to the breaking of a magic spell on a close relation (Elsa's brother Gottfried), previously thought dead.

By 1866 Bluebeard was ready for burlesque on the opera stage. Offenbach's razor-sharp

librettists Meilhac and Halévy made some neat jokes in *Barbe-Bleue*. The wives are not really dead but have come to an 'arrangement' with Bluebeard's alchemist. The feudal setting and the character of the alchemist himself are deliberate references to the Gilles de Rais stories.

The myth's brew of sex, violent death, gloom and mystical self-analysis made it attractive to Symbolist writers at the close of the nineteenth century. The 1891 novel *Là-bas* ('Down There'), by the Decadent writer J-K Huysmans, is a thinly disguised autobiographical journal purporting to be the researches of the writer Durtal into the Bluebeard part of Gilles de Rais's career. Huysmans's interest in 'deep and sinful' Night and its 'beloved' enemy Light became an ever-present metaphor in Maurice Maeterlinck's 1901 play *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*, set as an opera by Paul Dukas in 1907.

Maeterlinck's bride is called Ariane, whose Greek namesake Ariadne guided Theseus out of the Minotaur's cave. She is given the keys to seven doors, but the only one which interests her is the forbidden golden key to the last door. 'We learn nothing from what we're allowed to do', she tells her Nurse and throws the other keys away. The Nurse opens the first

six doors, finding jewels, sapphires, pearls, emeralds, rubies and diamonds in a crescendo of blazing light and eventually blood. Behind the last door are muffled voices – Bluebeard's five former wives are still alive. 'The happiness I want cannot live in the shadows', declares Ariane to her husband. She opens the seventh door, smashes all the castle's windows to let in the light and offers the wives their freedom. But the wives cannot and will not escape even when Bluebeard is almost killed in a revolt of his subjects, and his castle's magic collapses. While they lovingly restore him to life (the legend will not die!), Ariane has to leave on her own. *Ariane et Barbe Bleu* is the first treatment to spell out that Bluebeard's house and possessions are metaphors for his soul and state of mind, and the first time that the tale's ending is tragic rather than recuperative. The bride's mission of Light, her quest for knowledge, has failed.

Herbert Bauer, born 1884, adapted the pseudonym Béla Balázs when his first teenage poems were published. He is best known today for his two collaborations with Bartók (*Bluebeard's Castle* was followed by the ballet *The Wooden Prince*, premiered in 1917). Later he joined Hungary's first short-lived Communist government of 1919, escaping

after its overthrow first to Austria, and then to Germany, where he worked as a film critic and writer and collaborated with Bertolt Brecht on the workers' film *Kuhle Wampe*. His book *The Visible Man, or the Culture of Film* is an important early essay on the aesthetics of the silent cinema.

Balázs first met Bartók through Zoltán Kodály, Hungary's other great composer in the making at the turn of the twentieth century. Balázs was in Paris with Kodály when the latter first heard the music of Debussy (a discovery soon passed onto Bartók) and went on field trips collecting folksongs with both men. Balázs at this time was interested in a new drama that would 'show the inner images, the struggles that are inner dialogues' in humanity. His fairytale *The Silence* was a bleak vision of the impossibility of significant relationships between man and woman; another poem argues, as D.H. Lawrence was doing at the same time, that friendship between men is superior to the love between man and woman. In 1908 Balázs began a one-act play *Bluebeard and Don Juan* (the two ladies' men of legend meet in a bar), but soon reshaped it into a more direct reincarnation of the myth. *Bluebeard's Castle* was published in a theatrical journal in summer 1910, with a joint



dedication (presumably a hint) to Bartók and Kodály. Kodály admitted that he 'could not feel an affinity for it', so Bartók got rapidly to work, finishing the score by September 1911. Rejected as unperformable by the jury of a competition organised by a Budapest casino, the opera had to wait through the difficult years of the First World War – and substantial revision (including an addition to the ending) by Bartók – for its eventual premiere in May 1918.

Writing about his *Bluebeard*, Balázs allied his work closely to Bartók's folk music researches:

I created this ballad of mine in the language and rhythms of the old Hungarian Székely folk ballads. In character these folk ballads very nearly resemble old Scottish folk ballads, but they are, perhaps, more acerbic, more simple. There is no 'literature' or rhetoric within them; they are constructed from dark, weighty, uncarved blocks of words. Bartók's music also conforms to this. My ballad is the 'ballad of inner life'. Bluebeard's castle is not a real castle of stone. The castle is his soul. It is lonely, dark, and secretive: the castle of closed doors.

His version draws from both Perrault and Maeterlinck, while the influence of Huysmans can be seen in the obsession with love and fear, the light-dominated imagery and the

world-weary central figure. Although Perrault's tale concentrates on a single room, there are suggestions in it of the opposition between darkness (the man's secret world) and light (the woman's quest for knowledge and freedom) when the wife tries to look around the forbidden space and when she hopes for a sight of her brothers' rescue but all that can be seen is the dazzling sun. From Maeterlinck, Balázs took over the number of secret doors, the progressive increase in light as they are opened, the blood-stained treasures and muffled voices that lie behind them and the failure of the bride's mission.

Balázs is more interested in the male ego than in its liberation or overthrow. There are many new developments. The hall of the bridegroom's castle is the one and only scene and the test of the wife begins immediately. All the traditional dramatic givens of the situation – the joy of the bride's distant home, her angry family in pursuit – are ticked off by Bluebeard in the opening minutes of the opera, then forgotten. He continually asks his bride if she is afraid; she continually asks him to love her. This proselytising, would-be liberator – called Judith, after the Bible's slayer of Holofernes – is actually handed the keys to the doors by Bluebeard himself, with varying

degrees of willingness. They make their voyage of discovery together; temptation is replaced by graded invitation. Balázs details the lighting in his libretto (and what it should show) with Shavian, filmic precision – from Judith's and Bluebeard's first entry silhouetted against 'a dazzling white square beam of light', via the colours and vistas associated with each door, to the total darkness at the end from which nobody leaves and into which even Bluebeard disappears.

As an afterthought (first published as a separate poem), Balázs added a 'Bard's Prologue' to be spoken before the curtain rises on the opera. Although in the old form of a rhyming riddle, the Prologue sets a very twentieth-century Brechtian distance between audience and stage; this will be a drama of symbols and interior monologues rather than naturalistic action:

Your eyelids are curtains
And now you raise them.
What do you see? A Stage? A Castle?
A Cage? A Lonely Man?
It's only a story,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Bartók liked planning music in systems – compare the folk music he loved to collect, the precisely described orchestral lay-out for

his Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta or the 'game of pairs' in his Concerto for Orchestra. He must have found the precise stage directions and symbolism of Balázs's text much to his taste. His tonalities mirror the libretto's progression from darkness to light and back again – from a dark minor-key beginning towards the C major centerpiece of the opening of the fifth door, then back (almost) to the tonality and material of the opening as the wives and Bluebeard disappear. His pacing of the drama – and use of illustrative interludes – was influenced by Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, another opera made from Maeterlinck's symbolist tragedies. His depiction of the personalities of Bluebeard and Judith, and the contrast between the oppressive realm of the castle (Bluebeard's inner life) and the external world from which his would-be redeemer comes, have a narrative clarity derived from his folksong sources. To achieve this, spare vocal lines are often contrasted with rich orchestration. At the opening of the fifth door Bluebeard's pride in his domain is matched by a (comparatively rare) use of the full orchestra, plus organ and offstage brass band. But Judith can only repeat 'stiffly and absent-mindedly', 'Great and glorious is your kingdom'.



Like Maeterlinck's central character, the Bluebeard story never dies. Later in the twentieth century came further reworkings by Anatole France (a kind Bluebeard), Angela Carter (*The Bloody Chamber*) and, most widely circulated of all, Daphne du Maurier's novel – and Alfred Hitchcock's film – of *Rebecca*, in which a later wife uncovers dark secrets about her husband, putting them both at risk.

© 2006 Mike Ashman



Sally Burgess has made some of the most exciting operatic roles her own; Carmen is a role she first performed for English National Opera, and which she then went on to perform for the Metropolitan Opera, the Opéra National de Paris, Bastille, the Bavarian State Opera, Munich, the Bregenz Festival and in Zurich, Berlin, New Zealand and Portland.

Other roles in her repertoire include Azucena (*Il trovatore*) for Opera North;

Amneris (*Aida*) for Opera North, Scottish Opera and in Nancy, Lausanne and Wiesbaden; Hanna Glawari (*The Merry Widow*) for the Metropolitan Opera; Kabanicha (*Katya Kabanova*) for the Bavarian State Opera, Munich; Fricka (*The Ring*) in Geneva and for Scottish Opera; Ottavia (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) for Welsh National Opera, also recorded for BBC TV; Dalila (*Samson et Dalila*) for Nantes Opera; Judith (*Bluebeard's Castle*) in Bordeaux, for English National Opera and for Opera North; the title role in Gluck's *Orfeo* for Opera North; Dulcinée (*Don Quixote*) for English National Opera where she has also enjoyed success as Widow Begbick (*The Rise and Fall of Mahagonny*) and Herodias (*Salome*); Mère Marie (*Dialogues des Carmélites*) for Welsh National Opera; Pantalís/Martha (*Mefistofele*) for De Nederlandse Opera; and the world premiere of Matthew King's *On London Fields* on stage in London.

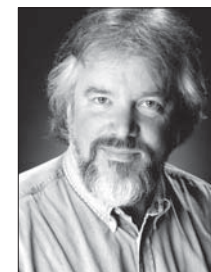
Concert repertoire includes Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; Handel's *Messiah*, Canteloube's *Songs of the Auvergne*, the premiere and subsequent performances of Paul McCartney's *Liverpool Oratorio*, Verdi's Requiem and *Bluebeard's Castle* with the

BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and Elgar's *Sea Pictures*. In the US she has sung with the Houston Symphony Orchestra, the North Carolina Symphony, and the Seattle Symphony. Recital venues include the Purcell Room, the Wigmore Hall, and various locations on tour in New Zealand.

Sally Burgess received an Olivier Award nomination for her performance in the RSC/Opera North co-production of *Showboat* in London's West End, a musical she has also recorded, alongside *West Side Story* and *The King and I*. She regularly performs with her own Jazz trio lead by her husband Neal Thornton and has performed cabaret jazz evenings for the Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Harrogate, Worcester, Buxton and Newcastle Festivals and at jazz venues such as London's *Pizza on the Park*.

John Tomlinson was born in Lancashire. He gained a degree in Civil Engineering at Manchester University before winning a scholarship to the Royal Manchester College of Music (now the Royal Northern College of Music).

John Tomlinson has sung regularly with English National Opera since 1974, and with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, since



1977, and has also appeared with Opera North, Scottish Opera, Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Operas and Kent Opera. He has sung at the Bayreuth Festival every year since 1988, where he has been heard as

Wotan (*Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*), the Wanderer (*Siegfried*), Titurel and Gurnemanz (*Parsifal*), Mark (*Tristan und Isolde*), Heinrich (*Lohengrin*), Hagen (*Götterdämmerung*) and the Flying Dutchman.

Foreign engagements include Geneva, Lisbon, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, San Diego, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin (Deutsche Oper and Deutsche Staatsoper), Dresden, Munich and Vienna, and the Festivals of Orange, Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg, Edinburgh and the Maggio Musicale, Florence. His repertoire further includes Hans Sachs (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Landgraf (*Tannhäuser*), the title role in *Der fliegende Holländer* (*The Flying Dutchman*), Baron Ochs (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Orestes (*Elektra*), Moses (*Moses und Aron*), Green Knight in the world premiere of



Harrison Birtwistle's *Gawain and the Green Knight*, Rocco (*Fidelio*), King Philip (*Don Carlos*), Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), the four roles of Lindorf, Coppelius, Dr Miracle and Dapertutto in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Golaud and Arkel (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Boromeo (*Palestrina*), Dosifey (*Kovanshchina*) and title roles in *Boris Godunov*, *Oberto* and *Attila*. John Tomlinson has a large concert repertoire and has sung with all the leading British orchestras and in Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland, France, Spain, Denmark and the U.S.A. His many recordings include Donizetti's *Gabriella di Vergy* for Opera Rara, and for Chandos' Opera in English series *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Rigoletto*, *Werther*, discs of highlights from *Boris Godunov* and *Der Rosenkavalier*, *The Flying Dutchman* and two discs of Great Operatic Arias.

John Tomlinson was awarded a CBE in 1997 and was knighted in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2005.

Richard Farnes read Music at King's College, Cambridge, where he was organ scholar, and went on to study at the National Opera Studio, Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music, where he

Chris Blott



conducted the first production of Rossini's *Journey to Reims*. On completion of his studies he worked on the music staff of the Glyndebourne Festival, Scottish Opera and Opera Factory.

In September 2004 Richard Farnes was appointed Music Director of Opera North after a long association with this company, for whom he had already conducted a wide variety of repertoire including *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Eugene Onegin*, *La traviata*, Simon Holt's *The Nightingale's to Blame*, Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco*, Britten's *Gloriana*, and Cimarosa's *The Secret Marriage*. In his first season he conducted new productions of *Manon* and *Don Giovanni*, as well as concert performances of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*.

He has also had a close association with Scottish Opera, conducting *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *The Magic Flute*, *L'elisir d'amore*, David Horne's *Friend of the People*, and a double bill of works by Param Vir; and with Glyndebourne, conducting *The Makropoulos Case* and *Otello* at the Festival, and *Albert*

Herring, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *La Bohème* and *Le nozze di Figaro* on tour throughout the UK. He returned to the Glyndebourne Festival in August 2005 to conduct Jonathan Dove's *Flight*.

Other opera engagements have included *Simon Boccanegra* at the Royal Opera House, *The Cunning Little Vixen* for English National Opera, *Nabucco* for New Israeli Opera, Tel Aviv, *Falstaff*, *La Bohème* and *The Barber of Seville* for English Touring Opera, Pergolesi's *La serva padrona* and Verdi's *Macbeth* for Birmingham Opera Company, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *The Rake's Progress* for Opera Theatre Company in Dublin, and Mozart's *Bastien und Bastienne* for European Chamber Opera.

Concert engagements have included performances with the London Philharmonic, Haydn Chamber Orchestra, the English Northern Philharmonia, the Royal Opera House Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. In 1992 Richard Farnes founded Equinox, a chamber orchestra and ensemble that aims to promote twentieth-century repertoire to wider audiences, and which has given a number of concerts at St John's Smith Square in London.

Opera North is England's national opera company in the North, and one of Europe's leading arts organisations. The company is committed to producing work of the highest quality that excites, challenges and entertains. It tours not only throughout the North of England and to London, but also to opera houses on the continent in cities such as Prague and Barcelona, and performs at major international festivals including Edinburgh and Ravenna. An innovative approach to programming and performance style has been widely acknowledged through a number of prestigious awards, including four for its Eight Little Greats season in 2004 (Royal Philharmonic Society Opera and Music Theatre Award, The South Bank Show Opera Award, TMA Theatre Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera, Manchester Evening News Theatre Award for Opera).

Opera North is a vibrant, lively organisation, which actively challenges conventional perceptions of opera. Breathing new life into the classics, the company is also a strong advocate of lesser-known works and a champion of musical theatre. Opera North collaborates with artists and companies working in a variety of media, including



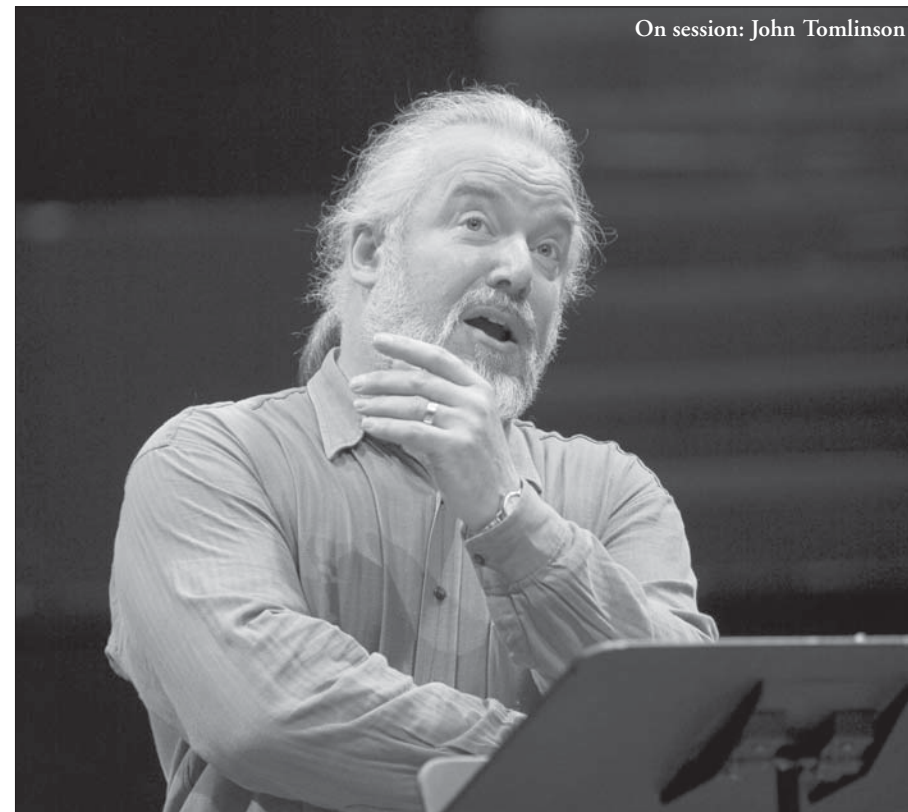
film and visual art. Its versatile Chorus and Orchestra also perform independently, constantly revitalising their approaches to music-making. Opera North Education is one of the best-respected arts education

departments in the country. The team uses opera to inspire and develop artistic creativity not only for children but also for young people, as well as those with disabilities and the wider community.



© Mary Evans Picture Library

Illustration by Gustave Doré: Bluebeard giving the keys to Judith



On session: John Tomlinson



PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

British philanthropist Sir Peter Moores established the Peter Moores Foundation in 1964 to realise his charitable aims and, to fulfill one of these, the Compton Verney House Trust in 1993 to create a new art gallery in the country. Through his charities he has disbursed more than £104 million to a wide variety of arts, environmental and social causes 'to get things done and open doors for people'.

Sir Peter's philanthropic work began with his passion for opera: in his twenties he helped a number of young artists in the crucial, early stages of their careers, several of whom – Dame Joan Sutherland, Sir Colin Davis and the late Sir Geraint Evans amongst them – became world-famous.

Today, the Peter Moores Foundation supports talented young singers with annual scholarships awarded through the Royal Northern College of Music, has made it possible for Chandos Records to issue the world's largest catalogue of operas recorded in English translation, and enabled Opera Rara to record rare bel canto repertoire which would otherwise remain inaccessible to the general public.

In live performance, the Foundation has encouraged the creation of new work and schemes to attract new audiences, financed the publication of scores, especially for world premieres of modern operas, and enabled rarely heard works to be staged by British opera companies and festivals.

Projects supported by the Foundation to help the young have ranged from a scheme to encourage young Afro-Caribbeans 'stay at school' for further education, to the endowment

of a Faculty Directorship and Chair of Management Studies at Oxford University (providing the lead donation which paved the way for the development of the Said Business School).

In 1993 the Foundation bought Compton Verney, a Grade I Georgian mansion in Warwickshire, designed by Robert Adam, with grounds by Capability Brown. Compton Verney House Trust was set up by Sir Peter to transform the derelict mansion into a world-class art gallery that would provide an especially welcoming environment for the 'first-time' gallery visitor. The gallery, which houses six permanent collections, a Learning Centre for all ages, and facilities for major visiting exhibitions, was opened in March 2004 by HRH the Prince of Wales. The Compton Verney website can be found at: www.comptonverney.org.uk

Sir Peter Moores was born in Lancashire and educated at Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford. He was a student at the Vienna Academy of Music, where he produced the Austrian premiere of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, and at the same time was an assistant producer with the Vienna State Opera, working with Viennese artists in Naples, Geneva and Rome, before returning to England in 1957 to join his father's business, Littlewoods. He was Vice-Chairman of Littlewoods in 1976, Chairman from 1977 to 1980 and remained a director until 1993.

He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1985. In 1992 he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire by HM the Queen. He was appointed CBE in 1991 and received a Knighthood in 2003 for his charitable services to the arts.



“Die Burg ist seine Seele”

Synopse

Herzog Blaubart hat seine neue Frau Judith heimgeführt. In leidenschaftlicher Liebe zu ihm hat sie sich von ihrer Familie losgesagt. Sieben verschlossene Türen erwecken nun in Blaubarts Burg ihre Neugier, und sie verlangt die Schlüssel. Zögernd kommt Blaubart ihrer Forderung nach. Judith entdeckt zunächst seine Folterkammer, dann die Waffenkammer, die Schatzkammer und einen verborgenen Garten. Hinter der fünften Tür erblickt sie das weite Reich Blaubarts und hinter der sechsten einen Tränensee. Als er sich weigert, die siebte Tür zu öffnen, befürchtet sie dahinter die Leichen ihrer Vorgängerinnen. Als er ihr schließlich den Schlüssel gibt, öffnet Judith die Tür und begegnet seinen drei früheren Frauen: dem Morgen, Mittag und Abend in Blaubarts Leben. Als er Judith zur Nacht erklärt, schließt sie sich den drei anderen an und lässt ihn in Finsternis zurück.

* * * * *

Herzog Blaubarts Burg beruht auf einem alten Märchen. Darin ist ein reicher, mächtiger

Mann auf Brautsuche. Für das Verschwinden seiner früheren Frau gibt es rätselhafterweise keine Erklärung, doch kann er trotz seiner finsternen Fama und Erscheinung die Gesellschaft davon überzeugen, dass er eine gute Partie ist.

Er lebt in weiter Ferne von seiner Braut. Sie ist jung, unschuldig und wunderschön. Gleich nach der Hochzeit muss der Mann in einer wichtigen Sache auf eine längere Reise gehen. Er hinterlässt seiner Frau die Hausschlüssel und lädt sie ein, sich gründlich umzusehen. Nur zu einem Raum ist ihr der Zutritt versagt, obwohl sie auch diesen Schlüssel hält. Beim Betreten des Raums würde sie großes Leid befallen.

An diesem Punkt verzweigt sich die Geschichte. Die Frau kann der Versuchung, einen Blick in den Raum zu werfen, nicht widerstehen. Sie mag darin von einer anderen, ihr übel gewillten Frau bestärkt worden sein. Vielleicht ist es auch eben diese ihre Entscheidung, sich umzusehen – symbolisch für den Versuch, mehr über die wahre Identität des Mannes in Erfahrung zu bringen – die ihn vertreibt und das Ende der Ehe besiegt.

In dem verbotenen Raum wird die Frau mit einem Bild des Grauens konfrontiert, der bluttriefenden Erkenntnis, dass ihr Mann frühere Frauen gefangen gehalten oder gar ermordet hat. Oder sie erfährt, dass ihr Mann übernatürliche Kräfte besitzt. Überraschend kehrt dieser nun heim und verkündet ihr, dass er ihr zur Strafe das Leben nehmen wird bzw. dass er für sie nun auf ewig verloren ist.

Bis in das zwanzigste Jahrhundert hinein ging die Blaubart-Geschichte normalerweise so zu Ende, dass die Frau ihren Tod oder den Verlust ihres Mannes vermeiden konnte. Entweder zögerte sie ihre Hinrichtung hinaus, bis Hilfe eintraf, oder sie nahm eine lange, schwere Prüfung auf sich, um sich ihres Partners würdig zu erweisen. Danach wurde der Mann entweder selbst getötet oder mit ihr wieder vereinigt, da nun ein über ihm hängender Bann gebrochen war.

Kernelemente der Blaubart-Geschichte treten auch in anderen Erzählungen auf, wie der Vertreibung aus dem Paradies, Amor und Psyche, Zeus und Semele in der griechischen Mythologie und deren mittelalterlicher Variante Lohengrin. In all diesen Geschichten geht es um den Gehorsam. Der Mann verbietet der Frau die Infragestellung seiner Identität, woraufhin die Frau das Tabu ignoriert und den

Mann auf ewig oder für die Dauer einer langen Prüfung verliert.

Frankreich ist besonders reich an Blaubart-Erzählungen gewesen. Aus der Bretagne kommt die wahre Lebensgeschichte eines Marschalls von Frankreich, Gilles de Rais (1404 – 40). Er spielte während des Hundertjährigen Krieges eine wichtige Rolle an der Seite von Jeanne d'Arc, zog sich jedoch mit 28 Jahren auf seine Güter zurück, um nunmehr dem Satanismus und der Alchemie, der Sodomie und Mordlust zu frönen (allerdings an Kindern, nicht an erwachsenen Frauen). Die verbrecherischen Exzesse des Barons und seine Kehrtwendung vom Dienst in der Sache einer Heiligen zur Teufelsverehrung nährten bald den Mythos, dass er der “wahre” Blaubart war.

Der Name Blaubart geht auf den französischen Schriftsteller und Literaturkritiker Charles Perrault zurück, dessen *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé* (Feenmädchen für die Jugend) von 1697 die erste weit verbreitete Fassung des Stoffes enthielt. Vielleicht nannte er den Bräutigam “La Barbe Bleue”, weil die Götter Bes, Indra und Zeus blaue Bärte gehabt haben sollen oder weil ein blauer Bart in den legendären Schlachten zwischen Licht und Finsternis,



zu denen die Erzählung eindeutig gehört, die Nacht symbolisierte. Unter Verarbeitung vieler älterer Einflüsse schuf Perrault die drei Hauptfaktoren (ein Peiniger der Frau, das Handlungs-/Frageverbot, die Prüfung der Frau) eines Märchens, das auf Jahrhunderte hinaus andere Schriftsteller beschäftigen sollte. Eine Blaubart-Geschichte durfte in den gesammelten Volkserzählungen (wie denen der Gebrüder Grimm), die vom frühen neunzehnten Jahrhundert an in Europa wachsende Beliebtheit erlangten, nicht fehlen. *Mr. Fox* und der trefflich benannte *Captain Murderer* (von Charles Dickens in *The Uncommercial Traveller* beschrieben) waren britische Versionen. Charlotte Brontës *Jane Eyre* mit dem roten Gemach, in dem Rochester seine wahnsinnige erste Frau versteckt hält (und in dem sie schließlich verbrennt), ist ebenfalls dem Blaubart-Märchen verpflichtet.

Die erste abendfüllende Oper über Blaubart, *Raoul Barbe-Bleue*, wurde zu Beginn der Französischen Revolution von Michel-Jean Sedaine für André Grétry geschrieben. Ebenso wie die zwei Jahre später folgende Vertonung von Dalrymple reüssierte das Werk in dem seinerzeit beliebten Genre der "Rettungsoper". Wagners *Lohengrin* (1848) kehrte das Wesen des mittelalterlichen Stoffes noch stärker

hervor. Lohengrin ist ein mächtiger Ritter von mysteriöser, quasigöttlicher Herkunft aus fernen Landen, der seiner neuen Frau (Elsa) verbietet, ihn je nach seinem Namen oder seiner Abstammung zu fragen. Eine Widersacherin (Ortrud) erschüttert Elsas Vertrauen in ihren Mann, so dass sie ihm schließlich doch in der Abgeschiedenheit des Brautgemachs die verbotene Frage stellt. In dem Moment wird er zum Ziel eines Mordversuchs, und es fließt Blut. Lohengrin ist nun gezwungen, seine Herkunft und Mission zu enthüllen und Elsa auf ewig zu verlassen. Sein Handeln erlöst jedoch einen engen Verwandten (Elsas Bruder Gottfried), dessen vermeintliche Ermordung man Elsa vorgeworfen hatte.

1866 war die Zeit bereits reif für eine burleske Opernbehandlung des Stoffes. Meilhac und Halévy, die scharfsinnigen Librettisten Offenbachs, fanden in *Barbe-Bleue* den Humor. Die Frauen sind eigentlich gar nicht tot, sondern haben sich mit dem Alchemisten Blaubart "geeignet". Der feudale Rahmen und die Gestalt des Alchemisten selbst sind bewusste Anspielungen auf die Geschichten über Gilles de Rais.

Mit seiner Mischung aus Sex, gewaltsamem Tod, Hoffnungslosigkeit und mystischer

Selbstanalyse drängte sich das Märchen gegen Ende des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts den Symbolisten geradezu auf. Der 1891 veröffentlichte Roman *Là-bas* ("Tief unten") des Dekadenz-Schriftstellers Joris-Karl Huysmans ist ein dünn kaschiert-autographischer Bericht über die Recherchen des Autors Durtal, den den Blaubart-Aspekten im Leben von Gilles de Rais nachgeht. Das Interesse Huysmans' an der "tiefen und sündigen" Nacht und deren "geliebtem" Feind Licht fand Ausdruck als allgegenwärtige Metapher in Maurice Maeterlincks Schauspiel *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* (1901), das von Paul Dukas 1907 zu einer Oper verarbeitet wurde.

Bei Maeterlinck heißt die Frau Ariane, in Anspielung an ihre griechische Namensvetterin Ariadne, die Theseus aus dem Labyrinth des Minotaurus befreite. Sie bekommt die Schlüssel zu sieben Türen, doch nur der eine, der goldene Schlüssel zur verbotenen letzten Tür, ist für sie von Interesse. "Was uns erlaubt ist, lehrt uns nichts", erklärt sie ihrer Amme und wirft die silbernen Schlüssel fort. Die Amme öffnet damit die ersten sechs Türen, hinter denen sich Juwelen, Saphire, Perlen, Smaragde, Rubine und Diamanten in strahlendem Glanz und schließlich blutbefleckte Gegenstände liegen. Hinter der letzten Tür hört man

gedämpfte Stimmen – die fünf früheren Frauen Blaubarts leben noch. "Die Glückseligkeit, die ich mir wünsche, kann nicht im Schatten leben", erklärt Ariane ihrem Mann. Sie öffnet die siebte Tür, schlägt die Fenster ein, um Licht eindringen zu lassen und offenbart den Frauen ihre Freiheit. Doch die Frauen wollen und können nicht die Flucht ergreifen, selbst als Blaubart von seinen aufgebrachten Bauern fast umgebracht wird und seine Zauberburg einstürzt. Während die fünf Frauen ihn liebevoll wieder zum Leben erwecken (kein Ende der Legende!), geht Ariane ohne sie. *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* verdeutlicht zum erstenmal, dass Blaubarts Haus und sein Besitz als Metaphern für seine Seele und seinen Geisteszustand zu verstehen sind, und erstmals geht die Geschichte nicht erlösend, sondern tragisch aus. Die Frau ist mit ihrer Mission des Lichtes, ihrer Wahrheitssuche, gescheitert.

Béla Balázs (geb. 1884 als Herbert Bauer) wurde unter seinem Pseudonym mit ersten Jugendgedichten bekannt. Heute verbindet sich sein Name oft mit den beiden Libretti, die er für Bartók schrieb: *Herzog Blaubarts Burg* und das Ballett *Der holzgeschnitzte Prinz*, das 1917 zur Uraufführung kam. 1919 trat er der ersten kommunistischen Räteregierung Ungarns bei, floh aber nach deren Absetzung



noch im selben Jahr zunächst nach Wien und dann weiter nach Berlin, wo er sich als Filmkritiker und Schriftsteller einen Namen machte und u.a. an der Entstehung von Brechts Arbeiterfilm *Kuhle Wampe* beteiligt war. Sein filmtheoretisches Werk *Der sichtbare Mensch* (1924) ist ein wichtiger früher Beitrag zur Ästhetik des Stummfilms.

Die erste Begegnung zwischen Balázs und Bartók verdanken wir Zoltan Kodály, einem zweiten zur Jahrhundertwende an der Schwelle künftigen Ruhms stehenden ungarischen Komponisten. Balázs hielt sich mit Kodály in Paris auf, als dieser zum erstenmal Musik von Debussy hörte (eine Entdeckung, die er bald an Bartók weitergeben würde), und begleitete beide Männer auf Landfahrten zur Sammlung von Volksliedgut. Zu jener Zeit war Balázs an einem neuen Schauspiel interessiert, das “die inneren Bilder, das Ringen im inneren Dialog” des Menschen zeigen sollte. Sein Märchen *Die Stille* war eine trostlose Vision, die tiefgründige Beziehungen zwischen Mann und Frau als unmöglich darstellt; in einem Gedicht stufte er, so wie es seinerzeit auch D.H. Lawrence tat, die Männerfreundschaft höher ein als die Liebe zwischen Mann und Frau. 1908 nahm Balázs einen Einakter mit dem Titel *Blaubart und Don Juan* in Angriff

(die beiden Frauenhelden begegnen sich in einer Bar), das sich schon bald in eine Reinkarnation des Märchens verwandelte. Das Stück wurde im Sommer 1910 als *Herzog Blaubarts Burg* in einer Theaterzeitschrift veröffentlicht, mit einer gemeinsamen (und vermutlich augenzwinkernden) Widmung an Bartók und Kodály. Während letzterer nach eigenem Bekennen kaum Interesse daran aufbrachte, war Bartók begeistert. Er machte sich schnell an die Arbeit und vollendete die Partitur im September 1911. Bei einem Kompositionswettbewerb eines Budapester Kasinos wurde die Oper jedoch als unspielbar abgelehnt. Die Kriegsjahre erschwerten die Bemühungen um eine Inszenierung weiter, und erst nachdem Bartók das Werk drastisch überarbeitet (und den Schluss ausgebaut) hatte, wurde es schließlich im Mai 1918 uraufgeführt.

Balázs selber rückte seinen *Blaubart* in die enge Nähe der Volksmusikstudien Bartóks:

Ich schuf diese Ballade von mir in der Sprache und den Rhythmen der alten ungarischen Székely-Volksballaden. Vom Charakter her ähneln diese Volksballaden sehr stark den alten schottischen Volksballaden, auch wenn sie vielleicht bissiger, simpler sind. In ihnen ist keine “Literatur” oder Rhetorik enthalten; sie bauen

sich aus dunklen, gewichtigen, ungeschnitzten Wortblöcken auf. Dem entspricht auch Bartóks Musik. Meine Ballade ist die “Ballade des Innenlebens”. Blaubarts Burg ist keine wirkliche Burg aus Stein. Die Burg ist seine Seele. Sie ist einsam, finster und geheimnisvoll: die Burg der verschlossenen Türen.

Balázs stützt sich sowohl auf Perrault als auch Maeterlinck, während der Einfluss von Huysmans in den Zwangsvorstellungen von Liebe und Furcht, der vom Licht beherrschten Bildsprache und der weltverdrossenen Hauptfigur zum Ausdruck kommt. Obwohl Perraults Erzählung nur auf einen Raum beschränkt ist, enthält sie Andeutungen auf den Konflikt zwischen Finsternis (der geheimen Welt des Mannes) und Licht (dem Streben der Frau nach Wissen und Freiheit), als die Frau versucht, sich im Dunkel des verbotenen Kabinetts umzusehen, und später darauf hofft, dass ihre zur Rettung herbeigesehnten Brüder zu sehen sind, doch es zeigt sich nur die schimmernde Sonne. Von Maeterlinck übernahm Balázs die Zahl der verschlossenen Türen, die durch ihre Öffnungen allmählich zunehmende Helligkeit, die blutbefleckten Schätze und die gedämpften Stimmen dahinter sowie das Scheitern der weiblichen Mission.

Balázs ist am männlichen Ego stärker interessiert als an seiner Befreiung oder Entmachtung. Es treten zahlreiche Neuentwicklungen auf. Der Burgsaal ist der einzige Schauplatz, und die Prüfung der Frau beginnt sofort. Alle traditionellen dramatischen Elemente der Situation – das schöne Elternhaus der Frau, die aufgebrachte Familie – werden von Blaubart in den ersten Minuten der Oper angesprochen, dann aber vergessen. Ständig fragt er sie, ob sie Angst hat; ständig appelliert sie an seine Liebe. Diese Frau, die liebend gerne bekehren und befreien möchte (Judith genannt nach der biblischen Mörderin des Holofernes), bekommt die Türschlüssel von dem mehr oder weniger widerwilligen Blaubart selbst überreicht. Sie unternehmen ihre Entdeckungsreise gemeinsam; an die Stelle der Versuchung tritt die qualifizierte Einladung. Balázs erläutert in seinem Libretto die Beleuchtung (und was sie zu erkennen geben sollte) mit Shawscher, filmischer Präzision – vom ersten, silhouettenhaften Auftreten Judiths und Blaubarts vor dem “blendend weißen Schein der Türöffnung” über die mit den einzelnen Türen verbundenen Farben und Ausblicke bis hin zur völligen Dunkelheit am Ende, der niemand entrinnt und in der selbst Blaubart verschwindet.



Im Nachhinein fügte Balázs einen “Prolog des Barden” hinzu, der (ursprünglich als separates Gedicht veröffentlicht) gesprochen wird, bevor sich der Vorhang zu der Oper hebt. Obwohl er in die althergebrachte Form eines Rätselreims gekleidet ist, sorgt der Prolog für eine sehr moderne, Brechtsche Entfremdung zwischen Publikum und Bühnengeschehen – was bevorsteht, ist ein Drama der Symbole und inneren Monologe, keine naturalistische Handlung:

Vorhänge sind Eure Augenlider,
Die Ihr jetzt hebt.

Was seht Ihr? Eine Bühne? Eine Burg?
Einen Käfig? Einen einsamen Mann?
Eine Geschichte ist's nur,
Liebe Leute.

Bartók plante die Musik gerne auf systematischer Basis – man denke an die von ihm so leidenschaftlich gesammelte Volksmusik, die genau beschriebene Orchestersitzordnung für seine *Musik für Saiteninstrumente, Schlagzeug und Celesta* oder das “Spiel der Paare” im *Konzert für Orchester*. Die präzisen Bühnenanweisungen und der Symbolismus im Libretto von Balázs müssen ihm sehr zugesagt haben. Seine Tonalitäten sind ein Spiegelbild der textlichen Entwicklung von der Dunkelheit zum Licht und wieder

zurück – von einer anfänglichen dunklen Molltonart zum C–Dur–Kernstück für das Öffnen der fünften Tür und (fast) zurück zur Tonalität und zum Material der Eröffnung, als die Frauen und Blaubart verschwinden. In der dynamischen Entwicklung des Dramas – und dem Einsatz illustrativer Zwischenspiele – war er von Debussys *Pelléas et Mélisande* beeinflusst, einer anderen durch Maeterlincks symbolistische Tragödien inspirierten Oper. Seine Darstellung der Charaktere Blaubarts und Judiths sowie des Kontrastes zwischen der bedrückenden Burgatmosphäre (Blaubarts Innenleben) und der Außenwelt, der seine Möchtegernlöserin entstammt, verfügen über eine erzählerische Transparenz, die den Volksliedquellen Bartóks zu verdanken ist. Zu diesem Zweck werden oft einfache Vokallinien mit einem üppigen Orchestersatz kontrastiert. Beim Öffnen der fünften Tür wird Blaubarts Stolz auf sein Reich durch das sonst nur selten voll zu hörende Orchester untermauert, verstärkt durch eine Orgel und eine Blechblaskapelle hinter den Kulissen. Doch “starr und zerstreut” kann Judith ihm nur nachsprechen: “Schön und groß ist dein Land”.

So wie Maeterlincks Titelfigur hat auch die Blaubart-Tradition nie ein Ende. Im weiteren

Verlauf des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts folgten Neuversionen von Anatole France (eine Art Blaubart), Angela Carter (*The Bloody Chamber*) und – mit der größten Breitenwirkung – ein auch von Alfred Hitchcock verfilmter Roman von Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca*, in dem die neue Frau eines Witwers dessen finstere Vergangenheit entdeckt und dadurch ihn und sich in Gefahr bringt.

© 2006 Mike Ashman

Übersetzung: Andreas Klatt

Sally Burgess hat sich einige der aufregendsten Opernrollen zu eigen gemacht. Als Carmen trat sie zuerst an der English National Opera auf; anschließend sang sie die Rolle an der Metropolitan Opera, der Opéra national de Paris–Bastille und der Bayerischen Staatsoper, bei den Bregenzer Festspielen sowie in Zürich, Berlin, Neuseeland und Portland.

Weitere Erfolge waren Azucena (*Il trovatore*) an der Opera North; Amneris (*Aida*) an der Opera North, Scottish Opera und in Nancy, Lausanne und Wiesbaden; Hanna Glawari (*Die lustige Witwe*) an der Metropolitan Opera; Kabanicha (*Katja Kabanowa*) an der Bayerischen Staatsoper; Fricka (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) in Genf und an der Scottish

Opera; Ottavia (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) an der Welsh National Opera und auch als BBC-Fernsehaufnahme; Dalila (*Samson et Dalila*) an der Opéra de Nantes; Judith (*Herzog Blaubarts Burg*) in Bordeaux, an der English National Opera und an der Opera North; die Titelrolle in Glucks *Orfeo* an der Opera North; Dulcinée (*Don Quixote*) an der English National Opera, wo sie auch als Witwe Begbick (*Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*) und Herodias (*Salome*) überzeugte; Mère Marie (*Dialogues des Carmélites*) an der Welsh National Opera; Pantalís/Martha (*Mefistofele*) an der Nederlandse Opera; sowie die Welturaufführung von Matthew Kings *On London Fields* in London.

Konzertant imponierte sie in Elgars *Dream of Gerontius* mit dem Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; Händels *Messiah*, Canteloubes *Lieder aus der Auvergne*, der Premiere und späteren Aufführungen von Paul McCartneys *Liverpool Oratorio*, Verdis *Requiem* und *Herzog Blaubarts Burg* mit dem BBC National Orchestra of Wales sowie Elgars *Sea Pictures*. In den USA ist sie mit dem Houston Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony Orchestra und Seattle Symphony Orchestra aufgetreten. Solokonzerte hat sie im Purcell Room und in der Wigmore Hall



London sowie an verschiedenen Orten auf Neuseeland-Tournee gegeben.

Für ihre Auftritte in *Showboat*, einer Gemeinschaftsinszenierung der RSC/Opera North im Londoner Westend, wurde Sally Burgess bei den Olivier Awards als Beste Schauspielerin in einem Musical nominiert; *Showboat* hat sie auch, ebenso wie *West Side Story* und *The King and I*, auf Schallplatte aufgenommen. Sie tritt regelmäßig mit ihrem eigenen Jazztrio auf, das von Ehemann Neal Thornton geleitet wird, und hat Jazzabende bei den Festspielen von Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Harrogate, Worcester, Buxton und Newcastle sowie in Jazzlokalen wie Londons *Pizza on the Park* gegeben.

John Tomlinson wurde in Lancashire geboren. Er studierte zunächst Bauwesen an der Universität Manchester, bevor er als Stipendiat das Royal Manchester College of Music (heute: Royal Northern College of Music) besuchte.

Regelmäßig singt John Tomlinson seit 1974 an der English National Opera und seit 1977 an der Royal Opera Covent Garden. Außerdem ist er an der Opera North, der Scottish Opera, in Glyndebourne und mit der Glyndebourne Touring Opera sowie der Kent Opera aufgetreten. Seit 1988 singt er

jedes Jahr bei den Bayreuther Festspielen, wo man ihn als Wotan (*Das Rheingold* und *Die Walküre*), Wanderer (*Siegfried*), Titurel und Gurnemanz (*Parsifal*), König Marke (*Tristan und Isolde*), Heinrich (*Lohengrin*), Hagen (*Götterdämmerung*) und in der Titelrolle von *Der fliegende Holländer* erlebt hat.

Weitere Stationen waren Genf, Lissabon, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, San Diego, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Dresden, München und Wien, die Festspiele von Orange, Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg, Edinburgh sowie der Maggio musicale in Florenz. Sein Opernrepertoire umfasst auch die Rollen von Hans Sachs (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Landgraf (*Tannhäuser*), Baron Ochs (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Rocco (*Fidelio*), Filippo II. (*Don Carlos*), Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), Dossifei (*Chowanschtschina*) und die Titelrollen in *Boris Godunow*, *Oberto* und *Attila*.

John Tomlinson verfügt über ein umfangreiches Konzertrepertoire. Er hat mit allen namhaften britischen Orchestern gesungen und auch in Deutschland, Italien, Belgien, Holland, Frankreich, Spanien, Dänemark und den USA konzertiert. Stellvertretend für seine vielen Schallplattenaufnahmen seien hier nur

genannt für Opera Rara Donizettis *Gabriella di Vergy*, für die Chandos-Reihe "Opera in English" *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Rigoletto*, *Werther*, Auszüge aus *Boris Godunow* und *Der Rosenkavalier* sowie zwei Sammlungen großer Opernarien und die Titelrolle in *Der fliegende Holländer*.

John Tomlinson wurde 1997 mit dem britischen Verdienstorden CBE ausgezeichnet, und 2005 zum Ritter geschlagen.

Richard Farnes studierte Musik am King's College Cambridge, wo er Orgelstipendiat war; er setzte seine Ausbildung am National Opera Studio, der Royal Academy of Music und der Guildhall School of Music fort, wo er die britische Erstaufführung von Rossinis *Il viaggio a Reims* leitete. Nach Abschluss seiner Studien arbeitete er für das Glyndebourne Festival, die Scottish Opera und die Opera Factory.

Im September 2004 wurde Richard Farnes die musikalische Leitung der Opera North anvertraut, für die er bereits in langjähriger Zusammenarbeit diverse Werke dirigiert hatte, u.a. *La traviata*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Eugen Onegin*, Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco*, Simon Holts *The Nightingale's to Blame*, Brittens *Gloriana* und Cimarosas *Il matrimonio segreto*. In seiner ersten Saison leitete er Neuinszenierungen

von *Manon* und *Don Giovanni* sowie Konzertaufführungen von Bartóks *Herzog Blaubarts Burg*.

Enge Kontakte pflegt er auch mit der Scottish Opera (*La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *L'elisir d'amore*, David Hornes *Friend of the People* und ein Doppelprogramm mit Werken von Param Vir) und mit Glyndebourne (*Die Sache Makropulos* und *Otello* bei den Festspielen sowie *Albert Herring*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *La Bohème* und *Le nozze di Figaro* auf Großbritannien-Tournee). Im August 2005 kehrte er mit Jonathan Doves *Flight* nach Glyndebourne zurück.

Weitere Opernverpflichtungen waren *Simone Boccanegra* an der Royal Opera House Covent Garden, *Das schlaue Fuchslein* an der English National Opera, *Nabucco* an der New Israeli Opera Tel Aviv, *Falstaff*, *La Bohème* und *Il barbiere di Siviglia* mit der English Touring Opera, Pergolesis *La serva padrona* und Verdis *Macbeth* an der Birmingham Opera Company, *Das schlaue Fuchslein* und *The Rake's Progress* mit der Opera Theatre Company Dublin und Mozarts *Bastien und Bastienne* mit der European Chamber Opera.

Konzertgänger haben ihn bei Auftritten mit dem London Philharmonic Orchestra, Haydn



Chamber Orchestra, der English Northern Philharmonia, dem Royal Opera House Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra und Scottish Chamber Orchestra erlebt. 1992 gründete Richard Farnes das Kammerorchester und -ensemble Equinox, um die Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts einem breiteren Publikum zugänglich zu machen, u.a. durch Konzerte in St. John's Smith Square London.

Opera North ist als staatliches Opernensemble für Nordengland eine der führenden Kunstinstitutionen Europas. Das Ensemble ist der aufregenden, herausfordernden und unterhaltsamen Arbeit auf höchstem Niveau verpflichtet. Seine Tourneen führen nicht nur durch den englischen Norden, sondern auch nach London und auf den Kontinent, zu Veranstaltungen in Städten wie Prag und Barcelona, aber auch zu großen internationalen Festspielen wie Edinburgh und Ravenna. Ein innovativer Ansatz zur Programmgestaltung und zum Interpretationsstil ist mit verschiedenen begehrten Auszeichnungen anerkannt worden,

allein vier davon für die Saison "Eight Little Greats" 2004 (Royal Philharmonic Society Opera and Music Theatre Award, The South Bank Show Opera Award, TMA Theatre Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera, Manchester Evening News Theatre Award for Opera).

Opera North ist eine dynamische, lebhafte Organisation, die herkömmliche Vorstellungen von der Oper aktiv in Frage stellt. Sie erweckt Klassiker zu neuem Leben, setzt sich energisch für weniger bekannte Werke ein und tritt als Fürsprecher des Musiktheaters auf. Opera North pflegt die Zusammenarbeit mit Künstlern und Ensembles in den verschiedensten Medien, wie Film und bildende Kunst. Seine vielseitigen Chor- und Orchesterkräfte treten auch unabhängig auf, unter ständiger Revitalisierung ihres musikalischen Selbstverständnisses. Opera North Education ist eines der angesehensten Bildungszentren Englands im künstlerischen Bereich, das mit Hilfe der Oper die künstlerische Kreativität der Mitbürger fördert und entwickelt.



Sally Burgess as Judith in Opera North's semi-staged performances of *Bluebeard's Castle*



“Le château, c’est son âme”

Synopsis

Le duc Barbe-Bleue a amené Judith, sa nouvelle épouse, dans son château. Passionnément éprise de lui, cette dernière a quitté sa famille pour le suivre. Sa curiosité est éveillée par les sept portes du château fermées à double tour et elle en réclame les clefs. Barbe-bleue les lui donne à contrecœur. Tour à tour, Judith découvre la chambre de torture, l’armurerie, le trésor et un jardin secret. Derrière la cinquième porte elle voit le royaume de Barbe-Bleue et derrière la sixième un lac de larmes. Lorsqu’il refuse de lui laisser ouvrir la septième, elle devine qu’elle y trouvera le corps de ses épouses précédentes. Finalement Barbe-Bleue lui donne la dernière clef. Judith ouvre la porte et découvre trois femmes, épouses du matin, du midi et du soir de la vie de Barbe-Bleue. Judith les rejoint, épouse de la nuit, laissant Barbe-Bleue seul.

* * * * *

Le Château de Barbe-Bleue est basé sur un mythe ancien dans lequel un homme riche et puissant cherche une épouse. Bien que

le mystère de la disparition de son épouse précédente reste entier et malgré une apparence et une réputation des plus sinistres, il réussit à convaincre la société qu’il ferait un bon mari.

Il habite loin de la famille de son épouse. Elle est jeune, innocente et très belle. A peine le mariage célébré, l’homme doit partir pour affaires. Il laisse à son épouse les clefs de son logis et l’invite à l’explorer. Mais une seule pièce lui reste absolument interdite, bien qu’elle en possède la clef parmi les autres. Si elle entre dans cette pièce, un grand malheur la frappera.

A cet endroit de l’histoire, les versions divergent. L’épouse décide de regarder dans la pièce interdite. Parfois c’est une autre femme qui, lui voulant du mal, la pousse à le faire. Parfois, c’est cette décision même d’explorer la pièce – symbole de son désir de découvrir la véritable identité de son mari – qui fait disparaître le mari, et semble donc mettre fin à leur relation. Une fois dans la pièce interdite, l’épouse fait face à une image d’horreur, mêlant le sang et la découverte soudaine que son mari a tué ou emprisonné ses épouses précédentes. Parfois encore, elle apprend que son mari a des

pouvoirs surnaturels. Ensuite, le mari rentre chez lui inopinément et condamne son épouse à mourir de sa main, ou à être à jamais séparée de lui.

Dans les traitements du mythe de Barbe-Bleue jusqu’à la fin du XIXe siècle, l’épouse échappait en général à la mort ou retrouvait son mari. Soit elle réussissait à retarder le moment de son exécution jusqu’à ce que l’on lui vienne en aide, soit elle se lançait dans une quête longue et ardue pour prouver qu’elle était digne de son partenaire. Le mari était alors mis à mort ou bien retrouvait son épouse, libre du sort qui l’avait envoûté.

Certains aspects importants du mythe de Barbe-Bleue se retrouvent dans la tentation d’Ève qui choisit de manger la pomme dans le jardin d’Eden, dans les mythes grecs classiques de Cupidon et Psyché, de Zeus et Sémélé, et dans le conte médiéval de Lohengrin. Dans toutes ces histoires, le jeune marié refuse d’être questionné sur son identité et la femme brise le tabou, perdant ainsi son amant à jamais ou tout au moins pour une longue période d’épreuve.

Les histoires basées sur le mythe de Barbe-Bleue ne manquent pas en France. De Bretagne nous vient l’histoire vraie de Gilles de Rais (1404 – 40). Après avoir joué un rôle

militaire et diplomatique de premier plan dans les victoires de Jeanne d’Arc durant la Guerre de Cent Ans, il se retira à vingt-huit ans sur ses terres pour s’adonner à une vie de satanisme, d’alchimie, de sodomie et de meurtre (choisissant pour victimes de jeunes enfants plutôt que des femmes adultes). C’est l’excès incroyable de ses crimes et la façon subite dont il abandonna la cause d’une sainte pour s’associer à Satan qui firent naître l’idée que De Rais était le “vrai” Barbe-Bleue.

Ce fut le poète et critique français Charles Perrault, dont les *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé* de 1697 renferment la première version littéraire populaire de ce conte, qui nomma l’époux “La Barbe Bleue”, sans doute parce qu’en mythologie la barbe des dieux Bes, Indra et Zeus est bleue, ou qu’une barbe bleue représente la nuit dans les luttes légendaires entre les Ténèbres et la Lumière dont cette histoire est clairement un exemple. S’inspirant du passé, Perrault présente les trois fils conducteurs d’un mythe – le mari malfaisant envers son épouse, l’action ou la question interdite, la quête de l’épouse – fils assez solides pour inspirer les futurs écrivains des siècles durant. Un conte de Barbe-Bleue devint de rigueur dans les recueils d’histoires populaires (comme ceux des frères Grimm)



en grande vogue en Europe et en Scandinavie dès le début du XIX^e siècle. *Mr Fox* et *Captain Murderer* – quel titre superbe – que Charles Dickens raconta dans *The Uncommercial Traveller*, sont des versions britanniques de cette histoire. *Jane Eyre* de Charlotte Brontë, avec la chambre rouge où Rochester séquestre sa première épouse devenue folle (et dans laquelle elle mourra brûlée) doit aussi certains de ses éléments au mythe de Barbe-Bleue.

Raoul Barbe-Bleue, le premier opéra complet dédié à Barbe-Bleue, fut écrit au début de la Révolution française par Michel-Jean Sedaine pour André Grétry. Tout comme la mise en musique de Dalrymple qui suivit deux ans plus tard, l'histoire s'inscrit parfaitement dans un genre en vogue à l'époque, celui de l'opéra à sauvetage. Le *Lohengrin* de Wagner de 1848 rapproche encore plus le matériau médiéval de l'histoire de Barbe-Bleue. Lohengrin est un homme puissant d'origine mystérieuse et quasi-divine, venu d'un pays lointain, qui interdit à sa nouvelle épouse (Elsa) de le questionner sur son nom et son origine. Poussée par une autre femme (Ortrude), Elsa lui pose la question interdite dans la chambre nuptiale. Immédiatement quelqu'un cherche à tuer Lohengrin et du sang est versé. Lohengrin doit maintenant révéler

son nom et sa mission avant de quitter Elsa pour toujours, bien que par ce geste il brise le sort qui envoûtait le frère d'Elsa, Godefroi, que l'on présumait mort.

En 1866 Barbe-Bleue était prêt pour le burlesque sur la scène lyrique. Meilhac et Halévy, les librettistes plein de mordant d'Offenbach, truffent *Barbe-Bleue* de plaisanteries ingénieuses. Les épouses ne sont pas vraiment mortes mais se sont "arrangées" avec l'alchimiste de Barbe-Bleue. Le cadre féodal et le personnage de l'alchimiste lui-même sont des allusions voulues aux aventures de Gilles de Rais.

Le mélange de sexe, de mort violente, d'atmosphère sinistre et d'introspection mystique qu'offre ce mythe attira les écrivains symbolistes à la fin du XIX^e siècle. *Là-bas*, roman de 1891 de l'écrivain décadent J-K Huysmans, est un journal quasi-ouvertement autobiographique relatant les recherches de l'écrivain Durtal sur la phase Barbe-Bleue de la carrière de Gilles de Rais. L'intérêt de Huysmans pour la Nuit "profonde et coupable" et son ennemie "bien-aimée", la Lumière, devint une métaphore omniprésente dans la pièce de Maurice Maeterlinck de 1901 *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*, qui inspira à Paul Dukas un opéra en 1907.

L'épouse de Maeterlinck s'appelle Ariane, comme la jeune femme grecque qui guida Thésée hors du labyrinthe du Minotaure. Elle reçoit les clefs des sept portes, mais la seule qui l'intéresse, c'est la clef d'or, clef interdite qui ouvre la septième porte. "Tout ce qui est permis ne nous apprendra rien", dit-elle à sa Nourrice avant de jeter les autres clefs. La Nourrice ouvre les six premières portes, découvrant bijoux, saphirs, perles, émeraudes, rubis et diamants dans un crescendo de lumière étincelante et finalement le sang. Derrière la dernière porte, on entend des voix étouffées – les cinq épouses précédentes de Barbe-Bleue sont toujours en vie. "Le bonheur que je veux ne peut vivre dans l'ombre", déclare Ariane à son mari. Elle ouvre la septième porte, brise toutes les fenêtres du château pour faire entrer la lumière du jour et offre aux épouses leur liberté. Mais les épouses ne peuvent pas et ne veulent pas s'échapper même lorsque Barbe-Bleue évite de peu la mort dans une révolte de ses sujets et que la magie de son château s'effondre. Tandis qu'elles le raniment avec amour (la légende ne mourra point!), Ariane part, seule. *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* est la première œuvre qui fait clairement de la maison et des biens de Barbe-Bleue des métaphores pour son âme et son état d'esprit,

et c'est également dans cette œuvre que pour la première fois l'histoire a une fin tragique plutôt que régénératrice. L'épouse a échoué dans sa mission d'atteindre la Lumière, dans sa quête de la connaissance.

Herbert Bauer, né en 1884, choisit le pseudonyme de Béla Balázs à l'époque de la publication de ses poèmes de jeunesse. Il doit sa renommée avant tout à ses deux collaborations avec Bartók (*Le Château de Barbe-Bleue* fut suivi par le ballet *Le Prince de bois*, créé en 1917). Par la suite il fit partie de l'éphémère gouvernement communiste hongrois de 1919, fuyant après la chute de ce dernier tout d'abord en Autriche puis en Allemagne, où il travailla comme critique de cinéma et écrivain, collaborant avec Bertold Brecht sur le film ouvrier *Kuhle Wampe*. Son livre, *L'Homme visible, ou la culture cinématographique* est l'un des premiers essais importants sur l'esthétique du cinéma muet.

Balázs rencontre Bartók grâce à Zoltan Kodály, l'autre futur grand compositeur hongrois en ce début de XX^e siècle. Balázs est à Paris avec Kodály lorsque ce dernier découvre la musique de Debussy (une découverte qu'il ne tarde pas à partager avec Bartók) et il l'accompagne les deux compositeurs lorsqu'ils parcourent leur pays



à la recherche de chants populaires. Balázs à l'époque nourrit l'idée d'un nouveau drame qui exposerait "les images intérieures, les luttes que sont les dialogues intérieurs" de l'humanité. Son conte *Le Silence* est une vision lugubre de l'impuissance de l'homme et de la femme à nouer ensemble des relations profondes; dans un autre poème, il avance, tout comme D.H. Lawrence à la même époque, que l'amitié entre hommes est supérieure à l'amour qui peut unir un homme et une femme. En 1908 Balázs commence une pièce en un acte, *Barbe-Bleue et Don Juan* (les deux hommes à femmes légendaires se rencontrent dans un bar) mais bien vite la transforme en une réincarnation plus directe du mythe. *Le Château de Barbe-Bleue* est publié dans un journal de théâtre durant l'été 1910, dédié conjointement à Bartók et Kodály. Kodály avoue n'avoir "aucune affinité pour cette pièce", et donc Bartók se met rapidement au travail, finissant la partition en septembre 1911. Rejeté comme étant inexécutable par le jury d'un concours organisé par un casino de Budapest, l'opéra devra patienter tout au long des dures années de la Première Guerre mondiale – et subir d'importantes révisions de Bartók (dont une addition à la conclusion) – avant d'être enfin créé en mai 1918.

Dans un article sur *Barbe-Bleue*, Balázs associe de près son œuvre aux recherches de Bartók sur la musique populaire:

J'ai créé ma ballade dans la langue et les rythmes des vieilles ballades sicules hongroises. Ces ballades populaires sont très proches de par leur caractère des vieilles ballades écossaises, mais elles sont peut-être plus âpres, plus simples. Elle ne renferment ni "littérature", ni rhétorique; elles sont construites de blocs de mots bruts, sombres et lourds. La musique de Bartók se conforme elle aussi à ce style. Ma ballade est la "ballade de la vie intérieure". Le château de Barbe-Bleue n'est pas un vrai château de pierre. Le château, c'est son âme. Il est solitaire, sombre, secret: le château aux portes fermées.

Sa version s'inspire à la fois de Perrault et de Maeterlinck, tandis que l'influence de Huysmans se retrouve dans les thèmes obsédants de l'amour et de la peur, l'imagerie dominée par la lumière et le personnage principal dégoûté du monde. Bien que l'histoire de Perrault se concentre sur une seule pièce, on y trouve des allusions à l'opposition entre les ténèbres (le monde secret de l'homme) et la lumière (la quête féminine de la connaissance et de la liberté) lorsque l'épouse tente de pénétrer dans l'espace interdit et qu'elle espère voir ses frères venir à son

secours mais que seul s'offre à sa vue la lumière aveuglante du soleil. A Maeterlinck, Balázs emprunte le nombre de portes secrètes, la luminosité croissante au fur et à mesure que ces dernières s'ouvrent, les trésors tachés de sang et les voix étouffées qui se cachent derrière, ainsi que l'échec de la mission de l'épouse.

Balázs s'intéresse plus au moi masculin lui-même qu'à sa libération ou sa chute. Il apporte de nombreux éléments nouveaux. La grande salle du château de l'époux est le décor unique et les épreuves commencent immédiatement pour l'épouse. Toutes les données dramatiques traditionnelles de la situation – la maison familiale si lointaine, symbole du bonheur, la famille furieuse qui la poursuit – sont mentionnées par Barbe-Bleue dans les premières minutes de l'opéra, puis oubliées. Il demande sans cesse à son épouse si elle a peur; elle lui demande sans cesse de l'aimer. Celle qui se veut libératrice, qui cherche à convertir – et prénommée Judith, comme celle qui dans la Bible tua Holopherne – reçoit les clefs des mains mêmes d'un Barbe-Bleue plus ou contraint. Ils se lancent ensemble dans ce voyage d'exploration; la tentation est remplacée par une invitation progressive. Balázs donne dans le livret des indications détaillées sur l'éclairage (et ce qu'il doit révéler)

avec une précision cinématographique digne de G.B. Shaw – depuis l'entrée initiale de Judith et Barbe-Bleue dont les silhouettes se découpent sur un "carré de lumière blanche aveuglante", en passant par les couleurs et les images associées à chaque porte, jusqu'au noir total de la fin que personne ne quitte et dans lequel Barbe-Bleue lui-même disparaît.

Après coup, Balázs ajoute un prologue, publié initialement comme poème à part entière, le Prologue du Barde, récité avant le lever de rideau. Bien qu'il emprunte la forme ancienne d'une énigme en vers, le Prologue permet d'établir une distance très brechtienne entre le public et la scène; il s'agit d'un spectacle de symboles et de monologues intérieurs plutôt que d'une pièce naturaliste:

Le rideau devant nos yeux se lève.

Que voyez-vous? Une scène? Un château?

Une cage? Un homme seul?

Ce n'est qu'un conte,

Seigneurs et gentes dames.

Bartók aimait organiser la musique en systèmes – comparez donc ces airs populaires qu'il adorait collectionner, la description très précise de l'organisation de l'orchestre pour sa *Musique pour cordes, percussion et célesta* ou le "jeu de paires" dans son *Concerto pour orchestre*. Il ressentit certainement une profonde affinité



pour les directions scéniques précises du texte de Balázs et son symbolisme. Ses tonalités reflètent la progression du livret depuis les ténèbres jusqu'à la lumière avant de retomber dans les ténèbres – d'une tonalité mineure fort sombre au départ jusqu'à l'Ut majeur central lors de l'ouverture de la cinquième porte, puis un quasi retour à la tonalité et au matériau du début tandis que les épouses et Barbe-Bleue disparaissent. Dans l'allure qu'il adopte tout au long du drame – et son recours à des interludes explicatifs – on retrouve l'influence du *Pelléas et Mélisande* de Debussy, autre opéra inspiré des tragédies symbolistes de Maeterlinck. Son portrait de Barbe-Bleue et de Judith, et le contraste régnant entre l'univers oppressant du château (la vie intérieure de Barbe-Bleue) et le monde extérieur d'où vient celle qui veut le libérer, ont une clarté narrative digne de la musique populaire. A cet effet, il oppose fréquemment à la frugalité des lignes vocales une orchestration très riche. A l'ouverture de la cinquième porte, la fierté que Barbe-Bleue tire de son royaume est l'occasion (assez rare) de faire appel à l'orchestre au grand complet, avec orgue et fanfare dans les coulisses. Mais Judith ne cesse de répéter d'un air froid et distrait "Grande est la terre, noble est la terre".

Tout comme le personnage central de Maeterlinck, l'histoire de Barbe-Bleue ne meurt jamais. Plus avant dans le XX^e siècle, il y eut la version d'Anatole France (un bon Barbe-Bleue), celle d'Angela Carter (*The Bloody Chamber*) et la version la plus diffusée de toutes, *Rebecca*, le roman de Daphne du Maurier dont Alfred Hitchcock tira un film et dans lequel une nouvelle épouse découvre les noirs secrets de son mari, mettant ainsi le couple en danger.

© 2006 Mike Ashman
Traduction: Nicole Valencia

Sally Burgess a fait siens certains des rôles les plus passionnants du répertoire lyrique: comme celui de Carmen qu'elle joua pour la première fois pour l'English National Opera puis qu'elle interpréta au Metropolitan Opera, à l'Opéra National de Paris Bastille, à l'Opéra de Munich, au Festival de Bregenz ainsi qu'à Zurich, Berlin, Portland et en Nouvelle-Zélande.

Parmi ses autres rôles on notera Azucena (*Il trovatore*) pour Opera North; Amneris (*Aida*) pour Opera North, Scottish Opera ainsi qu'à Nancy, Lausanne et Wiesbaden; Hanna Glawari (*The Merry Widow*) pour

le Metropolitan Opera; Kabanicha (*Kátya Kabanová*) pour l'Opéra de Munich; Ottavia (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) pour le Welsh National Opera, rôle qu'elle enregistra aussi pour BBC Television; Dalila (*Samson et Dalila*) pour l'Opéra de Nantes; Judith (*Le Château de Barbe-Bleue*) à Bordeaux, pour l'English National Opera et pour Opera North; le rôle-titre d'*Orfeo* de Gluck pour Opera North; Dulcinée (*Don Quichotte* en anglais) pour l'English National Opera où elle triompha également en tant que la veuve Begbick (*Grandeur et décadence de la ville de Mahagonny*) et Herodias (*Salome*); Mère Marie (*Dialogues des Carmélites*) pour le Welsh National Opera; Pantalís/Martha (*Mefistofele*) pour l'Opéra Néerlandais; et la création mondiale sur scène de *On London Fields* de Matthew King à Londres.

Son répertoire de concert comprend *The Dream of Gerontius* d'Elgar avec le Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; le *Messie* de Haendel, *Chants d'Auvergne* de Canteloube, le *Liverpool Oratorio* de Paul McCartney qu'elle créa et reprit par la suite, le *Requiem* de Verdi et *Le Château de Barbe-Bleue* avec le BBC National Orchestra of Wales, le North Carolina Symphony Orchestra et le Seattle Symphony Orchestra. Elle a donné des récitals entre autres

à la Purcell Room, au Wigmore Hall et dans le cadre de sa tournée en Nouvelle-Zélande.

Sally Burgess fut nommée pour un Olivier Award pour son rôle dans *Showboat*, une co-production de la RSC et d'Opera North dans le West End de Londres, comédie musicale qu'elle a également enregistrée, tout comme *West Side Story* et *The King and I*. Elle se produit régulièrement avec son propre trio de jazz dont son mari, Neal Thornton, fait partie et a participé à des soirées de cabaret jazz lors des festivals d'Edimbourg, d'Aldeburgh, de Harrogate, de Worcester, de Buxton et de Newcastle ainsi qu'à des concerts de jazz comme *Pizza on the Park* à Londres.

John Tomlinson est né dans le Lancashire. Il reçoit un diplôme de génie civil à l'Université de Manchester avant d'obtenir une bourse pour étudier au Royal Manchester College of Music (aujourd'hui le Royal Northern College of Music).

John Tomlinson chante régulièrement à l'English National Opera depuis 1974 et au Royal Opera de Covent Garden depuis 1977; il s'est également produit à l'Opera North, au Scottish Opera, au Festival de Glyndebourne et dans le cadre de la tournée du Festival de Glyndebourne, ainsi qu'à l'Opéra du Kent.



Il chante chaque année au Festival de Bayreuth depuis 1988; il s'y est produit dans les rôles de Wotan (*L'Or du Rhin* et *La Walkyrie*), du Voyageur (*Siegfried*), de Tituel et Gurnemanz (*Parsifal*), du roi Mark (*Tristan et Isolde*), de Heinrich (*Lohengrin*), de Hagen (*Le Crépuscule des dieux*) et du Hollandais (*Le Vaisseau fantôme*).

Ses engagements à l'étranger l'ont mené à Genève, Lisbonne, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, San Diego, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Dresde, Munich et Vienne, et aux festivals d'Orange, Aix-en-Provence, Salzbourg, Édimbourg, ainsi qu'au Mai musical florentin. Son répertoire comprend aussi les rôles de Hans Sachs (*Les Maîtres Chanteurs de Nuremberg*), du Landgrave (*Tannhäuser*), du Baron Ochs (*Le Chevalier à la rose*), de Rocco (*Fidelio*), de Philippe II (*Don Carlos*), de Sarastro (*La Flûte enchantée*), du Commandeur (*Don Giovanni*), de Dosiféi (*Khovanchichina*) et les rôles titres de *Boris Godounov*, *Oberto* et *Attila*.

John Tomlinson a un vaste répertoire de concert et a chanté avec tous les grands orchestres britanniques, ainsi qu'en Allemagne, Italie, Belgique, Hollande, France, Espagne, au Danemark et aux États-Unis. Ses nombreux enregistrements comprennent *Gabriella di*

Vergy de Donizetti pour Opera Rara, et dans la série "Opera in English" de Chandos, *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Rigoletto*, *Werther*, des disques d'airs célèbres de *Boris Godounov* et du *Chevalier à la rose*, deux disques de Grands Airs d'opéra, et le Hollandais dans *Le Vaisseau fantôme*.

John Tomlinson fut nommé commandeur de l'Empire britannique (CBE) en 1997, et annobli en 2005.

Richard Farnes fit des études de musique à King's College à Cambridge où il obtint une bourse comme organiste avant de poursuivre ses études au National Opera Studio, à la Royal Academy of Music et à la Guildhall School of Music où il dirigea la première mise en scène britannique du *Voyage à Reims* de Rossini en anglais. Ses études achevées, il travailla pour le Festival de Glyndebourne, pour Scottish Opera et Opera Factory.

En septembre 2004, Richard Farnes fut nommé Directeur musical d'Opera North après une longue association avec cette compagnie pour laquelle il avait déjà dirigé un répertoire varié dont *La traviata*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Eugene Oneguine*, *Giovanna d'Arco* de Verdi, *The Nightingale's to Blame* de Simon Holt, *Gloriana* de Britten et *Le Mariage secret*

(en anglais) de Cimarosa. Durant sa première saison, il dirigea des nouvelles mises en scène de *Manon* et de *Don Giovanni* ainsi que des versions de concert du *Château de Barbe-Bleue* de Bartók.

Il a également travaillé de près avec Scottish Opera, dirigeant *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *La Flûte enchantée* en anglais, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Friend of the People* de David Horne, et deux œuvres de Param Vir; pour Glyndebourne, il a dirigé *L'Affaire Makropoulos* en anglais et *Otello* dans le cadre du festival, ainsi qu'*Albert Herring*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *La Bohème* et *Le nozze di Figaro* en tournée dans tout le Royaume-Uni. Il retrouva la scène du Festival de Glyndebourne en août 2005 pour diriger *Flight* de Jonathan Dove.

Parmi ses autres engagements à l'opéra, notons *Simone Boccanegra* au Royal Opera House, *La Petite Renarde rusée* pour l'English National Opera, *Nabucco* pour le New Israeli Opera de Tel Aviv, *Falstaff*, *La Bohème* et *Le Barbier de Séville* en anglais pour English Touring Opera, *La serva padrona* de Pergolesi et *Macbeth* de Verdi pour l'Opera Theatre Company à Dublin et *Bastien und Bastienne* de Mozart pour l'European Chamber Opera.

En concert, il a dirigé le London Philharmonic Orchestra, le Haydn Chamber

Orchestra, l'English Northern Philharmonia, le Royal Opera House Orchestra, le Royal Scottish National Orchestra et le Scottish Chamber Orchestra. En 1992, Richard Farnes fonda l'orchestre et ensemble de chambre Equinox dans le but de faire connaître à un plus large public le répertoire du XX^e siècle; l'ensemble a donné plusieurs concerts à St John's Smith Square à Londres.

Opera North est la compagnie lyrique nationale anglaise basée dans le nord du pays et l'une des grandes institutions artistiques d'Europe. La compagnie travaille au plus haut niveau et cherche à passionner, stimuler et divertir. Ses tournées l'entraînent non seulement dans le nord de l'Angleterre et à Londres mais aussi dans les théâtres européens comme ceux de Prague ou Barcelone; Opera North participe aux grands festivals internationaux comme Edimbourg et Ravenne. Son approche novatrice de la programmation et de l'interprétation lui a valu de remporter de nombreux prix prestigieux, dont quatre pour sa saison de 2004 intitulée *Eight Little Greats* (Royal Philharmonic Society Opera and Music Theatre Award, The South Bank Show Opera Award, the TMA Theatre Award for

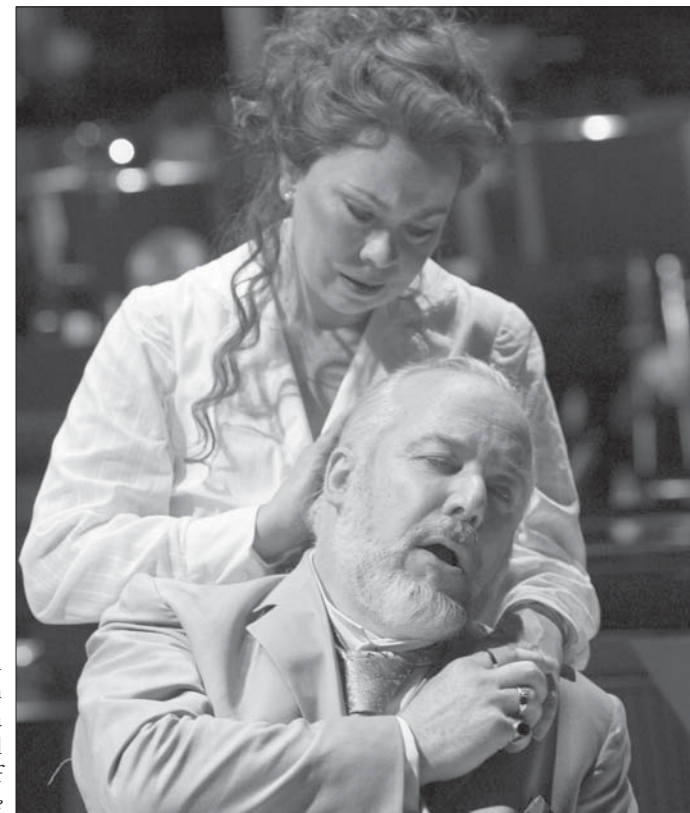


Outstanding Achievement in Opera, the Manchester Evening News Theatre Award for Opera).

Opera North est une organisation pleine de vie et d'énergie qui n'hésite pas à remettre en question une vision conventionnelle de l'opéra. Insufflant une vie nouvelle aux grands classiques de l'opéra, la compagnie se fait aussi le défenseur d'œuvres moins connues et du théâtre musical. Opera North collabore avec des artistes et des compagnies issus de

médias les plus divers, comme le cinéma et les arts plastiques. Son Chœur et son Orchestre fort talentueux se produisent également indépendamment et cherchent sans cesse à se renouveler musicalement parlant. Opera North Education est un organisme fort estimé dans le pays pour son travail éducatif dans le domaine artistique, utilisant l'opéra pour inspirer et développer la création artistique dans l'ensemble de la communauté.

On session: Richard Farnes



© Bill Cooper

Sally Burgess as Judith
and John Tomlinson
as Bluebeard in Opera
North's semi-staged
performances of
Bluebeard's Castle



“Il castello è la sua anima”

Sinossi

Il principe Barbablù ha accompagnato Judit, che ha da poco sposato, nel suo castello. Profondamente innamorata di lui, la donna ha rinnegato la sua famiglia. Nel castello si trovano sette porte chiuse a chiave: incuriosita, Judit ne chiede le chiavi. Barbablù gliele consegna con riluttanza e la moglie le apre per scoprire una camera di tortura, una sala d'armi, un tesoro e un giardino segreto. Dietro la quinta porta vede il reame di Barbablù e dietro la sesta un lago di lacrime. Quando il marito le vieta di aprire la settima porta, lei sospetta che qui troverà i cadaveri delle mogli precedenti e a questo punto Barbablù le consegna l'ultima chiave. Judit apre la porta e trova tre donne, le spose della mattina, mezzogiorno e sera della vita di Barbablù. Judit deve andare con loro: sarà la sposa della notte. Barbablù rimane solo.

* * * * *

Il castello del principe Barbablù si ispira a un antico mito: un uomo ricco e potente cerca moglie. La sparizione della moglie precedente rimane un mistero insoluto ma, nonostante la

sinistra natura della sua reputazione o del suo aspetto, l'uomo riesce a convincere la società di essere uno sposo desiderabile.

La sua casa è lontana da quella della moglie, che è giovane, innocente e bellissima. Subito dopo le nozze, l'uomo deve allontanarsi urgentemente per affari. Lascia alla moglie le chiavi della sua casa, invitandola ad andare a visitarla. Alla donna è espressamente vietato di aprire solo una stanza, per quanto gliene venga consegnata la chiave, insieme con tutte le altre. Se entra in quella stanza sarà stravolta da un grande dolore.

A questo punto della storia le versioni cambiano. La moglie decide di andare nella stanza proibita. Forse è stata spinta a farlo da un'altra donna che le vuole male, oppure la decisione – simbolo di un tentativo di scoprire altri particolari sulla vera identità del marito – ha fatto scomparire il marito, ponendo apparentemente fine al loro rapporto. Nella stanza proibita la donna si trova di fronte a un'immagine orrendamente cruenta e si rende conto che il marito ha assassinato o imprigionato le precedenti mogli. Oppure viene a sapere che l'uomo è

dotato di poteri soprannaturali. Poi il marito ritorna all'improvviso e la condanna a morte, uccidendola con le proprie mani, o l'allontana per sempre.

Fino al Ventesimo secolo, la normale conclusione del mito di Barbablù vedeva la moglie sfuggire alla morte o alla perdita del marito, riuscendo a ritardare la propria esecuzione fino all'arrivo di soccorsi o sobbarcandosi a una lunga e ardua ricerca per dimostrarsi degna del compagno. Poi il marito veniva messo a morte o le veniva restituito, finalmente libero, da quello che si rivelava essere stato un incantesimo.

Alcuni importanti elementi del mito di Barbablù si possono trovare nella scelta della mela da parte di Eva nel paradiso terrestre, nei classici miti greci di Eros e Psiche o Zeus e Semele, o nel loro successore medievale, la vicenda di Lohengrin. In queste storie il divieto di rivolgere domande sull'identità dello sposo viene infranto dalla moglie, che così perde l'oggetto del suo amore per sempre o per un lungo periodo di prova.

Il passato della Francia è ricco di storie su Barbablù. Dalla Bretagna proviene la vera storia di Gilles de Rais (1404–40), che svolse un importante ruolo militare e diplomatico nei trionfi di Giovanna d'Arco durante la Guerra

dei cento anni, ma si ritirò all'età di ventotto anni nelle sue terre, per dedicarsi a una vita di riti satanici, alchimia, sodomia e omicidio (anche se di bambini piuttosto che di donne adulte). Gli eccessi delittuosi di De Rais e il fatto che avesse rinnegato la propria dedizione a una santa per votarsi a Satana ben presto fecero nascere l'idea che fosse lui il “vero” Barbablù.

Fu il poeta e critico francese Charles Perrault: la sua raccolta di *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* del 1697 conteneva la prima versione famosa della fiaba che battezzava per la prima volta lo sposo “La Barbe Bleue”, forse perché nella mitologia le divinità Bes, Indra e Zeus avevano la barba azzurra, o forse perché una barba blu simboleggiava la notte nelle leggendarie battaglie tra le Tenebre e la Luce da cui la storia ovviamente deriva. Attingendo a numerose influenze precedenti, Perrault espose i tre temi di un mito – il marito che fa del male alla moglie, l'azione o la domanda proibita, la ricerca della sposa – sufficientemente potente da continuare a ispirare gli scrittori per secoli. Una storia di Barbablù è immancabile nelle raccolte letterarie di fiabe popolari (come quella dei fratelli Grimm), che ebbero molta fortuna in Europa e in Scandinavia dall'inizio dell'Ottocento in poi. *Mr Fox e Captain*



Assassino (meraviglioso titolo della storia narrata da Charles Dickens nella raccolta *The Uncommercial Traveller*) furono le versioni britanniche della storia. Anche *Jane Eyre*, il romanzo di Charlotte Brontë, deve qualcosa al mito di Barbablù, con la stanza rossa in cui Rochester tiene prigioniera la prima moglie demente (che finirà bruciata).

La prima opera completa su Barbablù, *Raoul Barbe-Bleue*, fu composta all'inizio della Rivoluzione francese da Michel-Jean Sedaine per André Grétry. Come l'ambientazione di Dalryac che la seguì due anni dopo, la storia rientrava comodamente in uno dei generi contemporanei preferiti, l'opera di "salvataggio". Il *Lohengrin* di Wagner nel 1848 utilizza materiale medievale per un'altra versione del mito di Barbablù. Lohengrin è un potente sposo di origine misteriosa, quasi divina, proveniente da terre lontane, e vieta alla donna che ha appena sposato (Elsa) di chiedergli chi sia e da dove venga. Ma un'altra donna (Ortrud) la convince a farlo, nell'intimità della camera nuziale. Immediatamente si verifica un attentato alla vita di Lohengrin, con conseguente spargimento di sangue. Lohengrin è costretto a rivelare il proprio nome e la propria missione e abbandona la sposa per sempre, ma con

la sua azione si spezza l'incantesimo gettato su Gottfried, fratello di Elsa, in precedenza ritenuto morto.

Nel 1866 Barbablù era pronto per l'opera buffa. Le lingue affilatissime di Meilhac e Halévy, librettisti di Offenbach, crearono alcune belle battute in *Barbe-Bleue*. Le spose non sono veramente morte, ma hanno stretto un "patto" con l'alchimista di Barbablù. L'ambientazione feudale e il personaggio dell'alchimista sono riferimenti deliberati alle storie su Gilles de Rais.

Con la sua mescolanza di sesso, morti violente, tristezza e autoanalisi, il mito fece presa sugli scrittori simbolisti alla fine del XIX secolo. Il romanzo del 1891 intitolato *Là-bas*, dello scrittore decadente J-K Huysmans, è il diario autobiografico appena mascherato dello scrittore Durtal, nella parte di Barbablù, e delle sue ricerche sulla carriera di Gilles de Rais. L'interesse di Huysmans per la Notte "profonda e peccaminosa" e la sua "amata" nemica, la Luce, divenne una metafora onnipresente nel dramma del 1901, *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*, di Maurice Maeterlinck, musicato poi da Paul Dukas nel 1907.

La sposa di Maeterlinck si chiama Ariane (la sua omonima greca Arianna aveva aiutato Teseo a uscire dal labirinto del Minotauro).

Le vengono consegnate sette chiavi, ma l'unica che le interessa è quella dorata che apre l'ultima porta proibita. "Non si impara nulla da quello che ci è consentito fare", dice alla sua nutrice e butta via le altre chiavi. La nutrice apre le prime sei porte e trova gioielli, zaffiri, perle, smeraldi, rubini e diamanti, in un crescendo di luce abbagliante e, alla fine, sangue. Dietro l'ultima porta si sentono voci soffocate: le cinque ex mogli di Barbablù sono ancora vive. "La felicità che voglio non può vivere tra le ombre", dichiara Ariane a suo marito. Apre la settima porta, infrange tutte le finestre del castello per lasciare entrare la luce e offre alle donne la libertà. Ma le mogli non sanno e non vogliono fuggire, persino quando Barbablù rimane quasi ucciso dopo una rivolta dei suoi sudditi e la magia del suo castello crolla. Mentre lo riportano amorosamente in vita (la leggenda è dura a morire!) Ariane è costretta ad andarsene da sola. *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* è il primo trattamento a rivelare che la casa e le ricchezze di Barbablù sono metafore della sua anima e della sua psiche. È qui che, per la prima volta, la conclusione della vicenda è tragica e non prevede salvezza. La missione di Luce della sposa, la sua ricerca di conoscenza è fallita.

Herbert Bauer, nato nel 1884, adottò lo pseudonimo di Béla Balázs quando furono pubblicate le sue prime poesie adolescenziali. Oggi è famoso per le sue due collaborazioni con Bartók (*Il castello di Barbablù* fu seguito dal balletto *Il principe di legno*, eseguito per la prima volta nel 1917). In seguito fece parte del primo governo comunista ungherese del 1919, che ebbe breve durata, e fuggì quando venne rovesciato prima in Austria e poi in Germania; qui lavorò come critico cinematografico e scrittore e collaborò con Bertolt Brecht a *Kuhle Wampe*, il film su una colonia di disoccupati. Il suo volume *L'uomo visibile* è un importante primo saggio sull'estetica del cinema muto.

Balázs conobbe Bartók tramite Zoltan Kodály, altro grande compositore ungherese ancora in erba all'inizio del Ventesimo secolo. Balázs si trovava a Parigi con Kodály quando quest'ultimo ascoltò per la prima volta la musica di Debussy (una scoperta ben presto passata a Bartók) e seguì entrambi nelle campagne per raccogliere canti popolari. All'epoca a Balázs interessava un nuovo dramma che "mostrasse le immagini intime, le lotte che sono dialoghi intimi" nell'umanità. La sua fiaba, *Il silenzio*, era una visione desolata dell'impossibilità di relazioni significative tra uomo e donna; un'altra poesia sostiene, come



faceva allo stesso tempo D.H. Lawrence, che l'amicizia tra uomini è superiore all'amore tra uomo e donna. Nel 1908 Balázs iniziò un lavoro teatrale di un atto, *Barbablù e don Giovanni* (i due leggendari seduttori si incontrano in un bar) ma ben presto lo modificò, trasformandolo in una rilettura più diretta del mito. *Il castello del principe Barbablù* fu pubblicato su una rivista teatrale nell'estate del 1910, con una dedica a Bartók e Kodály insieme (probabilmente un'allusione). Kodály ammise che non riusciva a “sentire affinità” per il tema, per cui Bartók si mise a lavorare in fretta e completò la partitura nel settembre 1911. Ritenuta impossibile da rappresentare e respinta dalla giuria di una gara organizzata da un casinò di Budapest, l'opera dovette attendere durante gli anni difficili della prima Guerra mondiale – e subire revisioni sostanziali (compresa un'aggiunta finali) di Bartók – fino al maggio del 1918, anno in cui si svolse finalmente la prima.

Nel suo testo su *Barbablù*, Balázs affiancava il suo lavoro alle ricerche di Bartók sulla musica popolare:

Ho creato questa ballata nella lingua e nei ritmi delle antiche ballate popolari ungheresi Székely, che somigliano molto da vicino alle antiche ballate scozzesi, ma sono forse più acerbe, più

semplici. Non contengono “letteratura” o retorica; le parole che le costruiscono sono mattoni cupi, pesanti, non sbazzati. Anche la musica di Bartók si conforma a questo. La mia ballata è la “ballata della vita interiore”. Il castello di Barbablù non è un vero castello di pietra. Il castello è la sua anima. È solitario, buio e riservato: il castello delle porte chiuse.

La sua versione si ispira a Perrault e Maeterlinck, mentre è possibile scorgere l'influenza di Huysmans nell'ossessione per l'amore e la paura, nelle immagini dominate dalla luce e nel protagonista, stanco del mondo. Sebbene il racconto di Perrault sia imperniato su una sola stanza, contiene suggerimenti sulla contrapposizione tra buio (il mondo segreto dell'uomo) e luce (la ricerca di conoscenza e libertà della donna) quando la moglie cerca di visitare lo spazio proibito e mentre spera di scorgere il fratello che viene a liberarla, ma riesce solo a vedere il sole abbagliante. Da Maeterlinck, Balázs ricavò il numero delle porte segrete, il progressivo aumento della luce via via che queste vengono aperte, i tesori macchiati di sangue, le voci soffocate dietro di esse e il fallimento della missione della sposa.

A Balázs interessa più l'ego maschile che la sua liberazione o il suo rovesciamento e

aggiunge molte novità. La sala del castello dello sposo è l'unica scena e la sposa viene messa alla prova immediatamente. Tutti i tradizionali dati drammatici della situazione – la gioia della dimora lontana della sposa, l'ira dei familiari che la inseguono – vengono elencati da Barbablù nei primi minuti dell'opera, poi dimenticati. L'uomo continua a chiedere alla moglie se ha paura; lei continua a chiedergli di amarla. A questa possibile liberatrice che vuol convertirlo e si chiama Judit come la biblica giustiziera di Oloferne, lo stesso Barbablù consegna le chiavi delle porte, opponendo diversi gradi di resistenza. Entrambi si incamminano insieme nel viaggio di scoperta; alla tentazione si sostituisce un graduale invito. Balázs include istruzioni dettagliate sull'illuminazione nel libretto (e ciò che intende illustrare) con una precisione cinematografica alla Shaw, dal primo ingresso di Judit e Barbablù, le cui sagome si vedono in controluce su “un abbagliante quadrato di luce bianca”, attraverso i colori e i panorami associati a ciascuna porta, fino all'oscurità totale della fine, da cui nessuno emerge e in cui persino Barbablù scompare.

Come aggiunta (prima pubblicata come poesia a parte), Balázs incluse un “Prologo del bardo” parlato da pronunciare prima che si

alzi il sipario sull'opera. Sebbene nella vecchia forma di enigma in rima, il Prologo stabilisce una distanza brechtiana tipica del ventesimo secolo tra il pubblico e il teatro: questo sarà un dramma di simboli e monologhi interiori piuttosto che un'azione naturalistica:

Le vostre palpebre sono tende

E adesso le sollevate.

Cosa vedete? Un palcoscenico? Un castello?

Una gabbia? Un uomo solo?

Solo una storia,

Signore e signori.

A Bartók piaceva strutturare la musica in sistemi – confrontate la musica popolare che amava collezionare, la disposizione orchestrale descritta con precisione della sua Musica per Archi, percussione e celesta, oppure il “gioco delle coppie” nel suo Concerto per orchestra. Sicuramente trovò di proprio gusto le precise indicazioni di scena e il simbolismo di Balázs. Le sue tonalità rispecchiano il progresso del libretto dall'oscurità alla luce e viceversa – dalla cupa tonalità minore dell'inizio verso il brano centrale in do maggiore dell'apertura della quinta porta e poi a ritroso (quasi) fino alla tonalità e al materiale dell'inizio, mentre le mogli e Barbablù scompaiono. Il ritmo del dramma e gli interludi illustrativi risentono dell'influenza del *Pelléas et Mélisande* di



Debussy, altra opera ispirata alle tragedie simboliste di Maeterlinck. L'illustrazione delle personalità di Barbablù e Judit, e il contrasto tra il regno opprimente del castello (la vita interiore di Barbablù) e il mondo esterno da cui viene la sua possibile redentrica, hanno una chiarezza narrativa derivata dai motivi popolari a cui attinge il compositore. Per ottenere questo, ad alcune righe vocali spesso fa contrasto una ricca orchestrazione. All'apertura della quinta porta l'orgoglio di Barbablù nel suo dominio viene eguagliato da un uso dell'orchestra completa (relativamente raro), più organo e banda di ottoni fuori scena. Ma Judit può solo ripetere 'rigidamente e distrattamente', "Grande e glorioso è il tuo regno".

Come il protagonista di Maeterlinck, il mito di Barbablù è immortale. Nel Ventesimo secolo vennero nuovi trattamenti di pugno di Anatole France (un Barbablù gentile), Angela Carter (*La camera di sangue*) e l'opera più nota di tutte, il romanzo di Daphne du Maurier – e il film di Alfred Hitchcock – *Rebecca*, in cui una seconda moglie scopre i tenebrosi segreti del marito, mettendo a rischio la vita di entrambi.

© 2006 Mike Ashman

Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

Sally Burgess ha fatto propri alcuni dei più entusiasmanti ruoli lirici, per esempio quello di Carmen, da lei interpretato per la prima volta per English National Opera e poi cantato per la Metropolitan Opera, l'Opéra National de Paris Bastille, l'Opera di Monaco, il Festival di Bregenz, nei teatri di Zurigo, Berlino, Nuova Zelanda e Portland.

Il suo repertorio comprende inoltre Azucena (*Il trovatore*) per Opera North; Amneris (*Aida*) per Opera North, Scottish Opera e a Nancy, Losanna e Wiesbaden; Hanna Glawari (*Die lustige Witwe*) per la Metropolitan Opera; Kabanicha (*Katya Kabanova*) per l'Opera di Monaco; Fricka (*Der Ring*) a Ginevra e per la Scottish Opera; Ottavia (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) per la Welsh National Opera, registrata anche dalla BBC per la TV; Dalila (*Samson et Dalila*) per l'Opéra di Nantes; Judit (*Il castello del principe Barbablù*) a Bordeaux, per English National Opera e Opera North; il ruolo di protagonista in *Orfeo* di Gluck per Opera North; Dulcinée (*Don Quixote*) per English National Opera, dove la cantante ha riscosso successo nelle vesti della vedova Begbick (*Ascesa e caduta della città di Mahagonny*) e Herodias (*Salome*); Mère Marie (*Dialogues des Carmélites*) per Welsh National Opera; Pantalís/Martha (*Mefistofele*) per

De Nederlandse Opera; e la prima mondiale di *On London Fields* di Matthew King allestita a Londra.

Il repertorio concertistico comprende *The Dream of Gerontius* di Elgar con la Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; *Messiah* di Handel, *Chants d'Auvergne* di Canteloube, la prima e le successive esecuzioni del *Liverpool Oratorio*, di Paul McCartney, la Messa di Requiem di Verdi, *Bluebeard's Castle* con la BBC National Orchestra of Wales e *Sea Pictures* di Elgar. Negli USA ha cantato con la Houston Symphony Orchestra, la North Carolina Symphony, e la Seattle Symphony. Si è esibita presso la Purcell Room, la Wigmore Hall e in varie sale in una tournée della Nuova Zelanda.

Sally Burgess ha ricevuto una nomination per un Olivier Award per l'interpretazione di *Showboat*, nella coproduzione RSC/Opera North allestita nel West End di Londra, e ha registrato questo musical, insieme con *West Side Story* e *The King and I*. Si esibisce regolarmente con il proprio trio di jazz diretto dal marito Neal Thornton con cui è stata protagonista di serate ai festival di Edimburgo, Aldeburgh, Harrogate, Worcester, Buxton e Newcastle e in locali come il *Pizza on the Park* di Londra.

John Tomlinson è nato nel Lancashire. Ha conseguito la laurea in ingegneria presso l'università di Manchester prima di vincere una borsa di studio per il Royal Manchester College of Music (oggi Royal Northern College of Music).

John Tomlinson canta regolarmente con la English National Opera dal 1974 e con la Royal Opera, Covent Garden, dal 1977, e ha collaborato anche con Opera North, Scottish Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera e Glyndebourne Touring Opera e Kent Opera. Dal 1998 ha partecipato ogni anno al festival di Bayreuth, dove ha interpretato i ruoli di Wotan (*Das Rheingold* e *Die Walküre*), il Viandante (*Siegfried*), Titorel e Gurnemanz (*Parsifal*), re Marke (*Tristan und Isolde*), Heinrich (*Lohengrin*), Hagen (*Götterdämmerung*), e il ruolo di protagonista in *Der fliegende Holländer*.

I suoi impegni all'estero lo hanno portato a Ginevra, Lisbona, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, San Diego, Parigi, Amsterdam, Berlino, Dresda, Monaco e Vienna, e ai festival di Orange, Aix-en-Provence, Salisburgo, Edimburgo e al Maggio Musicale fiorentino. Il suo repertorio include inoltre Hans Sachs (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Landgraf (*Tannhäuser*), Barone Ochs



(*Der Rosenkavalier*), Rocco (*Fidelio*), re Filippo (*Don Carlos*), Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), il Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), Dosifey (*Kovanshchina*) e il ruolo di protagonista in *Boris Godunov*, *Oberto* e *Attila*.

John Tomlinson vanta un vasto repertorio concertistico e ha lavorato con le principali orchestre britanniche oltre che in Germania, Italia, Belgio, Olanda, Francia, Spagna, Danimarca e U.S.A. La sua ricca discografia comprende *Gabriella di Vergy* di Donizetti per Opera Rara, e per la serie Opera in English da Chandos, *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Rigoletto*, *Werther*, dischi di momenti salienti da *Boris Godunov* e *Der Rosenkavalier*, due dischi di Great Operatic Arias, e *The Flying Dutchman*.

John Tomlinson ha ricevuto l'onorificenza di Commander of the British Empire nel 1997, seguito dalla nomina a baronetto nel 2005.

Richard Farnes ha studiato musica presso il King's College di Cambridge, con una borsa di studio per organisti, e si è perfezionato presso il National Opera Studio, la Royal Academy of Music e la Guildhall School of Music, dove ha diretto la prima produzione britannica del *Viaggio a Reims* di Rossini. Al termine degli studi ha lavorato per Glyndebourne Festival, Scottish Opera e Opera Factory.

Nel settembre 2004 Richard Farnes veniva nominato Direttore Musicale di Opera North dopo una lunga collaborazione che lo aveva già visto dirigere un repertorio molto vasto comprendente *La traviata*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Eugenio Onieghin*, *Giovanna d'Arco* di Verdi, *The Nightingale's to Blame* di Simon Holt, *Gloriana* di Britten e *Il matrimonio segreto* di Cimarosa. Nella sua prima stagione ha diretto nuovi allestimenti di *Manon* e *Don Giovanni*, oltre ad esecuzioni concerto del *Castello del principe Barbablù* di Bartók.

Richard Farnes ha al suo attivo anche una stretta collaborazione con la Scottish Opera, per cui ha diretto *La bohème*, *Tosca*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Friend of the People* di David Horne e un doppio programma di opere di Param Vir; ha diretto *L'affare Makropoulos* e *Otello* al Festival di Glyndebourne, e *Albert Herring*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *La bohème* e *Le nozze di Figaro* in tournée con la compagnia in tutto il Regno Unito. Ha fatto ritorno al Festival di Glyndebourne nell'agosto del 2005 per dirigere *Flight* di Jonathan Dove.

Gli altri impegni operistici comprendono *Simon Boccanegra* alla Royal Opera House, *The Cunning Little Vixen* per English National Opera, *Nabucco* per la New Israeli Opera di Tel Aviv, *Falstaff*, *La bohème* e *The Barber of*

Seville per la English Touring Opera, *La serva padrona* di Pergolesi e *Macbeth* di Verdi per la Birmingham Opera Company, *The Cunning Little Vixen* e *The Rake's Progress* per Opera Theatre Company a Dublino e *Bastien und Bastienne* di Mozart per la European Chamber Opera.

Gli impegni concertistici lo hanno visto collaborare con la London Philharmonic Orchestra, Haydn Chamber Orchestra, English Northern Philharmonia, Royal Opera House Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra e Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Nel 1992 Richard Farnes ha fondato Equinox, un organico e orchestra da camera allo scopo di diffondere il repertorio del Ventesimo Secolo a un pubblico più vasto, e che ha svolto alcuni concerti presso St John's Smith Square a Londra.

Opera North è la compagnia lirica dell'Inghilterra del nord e una delle principali organizzazioni artistiche europee, impegnata al massimo nell'allestimento di opere di stimolare, interessare e intrattenere. Oltre a svolgere tournée nell'Inghilterra del nord e a Londra, compare nei teatri lirici europei in città quali Praga e Barcellona e si esibisce in importanti festival internazionali tra cui

quelli di Edimburgo e di Ravenna. Il suo approccio innovativo nei confronti della programmazione e dello stile di esecuzione è stato apprezzato e ricompensato con alcuni prestigiosi riconoscimenti, tra cui quattro per la stagione Eight Little Greats del 2004 (Royal Philharmonic Society Opera and Music Theatre Award, The South Bank Show Opera Award, TMA Theatre Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera, Manchester Evening News Theatre Award for Opera).

Opera North è un'organizzazione vivace e dinamica, che ha il coraggio di mettere in discussione la percezione convenzionale dell'opera per dare nuova vita ai classici. La compagnia si è inoltre fatta paladina delle opere meno note e del teatro musicale. Opera North collabora con artisti e compagnie impegnati utilizzando mezzi di comunicazione diversi, tra cui film e arte visiva. Il versatile Coro e l'Orchestra della compagnia si esibiscono in maniera indipendente e rinnovano costantemente il proprio approccio nei confronti del far musica. Opera North Education è uno dei dipartimenti di educazione artistica più rispettati a livello nazionale e utilizza l'opera come mezzo per ispirare e sviluppare la creatività artistica nell'intera comunità.



© Bill Cooper

John Tomlinson as Bluebeard,
Richard Farnes, and Sally Burgess as
Judith in Opera North's semi-staged
performances of *Bluebeard's Castle*



Prologue

Minstrel

- 1 Bluebeard's castle, a myth, a legend.
When was it born? Where does it come from?
Where did it happen? Or did it never happen?
Is there a moral?
What does it mean,
Ladies and Gentlemen?

The story begins. Lonely faces gaze at me
And I, a lonely man, gaze back at you.
But where is the stage?
Can you be certain?
Is it here where I sit or there with you,
Ladies and Gentlemen?

Your eyelids are curtains.
And now you raise them.
What do you see? A Stage? A Castle?
A Cage? A Lonely Man?
It's only a story,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

We watch each other and we tell our tales,
But you must know,
You may sit next to a loved spouse or a dear friend
But each of us is alone in the end.
Listen and wonder,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

The music begins. The flame burns.
The legend is told again.
The curtains of your eyelids are raised.
Observe and wonder
Ladies and Gentlemen.

You see an ancient castle
And a lonely man.
Listen friends. Listen.

* * * * *

(A huge, round gothic hall. Steep stairs at the left lead to a small iron door. To the right of the stairs are seven enormous doors, four of which directly face the audience, and three of which are to the side. There are no windows and no ornamentation. The hall is empty, dark, and forbidding like a cave in the middle of solid rock. When the curtain rises the stage is in total darkness. The minstrel steps back and is swallowed up in the gloom. Suddenly the small iron door at the top of the stairs is flung open and in a dazzling white square beam of light appear the silhouetted figures of Bluebeard and Judith.)

Bluebeard

- 2 Will you enter? Look around you,
this is Bluebeard's ancient castle.
Yes, the home you left was brighter.
Judith dearest, will you follow?

Judith

Lead me Bluebeard, I will follow.
(Bluebeard comes down the steps.)

Bluebeard

Can you hear the great bell tolling,
as your mother mourns your leaving?
Armed for vengeance is your father,
and your brother mounts his stallion:
Judith dearest, will you follow?

Judith

Lead me Bluebeard, I will follow.
(At the bottom of the stairs, Bluebeard turns to Judith who has stopped halfway down. The light from the doorway shines on both of them.)

Bluebeard

You're uncertain? Are you frightened?

Judith *(with her hands to her breast)*

No... my skirt was caught on something,
something caught it in the darkness.

Bluebeard

Open still, the door behind you!

Judith

Ah, my Bluebeard!
(She comes down a few steps.)
I left my father and mother,
I left my brother all alone,

(She comes all the way down.)

I left the man I was to marry to follow you,
to be with you.

(She snuggles up to him.)

Oh my Bluebeard, if you leave me,
if you should abandon me now,
I'll lie here and wait forever.
(He takes her in his arms.)

Bluebeard

Let the door be closed behind us.

(The small iron door closes. The hall is bright enough to see the two figures and the seven huge black doors. Judith feels her way along the wall, still holding Bluebeard's hand.)

Judith

- 3 Here I am in Bluebeard's castle.
But no windows? But no daylight?

Bluebeard

Nothing.

Judith

No light from the sun reaches here?

Bluebeard

Never.

Judith

Always cold here? Always dark here?



Bluebeard

Coldness, darkness.

Judith

In this darkness, ah! The silence –
none would dare to speak the rumours.

Bluebeard

You've heard rumours?

Judith

In your castle all is darkness.
(She feels her way on. She shudders.)
It is wet here. Oh my Bluebeard,
water's dripping from your castle.
It is weeping! It is weeping!
(She covers her eyes.)

Bluebeard

Dearest Judith, would you not be happier
in your bridegroom's castle,
where the roses climb the turrets,
where the roof is bathed in sunshine?

Judith

Never, never. Oh my Bluebeard!
What are roses, what is sunshine?
What are roses, what is sunshine?
Nothing, nothing. Nothing.
In your castle all is darkness.
In your castle all is darkness, all is darkness...
Bluebeard! Bluebeard! How you suffer!

(She sinks down sobbing and kisses his hands.)

Bluebeard

4 Tell me why you came here, Judith.

Judith *(springing up)*

With my lips I'll warm the coldness,
with my body burn up the tears,
till the frozen walls are glowing,
with my body set them glowing.
Will you let me, will you let me?
Oh my Bluebeard!
Dark no longer will be your castle!
We will open up the darkness!
Let the air in, let the sun in! Let the sun in,
let your castle shine forever!

Bluebeard

Nothing shines within my castle.

(Judith turns to the right, towards the middle of the stage.)

Judith

Lead me further, oh my Bluebeard!
Lead me further in your castle!
(She moves to the middle.)
5 Ah! I can see seven doorways, –
seven locked and bolted doorways.
(He watches her, silent and motionless.)
Tell me why the doors are bolted.

Bluebeard

So that none may see beyond them.

Judith

Open, open, let them open!
All the doors must now be open!
Let the air in, let the sun in!

Bluebeard

Just remember all those rumours.

Judith

Let the castle greet the daylight!
Let the castle greet the daylight!
Bitter, wretched, joyless castle.
Open! Open! Open!
(She hammers on the door. The sound is answered by a cavernous sighing, as if the night is sighing down long, dismal corridors.)
Ah! Ah! *(She recoils.)*
What was that? What was sighing?
Who was sighing? Tell me Bluebeard!
It's your castle, it's your castle, it's your castle.

Bluebeard

Frightened?

Judith *(weeping softly)*

6 Oh, I heard your castle sighing!

Bluebeard

Frightened?

Judith

Oh, I heard your castle sighing!
Let's unlock it, both together.
I will unlock it, only I.
Softly, quietly, I'll unlock it.
Quietly, softly, quietly.
Oh my love, give me the key now!
Give the key here, for I love you.
(She leans against his shoulder.)

Bluebeard

May your hand bring blessings, Judith.
(Keys are heard clinking in the darkness.)

Judith

Thank you, thank you!
(She walks back to the first door.)
I alone will open it. I!
(As the lock turns, the reverberating sigh is heard again.)
Listen, listen.
(The door opens silently onto a blood-red rectangle on the wall, like an open wound. A red glimmer comes from within, casting a long beam of light across the floor.) Oh!

Bluebeard

7 What's there? What's there?

Judith *(with her hands to her breast)*

Shackles, daggers. Torture tables.
Red hot irons...



Bluebeard

That's my torture chamber, Judith.

Judith

Hideous is your torture chamber.
Oh my Bluebeard! Hideous! Hideous!

Bluebeard

Frightened?

Judith (*She shudders.*)

All your castle walls are bloodstained!
Yes, your castle's bleeding!
Bloodstained, bleeding...

Bluebeard

Frightened?

(Judith turns to Bluebeard. She is silhouetted against the red light.)

Judith (*with pale, quiet determination*)

No, not frightened. Look, daylight comes. Can't you see it?

(She goes back to him, walking carefully along the beam of light.)

Look at the light. See it? Dazzling brilliance.

(She kneels down and stretches out her hands as if cupping the light.)

Bluebeard

Tainted brilliance. Bloodstained brilliance.

Judith (*standing up*)

Can't you see it, how it's brighter?
Can't you see it?
All the doors must now be opened,
letting in the wind and sunshine.
All the doors must now be opened!

Bluebeard

You don't know what lies beyond them.

Judith

Give me keys to every doorway!
Give me keys to every doorway.
All the doors must now be opened!
All must open!

Bluebeard

Judith, tell me why you want this?

Judith

I love you.

Bluebeard

Trembling seizes all my castle.
You may open them – but listen:
(He gives her the second key. Their hands meet in the red light.)
danger's lurking in my castle,
danger's waiting for us, Judith.

Judith (*going to the second door*)

Softly, quietly, I'll unlock it, softly, quietly.

(The lock snaps open. The door opens silently. The opening is a yellowish red colour, dark and disturbing. The second beam of light lies on the floor alongside the first.)

Bluebeard

[8] What's there?

Judith

Thousands of barbaric weapons,
horrifying weapons of war.

Bluebeard

That's my armoury, Judith.

Judith

You are strong and full of power,
but how hard your pitiless heart.

Bluebeard

Frightened?

Judith

Blood is staining all your weapons,
all your weapons here are bloody.

Bluebeard

Frightened?

Judith (*turning to Bluebeard*)

Give me keys to all the others!

Bluebeard

Judith, Judith.

(Judith walks back to Bluebeard along the second beam of light.)

Judith

Can't you see the light brightly shining? See it?
See it?
Give me keys to all the others!

Bluebeard

Danger's waiting for us, Judith!

Judith

Give me keys to all the others!

Bluebeard

You don't know what lies beyond them.

Judith

I have come here, because I love you.
I am here, and I am yours.
Let me see what lies beyond them –
all the doors must now be opened!



Bluebeard

- 9 Trembling seizes all my castle,
weeping stones feel joy and pleasure.
Judith, Judith! It is soothing,
when the blood from wounds flows freely.

Judith

I came here because I love you:
all the doors must now be opened!

Bluebeard

You may open three more doorways.
Open them, but ask no questions.
Look inside, but ask no questions!

Judith

Give me now the keys you promised.

*(He gives her the keys. She snatches them
impatiently and hurries to the third door,
hesitating in front of it.)*

Bluebeard

Why're you waiting? Are you frightened?

Judith

Where's the lock? I cannot find it.

Bluebeard

Judith, fear not, fate has willed it.

*(Judith turns the key and the door opens with a
deep, warm metallic sound. A beam of golden light
stretches across the floor next to the other two.)*

Judith

- 10 Glittering gold! Glittering gold!
*(She kneels down and plunges her hands into
the treasures, and places jewels, a crown, and a
luxurious cape on the doorstep.)*
Golden coins and precious diamonds,
emeralds and shining rubies,
jewelled crowns and robes of velvet!

Bluebeard

Now you see my treasure chamber.

Judith

You are rich indeed my Bluebeard.

Bluebeard

All the wealth you see now is yours –
gold and silver, pearls and diamonds.

Judith *(turning in alarm)*

There is blood on all your jewels.
(She gazes at him, astonished.)
Your crown is covered in bloodstains!
(She becomes more restless and impatient.)

Bluebeard

Let the fourth door now be opened!
Let the light in! Open! Open!

*(Judith turns to the fourth door and opens it.
Branches heavy with blossom crowd through the
opening. They are suffused with a blue-green light,
which shines across the floor beside the others.)*

Judith

- 11 Oh! Lovely flowers! Oh! Beautiful scents, hidden
in the stony darkness.

Bluebeard

Now you see my secret garden.

Judith

Oh lovely flowers –
slender lilies tall as men.
Cool, white, beautiful roses,
red carnations, glowing with light.
Never have I seen such beauty!

Bluebeard

Ev'ry flower bends to greet you,
ev'ry flower bends to greet you.
Yours their blooming, yours their fading,
they shall grow for you more lovely.

Judith *(suddenly bending down, frightened)*

Ev'ry single rose is bloodstained.
All the earth around is bloodstained!

Bluebeard

At your glance they open and bloom.
Praising you, they dance at daybreak.

Judith

Who has watered them with blood?

Bluebeard

Judith, love me – ask me nothing.
Look, my castle's growing brighter.
Judith, go unlock the fifth door!

*(Judith runs to the fifth door and throws it open.
A high balcony is exposed, with far-reaching views,
and light pours out. Dazzled, Judith shields her eyes
with her hand.)*

Judith

- 12 Ah!

Bluebeard

That is my domain, my empire.
Gaze as far as that horizon.
Great and glorious is my kingdom!

Judith *(stiffly and absent-mindedly)*

Great and glorious is your kingdom.

Bluebeard

Silken meadows, velvet forests,
winding silver rivers flowing,
blue majestic distant mountains!

Judith *(stiffly and absent-mindedly)*

Great and glorious is your kingdom.



Bluebeard

Yours and yours alone this vastness.
Yours the daybreak and the twilight,
yours the sun and moon and starlight –
they shall be as playmates for you.

Judith

But the clouds cast bloody shadows!
Tell me why these clouds are gathering?

Bluebeard

- ¹³ Look! Brightness has filled my castle:
your bless'd hand has brought the light in,
your bless'd hand brings radiance, blessings.
(He opens his arms.)
Come now, Judith, let me hold you.

(Judith does not move.)

Judith

But two doors remain unopened.

Bluebeard

Those two doors will stay unopened.
Let the castle ring with music.
Come now, Judith – come and kiss me!

Judith

Let the final doors be opened!

Bluebeard

Judith, Judith, come and kiss me;
I am waiting, Judith, waiting!

Judith

Let the final doors be opened!

Bluebeard *(letting his arms fall to his side)*

Did you not wish to let light in?
See, now my castle shines with light.

Judith

I don't want a single door
inside your castle left unopened.

Bluebeard

Danger, danger's waiting for us.
Danger! Light can turn to darkness.

Judith

If I live or if I die here, ah, beloved.

Bluebeard

Judith!

Judith

Let the final doors be opened,
oh my Bluebeard, oh my Bluebeard.

Bluebeard

Judith! Must you ask me? Must you ask me?
Judith! Judith!

Judith

Open, open!

Bluebeard

I shall give you just one more key.
(Silent, Judith holds out her hand. He gives her the key. As she turns the key, a deep sigh is heard. She steps back.)
Judith, Judith, do not open!

(She goes quickly to the door and opens it. As if a shadow were passing over, the room becomes darker.)

Judith

- ¹⁴ Silent tranquil peaceful waters...
motionless mysterious water.
What's this water? Tell me Bluebeard.

Bluebeard

Tears, Judith, weeping, weeping.

Judith *(shuddering)*

Silent and mysterious water.

Bluebeard

Tears, Judith, weeping, weeping.

(She bends down and gazes into the lake.)

Judith

Silent water, lifeless water.

Bluebeard

Tears, Judith, weeping, weeping.
(Judith turns and gazes silently into his eyes. Slowly, Bluebeard opens his arms.) Come my Judith!
Come my Judith, come and kiss me.
(She does not move.)
I am waiting, Judith, waiting!
(She still does not move.)
¹⁵ My last door will stay unopened.
Stay unopened.
(With head down, she approaches Bluebeard slowly. With a pleading look, she leans towards him.)

Judith

Oh my Bluebeard, take me, love me.
(He embraces and kisses her. She lays her head on his shoulder.)
Do you love me truly, Bluebeard?

Bluebeard

You have brought me radiant sunlight.
Kiss me, kiss me – ask me nothing.
(He kisses her again.)

Judith *(her head on Bluebeard's shoulder)*

- ¹⁶ Tell me truly, tell me Bluebeard
who possessed your love before me?

**Bluebeard**

You have brought me radiant sunlight.
Kiss me, kiss me, ask me nothing.

Judith

Tell me of the way you loved her –
was she like me? Lovelier than me?
Tell me all about her, Bluebeard.

Bluebeard

Judith, love me – ask me nothing.

Judith

Tell me all about her, Bluebeard.

Bluebeard

Judith, love me – ask me nothing.

Judith (*freeing herself from his embrace*)

Open the seventh door.

(*Bluebeard does not answer.*)

- [17] I know what's behind it Bluebeard –
what the seventh door is hiding!
Blood is gleaming on your weapons,
blood upon your precious jewels,
bloody flowers in your garden,
bloody clouds across your heavens...
now I understand it Bluebeard!
I know where the tears came from.
All your other wives lie there,
brutally destroyed and murdered.
Ah, the rumour's true about you!

Bluebeard

Judith!

Judith

Tell me! Tell me!

I must know the terrible truth –
open the seventh door.

Bluebeard

Take it... Take it... Take the last of my keys.

(*Judith stands rigid, without taking the key.*)

When that door is opened Judith,
you shall see my former wives.

(*For some time she remains motionless, then takes the key with uncertain hand, and goes unsteadily to the seventh door. When the lock turns, the fifth and sixth doors close, with a soft sighing sound. It becomes much darker. Only the first four doors illuminate the hall with their beams of coloured light. The seventh door opens, and a long beam of silvery moonlight illuminates Judith and Bluebeard's faces.*)

- [18] Look upon the other women,
look at those I loved before you.
(*Judith steps back, astonished and horrified.*)

Judith

Living, living – they're still living.

(*From the seventh door his former wives come forward. There are three of them; they wear crowns and are richly dressed and jeweled. They are pale*

and proud, and step forward, stopping in front of Bluebeard, who falls to his knees. As if dreaming, he stretches his arms out to them.)

Bluebeard

Beauty, beauty, perfect beauty.

They shall always live beside me.

It is they who brought me treasure,

they who watered all my flowers,

they who built this mighty kingdom.

All I have is theirs forever.

(*Judith, looking broken in spirit and afraid, stands as the fourth in line.*)

Judith

With their beauty, with their riches,

ah! I'm nothing – nothing at all.

(*Bluebeard gets up and whispers to Judith with emotion.*)

Bluebeard

- [19] Daybreak – when I found the first one;
lovely pink and fragrant daybreak.
Now each dawn is hers forever,
hers the cloak of rosy sunrise,
hers the coronet of silver –
now each dawn is hers forever.

Judith

Ah, beside her I am nothing!

(*The first wife returns.*)

Bluebeard

Midday – when I found the second;
silent, glowing, golden midday.
Now each noon is hers forever,
hers the cloak of burning sunlight,
hers the coronet of gold –
now each noon is hers forever.

Judith

Ah, beside her I am nothing!

(*The second wife returns.*)

Bluebeard

Evening – when I found the third one;
peaceful, languid, shady evening.
Now each dusk is hers forever,
hers the cloak of gloomy sunset,
now each dusk is hers forever.

Judith

Ah, beside her I am nothing.

(*The third returns. Bluebeard remains in front of Judith, and they gaze into each other's eyes. The fourth door slowly closes.*)

Bluebeard

- [20] Midnight – when I found the fourth one...

Judith

Bluebeard, Bluebeard no more, no more!





Bluebeard

...shining black and starry midnight.

Judith

No more, no more. I am still here!

Bluebeard

How your face glowed in the moonlight,
how your dark hair chased the clouds away,
now each night is yours forever.
*(He goes to the third door and brings the crown,
cape and jewels that Judith put on the doorstep. The
third door closes. He puts the cape on her shoulders.)*
Yours the cloak of glitt'ring starlight.

Judith

Ah, beloved spare me! Spare me!

(Bluebeard places the crown on her head.)

Bluebeard

Yours the coronet of diamonds.

Judith

Bluebeard, take it off me.
(He puts the jewels round her neck.)

Bluebeard

Yours are my most precious jewels.

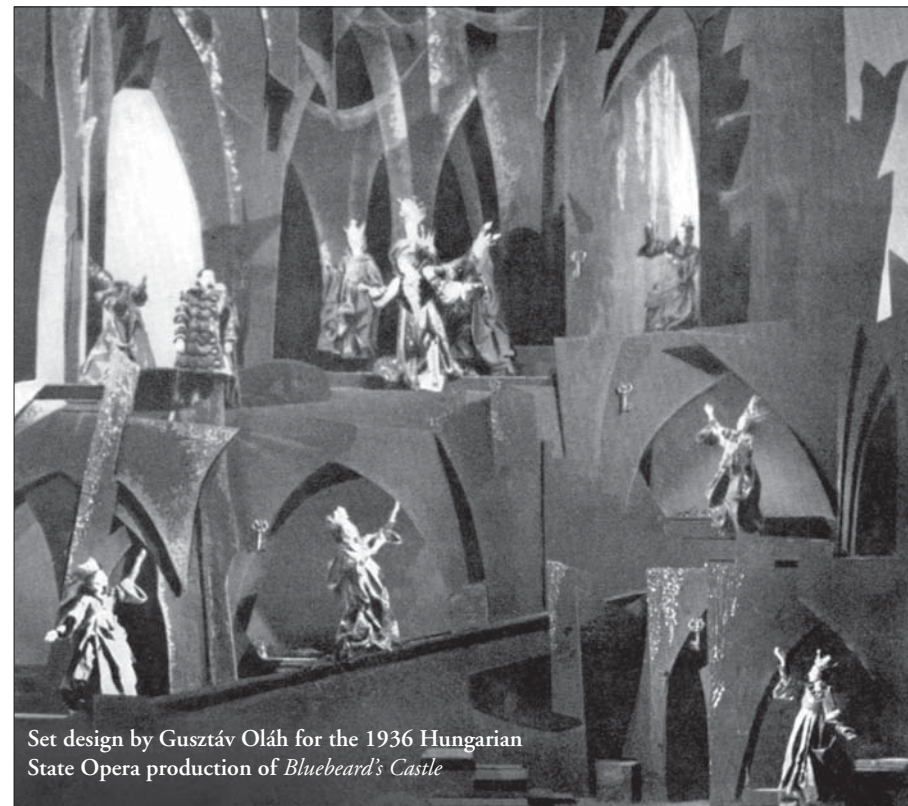
Judith

Spare me, Bluebeard, take it off me.

Bluebeard

Beauty, beauty, perfect beauty –
more than all the rest,
I loved you, my dearest Judith.
*(They gaze into each other's eyes. Judith stoops under
the weight of the cape, her head drooping. She walks
along the beam of moonlight towards the seventh
door. She enters, and the door closes behind her.)*
Night: nothing but endless darkness,
endless darkness...
*(The stage is plunged into total darkness, and
Bluebeard disappears from sight.)*

English version by John Lloyd Davies,
Prologue adapted for Opera North by Giles Havergal



Set design by Gusztáv Oláh for the 1936 Hungarian
State Opera production of *Bluebeard's Castle*



Also Available



CHAN 3007

Highlights from Boris Godunov with Opera North and John Tomlinson

72

The Opera in English series:

CHAN 3011(2) Donizetti: Don Pasquale
 CHAN 3027(2) Donizetti: The Elixir of Love
 CHAN 3083(2) Donizetti: Lucia of Lammermoor
 CHAN 3017(2) Donizetti: Mary Stuart
 CHAN 3073 Janet Baker sings scenes from Mary Stuart
 CHAN 3003 Leoncavallo: Pagliacci (The Touring Company)

CHAN 3004 Mascagni: Cavalleria rusticana (Rustic Chivalry)

CHAN 3005(2) Pagliacci & Cavalleria rusticana
 CHAN 3008(2) Puccini: La bohème

CHAN 3070(2) Puccini: Madam Butterfly

CHAN 3000(2) Puccini: Tosca

CHAN 3066 Jane Eaglen sings Tosca

CHAN 3086(2) Puccini: Turandot

CHAN 3025(2) Rossini: The Barber of Seville

CHAN 3097(2) Rossini: The Thieving Magpie

CHAN 3074(2) Verdi: Aida

CHAN 3052(2) Verdi: Ernani

CHAN 3079(2) Verdi: Falstaff

CHAN 3116(2) Verdi: A Masked Ball

CHAN 3068(2) Verdi: Otello

CHAN 3030(2) Verdi: Rigoletto

CHAN 3023(2) Verdi: La traviata

CHAN 3036(2) Verdi: Il trovatore (The Troubadour)

CHAN 3067 A Verdi Celebration

CHAN 3091(2) Bizet: Carmen

CHAN 3014(3) Gounod: Faust

CHAN 3089(2) Gounod: Faust (abridged)

CHAN 3033(2) Massenet: Werther

CHAN 3130(3) Berg: Lulu

CHAN 3094(2) Berg: Wozzeck

CHAN 3019(3) Handel: Julius Caesar

CHAN 3072 Janet Baker sings scenes from Julius Caesar

CHAN 3081(2) Mozart: The Abduction from the Seraglio

CHAN 3057(3) Mozart: Don Giovanni

CHAN 3103(2) Mozart: Idomeneo

CHAN 3113(3) Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro

CHAN 3121(2) Mozart: The Magic Flute

CHAN 3022 Strauss: Der Rosenkavalier (The Knight of the Rose, highlights)

CHAN 3119(2) Wagner: The Flying Dutchman

CHAN 3054(3) Wagner: The Rhinegold

CHAN 3038(4) Wagner: The Valkyrie

CHAN 3045(4) Wagner: Siegfried

CHAN 3060(5) Wagner: Twilight of the Gods

CHAN 3065(16) Wagner: Complete Ring Cycle

CHAN 3101(2) Janáček: The Cunning Little Vixen

CHAN 3029(2) Janáček: Osud (Fate)

CHAN 3106(2) Janáček: Jenůfa

CHAN 3007 Mussorgsky: Boris Godunov (highlights)

CHAN 3128(2) Smetana: The Bartered Bride

CHAN 3042(2) Tchaikovsky: Eugene Onegin

Great Operatic Arias

CHAN 3127 Christine Brewer

CHAN 3096 Elizabeth Futral

CHAN 3035 Yvonne Kenny

CHAN 3099 Yvonne Kenny 2

CHAN 3049 Della Jones

CHAN 3010 Diana Montague

CHAN 3093 Diana Montague 2

CHAN 3112 Barry Banks

CHAN 3006 Bruce Ford

CHAN 3100 Bruce Ford 2

CHAN 3088 Bruce Ford sings Viennese Operetta

CHAN 3013 Dennis O'Neill

CHAN 3105 Dennis O'Neill 2

CHAN 3085 Alan Opie

CHAN 3077 Andrew Shore

CHAN 3032 Alastair Miles

CHAN 3044 John Tomlinson

CHAN 3076 John Tomlinson 2

CHAN 3118 Sir Thomas Allen

CHAN 3078 Baroque Celebration

73



On session: Richard Farnes and Brian Couzens



74

Organ hire: Leeds Town Hall
Organ played by Simon Lindley, Opera North
Music Hire: Music Distribution Services Limited – Universal Edition

Artistic consultant to the Peter Moores Foundation: Patric Schmid
Vocal and language consultant: Ludmilla Andrew
Staging director: Charles Kilpatrick
Translation research: Henrietta Bredin

Session photographs by Bill Cooper

Recording producer Brian Couzens
Sound engineer Ralph Couzens
Assistant engineer Michael Common
Editor Jonathan Cooper
Operas administrator Sue Shortridge
Recording venue Leeds Town Hall; 5–6 June 2005
Front cover John Tomlinson as Bluebeard in Opera North's semi-staged performances of *Bluebeard's Castle*. Photograph by Bill Cooper
Back cover Photograph of Richard Farnes by Bill Cooper
Design and typesetting Cassidy Rayne Creative
Booklet editor Kara Reed
Copyright Universal Edition. Permission for use given by the Bartók Estate
© 2006 Chandos Records Ltd
© 2006 Chandos Records Ltd
Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, England
Printed in the EU

75

CHANDOS DIGITAL

CHAN 3133

Printed in the EU

LC 7038

DDD

TT 63:07

Recorded in 24-bit/96kHz

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Bluebeard's Castle

Opera in one act

Libretto by Béla Balázs, English version by John Lloyd Davies,
Prologue adapted for Opera North by Giles Havergal

Duke Bluebeard/Minstrel.....John Tomlinson *bass*
Judith.....Sally Burgess *mezzo-soprano*

Orchestra of Opera North
Richard Farnes

TT 63:07

© 2006 Chandos Records Ltd © 2006 Chandos Records Ltd Chandos Records Ltd • Colchester • Essex • England