

The Tempest

Suite from the Ballet

ARNE
NORDHEIM

Edward Gardner — Conductor
Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra

Beate Mordal — Soprano
Jeremy Carpenter — Baritone

Some Enchanted Island

It isn't the proliferation of songs that make *The Tempest* Shakespeare's most musical play, so much as the work's unrelentingly odd, fascinating and tantalising realm – a world of artful noises, enchantments and conjuring tricks. In *The Tempest*, nothing is certain. Illusion, disillusion and unpredictability collide in a curious self-contained space that may well sit on the Mediterranean fault-line separating European restraint and North African expression...but then again may not.

All this has long proved an invitation too strong for composers to resist. The first to be indulged was Robert Johnson, chief lutenist at the court of James I and the man who wrote a handful of songs for Shakespeare's original production. Matthew Locke and Henry Purcell followed. When it became fashionable to stage Shakespeare with proto-Wagnerian grandeur a few centuries later, the likes of Alexander Alyabiev and Jean Sibelius furnished his words with incidental music.

Full operatic treatment of *The Tempest* didn't arrive until the second half of the twentieth century; perhaps a drama consisting mostly of individuals conducting elusive conversations didn't suit the pre-war operatic aesthetic. The many songs cued in the script proved fertile ground for the British composer Thomas Adès. But he and others were almost certainly drawn more to the play's strange musical atmosphere – for Shakespeare scholar Martin Butler, 'an autonomous theatrical laboratory with its own internal logic'.

Even Adès struggled with the fact that *The Tempest* isn't all that operatic. It seems doubly wise of Arne Nordheim to choose to see the work not as a work of lyric theatre but as a ballet, scored for orchestra, electronics and two voices mostly without words.

The ballet was first seen in May 1979 at the Schwetzingen Festival. The suite drawn from it represents a further distillation of an already distilled view of Shakespeare's world, a series of 'postcards of moods' for conductor Edward Gardner that 'demands so much of us individually and collectively as an orchestra.' Gardner's words were connected to his presentation of the score, with his Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, at the 2021 Bergen International Festival. It combined Nordheim's music not with dance but with a visual retelling by video artist Sarah Derendinger that viscerally portrayed the character of Miranda, Prospero's daughter, on a journey to maturity and self-knowledge.

Arne Nordheim was Norway's most significant and respected composer until his death in 2010, and one of the few figures in contemporary western music who proved himself able to move beyond traditional harmonic relationships while maintaining a distinct ability to communicate widely through his striking, physical music. The Bergen Philharmonic has been far from immune to that music's power, championing it throughout the composer's lifetime and premiering his first orchestral work, *Canzona*, as well as his last, *Fonos*. It has given multiple performances of Nordheim's orchestral works and has recorded

Tenebrae (Cello Concerto), *Aurora* and *Wirklicher Wald*. In 1992, Nordheim was the subject of a special focus at the Bergen International Festival, where the orchestra premiered *Magic Island* – a revised version of *Be Not Afeard* (the starting point for *The Tempest*).

Nordheim studied at the Norwegian Academy of Music with Bjarne Brustad and at the Royal Danish Academy of Music with Vagn Holmboe. In the 1950s, he became acquainted with electronic music in Paris and spent time in Bilthoven, Warsaw (where he worked at Polish Radio's experimental studio) and with György Ligeti in Stockholm. He returned to Oslo determined to pioneer new techniques, undoubtedly breathing fresh life into Norway's relatively conservative new music scene in the process.

Nordheim was not a modernist for modernism's sake. Working as a critic and as a composer for theatre, film and television gave him an acute sense of music's place in the wider world and the need to find workable solutions for the stylistic and ideological confusion of the post-war period. The solutions he explored included new views of tonality and the augmentation of the orchestral palette via electronic means, the latter taken forward in *The Tempest* but heard first in the exploratory *Epitaffio per orchestra e nastro magnetico* (1963).

In seeking out new musical paths, Nordheim was prone to looking backwards as well as forwards. He maintained an intense interest in early music and never forsook his spiritual af-

finity with Gustav Mahler. He displayed a very Nordic tendency to drill deep into simple concepts and/or material with a view to reimagining them – be those materials timbral, thematic, harmonic or rhythmic.

The concept of time – its indiscriminate control and its potential manipulation, in the broadest sense – came to fascinate Nordheim and shape a great deal of his music including the score for *The Tempest*. Collaborating on the ballet with choreographer Glen Tetley, reported the composer, ‘brought me to understand his [Tetley’s] singular concept that music can be compared to a time machine that propels forward both men and action; it is the driving mechanism which keeps everything moving – like Prospero his universe.’

Tetley had his own recollections on the collaboration. ‘Every afternoon Arne walked around the mountain to my house [in Italy]. At that time of the day, the silence highlights the church bells and all the bird and animal sounds in the forest. The fog rises: mountains become islands, valleys become seas, the city disappears into thin air. The atmosphere of *The Tempest* is magical and the language is a metaphor, just as the language of dance is a metaphor...the changes of the dream in sleep or awakening, the changes of the sea, the inner tempest of man.’

In the 1970s, melody and tonality were returning to Nordheim’s works but in new contexts that ensured their dynamism and relevance – often pivoting on an ingenious view of musical

time. The result, in Nordheim’s music for *The Tempest*, is the conjuring of a musical realm as elusive as Shakespeare’s stage equivalent – one in which time as we know it, along with so many other anchors (including text) barely exists. It is a world of ‘transfigured, consonant lyricism’ to quote on critic, in which we clearly hear Nordheim’s central creative urge to reconcile simple, lucid material with his own protracted schemes and techniques. For Edward Gardner, the process draws us into a ‘beautiful, seductive world’ and music possessed of ‘a glow that can only be Nordheim’s.’

In his own preface to the score, Nordheim recalled that he ‘devoted himself to [Shakespeare’s] *The Tempest*’ for many months and years, ‘reading it in many countries and cities and in every season of the year, through all changes in weather and mood.’ He recalled that he had ‘frequently read it alone, filled with despair.’ The task, the composer concluded, was ‘to put *The Tempest* in a new musical setting’, one for which the cooperation of Tetley was essential. The figure of Prospero loomed large as Nordheim was drawn towards the imperative of communicating silence, solitude and truth combined.

The electronic elements – developed with Nordheim’s colleague from the experimental radio studio in Warsaw, Bohdan Mazurek – immediately put his score on a far more fantastical, unsettling and unpredictable keel than that of most equivalents, rendering it a worthy successor to its Nordic forbear by Jean Sibelius, who wrote music which seems to strain in its search for a new har-

monic language. At the US premiere at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1982, a *New York Times* critic suggested the score lacked ‘internal logic’. Considering how much of that exists in Shakespeare, perhaps that was never this score’s intended function in the dramatic equation.

In fact, there is logic at work in Nordheim’s score, particularly in its use of a five-note sequence derived from the spelling of the Italian word ‘Amore’. The music we hear certainly doesn’t benefit from a bar-by-bar analysis, and is often refreshingly self-explanatory – right from the island noises with which ‘Calm Sea, Storm and Awakening’ opens up. Timbre rules in this movement, an extension of principles laid down in the composer’s own *Aftonland* for soprano and orchestra (1957).

The ‘awakening’ portion draws listeners away from the surrounding beaches and deep into the frantic and magical disorientation of *The Tempest*’s island domain, led for a time by a romping trombone that will return anon. The haziness with which the movement opened pervades the entire suite, however calligraphic the micro-mechanisms of ‘Magic Circle’, which glistens when it’s not rearing up. A cello solo – particularly evocative in cahoots with pitch-bending timpani and a xylophone – sets up the incantation-like solo cello monologue central to the next movement, ‘Lacrymae’.

‘A Mazed Trod’ leads listeners on a cryptic dance for tuned and un-tuned percussion. The trombone is up to tricks again in ‘Four Legs and Two Voices’, before antiphonal ex-

changes between the two singers ricochet Caliban’s alcohol-smudged final stanzas from Shakespeare’s Act II: ‘Ban’ ban’ Caliban / Has a new master, get a new man. / Freedom, high-day; high-day freedom; freedom high-day, freedom.’

Something approaching an archetype Nordic chorale for strings follows before the stage of our consciousness is upset again in ‘Caliban’s Warning’. In an apparently amphibious domain, still more elasticated voices here recount Caliban’s spirited explanation of the mysterious, magical music that is heard throughout the island: ‘Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises, / Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.’ Nordheim’s augmenting of the orchestra with sounds manipulated by electronics approaches the ‘thousand twangling instruments’ to which Caliban refers. Is the music real, or just another manifestation of Prospero’s magic?

– Andrew Mellor, author of
The Northern Silence – Journeys in Nordic Music and Culture
(Yale University Press)

4 *Music.* ARIEL appears again, unscen by them,
and bends over GONZALO.

Ariel. My master through his art foresees the danger,
That you—his friend—are in, and sends me forth,
(For else his project dies) to keep them living.

[sings in Gonzalo's ear]

While you here do snoring lie,

Open-eyed conspiracy

His time doth take:

If of life you keep a care,

Shake off slumber, and beware,...

Awake! Awake!

Antonio. Then let us both be sudden.

†*Gonzalo* [waking]. Now, good angels preserve
the king!

Why, how now? Ho! awake! [*shaking Alonso,*
who wakes.]

Alonso [*to Antonio and Sebastian*]. Why are you drawn?
Wherefore this ghastly looking? What's the matter?

Sebastian. Whiles we stood here securing your repose,
Even now, we heard a hollow burst of bellowing
Like bulls, or rather lions—did't not wake you?

310 It struck mine ear most terribly.

Alonso. I heard nothing.

Antonio. O, 'twas a din to fright a monster's ear;
To make an earthquake! sure, it was the roar
Of a whole herd of lions.

Alonso. Heard you this, Gonzalo?

Gonzalo. Upon mine honour, sir, I heard a humming—
And that a strange one too—which did awake me...

I shaked you, sir, and cried: as mine eyes opened,
I saw their weapons drawn...there was a noise,
†That's verity. 'Tis best we stand upon our guard;

Or that we quit this place: let's draw our weapons.

Alonso. Lead off this ground, and let's make
further search

320

For my poor son.

Gonzalo. Heavens keep him from these beasts...

For he is, sure, i'th'island.

Alonso. Lead away.

Ariel [*as the band moves off*]. Prospero my lord shall
know what I have done....

So, king, go safely on to seek thy son. [*vanishes*]

[2. 2.] *A barren upland: the weather lowering.*

'Enter CALIBAN, with a burden of wood.

A noise of thunder heard.

5 *Caliban.* All the infections that the sun sucks up
From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall, and make him
By inch-meal a disease: [*lightning*] His spirits hear me,
And yet I needs must curse....[*casts down his burden*]

But they'll nor pinch,

9 Fright me with urchin-shows, pitch me i'th' mire,

Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark

Out of my way, unless he bid 'em; but

For every trifle are they set upon me—

Sometime like apes, that mow and chatter at me,

And after bite me: then like hedgehogs which

Lie tumbling in my barefoot way, and mount

Their pricks at my footfall: sometime am I

All wound with adders, who with cloven tongues

Do hiss me into madness...

10

Enter TRINGULO.

Lo, now, lo!

Here comes a spirit of his—and to torment me,



Edward Gardner – Chief Conductor

Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic, Edward Gardner, has led the orchestra on multiple international tours. He is also Principal Conductor for the London Philharmonic Orchestra (from 2021) and takes over as Music Director at the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet in 2024.

In demand as a guest conductor, he conducts orchestras like the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Wiener Symphoniker, the Royal Opera House, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and the Philharmonia Orchestra. Music Director of English National Opera for ten years (2006–15), Gardner has an

ongoing relationship with several opera houses; New York's Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Chicago Lyric Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Opéra National de Paris.

Born in Gloucester in 1974, Edward was educated at Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music. He went on to become Assistant Conductor of the Hallé and Music Director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera.

His many accolades include being named Royal Philharmonic Society Award Conductor of the Year (2008), an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera (2009) and receiving an OBE for Services to Music in Queen Elisabeth II's Birthday honours.



Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, a Norwegian national orchestra, dates back to 1765. Edward Grieg served as its artistic director from 1880 to 1882. Edward Gardner is Chief Conductor and Sir Mark Elder is the orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor.

The Orchestra was nominated Orchestra of the Year 2020 by Gramophone and won two Gramophone Classical Music Awards in 2021: Recording of the Year and Opera Award Winner for Britten's *Peter Grimes*. In recent years, the orchestra has played in the Concertgebouw, at the BBC Proms, Wiener Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Carnegie Hall, New York, Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and the Philharmonie, Berlin.

The orchestra and Edward Gardner appeared at the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) (2017) and Royal Festival Hall (2019) with their critically acclaimed production of *Peter Grimes*. In 2022 the orchestra was invited back to the Edinburgh International Festival and received rave reviews for their performance of Strauss' *Salome*. Edward Gardner and the Orchestra has released a series of recordings, including a Grammy-nominated recording of Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, Schönberg's *Gurre-Lieder*, songs by Sibelius, Grieg's Piano Concerto and incidental music to *Peer Gynt*, Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and *Pelleas und Melisande*, Britten's *Peter Grimes* with Stuart Skelton and Erin Wall, songs by Britten and Canteloube with soprano Mari Eriksmoen and a CD with saxophonist Marius Neset.

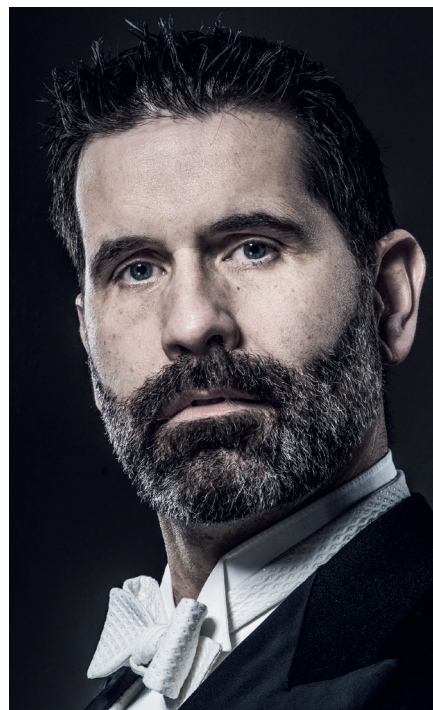


Beate Mordal — Soprano

Beate Mordal is a Norwegian lyric coloratura soprano who made her debut as Papagena in Mozart's *Magic Flute* at The Royal Danish Opera in 2015 and in the contemporary opera SVADBA at Festival Aix-en-Provence.

She has since then worked as an opera- and concert singer mainly in France, England, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Her latest roles include Eileen in *Wonderful Town* by Bernstein (2019 and 2022), Valencienne in *Die Lustige Witwe* by Lehar (2022), Lily in *Innocence* by Kaija Saariaho (premiered in Aix, 2021), Vitellia in *La clemenza di Tito* (2021) and Marie in Rufus Wainwright's *Primadonna* (2020).

Mordal has performed with the major Nordic orchestras, and with the London Symphony Orchestra at Festival Aix-en-Provence in *"l'amour de loin"* by Saariaho (2021). Her discography includes Brorson-psalms with Jakob Bloch (2019), the album *Orpheus Uncut* with Orkester Nord and Martin Wahlberg in 2021, and a new album with Koelner Akademie and Michael A. Willens, presenting music by Ernst Wilhelm Wolf (2022). Beate was Artist-in-Residence 2019/2020 at Bergen National Opera.



Jeremy Carpenter — Baritone

The English baritone, Jeremy Carpenter, was educated at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London and has, since 2016, been closely associated with the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm.

In Stockholm he has appeared as Germont in *La Traviata*, Marquis de la Force in Poulenc's *Dialogue des Carmélites*, the title roles in *Don Giovanni* and *Gianni Schicchi*, Danilo in *The Merry Widow*, Dr. Vigelius and The baron in Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, Dr. Pangloss in *Candide*, Zhou Enlai in John Adams' *Nixon in China*, the Protector in *Written on Skin*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Gérard in *Andrea Chénier*

and even Angelotti in The Royal Swedish Opera's filmed concert version of *Tosca*.

Carpenter has also performed the role of the Protector in *Written on Skin* with the Aix-en-Provence festival at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. He has even performed the role in concertant format on tour to Peking and Shanghai, together with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Lawrence Rennes.

Carpenter has appeared at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden where he sang Sir Robert Cecil in Britten's *Gloriana*, as well as Guglielmo Cecil in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*. He has also appeared at the Grand Théâtre de Genève as Sharpless in *Madame Butterfly*, Marullo in *Rigoletto* in Dijon and Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore* at Angers-Nantes Opéra. He has sung as a guest artist at Folkoperan in Stockholm where he had a great success as Zurga in Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* and Germont in *La Traviata*. At Malmö Opera he has sung Escamillo in *Carmen*. Carpenter is even a regular soloist on the concert platform giving recitals as well as appearing in Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* and *Liebesliederwaltzer* at the Opera de Paris. He has sung Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* with the Huddersfield Choral Society, Fauré's *Requiem* with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, and Elgar's *The Kingdom* with the Royal Flemish Philharmonic under the leadership of Martin Brabbins. He has even sung the role of Talpa in a concert performance of Puccini's *Il Tabarro* and The doctor in Verdi's *La Traviata* with The Swedish Radio Orchestra under the leadership of Daniel Harding.



ARNE NORDHEIM
(1931–2010)

**The
Tempest** (1979)
Suite from the Ballet

- 01 I. Calm Sea__05:41
- 02 II. Storm with Lightning and Thunder__04:14
- 03 III. Awakening__01:28
- 04 IV. Magic Circle__06:47
- 05 V. Lacrymae__08:42
- 06 VI. A Mazed Trod__02:59
- 07 VII. Four Legs and Two Voices__06:41
- 08 VIII. Caliban's Warning__13:04

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Arne Nordheim and Karsten Andersen, June 1979.
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