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CHARLES WUORINEN: HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES

CHARLES WUORINEN 1938–2020

HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES

LIBRETTO BY JAMES FENTON

HEATHER BUCK soprano

STEPHEN BRYANT bass-baritone

MATTHEW DiBATTISTA tenor

DAVID SALSBERY FRY bass

BRIAN GIEBLER tenor

WILBUR PAULEY bass

MICHELLE TRAINOR soprano

NEAL FERREIRA tenor

HEATHER GALLAGHER mezzo-soprano

CHARLES BLANDY tenor

AARON ENGBRETH baritone

THOMAS OESTERLING tenor

STEVEN GOLDSTEIN tenor

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT AND CHORUS Gil Rose, conductor

DISC 1 (80:54)

ACT I

- [1] Scene 1 In the Sad City of Alifbay 10:42
- [2] Scene 2 A Story 2:20
- [3] Scene 3 Enter Two Men 7:11
- [4] Scene 4 On the Road 3:17
- [5] Scene 5 To the Valley of K 1:16
- [6] Scene 6 In the Dark 0:33
- [7] Scene 7 In the Valley of K 2:25
- [8] Scene 8 Meeting Mr. Buttoo 2:59
- [9] Scene 9 The Floating Gardens 7:58
- [10] Scene 10 On the Houseboat 2:28
- [11] Scene 11 Changing Bedrooms 3:01
- [12] Scene 12 The Story Tap 9:38
- [13] Scene 13 Flying to the Moon 3:05
- [14] Scene 14 Wishwater 5:37
- [15] Scene 15 The Story He Drank 1:56
- [16] Scene 16 Flying to Gup City 9:17
- [17] Scene 17 War is Declared 7:08

DISC 2 (52:35)

ACT II

- [1] Scene 1 Rescue the Princess! 6:59
- [2] Scene 2 To the Twilight Strip 7:30
- [3] Scene 3 On the Way to the South Pole 3:37
- [4] Scene 4 They Were Being Pulled Slowly Forwards 12:47
- [5] Scene 5 Meanwhile, at the Citadel of Chup 5:39
- [6] Scene 6 At the Door of P2C2E House 5:29
- [7] Scene 7 Mr. Buttoo's Rally 4:33
- [8] Scene 8 Back Home 2:14
- [9] Scene 9 Haroun Wakes in His Bedroom at Dawn 3:46

By Mark Lamos

FILLING THE SEA OF STORIES

I can't quite remember how I came to direct the premiere of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, though I was thrilled to be asked, and I was eager to work with Charles Wuorinen, whose music I very much admired. I came aboard early in the composing process, which is always exciting for a stage director on a new opera. And as a fan of James Fenton's, when he agreed to write the libretto—in rhyming verse, no less (Salman's book is in prose), I sensed the piece would have strong "bones" which Charles could write to, and which I could stage with some assurity. James, Charles, and I discussed in very general terms how much we loved the book and what we felt the libretto needed to relate, since the book is picaresque and chock full of incident, detail, and surprises.

The finished libretto almost immediately inspired Charles to commence composition, and I was happy that James was able so deftly to mirror the novel's many tones, especially its playfulness and wistfulness. As I read it, images tumbled into my head, so I began collaboration with the superb design team: Riccardo Hernandez on sets, Candace Donnelly on costumes, and Robert Wierzel on lighting. It was a blessing that we'd worked together before and so had a shorthand and an ease together. Projection designer Peter Nigrini joined us as a newcomer and blended right in to the flow of ideas, images, and deeply dramaturgical thoughts the designers had about the novel. None of them had heard the score yet—Charles was still working on it—but we had the libretto and the novel in hand, and this generated enough ideas to get us going. The research was a joy to do; we could use it to give free reign to our fancies, and we were determined to fill the stage with color and exuberance and texture. India! Fantasy!



CHARLES WUORINEN AND GIL ROSE. PHOTO BY ERIC BERLIN.

Periodically I'd be invited to visit Charles and he would play what he'd composed so far. I enjoyed these get-togethers. He proved easy-going, opinionated, and very witty. Ribald too—especially when we uncorked the gin and vermouth and made liberal martinis. We had a running joke: he'd play a passage for me, and I'd yell, "Tunes, Wuorinen! Give me tunes!" And without missing a beat or a note, he'd continue banging out cascades of non-tonal, rhythmically challenging music and yell, "I don't *do* tunes!"

Salman was living mostly in New York City and still under the threat of *fatwā*, so there was something that felt revolutionary in making a piece adapted from and inspired by his work. As I recall, he was impossible to reach; he had to remain hidden. I was dying to talk with him, though—we all were. Well, Howard (Charles's partner) called me one day and said, "Salman is coming to lunch, you must join us." As I approached their home, I noticed (being an inveterate consumer of espionage and detective novels) a group of workmen doing ... something ... to the front steps. Mostly, they were watching me as I approached. They'd not been there before, and by this time I'd become a relatively frequent visitor to Charles's and Howard's home. They looked at me suspiciously as I, looking suspiciously at them, slowed down. Were they waiting to snatch Salman away before he could get inside, I wondered. (The *fatwā* had inspired a good deal of worry, tension, and indeed fear all 'round. It seemed very brave of Salman to venture out.) I noticed a gleaming black sedan parked right in front of the house, as well. Its motor purred but the windows were black, so whoever was inside was invisible.

Charles, Howard, and I waited. And waited some more. Finally the doorbell rang, and there he was. We shared a delightful lunch, and he was clearly thrilled that the opera was going to come about. He hoped somehow to be able to attend, but at that time it seemed doubtful. The lunch was collegial, and I was particularly happy to note that the mysterious workmen on the steps were gone by the time Salman had to depart. Another black car whisked him away.

The score, like the libretto, was completed on time, and New York City Opera, as usual, had fielded a stunning array of young, eager, attractive singers who came to the first rehearsal

note—and word—perfect. The score is exceptionally challenging, as you will hear. When I told the veteran mezzo Joyce Castle of my admiration for the cast's perfection, she nodded knowingly and said, "That's how American singers are. Europeans," she sniffed, "... aren't! They take a lot of boring time to learn everything."

I enjoyed rehearsing the piece, and scenes staged themselves with relative swiftness, thanks to my wonderful assistant David Grabarkewitz and the crack NYCO production team, who kept us neatly on schedule. The wonderful Heather Buck, pitch perfect as a sublime Haroun, led a cast of singing actors who went out of their way to capture the absurdity and energy of the creatures and the people in the opera.

When costumes, set, projections, and lighting came into the process, Charles seemed very happy. The final thrill came on opening night at the State Theater when, almost unexpectedly, Salman himself stepped onstage to join all of us taking a bow. The packed audience and everyone involved in making the piece roared with joy at his appearance. Tears flowed too, I recall.

I hope this recording will bring further life to *Haroun*. It richly deserves many revivals.

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Mark Lamos directed the world premiere production of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* at New York City Opera in 2004.



HAROUN, BUTT, AND RASHID ON THE BUS. PHOTO BY CLIVE GRANGER PHOTOGRAPHY.

HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES is an opera in two acts with a libretto by James Fenton based on the novel by Salman Rushdie. Scored for vocal soloists, chorus, and full orchestra, it was premiered by the New York City Opera, conducted by George Manahan, on October 31, 2004, at the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York, NY.

By Clifton Ingram

To read *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is to start in the middle of things, albeit not in classical *in medias res* as many literary warhorses do. (Think: Homer's *Odyssey*, "The Three Apples" from *Arabian Nights*, or Dante's *Divine Comedy*, where we must rely on the story-within-the-story to learn about our characters' experiences.) *Haroun* does begin *ab ovo* ("from the egg"), from the beginning of the story, in a more or less traditional way. But storytelling can be tricky enough when told start-to-finish. *Haroun's* reliance on nested narratives allows the stories-within-the-story to echo and reinforce each other, ultimately resonating their meaning to stronger effect. For example, here's one way to parse our young hero's interconnected goals throughout the narrative:

In order for our young hero Haroun to save his family, he must first restore his father's Gift of Gab.

In order to save his father (restore his power and confidence), Haroun must save the Land of K from the corrupt politician Snooty Buttoo.

In order to save the Land of K, Haroun must first find and save the Sea of Stories (thereby restoring his father's storytelling ability to defeat Snooty Buttoo).

In order to restore the Sea of Stories, Haroun must travel to the Land of Chup and defeat the Prince of Silence, Khattam-Shud.

Simple, right? Maybe not. There is a holistic quality in how the nested narratives—the adventures within the adventure—are joined and layered. They rely on each other for the final victory of storytelling—in the end, they must defeat Khattam-Shud, as the telling of this defeat is what ultimately defeats Snooty Buttoo, not to mention the home-wrecking Mr. Sengupta—which is more a triumph of effect and feeling than any logical conclusion to the story. Here, the *deus ex machina* that saves the day is the act of storytelling itself, which is both a whimsical notion and somehow plausible in an abstract sense. It is not so much about following every twist and turn of the plot, but about the fun to be had with the optimistic openness of a child protagonist along the way. Even more simply put, Haroun's adventures do not need to make sense to be meaningful—even if the novel does both, in its own way.

No doubt, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a tale about storytelling. Salman Rushdie's very choice of title emphatically hits home that this is one of "those" meta-narratives, a heady "story-about-the-nature-of-stories" story. And there is much going on in and behind the text and throughout the libretto of James Fenton's deft adaptation of Rushdie's 1990 novel. It is a veritable verbal playground for an experienced composer like Charles Wuorinen to set an opera. But for all its adult depth, Rushdie's novel reads more like a children's fairytale—why? Indeed, the literary atmosphere of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is saturated with tongue-in-cheek punning, intertextual tips-of-the-hat, and all-around whimsical wordplay. It is the kind of bookishly clever storytelling that reminds us of those childhood chimeras—like Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* or Norton Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth*—the ones that we revisit out of nostalgia as adults, only to find a familiar fantastic landscape from our sepia-tinged memories rife with previously missed meanings, often of surprisingly mature content, in contemporary technicolor.

One point here is that the reading (and re-reading) of the story changes the story itself, that by the very act of reading we are always-already inadvertently projecting ourselves into the text. Another point is that seemingly benign "literary nonsense" can easily prove to be quite the opposite. The textual reversals and inversions of reality's grey heaviness often end up carrying their own special weightless seriousness. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* does so by means of faulty cause-and-effect, madcap misappropriation and misunderstanding, new-fangled neologism, and pantomime-like portmanteau. *Haroun* is a message in a bottle for growing minds: the type of Disney or Pixar-esque animated romp that we would call "fun for all ages." But beyond the simple pleasures of the text, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* contains all the ingredients necessary for a good parody or satire—and can be easily read as one, as seems to be Fenton's and Wuorinen's desire in shaping their opera.

But this is all really just to say that *Haroun* is about the multi-faceted power that stories hold. Their imagination-fueled potency of possibility is activated not only by the telling of the tale, but also by its reception. Haroun's own nemesis, the nefariously despotic Khattam-Shud, speaks to this power during his explanation for poisoning the Sea of Stories with all the twisted arch logic expected of a James Bond villain. According to this Arch-Enemy of All Stories, the world is not meant for entertainment and imagination, for Fun. Instead, Khattam-Shud believes, "The world is for controlling. Inside every single story, there lies a world, a story world, that I cannot rule at all." Khattam-Shud, like a true tyrant, fears that which he cannot control. This is not surprising, of course; as Rashid Khalifa tells his son Haroun, Khattam-Shud "is the Prince of Silence and the Foe of Speech ... And so at the end of everything we use his name. We say: it is finished. It is over. Khattam-Shud: The End." Haroun's father is describing a rigid and humorless fundamentalism in regard to the telling and interpretation of the very stories that the autocratic villain seeks to eliminate. This illuminates perhaps a more significant element about cultural storytelling: how important the stories we are *allowed* to tell is to culture-creation. And make no mistake, *Haroun* was written in the face of much oppression for Rushdie.

The value of freedom of expression to society is ultimately being examined in *Haroun*. This freedom determines how we as witnesses are able to access the different meanings of our own lives by proxy, literally or otherwise. After all, ultimately this freedom determines what we share and learn from each other. And so, perhaps the dominant thrust of this fanciful tale is that the more types of stories we have, the more bountiful we are able to find our lives' meanings. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* then becomes about what music critic Peter G. Davis aptly describes as "free imagination trapped in a world of oppressive thought control." Through this lens, *Haroun* is a tale about the triumph of imagination over autocracy.

The steadfast composer Charles Wuorinen, who has remained loyal to 12-tone serialism for much of his long career, had the following to say about his writing the *Haroun* opera and staying true to the original novel:

"I wanted to try to emulate the character of the book and have it both ways. I mean, in the world of serious music, there's a very strong populist push these days, and that's something that I want no part of, but that fact doesn't need to get in the way of pure entertainment."

Wuorinen's devotion to the serial technique is in some ways a political one, as serialism is all too often considered an overly academic and "unmusical" invention of early 20th-century atonal pioneers. Using serialism therefore might seem contradictory to some as a means to write an opera about the triumph of freedom of expression. But for Wuorinen the tried-and-true technique seems more a means of salvation, as it necessitates a constant innovation of his craft, a way for the composer to avoid the too easily consumable, of getting stuck in a rut. And Wuorinen's contempt for "populist" neo-Romanticism is very much on record. In this light, Wuorinen's setting a whimsical story like *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* with the 12-tone method feels like a thrown gauntlet, a challenge to those that would dictate another's artistic and creative choices—a statement that "I'm doing it my way," regardless of a music scene's political pressures. A self-described "maximalist," Wuorinen uses serialism as a means to create vast amounts of motion, a "music luxuriant with events"—everything but the kitchen sink, as it were. Indeed, the music of *Haroun and*

the Sea of Stories is kaleidoscopically opulent at times, never resting long on one idea, full of energy and hopefulness for the possibility around the next corner, much like its youthful protagonist. The restless music is charged with what the composer finds so attractive about Rushdie's novel, "an admirable absence of self-pity and bitterness ... a social and political message against people who want to shut everyone up and strangle the imagination." And in the same way that the whole is greater than a recognition of its parts in following the plot of *Haroun*, Wuorinen suggests that the opera's ever-mutating maximalist effect is more important than locating the music's internal logic: "There is a [pitch-class] set underneath, though if anyone can find it, I'll give them a cigar. The overarching shape ultimately was given to me by the drama." Wuorinen's explanation sounds a bit like Iff the *Water Genie*'s explanation of P2C2E (Processes Too Complicated to Explain) to *Haroun*. Iff's message here might be that there are things that cannot be explained, that a steadfast hope for experience to show the way might be the best option—a subliminal message to Rushdie's own son for the struggles ahead.

For all its constant shifting of textures and densities, we can easily find the holistic in the opera. The role of the tyrannical Khattam-Shud is by no coincidence also sung by the same tenor that performs Mr. Sengupta, the clerk who has stolen Soraya (*Haroun*'s mother) away from Rashid and family. The story's ultimate villain, who aims to destroy the *Sea of Stories*, is the same as the more worldly villain that has come between *Haroun*'s parents and sent Rashid into a powerless depression at the start of the drama. With their many echoes and parallelisms, the nested narratives of *Haroun* contain their own allegorical tale for the reader to find and use.

The most important nested narrative of all is the context in which Salman Rushdie wrote his fourth novel—that is, the narrative of Rushdie's own private life and how it is interconnected with the already-nested stories of *Haroun*. For those not as familiar with Rushdie's work, the Bombay-born author was launched into literary success with his second novel, *Midnight's Children* (1981), which won the Booker Prize with its uniquely sci-fi blend of

magical realism with postcolonial and historical fictions. This combination creates a type of fiction that speaks truths about the reality that it is altering; and paradoxically it does so through this very artifice, as the fantastic fabrications are at the very root from which the fiction diverges from reality in the first place.

In February of 1989, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a *fatwā* due to controversy regarding Rushdie's third novel, *The Satanic Verses*, forcing the author into hiding for fear of his life (he would remain in hiding until 1998). The strain would prove enough to divide his family (like Haroun's family is divided). A few years after the publishing of *Haroun* in 1990, Rushdie would be divorced from his second wife, American novelist Marianne Wiggins. It seems Rushdie wished to explain this unfortunate change in the family's circumstances to his then 11-year-old son Zafar through the novel. Indeed, *Haroun* is based on the type of stories that Rushdie would improvise for Zafar at bath and bed times. In this way, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a "message in a bottle" to Rushdie's son, for him to read and remember his father from afar and through time as he grew older. In essence, a story that could change with a growing mind. And so, the acrostic poem of the book's dedication, which is notably used as text both to open and close the opera by Fenton and Wuorinen, is perhaps the greatest key to unlocking your own meaning in the opera *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

Zembla, Zenda, Xanadu:

All our dream-worlds may come true.

Fairy lands are fearsome too.

As I wander far from view

Read, and bring me home to you.

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Clifton Ingram is a composer, performer (Rested Field, guitars/electronics), and writer interested in the fault lines between contemporary and historical traditions. He holds degrees in music (composition) and classics from Skidmore College and The Boston Conservatory.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories

Music by Charles Wuorinen

Libretto by James Fenton, based on the novel by Salman Rushdie

Haroun Khalifa

Rashid Khalifa

Snooty Buttoo

Butt the Hoopoe

Iff the Water Genie

Mali / King of Gup

Oneeta / Princess Batcheat

Mr. Sengupta / Khattam-Shud

Soraya

Prince Bolo

General Kitab

Bagha

Goopy

Heather Buck, soprano

Stephen Bryant, bass-baritone

Matthew DiBattista, tenor

David Salsbery Fry, bass

Brian Giebler, tenor

Wilbur Pauley, bass

Michelle Trainor, soprano

Neal Ferreira, tenor

Heather Gallagher, mezzo-soprano

Charles Blandy, tenor

Aaron Engebretth, baritone

Thomas Oesterling, tenor

Steven Goldstein, tenor

ACT I

[1|1] **Scene 1** In the Sad City of Alifbay

SORAYA

Zembla, Zenda, Xanadu:
All our dream worlds may come true.
May come true.
They may come true.
All our dream worlds may come true.

HAROUN

That was my mother singing
In the sad city of Alifbay
And the smoke of the sadness poured away
Poured away
From all the sadness factories
Sadder than song
Sadder than song
Sadder than the seas where the glumfish swam
And something went wrong
One day
Something went wrong
And cut the thread of my mother's song.

SORAYA

Zembla, Zenda, Xanadu
Zembla, Zenda...

HAROUN (*speaking*)

As if someone had thrown a switch!
My father noticed none of this.
He was too busy
Telling stories every day
Hour after hour.
Myth and magic, wicked uncles,
Towards, heroes, catchy tunes,

Brand-new sagas, ancient legends,
Gangsters in yellow check pantaloons.

RASHID

Oh I am the Ocean of Notions.
I am the Shah of Blah.
The Source of the Sea of Stories
Is roughly speaking where we are.
I'm the guru of the Gulf of Gumption
With a hundred-mile attention span—
A heck of a feller
A treat of a teller
A million-volume version of a man.
Boccacc-i-o's Decameron
Is nothing to the likes of me.
A Thousand and One Arabian Nights
Are but a triviality
And Proust is a slim, slim volume
And Tolstoy a trite little joke.
I'm the Genie in the Bottle.
I'm the guy you'd like to throttle
I'm a never-ending sequel of a bloke!
I'm the Library of Alexandria!
I'm a desertful of Dead Sea Scrolls!
I'm a whole heap of hieroglyphics!
I'm the Greatest Story Ever Told!
I'm the soap of the soapiest opera!
I'm the Tale of a Tub at the turn of a tap!
I'm the art of diction!
I'm the Supreme Fiction!
I'm a multi-story carpark of a chap!

MR. SENGUPTA (*to Soraya*)

Supreme fiction indeed.
I'll give him a supreme fiction one of these days,
Excuse me if I mention
Excuse me if I dare
Excuse me but your husband
Has his head stuck in the air.
And what are all these stories?
And what are they to you?
(My dear)
What's the use of stories
That aren't even true?

HAROUN (*overhearing*)

What's the use of stories that aren't even true?
What a terrible question!
Father, where do stories come from?
Everything comes from somewhere
So a story couldn't come out of thin air.
The river comes from the mountain...

RASHID

Correct!

HAROUN

The rain comes from the sky...

RASHID

Spot on!

And the stories come from the Great Story Sea
And I shall never drink it dry.
I drink the warm story waters
Then I feel full of steam

HAROUN

Ridiculous!

MR. SENGUPTA (*aside to Soraya*)

My car is waiting.
Come with me my dear,

My dearest.

RASHID

And the stories come bubbling out of me...

HAROUN

Any more of this nonsense and I'll scream!

RASHID (*speaking*)

The story water comes out of an invisible tap installed by
one of the Water Genies.
Of course you have to be a subscriber.

HAROUN

And how do you do that?

RASHID

By a P2C2E— a process too complicated to explain.
How does a stroke of genius
Strike on the stroke of three?
By a P2C2

HAROUN

P2C2

BOTH

P2C2E!

RASHID

It's a complicated business
Which one day you will learn.
It's a wonder!
It's an enigma!
But you will have your turn
(My boy)
If I stand you a subscription
Will you do the same for me
For a P2C2

HAROUN

Me, too, see through

BOTH
The P2C2E!

RASHID
Now why should your mother have written me a letter?
Why couldn't she have spoken herself?
Let's see:
"My dear Rashid, my husband as was,
You are only interested in pleasure
But a proper man would know
That life is a serious business.
You have your head in the clouds—"

HAROUN
That's what Mr. Sengupta always says.
That sounds like Mr. Sengupta!

RASHID
"And your feet off the ground.
Your brain is full of make-believe
So there is no room for facts.
Mr. Sengupta has no imagination at all.
This is okay by me."
Oh No.

Drops letter, which Haroun picks up.

HAROUN
"Tell Haroun I love him
But I can't help him anymore.
I have to strike out now for a new life.
I have to slam the door."

RASHID
Eleven o'clock precisely.
She must have planned it all
To the last detail.

*Takes up clock and smashes it. Goes on rampage
smashing clocks.*

MRS. SENGUPTA
They've gone. They've gone together.
It was you neglecting your wife gave him the chance
And he took it like the rat that he is! Oh! Oh!

HAROUN
That was my clock. Why did you smash my clock?

RASHID
What to do, son
What to say, where to go.
This always telling stories
This is the only work I know.

HAROUN
But what's the point of it?
What's the use of stories that aren't even true?
(Rashid hides his face and weeps.)
If I could catch those words I spoke
And take them back again
I'd pay whatever price it took
Not to have seen your pain.
To turn the clock back a minute or less
To catch the word on the wing
I'd pay whatever price it took
Not to have done this thing.
I hurt you then. I know it now.
I knew it at the time.
But a word can strike like a criminal
And flee from the scene of the crime.
Return to the scene, o criminal word—
Isn't that what criminals do?
Return, return to the scene of the crime.
I have my dagger here for you

[1]2] Scene 2 A Story

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and Gentlemen,
The moment you have all been waiting for—
The great Ocean of Notions himself,
The Shah of Blah,
The Supreme Fiction—
Mr. Rashid Khalifa!

Applause

CHORUS
Tell us a story
Making it sentimental
And gentle
Or gory!
Tell us a story
Of caliphs and eunuchs and ogres
Or
Of Romans in tunics and togas
Shouting MEMENTO MORI!
Tell us a story
Of paynim knights and damozels
Or
Of fishnet tights and mam'selles
Inflammatory.
Tell us a story
Of the dragon, the hippogriff and the centaur
And other such mythological impedimenta
As are obligatory—
Tell us a Story
Now!
(pause)
If you please!

RASHID
Now let me see, in the Valley of Hum
In the days of who-the-devil was it...

CHORUS
This opening is inauspicious. Please improve.

RASHID
In the Valley of Hum in the days of Ha...

CHORUS
This exposition is exiguous.
We have nothing to go on.
Give us some facts.

RASHID
In the Ha of Hum...

CHORUS
This is minimalism

RASHID
Ho?! Hum?
Ark. Ark.

CHORUS
Verging on subliminalism.
You have exhausted our patience
With these equivocations.
Have some rotten eggs in return.

Crowd pelts Rashid.

[1]3] Scene 3 Enter Two Men

RASHID *(solus)*
Well, what's the use?
I had it all once
And now it seems I'm through
But who cares? Who's there to care

If I've run out of juice?
I might as well put my head in a noose.
What's the use of stories that aren't even true?
Oh it was all my imagination.
I had one once
And now it's flown into the blue.
But who cares? I've lost the caring part of me,
My instinct and my art.
I'm just a flake.
I might as well jump in the lake.
What's the use of stories that aren't even true?
I'm done.
My wife thinks herself well shot of me,
I'm an embarrassment to my son.
I've lost the thread.
I've lost the plot of me.
I might as well be dead
And through.
What's the use of stories that aren't even true?
MRS. SENGUPTA
I tell you something, Mr. Khalifa.
Independence is a beautiful thing.
No more Mrs. Sengupta for me!
From today, call me Miss Oneeta only.
(Sings her torch song, with diminishing confidence.)
I'm empowered
Bright as a frying pan that I myself
Have recently scoured.
I'm empowered!
The woman I once was
Oh that bloody woman was perfectly obviously
A bloody coward.
Now I'm empowered
I'm not afraid to live alone.

I don't sit waiting by the phone
Nor do I cry myself to sleep
(Or not as much as I used to)
And— you know— my existence has not soured.
I'M EMPOWERED!
(Bursts into tears.)
O! O! What is to become.
RASHID
What is to become indeed.
What is to become of all of us.
I've lost the gift of the gab
And the strangest thing has happened to Haroun.
He seems to have lost his powers of concentration.
Eleven minutes is as long as he can last.
After eleven, niente, nada, nix.
MRS. SENGUPTA
It's his pussy-collar-jee.
RASHID
I see.
MRS. SENGUPTA
You follow my drift.
RASHID
Well, no. Not your drift, as such.
Explain please.
MRS. SENGUPTA
His mother left at eleven o'clock precisely.
That was when you broke all the clocks.
It's pussy-collar-jee!
HAROUN (overhearing)
That isn't true.
Or maybe it is true.
I seem to stumble

After eleven minutes
And even when I count to eleven
My mind begins to wander.
What lies beyond eleven
Is wrapped in mystery.
I'm stuck in time like a broken clock.
I have no future.
Enter two men
RASHID
Who are you?
And why are you looking at me askance?
TWO MEN
We are two men in mustachios
And yellow check pants.
RASHID
I see I'm in for the high-jump.
Tell me what this mission means.
Cut the crap and spill the beans.
TWO MEN
Supposing a teller of stories
Got work from a powerful man
To tell the public stories
As only a storyteller can
And this powerful man had a rival
Who paid the old guy on the side
To pretend to forget all his stories—
RASHID
It's not true!
TWO MEN
And the silly old story-teller went and lied
And the powerful man grew angry
Cos the story-teller had taken a bung
So he sent out his trusted henchmen

To cut out the story-teller's tongue—
What a pity
What a horrible pity
What a horrible pity that would be!
RASHID
I deny it all.
It is true that I have been indisposed of late
But at our next appointment
In the Valley of K
I shall be terrifico
Magnifico.
Splendifico.
TWO MEN
Better you are
Better you are
Or out comes that tongue from your lying throat.
What a pity
What a horrible pity
What a horrible pity that would be.
(Spoken) And in case you think us incapable of such an
outrage, here's one we prepared earlier.
Handing Rashid a human tongue
HAROUN
My fault again.
I started all this off.
What's the use of stories that aren't even true?
I asked the question
And it broke my father's heart.
And now it's up to me to put things right.
Something has to be done.
Something has to be done.
And the trouble is— I haven't a clue in my head.



SHOOTY BUTT © AT HIS RALLY. PHOTO BY CULIVE BRANINGER PHOTOGRAPHY.

[1|4] Scene 4 On the Road

CHORUS

Get on the bus.
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus and come with us.
Vegetables goats and chickens
Sacks of rice and what the dickens
Leaking parcels, bags of rye—
Fling them in and pile them high
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus and come with us.
Gentlemen of many parts,
Travelling salesmen, unravelling tarts,
Hucksters, fixers, confidence tricksters,
Muckers, suckers, city slickers—
Get on the bus.
Unsavory monks
Get out of your bunks—
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus
With us.
Don't make a fuss.
Don't bust a truss.

BUTT

You seem a tip-top type, young man.
My good name is Butt
Driver of the Number One
Super Express mail-coach
To the Valley of K.
At your service, sir!

HAROUN

To the Valley of K?
Hey, if you mean what you say
And you really are at my service
Then there is something you can do.

BUTT

It was a figure of speech
But but but
I shall stand by my figure of speech.
Butt's a straight man
Not a twister.
What's your wish
My young mister?

HAROUN

Now let me see...
From the town of G
There runs a way
To the Valley of K...

BUTT

Correct!
HAROUN
And from the Pass of H
To the tunnel of I
There's a hairpin bend...

BUTT

There are twenty bends
And that's where many a journey ends.

HAROUN

But when you come through the tunnel
To the Valley of K—
Or so my father tells me—
There's a view to take your breath away

And no man can be sad
— Or so says my dad—
Who sees that view
When the fields are gold
The mountains silver
And the sky is blue.
Just give us two front seats
And cheer up my dad with that view.

BUTT
But but but
The hour is late.
We'll never be there before dark.
But but but
So what— let's try.
Let the sad dad have his day
All aboard for the Valley of K!

[1]5] Scene 5 To the Valley of K

CHORUS
Driver, driver, not so fast.
Every moment could be our last.

BUTT
The snow line! Icy patches ahead! Hurrah!

CHORUS
If you try to rush or zoom
You are sure to meet your doom.

BUTT
Crumbling road surface! Hurrah!

CHORUS
All the dangerous overtakers
End up safe at undertakers.

BUTT
Hairpin bends! Hurrah!
CHORUS
Look out. Slow down. Don't be funny.
Life is precious. Cars cost money.

BUTT
Danger of avalanches! Hurrah!

CHORUS
If from speed you get your thrill
Take precaution—Make your will.

BUTT
Full speed ahead into the Valley of K! Hurrah!

CHORUS
Aaagh!

They enter the tunnel.

[1]6] Scene 6 In the Dark

Black.

BUTT (*spoken, amplified, with reverberation*)

Like I said, Tunnel.
At the far end, Valley of K.
Hours to sunset, one.
Time in tunnel, some moments only.
One view coming up.
Like I said, no problem.

They emerge from the tunnel.

CHORUS
Aaah!

[1]7] Scene 7 In the Valley of K

HAROUN
So it was all true.
The fields are gold with saffron.
The mountains are silver with snow
And the skies are blue.

RASHID
Thanks for fixing this up, son.
But I admit
I thought we were all fixed up good and proper.
Done for. Finito. Khattam-Shud.

HAROUN
Khattam-Shud?
What was the story you used to tell?

RASHID
Khattam-Shud is the Arch-Enemy of all stories,
Even of language itself.
He is the Prince of Silence
And the Foe of Speech.
Everything ends.

Everything must come to an end.
Dreams end.
Stories end.
Life ends.
And so at the end of everything we use his name.
We say: it is finished
It is over.
Khattam-Shud: The End.

HAROUN
Khattam-Shud.
This place is doing you good.
Your crazy stories are coming back.

CHORUS
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus.
Get on the bus and come with us.
Don't make a fuss.
Don't bust a truss.
Get on the bus with us.

[1]8] Scene 8 Meeting Mr. Buttoo

SNOOTY BUTTOO
Mr. Rashid
Esteemed Mr. Rashid—
A legend comes to town:
The Shah of Blah deigns to make his way
To the Valley of K.
A pleasure to meet you.
The name is Buttoo.

HAROUN
Almost the same
As the bus driver's name.

BUTTOO
My dear young man not at all the same.
Bus driver?
Suffering Moses
Do I look the bus driver type?
Do you know to whom you speak?
I am Snooty Buttoo!

HAROUN
Well, excuse me—
BUTTOO
Respected Mr. Rashid,
Bearers will carry your bags.

(And yours too, I suppose, young man.)

HAROUN AND RASHID

Soldiers everywhere
And armored cars
And helmeted policemen
Lounging outside the bars
Burly men and surly men
Wandering around—
There's a sad feeling,
A bad feeling
In this town.

You can smell it on the highway
At night, when the trucks are gone
And the moon is shining
Bright as a silver piece
You can smell it in the alleyways
When the blinds are drawn
And the flame of the nightlight
Gutters in a pool of grease.
Sleeping out on the rooftops
Underneath the stars.
Gunshots from the mountains.
Gunshots from the bars.
Fearful men and tearful men
Stretched out on the ground—
There's a sad feeling,
A bad feeling
In this town.

HAROUN

How popular can Mr. Buttoo be
If he needs all these soldiers to protect him?
And why should my father
Tell stories for his campaign?

BUTTOO

Here is the swan-boat.
Tonight you stay as my guest
In the finest houseboat on the lake.
I trust it will not prove too humble
For a grandee like you.

[19] Scene 9 The Floating Gardens

RASHID

You see, Haroun, you see—
The Floating Gardens.
They weave a floating mat of lotus root.
You can grow vegetables on the lake.
That is, if you want to.

HAROUN

You sound sad, father.
Don't be sad.

BUTTOO

Sad? Did someone say sad?
Surely the eminent story-teller
Is satisfied with all we have done for him?

RASHID

Sir I am more than satisfied.
This sadness is an affair of the heart.

BUTTOO

Wife left you, did she?
Never mind.
There are plenty more fish in the sea.

HAROUN

Fish? Did he say fish?
Is my mother a pomfret?
Is she a shark?

Why doesn't father bop this Buttoo on the nose?

RASHID

But you must go a long, long way
To find Angel Fish.
Those Angel Fish are few and far between.

HAROUN

Never mind Angel Fish.
I can't even see to the tip of my—

RASHID

Phoo! Who made that smell?
Come on. Admit.

HAROUN

It is the mist.
We seem to have rowed
Into the Mist of Misery.
It is the Misery makes the Mist.

BUTTOO

That boy is crazy for make-believe
Like the folk of this foolish valley.
My enemies tell bad stories about me
And the ignorant people lap it up like milk.
So I have turned to you, Mr. Rashid.
You shall tell happy stories
You shall tell praising stories
And the people will believe you
And they will vote for me!
All of the people will vote for me!!
All the people will vote for me
Whether they like or no—
The muddy peasant with his ruddy wife,
The butcher with his bloody knife,
The nice boy on the way to school,
The ice boy with his ice-chopping tool,

The master of the silver band,
The lowly crematorium hand,
All the people will vote for me
Several times in a day.
None of them will get away
Until they vote for me!!
All the people will vote for me
Whether they like or no—
The laundress with her steamy vat,
The brothel madam and her cat,
The oily spiv with fancy wheels,
The transvestite in six-inch heels,
The chap in the chupatti flour,
The departed Parsee in the Vulture Tower—
All the people will vote for me
Several times in a day.
None of them will get away
Until they vote for me!!

HAROUN

Funny how that harsh hot wind
Began to blow
As soon as Snooty Buttoo began to speak.
This lake is positively temperamental...
But it's not at all dull.
It's positively temperamental.
Perhaps we have come to the Moody Land.
The Moody Land, the Moody Land
I heard my father say
When people were happy in the Moody Land
The sun would turn the night to day.
But when the sun got on their nerves
My father said to me
An irritable night would fall
Full of mutterings and misery.

And if they were neither happy nor sad
But muddled and unsure
The colours would run in the Moody Land
And every outline became obscure.
Oh father, father, take my hand
And try the trick with me.
Let us spread some joy in the Moody Land
And clear the Mist of Misery.

RASHID
My son, my son,
The Moody Land was only a story.

HAROUN
Now I know how *sad* he is.
"Only a story" indeed!
The Shah of Blah would never have spoken like that
In the good old days.
And now the mist is getting worse.

Lightning, Thunder

OARSMEN (*Chorus*)
Oh Oh Oh, down we go!

HAROUN
Okay. Everybody listen.
Stop talking. This is very important.
Not a word. Zip the lips
On a count of one two three.
One!
(I must try to calm them down
Or we'll definitely drown.)
Two!
(I must calm myself as well
And not let Buttoo break the spell.)
Three!

Now the waves and wind are gone
But the mist is lingering on.
Father, father, help your son.
Think of the happiest times you can.
Think of happiness gone by.
Think your happiness across the sky!
The mist disappears and the moon comes out.

RASHID
Now the sea is calm, and here's the moon.
You're a blinking good man
In a blinking tight spot.
Hats off to you, Haroun.
They arrive at the houseboat.

[1|10] Scene 10 On the Houseboat

BUTTOO
Welcome to my houseboat,
The largest and best on the lake.
I have called it Arabian Nights Plus One
Because even in the Arabian Nights
You will never have a night like this.
For you, erudite Mr. Rashid
Here is the peacock room,
And here on the shelves you will find
The whole collection of tales known as
The Ocean of the Streams of Story.
If ever you run out of material
You will find plenty here.

RASHID
Run out? What are you saying?

BUTTOO
Touchy, touchy Mr. Rashid!
It was a joke only,
A passing lightness,
A cloud blown away on the breeze.
Of course we have the highest expectations
Of your performance tomorrow
And all the praising stories
That will redound to our credit.
Of course we have...
Don't we?
Now as for you, young man,
We have given you the turtle room.

HAROUN
Thank you, it is very pleasant.

BUTTOO
Very pleasant, indeed!
Inappropriate young person,
This is Arabian Nights Plus One.
"Very Pleasant" doesn't cover it at all.
Supermarvelloso, perhaps.
Incredidable, and wholly fantastick!
All the best belongs to me!
Belongs to me!
Belongs to me!
The biggest vest!
The biggest treasure chest!
The biggest bathroom in the East or West!
Everything best belongs to me
By right!
Good night!

[1|11] Scene 11 Changing Bedrooms

Night music to indicate the passing of time. Haroun and Rashid are in their bedrooms, unable to sleep.

RASHID
It's no use.
I won't be able to tell my stories.
I'm finished, finished for good.
"Only praising tales" indeed.
I am the Ocean of Notions.
I am the Shah of—
Well, I'm not some office boy for Snooty Buttoo to boss
about.

But what am I saying?
What if I get up on stage and have nothing to say?
They'll slice me in pieces.
They'll come and cut out my tongue.
It'll be up with me for good.
Finito. Khattam-Shud!
Since you left me
Since you cleft my heart in two
Since you bereft me
There's nothing deft that I can do
I've no heft left
Since you tore the weft in two
Cleft my heart
Left me apart
From you.
Even my aria's run out of rhymes.

HAROUN
Still singing about my mother.
RASHID
Who's there?

HAROUN
It's me. I couldn't sleep.
I couldn't sleep on the turtle bed.
It's too weird.

RASHID
That's funny. I've been having problems with this peacock.
I'd rather a turtle any night.
How do you feel about the bird?

HAROUN
Definitely better.
A bird sounds okay.

RASHID
Well then let's swap.
Now get some sleep young man.

[1|12] Scene 12 The Story Tap

IFF
Do this. Do that.
Put it in. Take it out.
Rush job. Hush-hush job.
Never mind my workload.
Hot tap. Cold tap.
Story tap. Disconnect.
Cash job. On account.
On the never-never.
Never so much as a by-your-leave.
Never a thought for me, sir.
Disconnect my story tap
At the hour of three, sir.
Do this. Do that.
Put it in. Take it—
(Interrupting himself)
And on top of it all, where's my disconnecting tool?

Who's pinched it? Where are you?
No kidding. Well, enough's enough.
Party's over. Fair's fair.
GIVE IT BACK.

HAROUN
No.
IFF
The Disconnecter. Hand it over.
Return to sender.
Yield. Surrender.

HAROUN
You're not getting it back
Until you tell me what you are doing here.
Are you a burglar?
Shall I call the cops?

IFF
Mission impossible to divulge.
Top secret, classified. Eyes only info.
Zip the lips
Or you've had your chips.

HAROUN
Very well. Then I'll wake my father.

IFF
No. No adults.
Rules and regulations.
No parents or other close relations.

HAROUN
I'm waiting for some explanations.

IFF
I am the Water Genie Iff
From the Ocean of the Streams of Story.
You may think as a boy you're adorable.

I call you deplorable.

HAROUN
Are you really one of those genies
My father told me about?

IFF
Supplier of Story Water from the Great Story Sea.
Precisely the same. No other. It is me.
Or rather it is I.
I is it.
Hence this visit.
I regret to report
The gentleman your father
No longer requires the service.
He has discontinued narrative activities
Thrown in the towel
Told his last story
To the last vowel.
And hence my presence
For the purpose of disconnection of his story tap—
To which end, kindly return my tool.

HAROUN
Not so fast.
I don't believe you.
How did he send the message?
I've been with him almost all the time.

IFF
He sent it by the usual means—
A P2C2E.

HAROUN
And what is that?

IFF
Obvious.

It's a Process Too Complicated to Explain.
How does the Story Water
Come from the Story Sea
By a P2C2

HAROUN
P2C2
BOTH
P2C2E!
IFF

It's a most mysterious business
And hard to deconstruct.
It's a riddle.
It's a conundrum.
But it's utterly *ineluctable*
If you think of my department
You can think straight through to me
By a P2C2

HAROUN
No! Not he too!

BOTH
A P2C2E!

IFF
Something to do with thought-beams.
We listened to your father's thoughts—

HAROUN
And you got the wrong end of the stick
My father has definitely not given up.

IFF
Well, those are my orders.
If you have any queries
Please address them to:
P2C2E House

Gup City
Kahani.
HAROUN
Mr. Iff, take me at once to Gup City!
IFF
Oh, what a pity.
Gup City is banned, off limits, strictly restricted.
HAROUN
In that case you'll have to go back without *this*
And see how they like *that*.
IFF
Okay okay okay I give in.
You've got me bang to rights.
But if we're going, let's go now.
HAROUN
You mean—now?
IFF
Now means now
If you have something to do
Do it now.
Thinking of tying a shoe?
Tie it now.
Don't wait to slip
And trip on the street
—That is complete-
ly insane.
Think what advantage you gain
Doing it now
If you have somewhere to go
Go there now.
Though it is far as the crow
Flies, fly now.

Don't wait to pack
A rucksack or two.
That is the usual way.
Trust your first impulse and say:
I'll go there now.
So, pick a bird.
HAROUN
The only bird around here
Is a sort of wooden peacock.
IFF
Foolish thieflet,
A person may choose what he cannot see.
A person may mention a bird's name
Even if that creature is not present and correct.
A woodpecker, say, or a whinchat,
A wheatear, a waxwing or a wattlebird,
A whimbrel, a whistler or a wagtail,
A wigeon, a wedgebill or a weebill,
A whippoorwill, a warbler or a whiteye,
A whippoorwill, or a white-winged wydah—
All these exist, but there is more to come.
For a person may select
A flying creature of his own invention—
For example, a winged horse or a flying turtle,
An airborne whale or an aeromouse.
To give a thing a name, a label, a handle,
To pluck it out of the Place of Namelessness,
In short to identify it—
Well, that's a way of bringing
The said thing into being—
Or, in this case,
The said bird or Imaginary Flying Organism.
So pick a bird.
Think of all the birds you can,

Of all the winged creatures
Known and unknown to man.
HAROUN
I see a lion with a human head
And curly beard and hairy wings,
I see a monkey fly from tree to tree,
Angels and flying saucers, stranger things
Than ever I've heard said.
I see a school of levitating fish
Gulping the air and heading for the sky
And all these birds which seem to turn to me
And offer me the wings to fly—
Fly where my heart could wish
And offer me the wings to fly
Go heading for the open sky
Fly where my heart could wish.
Swim like a bird.
Fly like a fish.
Go heading for the open sky.
So, I'll choose that one—
The one with the funny crest.
IFF
So, it's the Hoopoe for us.
A significant choice!
Throws miniature Hoopoe out of window.
HAROUN
What was that for?
IFF
Wait and see.
(*A huge Hoopoe arrives.*)
And off we go!

[1|13] Scene 13 Flying to the Moon
HAROUN
That's odd, that floating feeling.
Just like on the mail coach ride.
And this Hoopoe with its feathers
Reminds me a lot of old Butt.
Butt with his quiff of hair.
Butt's hair seemed feathery
And these feathers seem hairy.
No bird could fly so fast.
Is this a machine?
BUTT THE HOPOE
But if I was?
Do you have some objection to machines?
But but but
You entrusted your life to me—
Am I not worthy of a little respect?
A machine
Is entitled to some self esteem
Or so it seems
To me.
HAROUN
You seem to be reading my mind.
BUTT
But but but certainly.
And I am speaking to you by telepathy.
HAROUN
And how do you do that?
BUTT AND IFF
By a P2C2E.
How does a hurtling hoopoe
Speak by telepath-ee?



IFF THE WATER GEM, BUTT THE HURDLE, AND HAROUN FLY TO THE MOON. PHOTO BY CLIVE GRANGER. PHOTOGRAPHY

ALL
By a P2C2
P2C2
P2C2E!

IFF
See there.
That is the second moon of Earth—
Kahani.

HAROUN
But but but
How can the earth have a second moon?
It would have been discovered!

BUTT
Speed, speed—
It is the Speed of the moon
Kahani.

Speed of the moon
Speed of the moon
Necessary
Needful speed
Shine like a spoon
Fly like a steed
Luminary
Lunar speed
Speed that conceals
Speed that reveals
Speed of hand and foot and thigh
Voom! Varoom!
Away we zoom!
Speed of a glance or a glint in the eye
Speed of the moon
Speed of the moon
Necessary

Needful speed
Be heedful Haroun
Of the speed of the moon
Heedful of the needful speed
Heedful of the needful speed.

*Rushing towards them is a sparkling and seemingly
infinite expanse of water.*

IFF
The Ocean of the Streams of Story—
Wasn't it worth travelling
So far and fast to see?

BUTT
Three two one zero!

They land on the Moon Kahani.

[1|14] Scene 14 Wishwater

HAROUN
It's a trick.
There's no Gup City here—
No point in being here at all.

IFF
Hold your horses.
Cool down.
Keep your hair on.
Everything will be explained.

HAROUN
But this is the Middle of Nowhere!

IFF
This is the Deep North of Kahani
And here we may find Wishwater.

BUTT
Look for the brightest patches of water.
That is wishwater.
Use it properly
And you can make a wish come true.

IFF
Wish for your father, Haroun,
And maybe you can make his problem disappear
And we can all go home.

HAROUN
Oh very well.
Though I should have liked to see Gup City too.

IFF
Tip top type!
Prince among men!
And hey presto—wishwater ahoy.

Iff fills a bottle with wishwater and hands it to Haroun.

BUTT AND IFF
Drink the water.
The harder you wish
The better it will work.
Your heart's desire
Will be as good as yours.
So—down the hatch!

HAROUN
I wish—what will I wish?
My wishes fly before me
Like a school of flying fish.
I wish my father well...
I wish him all the happiness of heart
And art
To tell...
To tell my mother to come home again!

No, that's not right.
Not quite.
I wish—what could I wish?
My wishes fly before me
Like a school of flying fish.
I see my father pleading
Saying: do this one thing for me...
What thing?
What can that be?
Maybe my father telling stories every day
Made my mother run away.
I wish she would come back.
No... that's a different track...
I wish—what would I wish?
My wishes fly before me
Like a school of flying fish—
Flashing
Dashing
Disappearing
Like a school of flying fish.

IFF
Eleven minutes—
Just eleven minutes and his concentration goes
Ka-bam, ka-blooney, ka-put.

HAROUN
I know.
I have failed.

BUTT
Wishes are not such easy things.
Don't bully the boy.
You, Mister Iff, are upset
Because of your own mistake,
Because we must now go to Gup City after all
And there will be harsh words,

Harsh words and hot water for you.
Stop taking it out on the boy.

IFF
But but but...
Okay, okay
Gup City it is.
Unless of course
You'd like to hand over the Disconnecting Tool
And call the whole thing off.

Haroun shakes his head miserably.

BUTT
But but but
You're still bullying the boy.
Cheer him up man
Cheer him up.
Give him a happy story to drink.

HAROUN
Not another drink.
What are you going to make me fail at now?

IFF
Cheer up, Haroun
And look at all the colours of the sea.
It is a liquid tapestry
Of breath-taking complexity.
This is the Ocean of the Streams of Story.
Every tale that has been told is here
And every tale that has yet to be invented
And if *you're* very careful
You can dip a cup into the ocean
And fill it with a single story—
A single pure stream of story
Like so.

Go on now. Knock it back.
Guaranteed to make you feel
A-number-one.

Haroun takes a cup, dips into the sea, and drinks a story.

[1|15] Scene 15 The Story He Drank

PRINCESS
An outlandish knight from the north country came
And he came for to rescue me
And the four-headed lion did shake its mane
Most grisly for to see.
Oh have you seen the noble knight
And have you heard his tune?
It is the fairest knight in the land
And his name it is Sir Haroun.
Oh yes I've seen the noble knight
A-pricking o'er the plane
And the sun did on his helmet shine
As on a mountain after the rain.

HAROUN
Let down, let down your flaxen hair
And I shall climb to thee
And I shall slay your jailer bold
And I shall your rescuer be.

PRINCESS
And so I let down my flaxen hair
And he began to climb
But then... I felt a hairy leg
And EEK it was a spider all the time!
Eek my dearest— you have into a spider turned!

Attacks Haroun with knife

[1|16] Scene 16 Flying to Gup City

IFF

Wake up, snap out of it.

Let's have you.

What happened?

Did you save the Princess?

HAROUN

I was saving her.

But then I turned into a spider.

IFF

Turned into a spider

In a Princess Rescue Story?

I can't believe it.

Never in all my born days.

HAROUN

I'm glad to hear it

Because I was thinking

That it wasn't the most brilliant way

To cheer me up.

BUTT

It's the pollution.

Something or someone has been putting filth

Into the Ocean of the Streams of Story.

If the stories get polluted they go wrong.

IFF

And if the poison has come as far as the Deep North

Then Gup City could be close to crisis.

BUTT AND IFF

Top speed ahead!

This could mean war!

HAROUN

War with whom?

BUTT

With the Land of Chup

On the dark side of Kahani.

This looks like the doing of the leader of the Chupwalas—

The Cultmaster of Bezaban himself.

HAROUN

And who is that?

BUTT AND IFF

His name is Khattam-Shud.

HAROUN

Too many fancy notions

Are turning out to be true.

Tell me more about Khattam-Shud.

IFF

Khattam-Shud is the Arch-Enemy of all stories,

Even of Language itself.

He is the Prince of Silence

And the Foe of Speech.

HAROUN

Exactly what my father told me.

BUTT AND IFF

On the far side of the moon

Darker than the deepest wood

In a permanence of gloom

Lives the Master Khattam-Shud.

And the dark Chupwalas go

Fearful of his least command

And their sombre legions know

Deeds done by his dreadful hand.

Everything must have an end,

Die, decay and decompose.

Friendship falter, falter friend.

Shorn the shape the shadow shows.

In the shadow of the moon

Darker than the deepest wood

You shall know, if you go, Haroun,

Khattam-Shud, Khattam-Shud—

You shall know

If you shall go

Khattam-Shud

Khattam-Shud.

HAROUN

Look at all the birds.

The sky is filling up with *birds*.

IFF

Something serious has happened.

All units have been called back to base.

HAROUN

Listen.

Listen to the beating of their wings.

Listen to the song of the birds.

CHORUS OF BIRDS

Halcyon blue

Halcyon blue

We're flying through the halcyon blue

On a thermal

On a high

Like mackerel in a mackerel sky.

Heaviside Layer

Heaviside Layer

We're flying through the Heaviside Layer

On a cyclone

Cycling near

Cycling home through the exosphere.

Bats have wings

And sprats have wings

And pterodactyls have similar things

To bring them through

The tropopause

And pare their nails and clip their claws.

Halcyon blue

Halcyon blue

We're flying home through the halcyon blue

On a thermal

On a high

Like mackerel in a mackerel sky.

HAROUN

What's that?

BUTT

A floating gardener of course.

Look— he floats, he runs, he hops.

No problem.

MALI

Who are you, stranger?

HAROUN

I am Haroun Khalifa

From the sad city of Alifbay.

MALI

I am Mali,

Floating Gardener First Class.

HAROUN

Please

What does a floating gardener do?

MALI

Untwisting twisted story streams.

Also unlooping same.

Weeding. In short: gardening.

BUTT AND MALI

Think of the Ocean as a head of hair.
The Story Streams are floating everywhere
As a thick mane is full of flowing strands
And you can run the stories through your hands.
Think of that hair growing longer every day
Thicker and knottier, tangled every way.
It needs a brush, conditioner, shampoo.
That's what a floating gardener has to do.

BIRDS

Halcyon blue
Halcyon blue
We're flying through the halcyon blue
On a thermal
On a high
Like mackerel in a mackerel sky.

BAGHA AND GOOPY

Hurry, hurry, don't be late.
Ocean's ailing. Cure can't wait.
Hurry, hurry.
Hurry.
Hurry, hurry.
Hurry.

BUTT AND MALI

These are Plentimaw fishes.
See how many mouths they have.

HAROUN

So there really are Plentimaw Fish in the Sea
Just as Snooty Buttoo said.
Excuse me,
Are you quite well?

BAGHA

All this bad taste! Too much dirt!

GOOPY

Swimming in the Ocean starts to hurt.

BAGHA

Call me Bagha. This is Goopy.

GOOPY AND BAGHA

Excuse our rudeness. We feel droopy.
Eyes feel rheumy. Throat feels sore.
When we're better we'll talk more.
Things are worse than we've ever known.
And the worst place is down in our Old Zone.

IFF

What? What?
If the Old Zone is polluted
Then the Source of all Stories is poisoned
And if the source is poisoned
What will happen to the Ocean, to us all?
We have ignored it far too long
And now we pay the price

BUTT (*spoken, amplified*)

Hold on to hats.
Hitting the brake now.
Gup City ahead.
Record time!
Va-va-voom!
No-o-o problem!

They land in Gup City.

[1|17] Scene 17 War is Declared

CHORUS

Now the lagoon is blue.
Now the lagoon is green
And now the lagoon is strawberry jelly
And something in between.

Now the lagoon is damask grey
And now an amber silk
And now the lagoon is a purple velvet
Dipped in a bath of asses' milk.
Stare in the depths of the water.
Stare in the depth Haroun.
This is the biggest kaleidoscope
On the bright side of the moon.
These are the colours of thought.
These are the colours of dreams.
These are the colours of storylines.
These are the story streams.
Now the lagoon is red.
Now the lagoon is blue.
Now the lagoon is everything
Everything a lagoon should be—
Topaz, quartz, chalcedony—
Doing everything a lagoon should do,
Everything, Haroun for you.

The crowd bustling about. General Kitab appears and the crowd falls silent.

GENERAL KITAB

Words fail the king.
He cannot speak to you.

CHORUS

Words fail his Majesty?
This is most unusual.

GENERAL KITAB

You tell them, Prince Bolo. (*Weeps.*)

PRINCE BOLO

They have seized her!
They have seized the Princess Batcheat
My bride to be.

The servants of the Cultmaster
Khattam-Shud...

CHORUS (*softly*)

Khattam-Shud.

BOLO

Have made off with my future wife.
Churls, varlets, dastards, hounds!
By gum, they shall pay for this!
Will they not pay for this, General Kitab ?
Will they not pay through the nose for this?

GENERAL KITAB

My liege, it is the most blasted business.
The Princess is now a prisoner
In the citadel of Chup,
The ice-castle of Khattam-Shud.

CHORUS (*softly*)

Khattam-Shud.

GENERAL KITAB

We have sent messages
To the Cultmaster Khattam-Shud—

CHORUS (*softly*)

Khattam-Shud.

GENERAL KITAB

Oh will you stop interrupting?
We have sent messages
Concerning the vile poison being injected
Into the Ocean of the Streams of Story
And the abduction of the Princess.
We demanded that he stop the pollution
And return the King's daughter within seven hours.
Neither demand was met
And I have to inform you
That a state of war now exists

Between the lands of Gup and Chup.
(*Silence.*)

I said a state of war now exists
Between the lands of Gup and Chup.
(*Silence.*)

I must say
You don't seem very interested.

CHORUS
You *told* us not to interrupt you
And we obeyed you to the letter.

GENERAL KITAB
My dear friends
I *seem* to have offended you.
You must forgive a military man
His crusty old ways.

CHORUS
It is never necessary or polite
To raise one's voice among friends.

GENERAL KITAB
Oh I *have* offended you.
Accept my most abject apologies.
Forgiveness, forgiveness
Forgiveness is all I ask.
Forgive me my friends
My failure to transcend
The limitations of my social class.

CHORUS
Forgiveness, forgiveness
Forgiveness is all he asks.
For failure to transcend
The limitations of his social class.

GENERAL KITAB
Forgive me my friends
My failure to transcend

The limitations of my social class.
CHORUS (*still seemingly offended*)
Very well. Go back to what you were saying.

GENERAL KITAB
I said I have to inform you
That a state of war now exists
Between the lands of Gup and Chup.

CHORUS (*after a split second, with amazing volume*)
War! War! War! War!
War between the lands of Chup and Gup!
War between the lands of Gup and Chup!
A battle to the death!
A battle to the dying breath!
A struggle for the triumph of the forces of the Good!
A struggle for the over throw of
(*pianissimo*)

Khattam-Shud!
GENERAL KITAB (*spoken*)
That's exactly what I had in—

CHORUS
War! War! War! War!
War between the lands of Chup and Gup!
War between the lands of Gup and Chup!
The armies of the night
Are absolutely frightful.
They are poisoning the Ocean like a poison of the blood
And the frightfullest of all of them is
(*pianissimo*)
Khattam-Shud!
(*fortissimo*)
Khattam-Shud!

End of Act I

ACT TWO

[2|1] Scene 1 Rescue the Princess!

Outside the Palace, exactly as before. Chorus and singers frozen in the same positions.

CHORUS
Khattam-Shud!
GENERAL KITAB
And now, herald, let my word go forth.
Bring the spy before the people!

FIRST HERALD
Bring the spy before the treacle!

SECOND HERALD
Bring the pie before the treacle!

THIRD HERALD
Fling the pie before the treacle!

HAROUN
Fling the pie before the treacle?
This could get messy!

GENERAL KITAB
You are right.
Officer, bring the spy before the people.

Footsteps approaching. Rashid is brought on with a sack over his head.

HAROUN
That looks like my dad.
It is my dad.

RASHID
Sir, there seems to be some mistake.

I am just a story-teller
And a long-time subscriber
To your story-water service.

CHORUS
One of our own subscribers
And he has betrayed us!
Caught spying in the Twilight Strip.

HAROUN
He's not a spy.
He's my father.

RASHID
Haroun!
HAROUN
And the only thing wrong with him
Is that he's lost the gift of gab.

RASHID
That's right, my son,
Tell everyone.
Broadcast it to the whole world.
Don't mind my feelings.
I'm just a humble story-teller
Who bit off more than he could chew.
I became over-extended
And now my story's ended.
(*Weeps.*)
It's so discouraging.

CHORUS
Aaah!

PRINCE BOLO
Tell us your story.
I love a good story—
Especially if I come into it.
Tell us a Prince Bolo story.

RASHID
Oh very well then.
It was like a dream
It was a dream
I fell asleep, and
I flew to the Twilight Strip.
It was dark and the trees were dripping.

PRINCE BOLO
How utterly gripping!

RASHID
And there was the whole Chupwala Army
Encamped in their black tents
In fanatical silence.

PRINCE BOLO
Those black tents
Are making me tense—
Go on.

RASHID
I made my way
Among those dull pavilions
Among those millions of scullions
Scouring their skillets
Outside their billets
When suddenly
I heard the sound
Of a young woman singing.

PRINCE BOLO
How wonderful!

RASHID
It was without doubt
One of the most appalling experiences of my life—
A voice like a parakeet
In heat—
Like so:
(He imitates the voice.)

CHORUS
Batcheat!
He has heard the Princess Batcheat!

PRINCE BOLO
Princess Batcheat,
My love, my bride to be!
So this is a Prince Bolo Story after all.
Proceed, pronounce, for pity's sake.

RASHID
No sooner had the princess and her handmaidens
Come into view
Than a posse of Chupwalas
Leapt from the bushes
And bagged the lot of them
Kicking and screaming

PRINCE BOLO
And you did nothing?
You did nothing to save them?

RASHID
Me? I did nothing?
You mistake your man...
Ahem... I, ah, I...

PRINCE BOLO
Well then...

RASHID
Sire, swift as a sunbeam
I surveyed my situation.
It was insupportable.
An unspeakable peril.
Not only was I in my nightshirt and unarmed,
I was also outnumbered twenty-five to one.

PRINCE BOLO
Those odds are trifling.

RASHID
Exactly what I thought
Until I heard something
That made my blood run cold—
So cold, I decided
There wasn't a moment to lose.
I must seek help at once.
Prince Bolo, sire,
Are you sitting down?

PRINCE BOLO
Of course not, I—

RASHID
Be prepared for the worst.
As the Chupwala soldiers
Hauled the Princess away
Kicking and screaming
I heard one say:
"The great Feast of the Idol Bezaban
Is coming soon.
Let us offer this Guppee Princess
As a sacrifice.

Let us stitch up her lips
And sacrifice her to Bezaban."

PRINCE BOLO
Now there is not a second to lose!
Assemble the armed forces—
All the pages,
Every Chapter,
Every Volume.
To war! To war!
For Batcheat, only Batcheat!

GENERAL KITAB
For Batcheat and the Ocean!

CHORUS
For Batcheat and the Ocean!

RASHID
Sire, I shall lead you to the Chupwala tents.

HAROUN
I'm coming too.

RASHID
No, son.
This could be dangerous.

HAROUN
All the more reason for sticking together.
It's a Princess Rescue Story.
It's a deed of derring-do.
It's a case of death or glory.
A priori
It's my cue.

RASHID
Though the upshot may be gory
We shall have to see it through.

Though the story may be hoary
A priori
It's our cue.

CHORUS
It's a well-known category
It's a tale that's tried and true.
It's a Princess Rescue Story
A priori
It's our cue.

[2|2] Scene 2 To the Twilight Strip

BAGHA
Saving Batcheat! What a notion.

GOOPY
What matters now is saving the Ocean.

BAGHA
That's the plan to set in motion.

GOOPY
Find the source of the poison potion.

BAGHA AND GOOPY
The Ocean's the important thing.
Worth more than the daughter of any king.

HAROUN
Sounds like mutinous talk to me.

BAGHA AND GOOPY
What's a Mutinus? Who he be?

HAROUN
What a chattering, clattering, quarreling crew
Sailing through the halcyon blue—
Floating gardeners, Pages, Barge-birds,

Plentimaw Fish
Plentimaw Fish
Plentimaw Fish in the Story Sea.

CHORUS
Chatter chatter chatter
What's the matter if we chatter
If we chatter chatter chatter on our way?
Chatter chatter chatter all day?
What's the matter with our patter
With the clatter of our scattergun

Rattling
Battling
Fray?

HAROUN
You'll give the game away!

CHORUS
Better to give
Better to live
Giving the game away.

HAROUN
What an absurd armada!
How can we ever succeed?
There isn't even any light
To see the enemy by.
We're on a suicide mission.
Batcheat will perish
And the Ocean will be ruined forever.

BUTT
But but but
Don't be depressed.
You're suffering from Heart Shadow.
Everyone gets it

As they come to the Twilight Strip
Heart Shadow—
The night is brushing you
Brushing like a raven's wing
A fearful thing
To feel.

IFF
Heart Shadow—
The wind is rushing through
Rushing like a swollen stream
And yet it seems
Unreal.

MALI
It feels like a memory
Buried somewhere beneath the snow.
It feels like a memory
Of something somehow lost long ago.

MALI, BUTT, AND IFF
Heart Shadow—
That loss is crushing you
Crushing you before you start
Making you lose heart—
Heart Shadow.
You're feeling Heart Shadow.

They land on the Twilight Strip.

CHORUS
Hush for a moment.
This is the Twilight Strip.
On these dark shores
No birds sing.
No wind blows.

No voice speaks.
Feet falling on the shingle
Fall silently.
The air smells stale
And stenchy.
The bushes cluster around
And leafless trees
Like fallow ghosts.
All is still and all is cold.
The darkness is biding its time.

RASHID
The further they lure us
Into the darkness
The better for them.
And they know we will come
Because they are holding Batcheat.

HAROUN
I thought that Love
Was supposed to conquer all
But it seems that Love
Makes monkeys of us—
Makes mincemeat of the lot of us.

PRINCE BOLO
Storyteller
Now is the hour
When you must lead us to the tents of the Chupwalas.
Great matters are afoot.
We must save the Princess.

HAROUN
Yes, father, you must save the Princess
And I
I shall go down to the Old Zone

And I shall save the Sea of Stories.

RASHID

To save the Sea of Stories singlehanded!
There's more to you, Haroun Khalifa,
Than meets the blinking eye.

HAROUN

There's not a moment to lose.
The sea is dying as we speak.
The sea is dying
And all the stories will end.

RASHID

Good luck, son.
Good luck, Haroun,
My pride and joy!
Oh, I feel as if I'd lost the plot entirely.

[2|3] Scene 3 On the way to the South Pole

MALI

Speed of the moon

BUTT

Speed of the moon

IFF

Necessary
Needful speed

MALI, BUTT, AND IFF

Shine like a spoon
Fly like a steed
Luminary Lunar speed

HAROUN

It's getting even colder
And the waters are losing their colour.

BUTT

Speed that conceals
Speed that reveals

BAGHA AND GOOPY

We're going the right way! We can tell!
Before it was filthy! Now it's Hell!

HAROUN (*to Mali*)

Doesn't the poison hurt your feet?

MALI

Poison?
A little poison? Bah!
A little acid? Pah!
I'm a tough old bird.
It won't stop me.
You can stop a cheque.
You can stop a leak or three.

You can stop traffic, but
You can't stop me.

HAROUN

Nobody wants to.
We're out to stop the Cultmaster
Khattam-Shud.

IFF

If the source of the Sea of Stories
Is at the South Pole
Then that's where Khattam-Shud will be.

HAROUN

To the South Pole.
To the South Pole.

BUTT

Full speed ahead to the South Pole.

BAGHA AND GOOPY

Never thought it would be so bad.
We have failed you. We feel sad.
I feel terrible. She feels worse.
We can hardly speak in verse.

HAROUN

Stay here and keep watch.
Goodbye.
The water is growing thicker.
It's like looking into molasses
Through dark glasses.

MALI

These are the waters of neglect.
These are the seas of disgrace.
Give me a year and
I could clean this place.

HAROUN

But we haven't got a year.
We haven't a moment to waste.

MALI

I'll go ahead and I will clear
A channel through.
You can stop a cheque.
You can stop a leak or three.
You can stop traffic but
You can't stop me.
You can't stop me
(I said)
You can't stop— aaagh!

HAROUN

Mali. Mali! Where are you?
Mali?

Hissing sound.

BUTT

It is the Web of the Night.
We are caught in the Web of the Night.
And the Web will grip you harder
The harder you fight.

IFF

It's no use.
It's no use.
Khattam-Shud
Has cooked our goose.

HAROUN

So we're prisoners already?
Some hero I turned out to be!

[2|4] Scene 4 They Were Being Pulled
Slowly Forwards

IFF

Up the creek
Pretty pickle
Had our chips is what I'd say.

BUTT

Woe is us!
Alack-a-day!

IFF AND BUTT

Hai-hai-hai
Hai-hai-hai
It's zap, bam, phut, finito for us all.

HAROUN

You're a fine pair of companions.
Pull yourselves together.

BUTT
How can we pull ourselves anywhere
When we are being pulled in the Web of Night?

IFF
Look down
Look down at the Ocean.

HAROUN
It is as cold as death.

IFF
Look at it now.
Look at it now.
The oldest stories ever made—
Look at them now.
We let them rot.
We abandoned them
And now they are utterly spoilt.

The Web of Night is removed. They are surrounded by Chupwalas.

HAROUN
We have stopped.
We must be on the edge
Of Perpetual Darkness.
They are taking us to the flagship
Of Khattam-Shud.

They are led onto the ship.

BUTT
But but but
You must not take that—
That's my brain!

The Chupwalas remove Butt's brain.

HAROUN
Oh Hoopoe
I'm sorry I ever criticised you.
You're the best and bravest machine that ever was.
I'll get back your brain for you.
Oh brave machine
Now it's too late to tell you what you mean
To me
To say what might have been
What moments on this flight have been
With your machinery—
Oh brave machine
Now it's too late to tell you what you mean
To me
And now this night has been
The chance to put things right has been
Lost, all at sea
For you, for me,
With your machinery.

IFF
Here, a little emergency something.
Maybe you'll get a chance to use it.

HAROUN
What is it?

IFF
Bite the end off
And it will give you two full minutes of light.
It's called a Bite-a-Lite.
Hide it under your tongue. Shh!

Haroun pockets the Bite-a-Lite.

HAROUN
Look, it's a factory ship

And those must be the poison tanks
And yet it all seems
Shadowy
As if the whole thing were made of shadows.
(Enter Khattam-Shud.)
And who is this skinny, scrawny,
Measly, weaselly, snivelling clerical type?
Can this be the terrible Cultmaster himself
Or could it be his shadow?
He reminds me of someone.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Spies. What a melodrama.
A Water Genie from Gup City
And a young fellow from down there
If I am not mistaken.

HAROUN
I know him.
I've met him somewhere before.

KHATTAM-SHUD
What brought you here, young man?
Stories, I suppose.
Well, look where stories have landed you now.
What started out as stories
Has ended up as spying
And you know what happens to spies, don't you?
Excuse me if I mention
Excuse me if I dare
Excuse me but this young man
Has his head right in the air.
What started out with stories
Has got him in a stew—
Young man!
What's the use of stories

That aren't even true?

HAROUN
I know. You're him.
You're Mr. Sengupta and you stole my mother.

IFF
Haroun, lad, it's not the same guy.
This is the Cultmaster of Bezaban, Khattam-Shud.

HAROUN
But I thought *he* was back in his Citadel!

KHATTAM-SHUD
He is. I am. That is, I am his shadow.
We've split in two
So I can poison the Ocean here
And defeat the Guppies there.
Body there. Shadow here.
No problem.
Come, young Haroun,
And let me show you my poison-blenders.
We need all the poisons we can make
For every story to be ruined in a different way.
And I have discovered
That for every story there is an anti-story.
Put the two together
And they cancel each other out.
Every day we release new poisons.
Soon, now, soon
The Ocean will be dead—
Cold and dead—
And my victory will be complete.

HAROUN
But why do you hate stories so much?
Stories are fun.



KHATTAM-SHUD'S LENCES PRINCESS BACHEAT PHOTO BY CLIVE GRANGER PHOTOGRAPHY

KHATTAM-SHUD
Foolish child,
The world is not for fun.
The world is for controlling.
Inside every single story
Is a world, a story world,
That I cannot rule at all.
Beyond my control!
Can you imagine it?
Can you imagine what that means to me?
It spoils everything!

Mali is heard whistling.

KHATTAM-SHUD
What was that?
I gave the strictest instructions
Nobody should ever whistle.

VOICE OF MALI
You can chop a flower-bush
You can chop a tree
You can chop liver but
You can't chop me.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Intruder. Intruder alert!

HAROUN
Hooray, Mali!

VOICE OF MALI
You can chop and change
You can chop in ka-ra-tee
You can chop suey but
You can't chop me
(I said)
You can't chop me.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Switch on the darkness!
HAROUN
Come on now Haroun—
It's your turn now or never.

KHATTAM-SHUD
This is control.
This is control.
Kill all the intruders.
Kill all the intruders.

HAROUN
Let's see what a Bite-a-Lite can do.
(Brilliant light. Groaning and shrieking of Chupwalas.)
Now if I just grab that brain-box.
But how does it connect up?
Like so?

BUTT *(making strange noises)*
You must sing a-down-a-down
And you call him a-down-a—

HAROUN
I've driven it mad.
Let's see...

BUTT
Look, look! A mouse. Peace, peace!
This piece of toasted cheese will do it.

HAROUN
Third time lucky, I hope.

BUTT
So what took you so long.
Let's go. Va-va-va-voom! Away we zoom!

HAROUN
They'll kill us if we try to escape.
We've only got one minute left of the Bite-a-Lite.

IFF
Look in your right pocket.

HAROUN
What? Wow! I'd forgotten.
There's still some wishwater left.

IFF
Go ahead. Wish us out of this mess
If you think you can concentrate.

HAROUN
Maybe this time I can do better than that.

BUTT AND IFF
Remember
The harder you wish
The better it will work.
Your heart's desire
Will be as good as yours.

HAROUN
I wish— what will I wish?
My wishes fly before me
Like a school of flying fish.
I wish this moon to turn
I wish this moon to turn in such a way
Today
Right now
So that the sun will shine
Shine on the Dark Ship
Shine on the dark Chupwalas one by one
Shine on, oh sun
Shine on the bad

Shine on the good
Shine on the world, the work of Khattam-Shud
Shine on the poisoned sea
Shine on my friends and shine on me.
I wish— this is what I wish.
My wishes fly before me
Like a school of flying fish.
I wish the sun to rise
Shine on the dread Chupwalas with their negative eyes
Shine on the Dark Ship on the poisoned sea
Shine on my mother wherever she be
Shine on my friends, shine on my dad, and shine on me.

The sun rises and the Dark Ship is destroyed.

[2|5] Scene 5 Meanwhile, at the Citadel of Chup

CHORUS
War! War! War! War!
War between the lands of Chup and Gup!
War between the lands of Gup and Chup!
A battle to the death!
A battle to the dying breath!
A struggle for the triumph of the forces of the good!
A struggle for the overthrow of
Khattam-Shud!

Battle music.

PRINCE BOLO
Where are you, Khattam-Shud?
Come on out.
Your army has been defeated
On the plains of Bat-Mat-Karo
And Batcheat
My golden girl

My princess, my love—
Where are you? Are you still alive?
KHATTUM-SHUD
Listen a moment.
You'll soon hear where your girlfriend Batcheat waits.

BATCHEAT
Ooh I'm talking 'bout my Bolo
And I ain't got time for nothin' else.

RASHID
I'm sure I know that song
But the words seem different.

BATCHEAT
Lemme tell you 'bout a boy I know,
He's my Bolo and I love him so.

BOLO
She sings? My Batcheat sings?
Then hush my friends and hearken to her song.

BATCHEAT (*appearing at a window in a tower*)
He won't play polo,
He can't fly solo,
Oo-wee but I love him true.
Our love will gro-lo,
I'll never let him go-lo—
Got those waiting for my Bolo blues.

BOLO
Beautiful. That's so beautiful.

BATCHEAT
His name aint Rollo,
His voice aint low-lo,
Uh-HUH!
But I love him fine,
So stop the show-lo,

Pay me what you owe-lo.
I'm gonna make that Bolo
Mine
YESSIR!
I'm gonna make that Bolo— aaggh, mmfff—
*Khattam-Shud appears at the window, his hand over
Batcheat's mouth.*

KHATTAM-SHUD
Prince Bolo, General Kitab,
I have heard your idle boasts
But before I let anyone lay hands on me
I shall sew up the lips of the Princess Batcheat
And put a stop to this racket for good
By sacrificing her to the colossus of Bezaban.
I have the needle here!
I have the thread.

PRINCE BOLO
Someone help me. Help save the Princess Batcheat!

CHORUS (*looking at their fingernails*)
Well...

BATCHEAT (*breaking free for a moment*)
I'm gonna MAKE THAT BMFFF!!!

BOLO
Is that a voice or what is it?

RASHID
It must be a what-is-it
For it isn't a voice.

Rumbling noise in distance.

KHATTAM-SHUD
Maybe this staple-gun will do the trick!

CHORUS
That sounds like an earthquake!

Sun rises on Citadel of Chup. Enter Haroun with Iff, flying on Butt.

HAROUN
It's a Princess Rescue Story.
It's a deed of derring do.
It's a case of death or glory—
A priori
It's my cue.

CHORUS
It's a well-known category
It's a tale that's tried and true.
It's a Princess Rescue Story
A priori
It's our cue.

They rescue Princess before Citadel collapses, taking Cultmaster and Idol with it.

[2|6] Scene 6 At the Door of P2C2E House

HAROUN
They told me to report here
And they sounded cross
Maybe I'm in trouble.
Knock knock.

VOICE
Who's there?

HAROUN
Haroun.

VOICE
Haroun who?

HAROUN
Haroun who was told to report here.

VOICE
Come in, little Haroun.
Come in and get a big surprise.

HAROUN
Is it a nice surprise
Or a nasty one?

VOICE
It's a surprise surprise.
It's a

The door opens. Light floods the stage.

CHORUS
Party! It's a party!
Hats off to you, Haroun.
Hats off to you, Haroun.
You're a heck of a chap

In a heck of a spot.
Hats off to you, Haroun, Haroun
Haroun!
Haroun!

Hats off to you, Haroun.

RASHID
When you've lost your inspiration
And you've storyteller's block
And you're somewhere between a hard place
And the proverbial rock
When you need a chap to befriend you

Or you'll burst like a stuck balloon
I can heartily recommend you
My talented son, Haroun, Haroun—
You're a tonic!
You're bionic!
My talented son, Haroun.

CHORUS
Hats off to you, Haroun.
Hats off to you, Haroun.
You're a heck of a chap
In a heck of a spot.
Hats off to you, Haroun, Haroun.

PRINCESS BATCHEAT
When they drag you off and gag you
And they bind your every joint

CHORUS
Stop!

PRINCESS BATCHEAT
In a Princess Rescue Story
Which seems to have lost its point,

CHORUS
Stop!

PRINCESS BATCHEAT
When you suffer a dread enforcement
And you feel you're about to swoon
I can offer a warm endorsement
Of my punctual friend Haroun, Haroun—

CHORUS
Stop!

PRINCESS BATCHEAT
I was frantic!

You're romantic!
My punctual friend Haroun.

CHORUS
Hats off to you, Haroun.
Hats off to you, Haroun.

BUTT, IFF, AND THE KING
For that quasi-impossible mission
For that deucedly difficult quest
For his verve and vim and vision
For his zip and his zeal and his zest
From the top-knot to the toenail
From pig-tail to pantaloons
We can offer a testimonial
For our capable friend Haroun, Haroun—
Your example
Has been ample,
Our capable friend Haroun.

CHORUS
Hats off to you, Haroun.
Hats off to you, Haroun.
You're a heck of a chap
In a heck of a spot.
Hats off to you, Haroun, Haroun.

Haroun!
Haroun!
Hats off to you, Haroun.

THE KING
Haroun Khalifa,
To honour you for the service
You have done to the peoples of Kahani
And to the Ocean of the Streams of Story
We grant you the right to ask of us

Whatever favour you desire
And we promise to grant it if we can.

RASHID
Well, Haroun, Any ideas?

HAROUN
It's no use asking for anything
For what I really want
Nobody here can give me.

THE KING
I think we can give you what you want.

HAROUN
And what would that be?

THE KING
After a great adventure
Everyone wants a happy ending.

HAROUN
A happy ending, yes.
But not only for me.
I come from a sad city
From the sad city of Alifbay.
I should like a happy ending
Not just for my adventure
But for the whole sad city, too.

THE KING
Haroun, Haroun
Happy endings come
But not till the end of the story.
I think—ahem—
That you and your father here
Have forgotten something.

HAROUN
Now, what could that be?

RASHID
Oh my goodness!
Snooty Buttoo!
It had quite gone out of my mind.
Come, Haroun, there is no time to lose.

[2|7] Scene 7 Mr. Buttoo's Rally

CHEERLEADERS
Vote Buttoo
Vote Buttoo
Who's the one for you?
Not just one, Buttoo!

MR. BUTTOO
All the people will vote for me
Whether they like or no—
The muddy peasant with his ruddy wife,
The butcher with his bloody knife,
The nice boy on the way to school,
The ice boy with his ice-chopping tool,
The master of the silver band,
The lowly crematorium hand—
All the people will vote for me
Several times in a day.
None of them will get away
Until they vote for me!

CHEERLEADERS
Vote vote vote
For you know who.
Vote Buttoo.
Vote Buttoo.
Vote Buttoo, or else!

BUTTOO (*aside to Rashid*)
And you, Mr. Rashid,



You're on now,
And you'd better be good, or else...

TWO MEN IN MUSTACHIOS
Or else out comes that tongue from your lying throat.

BUTTOO AND TWO MEN
What a pity
What a horrible pity
What a horrible pity that would be.

RASHID
Ladies and gentlemen
The great Shah of Blah
The Ocean of Notions himself —
That is, myself —
Is about to tell you a story
And the name of the story I am going to tell is
Haroun and the Sea of Stories.

CHORUS
Tell us that story!
Tell us that story!

HAROUN (*aside*)
So you didn't forget...
You're back on line.

RASHID
There was once a young boy
In the sad city of Alifbay
Where the smoke of the sadness poured away
Poured away
From all the sadness factories...

Continues telling story in dumbshow.

BUTTOO
I don't like the sound of this.

I don't like the sense of this.
I don't like the mood of this.
I don't like the tense of this.

CHORUS (*listening to Rashid*)
No-o-o-o.

BUTTOO
I don't like the drift of this—
Something slipping away from me.
I don't like the shift of this—
Someone calling it a day for me.

CHORUS
Ah-a-a-ah! No-o-o!

BUTTOO
I want the glory and
I want it whole,
I want a storyline
I can control.
Control
Control
I can control!
I want a storyline
I can control!

MEMBER OF CHORUS
Mister Buttoo
Khattam-Shud!

CHORUS
Mister Buttoo
Khattam-Shud.

BUTTOO
Alright everyone—
That's enough story-telling.
Now everyone go down to the polling-station

And vote for me!
Vote for me!

CHORUS
No no no.
We will not vote for you.
We will not speak by rote for you.
We will not trail a coat for you
Or push out the boat for you
Any more.

BUTTOO
How can this be?

CHORUS
Because we are free—
Or if not yet we shall be soon
Thanks to the efforts of Haroun.
We shall be free of you for good.
Snooty Buttoo is Khattam-Shud.

They chase him away.

[2|8] Scene 8 Back Home

RASHID
Here we are, son,
Back here again in Alifbay.
I wonder what we'll find.
Hallo? Anyone there?

HAROUN
Miss Oneeta, Miss Oneeta.

MRS. SENGUPTA
O too fine!
You are back. You are back.
What celebrations we will have,

What sweets there will be to eat!

HAROUN
Why, what is there to celebrate?

MRS. SENGUPTA
Well now, for me
I have really said goodbye to Mr. Sengupta.
I'm finally and truly empowered
And I am free as a bee.
And as for you...
You know...
Someone else has said goodbye to Mr. Sengupta too.

RASHID
Soraya! My dear wife!

SORAYA
I know, I made a mistake.
I went—I don't deny.
I acted like a fool
Or worse
And with that sniveling, drivelling
Mingy, stingy
Measly, weaselly clerk.
But now he's done for
Done for good.

HAROUN
Khattam-Shud.

SORAYA
That is right, Haroun, my son.
Mr. Sengupta is Khattam-Shud.

RASHID
Welcome home Soraya
Welcome
Welcome home.

[2]9] **Scene 9** Haroun Wakes in His Bedroom at Dawn

SORAYA'S VOICE

Zembla, Zenda, Xanadu
All our dream worlds may come true
May come true
They may come true
All our dream worlds may come true.

HAROUN

Where am I? Who was that?
Oh
That was my mother singing.
I must be home after all.
I was afraid it was all a dream.
(Picks up toy Hoopoe.)
And my friend, my friend the Hoopoe,
So small now you can fit in my hand.
Please understand
My friend
It's good to know
You will be here if I should need you.
You'll be ready to go.
But I've had enough adventures for a while.

HOOPOE'S VOICE

But but but...
No problem.

SORAYA'S VOICE

Fairy lands are fearsome too
Fearsome too
Fearsome too
Fairy lands are fearsome too.

All the clocks in the house begin to strike six.

HAROUN

What's all this?
I have a new clock
New clothes and presents.
Of course, it must be my birthday.
Time is on the move again.

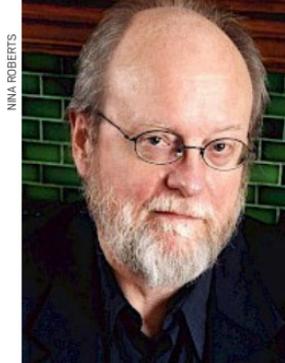
RASHID AND SORAYA

As I wander far from view
Read and bring me home to you
Home
Home
Bring me, bring me home to you.

HAROUN

Everything rhymes.
Everything chimes.
Yes, time is on the move again!

Finis



NINA ROBERTS

Charles Wuorinen, one of the world's great composers, was an influential presence over the course of a lifetime in music. His portfolio included three operas, nine symphonies, and twenty concertos, in addition to works in almost every instrumental and vocal genre. He was recognized with the Pulitzer Prize in Music and a MacArthur Fellowship, among many other awards and honors.

At the time of his death in March 2020, Wuorinen had completed 279 compositions. His final work was his Second Percussion Symphony. Among his last works are *Sudden Changes* for Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony, *Exsultet (Praeloquium Paschale)* for Francisco Núñez and the Young People's Chorus of New York, his Second String Trio for the Goeyvaerts String Trio, and a duo for viola and percussion, *Xenolith*, for Lois Martin and Michael Truesdell.

The premiere of his opera on Annie Proulx's *Brokeback Mountain* in 2014 was a major cultural event worldwide. "Representatives of more than 100 international media outlets and more than a dozen opera companies were present at the Teatro Real (an absolute record for opera in Spain) for the *Brokeback* premiere." (*Opera News*)

Wuorinen's previous opera *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1997–2001), based on the novel of Salman Rushdie, was premiered by the New York City Opera in fall 2004. In reviewing the work for New York Magazine critic Peter G. Davis wrote, "the score for Haroun will dazzle any receptive ear with its incredibly broad palate of finely tuned sounds and its irrepressible vitality—a singularly apt musical response to a sophisticated children's novel that has very adult things to say about a free imagination trapped in a world of oppressive thought control."

Though Wuorinen composed vocal works throughout his career, with his large-scale setting of Dylan Thomas's *A Winter's Tale* (1991) he began to devote increasing attention to works

for the voice. These include *Fenton Songs*, *Ashberyana* and *Alphabetical Ashbery*, and *It Happens Like This*, a staged cantata for singers and large ensemble on poems of James Tate.

In addition to his work in opera Wuorinen has also composed a variety of works for dance. These include five orchestral works for the New York City Ballet: *Five* (Concerto for Amplified Cello and Orchestra) choreographed by Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, *Delight of the Muses*, choreographed by Peter Martins; Martins also staged *The Reliquary for Igor Stravinsky* and three works inspired by scenes from Dante's *Commedia*: *The Mission of Virgil* (Inferno), *The Great Procession* (Purgatorio), and *The River of Light* (Paradiso). At the behest of the NYCB Wuorinen also made a two-piano arrangement of Arnold Schoenberg's *Variations for Orchestra* Op. 31.

Percussion was always one of Wuorinen's major interests, and he composed several works that have become classics of this medium: including *Janissary Music* (1966), *Ringling Changes* (1970), the *Percussion Symphony* (1976) for 24 players, *Metagong* for two pianos and two percussion, and the *Marimba Variations* (2009), commissioned by a consortium of 21 players. Nearly all of his orchestral scores feature elaborate use of percussion.

Wuorinen's career started very early. Although temporarily distracted by a love of astrophysics, by the age of 6 he had set his sights on becoming a composer, writing little imitations of Mozart and Bach which he played on the piano. Always excelling academically, Wuorinen's first professional performance took place in 1954 with the John Harms Chorus in New York's Town Hall. In 1954 he also won the New York Philharmonic's Young Composer's Award. By 1960 Wuorinen began creating some works in his own unique voice, including the *Variations* for piano, a virtuoso work which the composer premiered himself, and various works for chamber combinations, orchestra, and chamber orchestra. Notable among these is a series of chamber concerti for cello, flute, violin and oboe written for friends and colleagues.

Over his career Wuorinen developed strong connections with many extraordinary performers including Peter Serkin—for whom he wrote three works with orchestra (Fourth Piano Concerto, *Flying to Kahani*, *Time Regained*) and several solos (Scherzo, Adagio, Intrada); cellist Fred Sherry (*Five*, three sets of unaccompanied Variations, *Fast Fantasy*, *An Orbicle of*

Jasp); pianist Ursula Oppens (*The Blue Bamboula*, *Oros*); and the Brentano String Quartet for whom Wuorinen wrote his Fourth Quartet and Second Piano Quintet (with Serkin).

His works have been recorded on nearly a dozen labels including several releases on Naxos, Albany Records (Charles Wuorinen Series), John Zorn's *Tzadik* label, and a CD of piano works performed by Alan Feinberg on the German label *Col Legno*.

Wuorinen's works are published exclusively by C.F. Peters Corporation. He is the author of *Simple Composition*, used by composition students throughout the world.

An eloquent writer and speaker, Wuorinen lectured at universities throughout the United States and abroad, and served on the faculties of Columbia, Princeton, and Yale Universities, the University of Iowa, University of California (San Diego), Manhattan School of Music, New England Conservatory, State University of New York at Buffalo, and Rutgers University.

Wuorinen was also active as a performer, an excellent pianist and a distinguished conductor of his own works as well as other twentieth century repertoire. His orchestral appearances included those with the Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the American Composers Orchestra.

In 1962 he co-founded the Group for Contemporary Music, one of America's most prestigious ensembles dedicated to performance of new chamber music. In addition to cultivating a new generation of performers, commissioning and premiering hundreds of new works, the Group was a model for many similar organizations which have appeared in the United States since its founding.

Wuorinen was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



Heather Buck has been praised by *Opera News* as “the kind of performer who makes it all look easy,” and is best described by opera critic David Shengold as “a lithe and impactful actress with an uncommonly beautiful soprano for the high-lying and testing repertory she serves.” Her operatic repertoire ranges widely, from creating such roles as Haroun in Charles Wuorinen’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* at New York City Opera, Alma Beers in Wuorinen’s *Brokeback Mountain* at Madrid’s Teatro Real, and Ku in Paola Prestini’s *Gilgamesh*; to singing US stage premieres of Helmut Lachenmann’s *Little Matchgirl*, Wolfgang Rihm’s *Proserpina* (title role), and Pascal Dusapin’s *Faustus, the Last Night* (Angel); to enjoying standard repertoire such as *Beatrice et Bénédicte* (Héro, Opera Boston), *Der Freischütz* (Ännchen, Opera Boston), *L’Elisir d’Amore* (Anina), *Pearl Fishers* (Leïla), *The Magic Flute* (Queen of the Night), and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Tytania).

Other operatic highlights include Philip Glass’s *Orpheus* (Princesse), André Previn’s *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Stella), Dusapin’s *Medeamaterial* (Medea), Carlisle Floyd’s *Wuthering Heights* (Isabella Linton), Robert Aldridge’s *Elmer Gantry* (Lulu Baines), Dominick Argento’s *The Boor* (The Widow), and a staged production of Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater*. She also performed the role of Merteuil in the West Coast premiere of Luca Francesconi’s *Quartett*. She reprised the title role in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* with BMOP, and appeared with Odyssey Opera as Joan of Arc in Norman Dello Joio’s *The Trial at Rouen* and Argento’s *Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night*. She first worked with Gil Rose through BMOP in Thomas Adès’s *Powder Her Face* (The Maid), which she also performed in Aspen, Brooklyn, Metz, Bilbao, and London, and filmed for television broadcast.

In concert, Heather appeared both at the Kennedy Center and Trinity Wall Street in Glass’s Symphony No. 5, Beijing’s National Center for the Performing Arts in Mahler’s Symphony No. 2, Marinsky Theater in Tan Dun’s *Water Passion after St. Matthew*, the Concertgebouw in Dusapin’s *Faustus, the Last Night*, Boston’s Symphony Hall in Handel’s *Messiah*, Ottawa’s



Stephen L. Bryant’s distinguished career in concert and opera has earned him a Grammy nomination and taken him around the world, with acclaimed performances in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. In the 2018-19 season, he performed in Charles Wuorinen’s opera *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, based on the novel by Salman Rushdie, with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. In July 2019, he sang as a soloist with the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, in Tan Dun’s *Water Passion after St. Matthew*.

Mr. Bryant’s 2015-2016 season included Tan Dun’s *Water Passion after St. Matthew* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and with the Brussels Philharmonic, the roles of Cecco and Raimondo in Wagner’s *Rienzi* with the National Philharmonic, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the Bridgeport Symphony, and the title role in Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* with the Hartford Chorale.

A premier interpreter of the works of Academy Award-winning composer Tan Dun, Bryant created the role of Dante in the world premiere of the opera *Marco Polo* and was nominated for a Grammy for “Best Opera Recording” for the opera’s release on Opus Arte. He reprised the role for productions at London’s Barbican Centre (broadcast by the BBC), the Bergen International Festival, and with de Nederlandse Opera. He has also performed *Water Passion after St. Matthew* with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Internationale Bachakademie Stuttgart, MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony, and on tour in the Netherlands; and Tan Dun’s *Orchestra Theatre II* with the Hamburger Symphoniker. His other recent concert appearances include Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* with the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra; Handel’s *Messiah* with the Indianapolis and Pittsburgh symphonies; Mozart’s Requiem with the Washington National Opera Orchestra under the auspices of the Defiant Requiem Foundation.

Stephen L. Bryant has appeared in numerous roles with New York City Opera, most recently in productions of *A Quiet Place* and *Intermezzo*. Other opera performances include Mr. Gobineau in *The Medium* at Spoleto Festival USA; Robert Gonzales in Stewart Wallace’s *Harvey Milk*, and the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly* with San Francisco Opera; Capulet in *Roméo et Juliette* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Michigan Opera Theatre, Chautauqua Opera, and Toledo Opera; George Milton in *Of Mice and Men* with Arizona Opera; and Indiana Elliot’s Brother in Thomson’s *The Mother of Us All* with Santa Fe Opera.



JONATHAN HARTT

Matthew DiBattista, a tenor described as “brilliant” by *Opera News*, is continually in demand on some of the world’s most prestigious stages, having performed opera and concert works throughout the United States and Europe. He has sung with such conductors as Charles Dutoit, Seiji Ozawa, Keith Lockhart, Sir Andrew Davis and Andris Nelsons.

Known for an exceptionally varied repertoire, Mr. DiBattista has performed over 60 different roles to date spanning the entire operatic repertoire. He has been on the roster of the Metropolitan Opera and performed with Lyric Opera of

Chicago, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Glimmerglass Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Cincinnati May Festival, Florida Grand Opera, New Orleans Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Opera Omaha, Tulsa Opera, Opera Boston, Virginia Opera, Opera Colorado, Tanglewood Music Center, Long Beach Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Minnesota Orchestra, Michigan Opera Theatre, Odyssey Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Dayton Philharmonic, Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra, and has appeared for eight out of nine straight seasons as a principal artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

Mr. DiBattista has taught voice and masterclasses at Boston University, the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, DeSales University, Lehigh University, and Boston College High School. He maintains a private voice studio in Boston.

A recent Grammy nominee for Best Performance in Opera for his portrayal of the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel* with Michigan Opera Theatre, he can be heard as soloist in Ned Rorem’s *Our Town* (New World Records) and as the title role in Kamran Ince’s *Judgment of Midas* (Albany Records).



KRISTIN HOEBERMANN

David Salsbery Fry, bass, has been praised for his “extremely sensual and almost impossibly deep tones” by *concerti* and is the grand prize winner and reigning laureate of the Bidu Sayão International Vocal Competition. A tireless advocate for new music, in the 2016–17 season alone he created roles in three world premiere operas: Scott Wheeler’s *Naga*, Louis Karchin’s *Jane Eyre*, and Chaya Czernowin’s *Infinite Now* (“World Premiere of the Year” in the 2017 *Opernwelt* critics survey). In 2019, he premiered the role of “S”, the Head of the Shin Bet, in Adam Maor’s *The Sleeping Thousand* at Festival d’Aix-en-Provence. He has also

performed in four workshops for the Metropolitan Opera and given the world premiere performances of several solo and chamber works, including the song cycle *ten songs of yesno* by Osnat Netzer.

Other notable engagements include Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for St. Petersburg Opera, Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for Vero Beach Opera, Truffaldin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Tanglewood, Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* in Tel Aviv, his Mostly Mozart debut in Stravinsky's *Renard*, and Olin Blitch in *Susannah* with Opera at Rutgers.

Mr. Fry studied at Juilliard, the University of Maryland, and Johns Hopkins, and apprenticed with the Santa Fe Opera. He has written about the opera industry for *Classical Singer*, *The Liberated Voice*, *Opera and Disability*, and is a featured contributor to Claudia Friedlander's *The Singer's Audition & Career Handbook* and James Harrington's *Building a Career in Opera from School to Stage: Operapreneurship*. David is a proud member of the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA).

This is Mr. Fry's second recording for BMOP/sound. He can also be heard as the narrator in Charles Fussell's *Cymbeline*.

More on Mr. Fry's life and career can be found at davidsalsberyfry.com and in the October 2015 issue of *Classical Singer*.



J. DEMETRIE PHOTOGRAPHY

Brian Giebler, American tenor, praised for his “lovely tone and deep expressivity” by the *New York Times*, has established an impressive career singing virtuosic and eclectic repertoire “with shine and clarity” (*Opera News*). Whether performing Handel's *Semele* with Harry Bicket and The English Concert or Stravinsky's *Threni* with Franz Welser-Möst and the Cleveland Orchestra, “Brian Giebler use[s] his high-placed tenor with great skill” (*Opera Magazine*). His debut solo album *A Lad's Love* was released in 2020 on Bridge Records. “The sweetness of Giebler's impressive high tenor” and his “expressive and elegant phrasing” (*Cleveland*

Classical) have been heard recently with Boston Baroque, Boston Early Music Festival, Prototype Festival (Adam in Julian Wachner's *REV 23*), Grand Rapids Symphony, Virginia

Symphony Orchestra, Naples Philharmonic, Syracuse Symphoria, Mark Morris Dance Group, TENET, Apollo's Fire, Handel & Haydn Society, the Oratorio Society of New York, and regularly with the Trinity Baroque Orchestra, among others. Mr. Giebler has won awards at the Bethlehem Bach and American Traditions competitions, and took second-place in the 2018 Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition at Carnegie Hall. An active crossover artist, “the dashing Giebler, whose voice would make anyone melt” (*BroadwayWorld*), received critical acclaim and a Gregory Award nomination for his “faultless high tenor” (*Seattle Times*) in the role of Marius in *Les Misérables* (Seattle, WA). In 2018, Mr. Giebler revisited the role of Jack in *Into the Woods* with Charlottesville Opera, where he was lauded for “his spotless tenor vocals (that were) a highlight of the production” (*BroadwayWorld*). www.briangiebler.com



Wilbur Pauley, in four decades as a professional entertainer, has accumulated credits in a variety of musical and theatrical disciplines. His work in classical music extends from medieval liturgical dramas to contemporary operatic premieres, including roles in *The Ghosts of Versailles* at The Met, *McTeague* and *Amistad* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Atlas* and *Where's Dick?* at Houston Grand Opera, and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* at New York City Opera.

Mr. Pauley has appeared internationally at Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Teatro Nacional in Lisbon, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Triennale in Cologne, and other European festivals in Edinburgh, Spoleto, Ravenna, Ilmajoki and Salzburg. Some of his numerous North American engagements have included Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco Symphony, Glimmerglass Opera, Philadelphia Orchestra, Edmonton Opera, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, Brooklyn Philharmonic, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has sung for nineteen seasons at Lyric Opera of Chicago.



Michelle Trainor, soprano, “gave one of the most satisfying performances of the evening...her voice is richer and more expressive than ever,” hailed *Opera News*, for her portrayal of Brangain in Boston Lyric Opera’s *The Love Potion*, and the *Wall Street Journal* acclaimed that she “displayed a powerful, penetrating soprano as Brangain.” At Tuscia Opera Festival in Viterbo, Italy, she was praised by Filippo Tadonlini for her “intense and full-bodied vocalism”. Notable recent appearances include Michigan Opera Theatre, Nashua Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Emmanuel Music, and Odyssey Opera.

Equally at home with concert repertoire, Ms. Trainor has performed works such as Mozart’s Requiem, Mass in C Minor, *Solemn Vespers*, and his *Missa brevis* in B Flat, as well as Mahler’s Symphonies No. 2 and 8, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, Haydn’s *Missa in Angustiis*, and Vaughn Williams’s *A Sea Symphony*. Ms. Trainor made her Carnegie Hall debut as a soloist in Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 with Canterbury Choral Society.



Neal Ferreira, who has been praised for his “rich, powerful voice” and “bravura-filled stage presence,” is a nationally recognized lyric tenor based in Haverhill, MA. Dubbed a “Boston mainstay” by the *Boston Globe*, he recently appeared with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Hall as Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, with Emmanuel Music as Macheath in Benjamin Britten’s version of *The Beggar’s Opera*, and with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood as Parpignol in a concert performance of *La bohème* under the baton of Maestro Andris Nelsons.



Heather Gallagher’s prior engagements include the world premiere of *The Nefarious, Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke and Mr. Hare* (Margaret, Boston Lyric Opera), *The Threepenny Opera* (Betty; Jenny cover; BLO), *Carmen* (Mercedes; Carmen cover, BLO), and *Patience* (Lady Saphir, Odyssey Opera). Other credits include *Hansel and Gretel* (Hansel, BLO), *The Merry Widow* (Sylviane/Dodo), *Werther* (Käthchen; Charlotte cover), and *The Love Potion* (Isolt’s Mother) with Boston Lyric Opera; *The Daughter of the Regiment* (Marquise, Opera North), *Trouble in Tahiti* (Dinah, Metrowest Opera), *Les lettres de Werther* (Charlotte, Boston

Opera Collaborative), *Sumeida’s Song* (Asakir, Boston Opera Collaborative), and the title role in *Carmen* with Metrowest Opera. Ms. Gallagher is a Boston Lyric Opera Emerging Artist Alumna and a recipient of BLO’s 2016 Stephen Shrestinian Award for Excellence, in addition to First Place in the 2015 Peter Elvins Vocal Competition and First Place in Metrowest Opera’s 2014 Competition. For more information visit www.LiveInHG.com



Charles Blandy has been praised as “a versatile tenor with agility, endless breath, and vigorous high notes” (*Goldberg Magazine*) and “breathtaking” (*The Boston Globe*).

He has appeared as the Evangelist in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* with Emmanuel Music along with regular appearances in their Bach Cantata series; and in Bach’s B minor Mass with the Apollo Chorus of Chicago, Orchestra Iowa, and the American Classical Orchestra (NYC). He has sung Handel’s *Messiah* with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Portland Baroque Orchestra, and American Bach Soloists. With Emmanuel Music he performed in John Harbison’s

The Great Gatsby, Stravinsky’s *Rake’s Progress*, Mozart’s *Abduction from the Seraglio* and *Magic Flute*, and Handel’s *Ariodante*. Other appearances include: Boston Early Music Festival, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Handel and Haydn Society, Exsultemus, and the Charlotte Symphony.

He studied at Tanglewood, Indiana University, and Oberlin College. He is originally from Troy NY. charlesblandy.com



Aaron Engebret enjoys a varied solo career in opera, oratorio, and recital, and devotes considerable energy to the performance of established music and contemporary premieres. He has been featured as a guest soloist on stages from Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Boston’s Symphony Hall, to international appearances from Sapporo Japan’s Kitara Hall to Le Theatre de la Ville in Paris and the AmBul festival of Sofia, Bulgaria. He has been a guest of the Tanglewood, Ravinia, Rockport and Monadnock music festivals as well as many of the country’s finest symphony orchestras. Nominated for two Grammy Awards for Best



Thomas Oesterling is heard frequently on the opera and concert stages of New England. *The Boston Globe* praised him for the “sweetness, awe and clarity” of his singing of Uriel in Haydn’s *Creation* under the baton of Robert Shaw. As Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* for Commonwealth Opera, he was acclaimed for having “played Eisenstein to the height of comic foppishness, bringing to bear a voice equally at home in the most serious and demanding repertoire.” In addition to Eisenstein, his roles include Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville*, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, and Acis in *Acis and Galatea*, which he recently

performed with Ensemble Courant at UNC Chapel Hill.

Mr. Oesterling is a proponent of new music, having participated in the New England premieres or revivals of many new works, including Lee Hoiby’s *The Scarf* and James Yannatos’s *The Rocket’s Red Blare* with Intermezzo Opera; and Leonard Bernstein’s *A Quiet Place*, Robert Sirota’s *Cabaret Songs*, and the world premiere of *The Fall of the House of Usher* by Phillip Glass at the American Repertory Theatre.



Steven Goldstein, New York-born tenor, enjoys a career both on the opera stage and as an actor in theater and films. He has performed with BMOP in their productions of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* and *The Fisherman and His Wife*, as well as with Odyssey Opera in *La Belle Héléne* and *Patience*. Steven has sung many roles with companies including Squeak (*Billy Budd*), Harry (*La Fanciulla del West*), Third Jew (*Salome*), Scaramuccio (*Ariadne*), and Bardolfo (*Falstaff*), all with the Seattle Opera; Monostatos (*Die Zauberflöte*) and First Jew (*Salome*) with LA Opera; Don Basilio (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) with Vancouver Opera; Victorin (*Die Tote Stadt*), Don

Curzio (*Nozze*), and Borsa (*Rigoletto*) with New York City Opera; Pedrillo (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) with Israeli Opera; as well as with Cleveland Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Gotham Chamber Opera, Tanglewood Music Festival, Bard Summerscape Festival, and the Metropolitan Opera where he debuted in 2011 as one of the Servants in *Capriccio*. He has also created roles in many new contemporary pieces, including works by Libby Larson, Gerald Busby, and James Sellars.



Gil Rose is a musician helping to shape the future of classical music. Acknowledged for his “sense of style and sophistication” by *Opera News*, noted as “an amazingly versatile conductor” by *The Boston Globe*, and praised for conducting with “admiral command” by *The New York Times*, over the past two decades Mr. Rose has built a reputation as one of the country’s most inventive and versatile conductors. His dynamic performances on both the symphonic and operatic stages as well as over 75 recordings have garnered international critical praise.

In 1996, Mr. Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP has won fourteen ASCAP awards for adventurous programming and was selected as Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra to receive this distinction. Mr. Rose serves as the executive producer of the GRAMMY® Award-winning BMOP/sound recording label. His extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Evan Ziporyn, and many others on such labels as Albany, Arsiv, Chandos, Cantaloupe, ECM, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound.

In September 2013, he introduced a new company to the Boston opera scene, Odyssey Opera, dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire. Since the company’s inaugural performance of Wagner’s *Rienzi*, which took the Boston scene by storm, Odyssey Opera has continued to receive universal acclaim for its annual festivals with compelling themes and unique programs, presenting fully staged operatic works and concert performances of overlooked grand opera masterpieces. In its first five years, Mr. Rose has brought 22 operas to Boston, and introduced the city to some important new artists. In 2016 Mr. Rose founded Odyssey Opera’s in-house recording label with its first release, Pietro Mascagni’s *Zanetto*, followed by a double disc of one-act operas by notable American composer

Dominick Argento in 2018 and the world premiere recording of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 2020.

From 2012 to 2019, he was the Artistic Director of the longstanding Monadnock Music Festival in historic Peterborough, New Hampshire. Mr. Rose conducted several premieres as well as cycles of the symphonies of Beethoven and Mendelssohn. He made his opera stage directing debut in two revivals of operas by Dominick Argento as well as conducting, directing, and producing a production and world premiere recording of Ned Rorem's opera *Our Town* in the historic Peterborough Townhouse.

Mr. Rose maintains a busy schedule as a guest conductor on both the opera and symphonic platforms. He made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 he debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony at the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and National Orchestra of Porto. In 2015, he made his Japanese debut substituting for Seiji Ozawa at the Matsumoto Festival conducting Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédicte*, and in March 2016 made his debut with New York City Opera at the Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center. He has since returned to City Opera in 2017 (as Conductor and Director) in Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall and 2018 conducting a double bill of Rameau & Donizetti's settings of *Pigmalione*. In 2019, he made his debut conducting the Juilliard Symphony in works of Ligeti and Tippett.

As an educator, he has served on the faculty of Tufts University and Northeastern University, and has worked with students at a wide range of colleges such as Harvard, MIT, New England Conservatory, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of California at San Diego, among others.



The **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A unique institution of crucial artistic importance to today's musical world, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) exists to disseminate exceptional orchestral music of the present and recent past via performances and recordings of the highest caliber.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span nine decades. Each season, Rose brings BMOP's award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory's historic Jordan Hall in a series that offers the most diverse orchestral programming in the city. The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP's distinguished and adventurous track record includes premieres and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison's ballet *Ulysses*, Louis Andriessen's *Trilogy of the Last Day*, and Tod Machover's *Death and the Powers*. A perennial winner of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the orchestra has been featured

at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America's 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization's history to receive this distinction.

BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge's Club Oberon and Boston's Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2004 to 2012.

BMOP/sound, BMOP's independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP's extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today's most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of a 2020 GRAMMY® Award for *Tobias Picker: Fantastic Mr. Fox*, eight GRAMMY® Award nominations, and its releases have appeared on the year-end "Best of" lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Time Out New York*, *American Record Guide*, *Downbeat Magazine*, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical "night at the symphony." Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOP/sound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.

FLUTE

Sarah Brady*
Rachel Braude
Ashley Addington (piccolo)

OBOE

Jennifer Slowik*
Nancy Dimock

CLARINET

Michael Norsworthy*
Jan Halloran
Gary Gorczyk (bass clarinet)

BASSOON

Ronald Haroutunian*
Jensen Ling
Margaret Phillips (contrabassoon)

HORN

Kevin Owen*
Alyssa Daly
Neil Godwin
Alex Stening

TRUMPET

Terry Everson*
Eric Berlin

TROMBONE

Hans Bohn*
Victoria Garcia-Daskalova

BASS TROMBONE

Christopher Beaudry

TUBA

Takatsugu Hagiwara

PERCUSSION

Robert Schulz*
Craig McNutt (timpani)
Nicholas Tolle
Jonathan Hess

HARP

Ina Zdorovetchi

PIANO

Linda Osborn

VIOLIN I

Gabriela Diaz*
Megumi Stohs
Susan Jensen
Gabriel Boyers
Zenas Hsu
Yumi Okada
MaeLynn Arnold
Colin Davis

VIOLIN II

Katherine Winterstein*
Colleen Brannen
Piotr Buczek
Lilit Hartunian
Alyssa Wang
Nivedita Sarnath
Annegret Klaua
Paola Cabellero

VIOLA

Peter Sulski*
Noriko Futagami
Emily Rome
Alexander Vavilov
Samuel Kelder
Abigail Cross

CELLO

Rafael Popper-Keizer*
David Russell
Jing Li
Katherine Kayaian

BASS

Anthony D'Amico*
Bebo Shiu
Katherine Foss

CHORUS

Mariah Wilson, Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master

SOPRANO

Lauren Cook^
Celeste Godin^
Kathryn McKellar^
Kay Patterson

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Tascha Anderson^
Alexandra Dietrich^
Elena Snow^
Mauri Tetreault

TENOR

Colin Campbell (Third Herald)
Jeremy Fisher (Announcer)
Michael Merullo (Second Herald)
Wes Hunter (Man in Mustachio and Yellow Check Pants)

BARITONE

Allyn Court (First Herald)
Benjamin Pfell
Nathan Rodriguez (Man in Mustachio and Yellow Check Pants)
Cody McDonnell

KEY

*Principals
^Birds

Charles Wuorinen

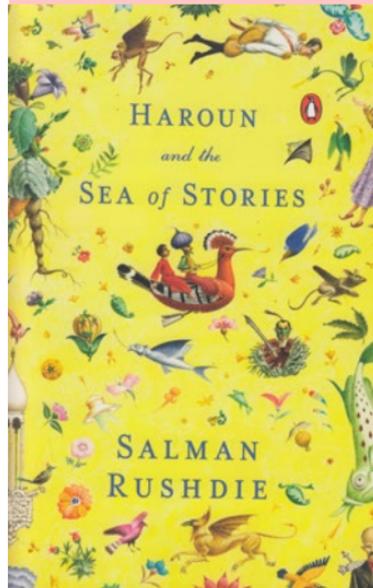
Haroun and the Sea of Stories

Producer: Gil Rose
Recording and postproduction engineer: Joel Gordon
Assistant Engineer: Peter Atkinson
SACD authoring: Brad Michel

Haroun and the Sea of Stories is published by Edition Peters.

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