

# ARIADNE AUF NAXOS

*Opera in one act with a scenic prologue*

by

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

*Music by*

RICHARD STRAUSS

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VOCAL SCORE, 37/6

LIBRETTO (English), 2/6

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LANGham, 2060

*Igor Strawinsky*

## CANTATA

FOR SOPRANO, TENOR, FEMALE CHORUS,  
2 FLUTES, 2 OBOES (COR ANGLAIS) AND VIOLONCELLO

"It is the work of a master. Technically it has wonderful moments, especially in the instrumentation. Only Strawinsky among living composers could get such timbre and variety from only five players. The choral writing is sure and adept; and the 'Westron Wind' duet rises to a tender lyricism that was immediately apparent even on first hearing."—*New York Times*.

"It is a rigid piece, formalistic, full of hidden canons and similar gothic ingenuities. As a result the work has weight and certain ritual qualities that a freer, more spontaneous treatment would not have achieved. It is clearly conceived and masterfully composed."—*New York Herald Tribune*.

"Speriamo che una audizione, che ci auguriamo prossima, potrà convalidare la nostra impressione di trovarci davanti a uno dei più autentici capolavori di questo ultimo dei padri della musica moderna che resti tutt'ora validamente sulla breccia."—*La Rassegna Musicale*.

"Es ist ein Werk der schöpferischen Sublimierung, völlig gereift und weise, dazu von jener Meisterschaft, die kaum noch zu unterscheiden gestattet, wo darin die haarfeine Grenze zwischen Destillation und geistiger Durchdringung ist."—*Melos*.

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# GLORIANA

OPERA IN THREE ACTS

Libretto by WILLIAM PLOMER

Music by BENJAMIN BRITTEN

First performed at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, 8th June 1953

*The Times*, 9.6.53.

"The librettist has provided him with opportunity for gay, excited, capricious, and ceremonious music, upon which he has brought to bear his astonishingly fertile resource and invention."

*Daily Telegraph*, 9.6.53.

"Mr. Britten is a composer who cannot write otherwise than stylishly. The whole score is evidence of his brilliant technique. . . . (Richard Capell).

*The Observer*, 14.6.53.

"The choral writing in particular, including dances to unaccompanied singing, is infallibly telling. . . . The orchestration is dazzling, often with that particularly Brittenish brassy edge, and the bells of Norwich are made to sound with a realism matched only by Mussorgsky's 'Boris,' but produced by quite different and essentially very simple means. That Britten is one of front-rank masters of scoring has long been evident, and here the fact is brilliantly confirmed by his knack, as remarkable in him as in Berlioz, of doing all sorts of things that had never been tried before—and one wonders why, for they seem obvious once they have been done. It must also be said that though the arresting phrases most take the ear, many of the set musical numbers are beautifully constructed and give strength and shape to the work as a whole."—(Eric Blom).

*Manchester Guardian*, 9.6.53.

" . . . an absorbingly interesting evening . . . is packed with clever and audaciously original strokes of operatic craft. The start, plunging straight into the rivalries which beset the Queen, is splendidly direct and vivid; the Queen alone in soliloquy and prayer, a wonderful page of opera by any standards whatsoever and one which touches the audience's imagination. . . . The way in which the world of the first Elizabeth is echoed without the least recourse to 'old-time' pastiche, the management of arioso and semi-speech against a tissue of orchestral sound, and the several very immediately appealing 'numbers'—the lute songs, the song of homage, the trio of pleading in the last scene: these and many other things one wishes to hear again and examine fully as soon as possible. . . . a delicate subject has been treated with a striking originality. The opera marks another stage in Mr. Britten's exceptional career."—(Philip Hope-Wallace).

*Birmingham Mail*, 9.6.53.

"Things which stick in the mind are the dramatic duet between Elizabeth and Essex, and the tenderness which comes over the music when Essex declares his devotion to the Queen. Particularly fine, too, is the note of doom which comes unmistakably in the prelude to the third act. But the great merit of the score is surely that the rising tension in the stage action is reinforced by the musical progression."—(Roy Sherwood).

*Yorkshire Post*, 9.6.53.

"These are the opening fanfares, and the State trumpeters on the stage, the clashing of bells suggested in the orchestra at the beginning of Act II during the Queen's progress through Norwich; the unaccompanied choruses in the Masque, which provide background for a ballet, and the nocturnal music that pervades the opening of the next scene, in the garden of Essex House. These things are wholly charming, and show that Britten can successfully mingle a 17th Century style with his personal modern idiom."—(Ernest Bradbury).

*Star*, 9.6.53.

" . . . full of magnificent sensations. The music is impressive."—(Preston Benson).

*Evening News*, 9.6.53.

" . . . moments of breath-taking beauty."—(Stephen Williams).

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