



Derek Walcott



Under the Bam, Under the Bomb,
Under the Ban-the-Bomb Tree

(sort of)
A Literary Cabaret

All Music Composed By Allen Shawn

Director- Steven Bach

Scenic Designer- Lydia Musco

Lighting Designer- Heather Hutton

Costume Designers- Danny Michaelson and Cayli Cavaco

Stage Manager- Steve Espach

Assistant Stage Manager- Taro Johnson

Technical Director- Andrew Cancellieri

March 15 and 16, 2001

Part One:

Lullaby (1983)

words by Wallace Shawn

Orianna Herrman, soprano

Five Songs on Poems by e.e. cummings (1990)

maggie and milly and molly and may

Kendra Kohrt, soprano

i carry your heart

Charity Dove, soprano

dominic

Rebecca Zafonte, soprano

if you can't eat

up into the silence

Ida Faiella, soprano

Boogie Woogie (1983/99)

Allen Shawn, piano

Grasshopper's Song (1998)

from The Ant and the Grasshopper,

words by Penny Orloff

Charissa Johnson, soprano

Diane Pascal, violin

To A Moth Seen In Winter (1990)

poem by Robert Frost

Christopher Molina, Richard Little, Matthew McConnell, and
Jeremy Schulick, bassi

Jason Sabol, Matthew Follette, Kevin Casey, and John Brauer,
tenori

Winter Sketchbook (1989) fourth movement: Presto
Osseviso

Diane Pascal, violin

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

Mandrake Songs (1978)

Five Songs From Niccolò Machiavelli's Play The Mandrake

Translation by Wallace Shawn

Life on this earth

Brigid Meehan, Orianna Herrman, Rebecca Zafonte, soprani

Oh Love

Alyssa Lowe, soprano

How happy would anyone be

Rachel Shirk, soprano

How lovely this deception

Shannon West, soprano

Oh Sweet Night

Jessica Hockaday, soprano

The Fisherman's Song (1981)

words by Jamaica Kincaid

Arthur Thompson, baritone
with Charity Dove, Orianna Herrman,
Brigid Meehan, and Rebecca Zafonte, soprani

----- There will be a ten minute intermission-----

Part Two:

Blues and Boogie (1991)

Blues

Boogie-Woogie

Semyon Fridman, cello

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

**Under the Bam, Under the Bomb,
Under the Ban- the -Bomb Tree (1984)**

Libretto by Derek Walcott

Evita Peron: Ida Faiella, soprano
Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.: Arthur Thompson, baritone
"Manny" the Ape: Thomas Bogdan, tenor
The Voice of God: Richard Little, baritone

Diane Pascal, violin
David Finck, double bass
Christopher Swist, percussion

Lullaby

words by Wallace Shawn

The day will soon be over,
Night will bring us rest.
Sweetly sleeping heads will
Lie on mother's breast.
The cows are in their barn now,
The horses in their stalls,
And in the house the little mice
Lie down in the walls.

Tonight

Tonight

The dove will fly tonight.

Tonight

Tonight

The pussycat will cry.

Tonight

Tonight

The crow will fly tonight.

Tonight

Tonight

The pussycat will cry.

The sun has gone to China,
The moon is here with us.
Not even the littlest baby
Is making any fuss.
The ducks are in their pond now,
The deer are in their glades.
The flies are all asleep now
Behind our window shades.

Tonight

Tonight

The dove will fly tonight

Tonight

Tonight

The pussycat will cry.

Tonight

Tonight

The crow will fly tonight.

Tonight

Tonight

The pussycat will cry.

Five Poems by e.e. cummings

maggie and milly and molly and may

maggie and milly and molly and may
went down to the beach (to play one day)

and maggie discovered a shell that sang
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles, and

milly befriended a stranded star
whose rays five languid fingers were;

and molly was chased by a horrible thing
which raced sideways blowing bubbles: and

may came home with a smooth round stone
as small as a world and as large as alone.

For whatever we lose (like a you or a me)
it's always ourselves we find in the sea

i carry your heart

i carry your heart with me (i carry it in
my heart) i am never without it (anywhere
i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done
by only me is your doing, my darling)

i fear

no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) i want
no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows
higher than a soul can hope or a mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart (i carry it in my heart)

dominic

dominic has

a doll wired
to the radiator of his
ZOOM DOOM

icecoalwood truck a

wistful little
clown
whom somebody buried

upsidedown in an ashbarrel so

of course dominic
took him
home

& mrs dominic washed his sweet

dirty
face & mended
his bright torn trousers (quite

as if were really her &

she
but) & so
that

's how dominic has a doll

& every now & then my
wonderful
friend dominic depaola

gives me a most tremendous hug

knowing
i feel
that
we & worlds
are
less alive
than dolls &
dream

if you can't eat

If you can't eat you got to

smoke and we aint got
nothing to smoke:come on kid

let's go to sleep
if you can't smoke you got to

Sing and we ain't got

nothing to sing:come on kid
let's go to sleep

if you can't sing you got to
die and we aint got

Nothing to die,come on kid

let's go to sleep
if you can't die you got to

dream and we aint got
nothing to dream(come on kid

Let's go to sleep)

4. up into the silence

up into the silence the green
silence with a white earth in it

you will (kiss me)go

out into the morning the young
morning with a warm world in it

you will go(kiss me

down into your memory and
a memory and memory

i)kiss me(will go)

Grasshopper Song

words by Penny Orloff

Here on the forest floor,
Life is beautiful.

Who could ask for more?
Life is beautiful.

Music on the air,
Songs are everywhere,
I don't have a care,
'Cause life is beautiful.

Watch a clear blue sky,
Oh! how beautiful.

Seize it. Don't ask why,
When life is beautiful

Perfume on the air,
Dreaming time to spare,
I'm a millionaire,
'Cause life is beautiful.

Feel the dancing breeze...

Listen to the bees...

Take your time, and seize the day...

Take a nap at noon...

Buy a red balloon...

Whistle a happy tune... Okay?

Stop and have a taste,
Life is beautiful.

Oh, how can you waste
All that's beautiful?

Don't you know that you're free?

Hear the melody.

Take the time to see
That life is beautiful.

TO A MOTH SEEN IN WINTER

poem by Robert Frost

Here's first a gloveless hand warm from my pocket,
A perch and resting place 'twixt wood and wood,
Bright-black-eyed silvery creature, brushed with brown.
The wings not folded in repose, but spread.
(Who would you be, I wonder, by those marks
If I had moths to friend as I have flowers?)
And now pray tell what lured you with false hope
To make the venture of eternity
And seek the love of kind in wintertime?
But stay and hear me out. I surely think
You make a labor of flight for one so airy,
Spending yourself too much in self-support.
Nor will you find love either nor love you.
And what I pity in you is something human,
The old incurable untimeliness,
Only begetter of all ills that are.
But go. You are right. My pity cannot help.
Go till you wet your pinions and are quenched.
You must be made more simply wise than I
To know the hand that I stretch impulsively
Across the gulf of well nigh everything
May reach to you, but cannot touch your fate.
I cannot touch your life, much less can save,
Who am tasked to save my own a little while.

Mandrake Songs

By Niccolò Machiavelli and translated by Wallace Shawn

I.

Life on this earth is very short,
many are the pains that,
living and struggling,
each person sustains-
that is why we,
following our whim,
have left the daily world of noisy strife
to pursue the life of shepherds and nymphs,
passing and using up the years in frivolity and play,
because he who deprives himself of pleasure
to live in anguish and breathless despair
in the ordinary world
must either somehow be insensible to
the anguish he suffers himself
and the strange events by which
all mortals are oppressed,
or else he must be blind to the ways
by which he might escape them.
Now we- who have chosen in our secluded spots
to flee from the weariness of this world
frolicking in festivity and joy,
young
comely
happy youths and
lighthearted nymphs forever-
we have come with our harmony
here on a rare visit,
to pay our respects to
you who have stayed behind,
to honor this pleasant occasion
the making of a play and your sweet company,
and to amuse ourselves by watching
this the story of the world we left
and the people in it.

II.

O Love, Love

he who has never tasted your strength
has no conception of Heaven's greatest power.
Nor does he know how inside one breast
death and life can live side by side,
or how a person may hide from all that is good
and pursue the very thing that will most harm him;
or how one can care for oneself
less than for another,
or how often and how quickly in succession
a human heart may be frozen
by fear and thawed by hope.
Nor can he know how gods fear no less than men
the terrible arms with which you are armed.

III.

How happy would anyone be
if he could see this person who is
born a fool and believes anything.
Blind to reality, opportunities don't entice him,
fear doesn't torment him-
he escapes these seeds of anxiety and pain.
The man longs to have children
and to feed his hopes would believe
that horses could fly.
How sad! How sad!
He'd cast all other wishes into darkness
and on that one hope only has fixed all his desire.

IV.

So lovely this deception that leads to this end
so dearly imagined and so dear,
that takes away suffering and discards it
like a cloak tossed in a corner
and makes every bitter taste sweet.
Oh sublime, rare Crookedness-
you show a straight road to wandering souls,
and by making them happy
you marvelously make Love rich.
O wondrous deception,
you conquer with your cleverness alone
stones, poisons, and enchantments.

V.

Oh sweet night,
oh holy quiet hours
that lie with desirous lovers,
in you are joined all joys,
you alone know the secret
of making hearts glad.
Oh night, what dear reward you give
to the amorous ranks
after wearisome battle;
oh happy hours,
you make every ice-cold breast
to burn with love.

The Fisherman's Song
words by Jamaica Kincaid

Hush! Hush!
Hush! Hush! Here comes that man
His wide net in his hand
He is alone
The sea his home
He turns his back to land.

Hush hush he hears a cry
Warm blooded beasts fly high
He is alone
The sea his home
The night his lullaby.

Hush hush he sees his doom.
His body in golden tomb.
He is alone
The sea his home
O weary night...

FISHERMAN

The sea is dark
The night is deep
I break the silence with O Hark!
I am alone
This is my home
I feel my random destiny.

My voice the only voice I hear
Makes music for my lonely ear.
From where I come I cannot tell
Except I loved someone so well.

I mend my net
I mend my oar
I feel my random destiny.

My course is set
Like beast in lair
Lie down, O sea,
O night consume me.

Program Notes

In 1984 Joseph Papp commissioned a large number of composers and writers to write ten minute musicals, asking us to choose our own partners. I modestly telephoned one of the world's greatest poets, Derek Wolcott, who was a friend of my wife's, but whom I had never met. He agreed to write me the text without a moment's hesitation, and I received the libretto a week later, complete with a title page that included the drawing which is on the back of tonight's program and our poster. I composed the piece, which turned out to be fifteen, not ten minutes long, during the following month, and like most of the short musicals Papp commissioned, it was not performed. Tonight is it's belated premiere. "Under the Bam, Under the Bomb, Under the Ban-the-Bomb Tree": this title is a variation on the title of the old music hall song, "Under the Bam, Under the Boo, Under the Bamboo Tree". Another variation appears in T. S. Eliott's "Sweeney Agonistes".

As the mini-musical opens we find our three protagonists on a desert island. They are the sole survivors of nuclear war: (Adam) Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., (Eve) Evita Peron, and an ape, "Manny". Adam and Evita are preparing to audition for God to be allowed to continue the human race, a role which "Manny", their agent and director, secretly hopes will be handed over to him.

The other "premiere" on tonight's program is the set of five songs meant to be used in Nicollò Machiavelli's play "The Mandrake". These were composed in 1978 so that the published text of the play as translated by my brother, Wallace Shawn, could include mention of available sheet music to go with the song texts in the script. In fact, the songs have never been used or performed until tonight. My brother has kindly provided this note to put these songs in context:

"The Mandrake is a play by Machiavelli in which, just as you might expect he would, he makes the case that trickery and deceit can in certain circumstances increase the world's sum total of human happiness. Commenting on the action of the play is a chorus of nymphs and shepherds. Appearing before each of the five acts, they make various points in their five songs. Song One sets the struggle of ordinary human life in perspective - it's better to be a nymph (or the sort of shepherd who lives with nymphs). Song Two describes the power of love. Song Three makes fun of one of the play's characters who is obsessed with his desire to have a child. Song Four praises the deception which leads in the play to happy results. Song Five explains the wondrousness of night".

The other songs and instrumental pieces on the program date from various times, and most need no explanation. "Lullaby" is from a music theater work, "The Music Teacher", composed in 1983 to my brother's libretto. The "Grasshopper's Song" is from a one-act opera for children, based on Aesop's fable "The Ant and the Grasshopper". "To A Moth Seen In Winter" is part of a ten movement Cantata on poems of Robert Frost. "The Fisherman's Song", to words by my wife, Jamaica Kincaid, was one of a few completed songs that were originally intended to be part of a evening length musical theater work.

This evening would not exist at all if it were not for Tom Bogdan and Ida Faiella. It was their interest in the Derek Wolcott piece and their conception of an evening of my music that would culminate with it, along with the staggeringly hard work they put into the production in a variety of ways, that made this evening happen. To them, and to the many people who have given their talents and time to this production, I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude.

-Allen Shawn

Production

Master electrician- Frank La Frazia

Lightboard Operator- Beth Jewett

Light Hang- Eli Hall, Beth Kessler, Juliana Berger, Beverly Fox

Lighting Assistants- Monica Hubbard, Kryssy Wright, Andrea Boothby, KJ Swanson, Jenette Lippiello, Chandra Reber

Scene Shop Carpenters- Shannon West, Skye Bender-de-Moll, Morgan Bender-de-Moll, Taro Johnson, Ryan O'Connor, Hans Buetow

Costume Shop Supervisor- Terry Teitlebaum

Costume Assistants- Joe Mazerelli, Kristy Phinney

Costume Construction- Nura Madjzoub, Michelle Cerone, Leah Estell

Artistic Consultant to Costume Shop- Sarah Courtney

Hair and Makeup- Kat Whitledge

Audio/Video- Nadir Naqvi

Sound- Lang Crawford

House Managers- Beth Daunis, Alex Lilly, Bronwen Davies-Mason

Poster- Beth Kessler

Program- Rebecca Zafonte

Thank You

Elizabeth Coleman, Bill Reichblum, Michael Giannitti, David Rees, Lani Stack, Suzanne Jones, Barnabas Rose, Susan Reiss, Yoshiko Sato, Martina Cukrov, Matt Follette, Artistic Associates, Jim Hasenfus.