

to Gerald English on his 65th birthday

whispers

andrew Ford
&
rodney Hall

PLAYERS, IN EVERYDAY CLOTHES, BEGIN TO ARRIVE ON-STAGE AS THE AUDIENCE ARRIVES IN THE AUDITORIUM. ONE PLAYER ARRIVES LATE AND BREATHELESS, AS EVERYONE TUNES. ALL THE USUAL EXTRA-MUSICAL PARAPHERNALIA NEEDED FOR REHEARSAL (STYROFOAM COFFEE CUPS, NEWSPAPERS, CROSS-WORD PUZZLES, DOG-EARED PAPERBACKS) SHOULD ACCOMPANY THE PLAYERS.

CONDUCTOR ENTERS LOOKING CHEERFUL; JOKES OVER HIS SHOULDER WITH SOMEONE UNSEEN BACKSTAGE. _____ COND.

Oh no, we won't tackle the Dance of Death yet.
We shall completely pass it by.

(To PLAYERS)

We aren't ready, poor things. We're too young!
We shall give it the slip. Good evening,
gentlemen. Good evening, ladies.
I'm rather old fashioned, I suppose.
Let us begin at the end. Straight to
paradise. How will that be? Satisfactory?

PLAYERS RIFFLE MUSIC, FINDING THEIR PLACES. _____

1 ♩ = 60

Timp. 

COND. An evening rehearsal... yes. Well, I thought you might need the day for disporting yourselves. In a manner of speaking.

ORCH. (REACTS)

COND. My wife will be joining us soon. We shall go through her part before she gets here. We can deceive her. We can tease her. We can say she's too late, that we've done it already! No, seriously: we need to prepare it, so she can go home while we work on the rest. You see? We're very old partners, she and I. We've performed this work together I don't know how many times. Dozens.

CONDUCTOR LOOKS AT AUDIENCE (THEY ARE THE BACKDESKS OF HIS ORCHESTRA).

Such large forces! Are you all ready out there?
Thank you.

CONDUCTOR OPENS SCORE, PAUSES AS IF LOST. HE IS LISTENING TO SOMETHING INTERIOR.

2

Timp.  (CONTINUE UNTIL K OF 'DARK')

COND. (MURMURING) G major. G major. I began as a bandsman. You may not have known that.


The dar(k) _____ k

A band always begins by sounding the G. You may not have known that either. Silver spoons these days and so forth. But nice people. I hope.

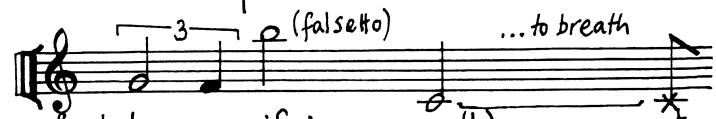
CONDUCTOR TAKES UP BATON.

3

HE PAUSES AGAIN, AS IF LOST.

Timp.  (CONTINUE UNTIL T OF 'PART')

COND. Shall we make an end? A start, I should say? When the soprano's cue comes, I shall


take my wife's par(t) _____ t... just for the purposes...

Fourth movement.

Poco rit. 6 *ALL FREEZE*
lunga

fl. *p* *f* *mf*

ob. *p* *sf*

clar. *mp* *Poco rit.*

hn. *p*

tromb. *p*

perc. triangle *p*

pno. *mp* *mf* lunga

v. *pizz.* *pp* *arco* *sf*

vla. *pp* *sf*

vlc. *p* *sf* arco *mf* lunga

c.b. *sf* *mf* 6

COND. Forgive me. That's right: I did say I would

p (fals.)

take my wife's — part ... didn't I?

Anyway - clarinet - I want it like this:

La da da dee di yee di yee dia di-a di-oo

Sing it out. The rapture beyond chaos

the rapture beyond

No. You see, you are rising into the light from the river of death. If you get my point

Mah-ler's point

Thank you.

ATTACCA

7

COND. *Yes. No. No. More. Strange. More. Sly. No. Yes. Good.*

fl. *pp mp*

ob. *pp mp f*

clar. *p*

hn. *pp p*

tromb. *pp p*

perc. *triangle timpani p*

pno. *ppp*

v. *pizz. pp arco p*

vla. *pizz. pp p*

vlc. *pizz. pp arco p*

c.b. *pp p*

7

CONDUCTOR TAPS BATON TO CUT OFF ORCHESTRA. HE STANDS STILL IN COMPLETE SILENCE, FINGER ON LIPS ADDRESSED TO THE AUDIENCE AS THE REMAINDER OF THE ORCHESTRA. HE FAVOURS HIS "FIRST DESKS" WITH A SMILE.

COND. And again.

ATTACCA