



THE METAMORPHOSES
of Paul Crabtree



CANTORI NEW YORK

conductor Mark Shapiro
mezzo-soprano Heather Johnson
countertenor Randall Scotting



Dive! a Water Music

by *Paul Crabtree*

The action of *Dive!* takes place by a forest pool in Halicarnassus, Turkey, where the excitable naiad Salmacis and an innocent and uncooperative young stranger clash upon their first chance encounter.

The boy is the ravishing 15-year-old son of the beautiful gods Hermes and Aphrodite (hence Hermaphroditus), newly released from his mountain hiding place to discover the world. The nymph is Salmacis, an unexpected female aggressor in Ovid's series of transformational poems, who is content to spend her time preening and admiring herself in and around the waters that are her domain, rather than accompanying her mistress Diana on the hunt. The pool where the drama plays out, here the water of sexual definition and initiation, is almost a third character, into whose coolness the boy dives to escape both the heat of the day and his pursuer's unwelcome advances, and from which will crawl the unhappy hybrid, half the youth and half the nymph who jumps in after to molest him.

The transformation through which both the boy and the nymph pass is a contortion of the purification and initiation stories common throughout world mythologies, variations of which also hold central positions in religious ritual.

Ted Hughes' fleshy and guttural translation of this passage from Ovid is unfortunately skimpy in its scene-setting, so I have used a second translation of Ovid by A.S. Kline and also an early scene of Charles Kingsley's 19th Century Christian allegory "The Water Babies" that dovetails neatly with Hermaphroditus' arrival in the forest clearing, and bridges the two worlds of Ovid's mythological pool and St. Paul's baptismal font. Young Tom the chimney sweep encounters the enviable underwater life of the water babies, amongst whom he longs to escape the grime of his daily life; the condition is that he abandon his world on land and begin his moral education under water. Here he encounters Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby and Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid, and tries to save his former boss from his deserved punishment, for which he is rewarded a return to human form.

Baptism's violent transition through death to life hit the headlines in June 2001 when Andrea Yates of Houston, Texas methodically drowned her five children believing that the water would release them into a better life and relieve them of the burden of having a mother possessed by the devil. The newspaper reports reminded me of this history of interlocking baptismal death and resurrection, and were the genesis of this piece; it is to the children's memory that the score of *Dive!* is dedicated.

Dive! a Water Music

by Paul Crabtree

in memoriam nj, js, pa, ld, md

I

YOU CANNOT BE SAVED UNTIL YOU
ARE CLEANSED IN THE WATER.*

He found himself in the middle of a meadow,
with the stream just before him.
“I must be clean, I must be clean.” †
Here he saw a pool of water, clear to its very depths.
There were no marsh reeds round it, no sterile
sedge, no spikes of rushes: it is crystal liquid. ‡
He went on to the bank of the brook, and lay down
on the grass, and looked into the clear, clear lime-
stone water, with every pebble at the bottom bright
and clean, while the little silver trout dashed about
in fright at the sight of his black face; and
he dipped his hand in and found it so cool, cool,
cool; “I will be a fish; I will swim in the water;
I must be clean, I must be clean.” †
A nymph lives there, but she is not skilled for the
chase, or used to flexing the bow, or the effort of
running. She only bathes her shapely limbs in the
pool, often combs out her hair and looks in the
water to see what suits it best. ‡

II

She was bending to gather lilies for a garland
When she spied Hermaphroditus.
At that first glimpse she knew she had to have him.
She felt she trod on prickles until she could touch him.
She held back only a moment,
Checked her girdle, the swing of her hem,
her cleavage,
Let her lust flood hot and startled
Into her cheek, eyes, lips – made her whole face
Open as a flower that offers itself,
Wet with nectar. Then she spoke:
“Do you mind if I say – you are beautiful?
Seen from where I stand, you could be a god.
Are you a god? If you are human,
What a lucky sister! As for the mother
Who held you, and pushed her nipple
between your lips,
I am already sick with envy of her.
I dare not think of a naked wife in your bed.
If she exists, I dare not think of her bliss.
Let me beg a taste, one little sip
Of her huge happiness. A secret between us.
But if you are unmarried – here I am.
Let us lie down and make our own
Bridal bed, where we can love each other
To sleep. And awaken each other.” §

III

The boy blushed – he had no idea
What she was talking about.
Her heart lurched again when she saw
How his blush bewildered his beauty.
Like the red side of an apple against a sunset,
Or the ominous dusky flush
That goes over the cold moon
When the eclipse grips its edge
And begins to swallow it inch by inch
In spite of all the drums and pans and gongs
Beaten on earth beneath to protect it.

Then the nymph slid her arms
Around his neck, and asked for a kiss,
One kiss, one brotherly kiss –
“Get away,” he cried. “Let me go,
Or I’m off. And you can sit here
On your basket of tricks all by yourself!”
That scared Salmacis, she thought
he really might go.
“Oh no, forgive me!” she sobbed. “Forgive me!
I couldn’t help it. I’m going. Oh, I’m spoiling
This lovely place for you. I’m going. I’m going.”

So, lingering her glances, she goes,
And truly she seems to have gone.
In fact, she has ducked behind a bush.
There she kneels, motionless, head lifted –
Her eye fixed, like the eye of a leopard. §

IV

*Sicut pluviae expectatae quae terram
arridam securerunt
ad rapidum ac ferum flumen allatus sum.
Me require redire scio
simul ac pedes oram liquerunt. ¶*

He plays, careless as a child,
Rooms about happily
Thinking he’s utterly alone.
He paddles into the pool’s edge, goes deeper.
The cool pulse of the spring, warping the clarity,
Massages his knees, delicious.
He peels off his tunic and the air
Makes free with all that had been hidden,
Freshens his nudity. Under the leaves
Salmacis groaned softly
And began to tremble.
As the sun
Catches a twisting mirror surface
With a splinter of glare
Her own gaze flamed and hurt her. She was already
Up and leaping towards him,
She had grabbed him with all her strength –
Yet still she crouched where she was
Shaking all over, letting this go through her
Like a dreadful cramp. She watched him
Slap his pale shoulders, hugging himself,
And slap his belly to prepare it.
For the plunge – then plunge forward.

And suddenly he was swimming, a head bobbing,
Chin surging through the build of a bow-wave,
Shoulders liquefied,
Legs as if at home in the frog's grotto,
Within a heave of lustre limp as air
Like a man of ivory glossed in glass
Or a lily in a bulb of crystal.

"I've won!" shrieked Salmacis. "He's mine!"
She could not help herself. §

V

"He's mine!" she laughed, and with
a couple of bounds
Hit the pool stark naked
In a rocking crash and thump of water –
The slips of her raiment settling wherever
They happened to fall. Then out of the upheaval
Her arms reach and wind round him,
And slippery as the roots of big lilies
But far stronger, her legs below wind round him.
He flounders and goes under. All his strength
Fighting to get back up through
a cloud of bubbles
Leaving him helpless to her burrowing kisses.
Burning for air, he can do nothing
As her hands hunt over him, and as her body
Knots itself every way around him
Like a sinewy otter
Hunting some kind of fish

That flees hither and thither inside him,
And as she flings and locks her coils
Around him like a snake
Around the neck and legs and wings of an eagle
That is trying to fly off with it,
And like ivy which first binds the branches
In its meshes, then pulls the whole tree down,
And as the octopus –
A tangle of constrictors, nipped with suckers,
That drag towards a maw –
Embraces its prey.
But still Hermaphroditus kicks to be free
And will not surrender
Or yield her the least kindness
Of the pleasure she longs for,
And rages for, and pleads for
As she crushes her breasts and face against him
And clings to him as with every inch of her surface. §

*Numen flumini magno inest,
quod numquam cognoscemus
nisi torrenti cedemus ut rapiat. ¶*

YOU CANNOT BE SAVED UNTIL YOU
ARE CLEANSED IN THE WATER.*

VI

"It's no good struggling," she hisses.
"You can strain, wrestle, squirm, but cannot
Ever get away from me now.
The gods are listening to me.
The gods have agreed we never, never
Shall be separated, you and me."

The gods heard her frenzy – and smiled.

And there in the giddy boil the two bodies
Melted into a single body
Seamless as the water. §

TEXTS

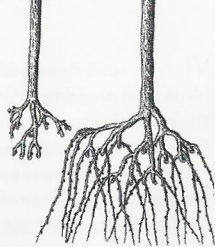
* Dennis Woroniecki

† *The Water Babies* by Charles Kingsley

‡ *Metamorphoses* by Ovid (trans. A. S. Kline)
from *Poetry in Translation*, www.tonykline.co.uk

§ *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus* from *Tales from Ovid* by Ted Hughes. Copyright © 1997 by Ted Hughes. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

¶ Denis Feeney



An American Persephone

by Paul Crabtree

In March 2003, I read of the death of a young American abroad; attempting to thwart the destruction of housing in Gaza, Rachel Corrie stood in the path of a bulldozer and was crushed into the earth. She has been lionized for her bravery and derided for her foolishness. Some weeks before that incident, I had picked up Ted Hughes' sophisticated translations, *Tales from Ovid*, which catch the energy and violence of Persephone's abduction in language that is made more savage by its simplicity. Enflamed by Cupid's arrow, Pluto seizes Ceres' virgin daughter and abducts her to his underworld kingdom. Persephone's friends do not resist, and it is the insubstantial water nymph Cyane who intervenes, only to be engulfed in Pluto's frenzy. Hughes' majestic and loamy poetry (he has been dubbed "the agricultural voice of God") made the similarities between the stories inescapably vivid. Cyane and Rachel both confront a blindly powerful charioteer; Persephone and Rachel are both swallowed by the earth.

Persephone is a mythological goddess, the personification of the life and death which is enacted in the cycle of the seasons. She resides for six months below ground ruling the underworld, where she is referred to as "grim" or "dread" or "awful" Persephone, and six months above ground in the company of her mother Ceres, goddess of the harvest. Her dual personality, "one moment gloomy as hell's king, but the next bright as the sun's mass," continues to remind me as an artist that barrenness balances with fruitfulness, the one expecting the arrival of the other.

The vehement public debate after Ms. Corrie's death echoed this polarized personality. Some celebrated her actions as heroic, others ridiculed her as naively meddlesome, and the two factions quickly took their positions, interpreting her story to their advantage. Neither would acknowledge any legitimacy in the other, and the possibility that a fuller characterization could include both sides was lost.

The post-mortem publication of Ms. Corrie's e-mail messages to her family and the transformation of these into a stage play in London kept the incident and its mythological resonance fresh in my mind. Then a chance encounter with the weighty sadness of two particular sonnets by Edna St. Vincent Millay (according to her biographer, the "American Eve") reminded me of the eternal presence of grief, and exposed me again to more of the ancient threads that make up the fabric of our daily experience.

The six
movements of
An American
Persephone.

DEDICATION

Ceres, Persephone's mother, is celebrated as the first harvester. Sounds of laborious struggle mix with celebration and worship.

MADRIGAL NO.1

Persephone gathers colorful spring flowers with her friends on the shady banks of Lake Pergusa. An email message gives initial impressions of differences and similarities.

DRAMATIC CHORUS

Pluto snatches Persephone. Cyane, a fountain nymph, chides him and stands in his path, but "the Son of Saturn" becomes furious, piercing the bottom of the pool with his scepter and plunging with his chariot and his prize headlong into the earth.

ACCOMPANIED SOLO

Edna St. Vincent Millay mourns the eternal presence of grief.

MADRIGAL NO.2

In her sadness Cyane slowly turns into "the very waters of which she had been the goddess."

A CAPPELLA CHORUS

Millay resigns herself to the endless cycles of history.

An American Persephone

by Paul Crabtree

VII

DEDICATION

Ceres was the first
To split open the grassland with a ploughshare.
The first
To plant corn and nurse harvests.
She was the first to give man laws.
Everything man has he owes to Ceres.
So now I sing of her
And so I pray my song may be worthy
Of this great goddess,
For surely she is worthy of the song.

VIII

MADRIGAL NO.1

Near Enna's walls is a deep lake
Known as Pergusa.
The swans on that surface make a music
Magical as the songs
On the swift currents of Cayster.
Trees encircling it
Knit their boughs to protect it
From the sun's flame.
Their leaves nurse a glade of cool shade
Where it is always spring, with spring's flowers.
Proserpina was playing in that glade
With her companions.

Brilliant as butterflies
They flitted hither and thither excitedly
Among lilies and violets. She was heaping
The fold of her dress with the flowers,
Hurrying to pick more, to gather most,
Piling more than any of her friends into baskets.

I am in Rafah. Today, as I walked on top of the rubble where homes once stood, Egyptian soldiers called to me from the other side of the border, "Go! Go!" because a tank was coming. And then waving and "What's your name?" Something disturbing about this friendly curiosity. It reminded me of how much, to some degree, we are all kids curious about other kids. I wish you could meet these people. Maybe, hopefully, someday you will.

— Rachel Corrie

IX

DRAMATIC CHORUS

There the Lord of Hell suddenly saw her.
In the sweep of a single glance
He fell in love
And snatched her away.
Terrified, she screamed for her mother,
And screamed to her friends. But louder
And again and again to her mother.
She ripped her frock from her throat downwards —
So all her cherished flowers scattered in a shower.

Then in her childishness
She screamed for her flowers as they fell,
While her ravisher leaped with her
Into his chariot, shouting to the horses
Each one by name,
Whipping their necks with the reins,
like the start of a race,
And they were off. They were gone –
Leaving the ripped turf and the shocked faces.

ne longius ibitis!

“You have gone too far.
non potes invitae Cereris gener esse:
You cannot be son-in-law to Ceres
If she does not want you.
roganda non rapienda fuit.
You should not have kidnapped this child,
But asked for her hand according to custom.”

Cyane stretched her arms as she spoke,
To block the path of the horses.
Then the son of Saturn, in a fury,
Plunged his royal sceptre
Down through the bed of her pool,
And called to his savage horses.
The bottom of the pool split wide open,
And they dived –
Horses, chariot, Pluto and his prize –
Straight into hell.

X

ACCOMPANIED SOLO

*Time does not bring relief; you all have lied
Who told me time would ease me of my pain!
I miss him in the weeping of the rain;
I want him at the shrinking of the tide;
The old snows melt from every mountain-side,
And last year's leaves are smoke in every lane;
But last year's bitter loving must remain
Heaped on my heart, and my old thoughts abide.
There are a hundred places where I fear
To go, – so with his memory they brim.
And entering with relief some quiet place
Where never fell his foot or shone his face
I say, "There is no memory of him here!"
And so stand stricken, so remembering him.*

– Edna. St. Vincent Millay

XI

MADRIGAL NO. 2

Cyane bewailed the rape of the goddess
And the violation of her fountain.
She wept over these wrongs
In secret, as if her heart
Were weeping its blood.
Nothing could comfort her.
Gradually her sorrow
Melted her into the very waters
Of which she had been the goddess.

Her limbs thinned, her bones became pliant,
Her nails softened. Swiftly she vanished
Into flowing water – first
Her slighter parts, her hair, fingers,
Feet, legs, then her shoulders,
Her back, her breasts, her sides, and at last
No longer blood but clear simple water
Flowed through her veins, and her whole body
Became clear simple water. Nothing remained
To hold or kiss but a twisting current of water.

XII

A CAPPELLA CHORUS

*Not in this chamber only at my birth –
When the long hours of that mysterious night
Were over, and the morning was in sight –
I cried, but in strange places, steppe and firch
I have not seen, through alien grief and mirth;
And never shall one room contain me quite
Who in so many rooms first saw the light,
Child of all mothers, native of the earth.
So is no warmth for me at any fire
Today, when the world's fire has burned so low;
I kneel, spending my breath in vain desire,
At that cold hearth which one time roared so strong:
And straighten back in weariness, and long
To gather up my little gods and go.*

– Edna. St. Vincent Millay

TEXTS

Excerpt from *The Rape of Proserpina* from *Tales from Ovid* by Ted Hughes. Copyright © 1997 by Ted Hughes. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

Latin from *Metamorphoses* by Ovid

“*Time does not bring relief.*” Copyright 1927, 1945 by Edna St. Vincent Millay. “*Not in this chamber only at my birth.*” Copyright 1927, 1945 by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Text used by permission of Elizabeth Barnett, literary executor.

Dive! a Water Music

Randall Scotting, *countertenor*
Yari Bond, *cello*
Dominic Donato, *percussion*
Michael Lipsey, *percussion*
Setsuko Otake, *oboe, English horn*
Anna Reinersman, *harp*
Dongsok Shin, *harpsichord, organ*

An American Persephone

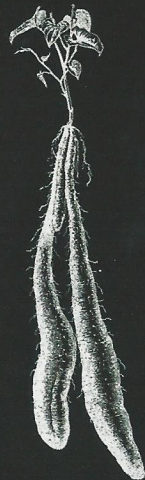
Heather Johnson, *mezzo-soprano*
Dominic Donato, *percussion*
Jeanne Golan, *piano, celesta*
Michael Lipsey, *percussion*
Anna Reinersman, *harp*

Cantori New York

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Barbara Barra
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Adela María Bolet
Casey Breves
Philipp Brieler
Saya Callner
Shawn Crouch
Susan Crumiller
Ilse de Veer
Gerald Greland
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continued

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Beth Hunter
Elliott Kaback
Rebecca Shell Kanarek
Degna P. Levister
Mary Jo Mace
Gerald Metz
Robert Nixon
Alison North
Ruth Parlin
Laura Perrone
Vince Peterson
Mary Porter
Rebecca Price
Pamela Reich
Zarya Rubin
Chris Ryan
Levi Smylie
Steven Statsinger
Ann Stedman
Mark Stedman
David Usdan
Richard Walker





Paul Crabtree

“...utterly compelling music that relates beautifully to our time.”

—*Palm Beach Post*.

Paul Crabtree's music is the product of two cultures; he combines the seriousness of the British choral tradition with the restlessness of the American spirit, producing perceptive and challenging works that are relevant to the 21st century experience. Born in England in 1960, he graduated from the Music Faculty at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and studied post-graduate composition at the Musikhochschule in Cologne, Germany.

Moving to California in his early 20s and becoming an American citizen, he escaped the constrictions of the English class system and integrated into his music various strands of personal history. Even though he intermingles ideas as diverse as Latin poetry and 1960s girl groups, his music maintains a seriousness of purpose which intensifies both 'high' and 'low' cultural references.

His work has been the recipient of an AMC Composer's Assistance Program Award (2007), three ASCAPPLUS awards (2004, 2007, 2008) and a Subito award from the American Composers Forum (2005).



Mark Shapiro

*In nova fert
animus mutatas
dicere formas
corpora;*

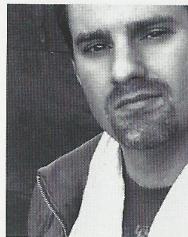
A recipient of three ASCAP Awards, Mark Shapiro is Artistic Director of Cantori New York and the Monmouth Civic Chorus, and Associate Conductor of the opera company Teatro Grattacielo. Instrumental conducting engagements have included Cygnus and New York Art Ensembles, Works & Process at the Guggenheim Museum, and PBS, where he was heard conducting the soundtrack for Ric Burns's special about New York. Opera and music theater appearances include American Opera Projects, the Center for Contemporary Opera, and Two River Theatre. Dr. Shapiro is Director of Choral Activities at Long Island University (CW Post Campus), and Director of Conducting at the European American Musical Alliance in Paris. A long-time faculty member of Mannes College The New School for Music, he conducted the Mannes Chorus at the United Nations. With New School science faculty, Dr. Shapiro has presented university lectures in music and science.



Heather Johnson

di, coeptis (nam
vos mutastis et
illas) adspirate
meis primaque ab
origine mundi...

Mezzo-soprano Heather Johnson has received critical acclaim both on the opera and on the concert stage. Ms Johnson has appeared with the New York City Opera, Academia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Glimmerglass Opera, Minnesota Opera, Boston Pops Orchestra, Opera Orchestra of New York, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, Sarasota Opera, Nashville Opera, Madison Opera, EOS Orchestra, Opera Lafayette, Portland Opera Repertory Theater, New York Choral Society, New Hampshire Music Festival and the Midcoast Symphony. In November 2009 Ms Johnson was invited to the Vatican with the Academia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia to perform for Pope Benedict XVI. A 2002 Metropolitan Opera Nation Council Semi-Finalist, Ms. Johnson was a 2006 recipient of New York City Opera's Stanley Tausend Award.



Randall Scotting

ad mea
perpetuum
deducite tempora
carmen!

— Metamorphoseon,
publius
ovidius naso.

Possessing a dramatic voice and a passion for communication, Randall Scotting is best known as a performer of Baroque and Contemporary opera, having sung with Des Moines Metro Opera, Juilliard Opera Center, Opera North Spoleto Festival, Italy, Boulder Opera Theater, New York City Opera, Opera Colorado and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. He is also a dedicated and ambitious performer of contemporary masterworks, such as Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, as well as a keen exponent of improvisation. As a 2008/09 Fulbright Scholar in Budapest, Hungary he continues to explore diverse styles and genres of music while specializing in study and performance of the region's folk music, as well as the works of contemporary Hungarian composers. In 2009 Mr. Scotting will sing in the United States premiere of Jonathan Dove's *The Adventures of Pinocchio* with Minnesota Opera, and make his Central American debut singing the role of Goffredo in Handel's *Rinaldo*. Mr. Scotting's distinctive style of performing is strongly influenced by his study of Shambhala Buddhism and meditation, yoga and Reiki.

in memoriam

Alexandra Montano 1961 - 2007

technical

Engineer Edward J. Kelly

Producer Robert Schuneman

thanks to

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Ardith Holmgren

Rosalind Rees

Alberto Reyes

Thomas Schmidt

Gregg Smith

Glen Wilkofsky and Manhattan Percussion

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Verda Alexander and Primo Orpilla

Walter M. Cain

Kenneth R. Caldwell

Gerald Greland

Elliott Kaback and Patricia Woodard

Degna P. Levister

Millicent Hall Powers

Ann and Mark Stedman

Studio O + A

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Heather Johnson by *Peter Kernerko*

Randall Scotting by *Nick Mramer*

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