

Speeches for Dr. Frankenstein

for Soprano & Recorded Sound

Music: Bruce Pennycook

Text: Margaret Atwood

Commissioned by Dexter Morrill and Neva Pilgrim
with the assistance of The Canada Council for the Arts

Duration: ca. 15 minutes

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Speeches for Dr. Frankenstein

This work was commissioned in 1980 by American composer, Dexter Morrill, and contemporary vocal specialist, Neva Pilgrim, for a touring program of works called "Singing Circuits". The commission was supported by the Canada Council for the Arts.

The composer wishes to thank Margaret Atwood for her permission to use the poem, *Speeches for Dr. Frankenstein*, from her collection, *The Animals in that Country* (Oxford Press, 1968). Thanks also to Prof. John Chowning, Director of the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA), Stanford University, Bill Schottstaed and Paul Wieneke.

Sound synthesis was realized at CCRMA and the final transfers were made at Destiny Sound in Kingston, Ontario. Analag tape to CD transfers by the composer.

To perform this work a compact disk of the accompaniment recordings is required. Sound playback levels should match the level of the voice in a large concert hall. A darkened hall and stage with narrow spot on the soloist is desirable.

Bruce Pennycook
Kingston, Ontario
1981

Speeches for Dr. Frankenstein

Margaret Atwood
From *The Animals in that Country*
(Oxford, 1968)

Abridged and edited by
the composer for this setting.

I.

I the performer
In the tense arena
Glittered under the fluorescent moon
Was bent, masked by the table
Saw what focused my intent
The emptiness,
The air filled with an ether of cheers
My wrist extended a scalpel.

IV.

Now I shall ornament you
What would you like?
Baroque scrolls on your ankles
A silver navel
I am the universal weaver
I have eight fingers
I complicate you
I surround you with intricate ropes
What web shall I wrap you in?
Gradually I pin you down.
What equation should I carve as seal in your skull?
What size shall I make you?
Where should I put your eyes?

VII.

Reflection
You have stolen everything you have needed.
My joy, my ability to suffer
You have transmuted yourself to me.
I am a vestige.
I am numb.
Now you accuse of murder.
Can't you see I am incapable.
Blood of my brain
It is you who have killed these people.

X.

The creature.
His arctic hackles bristling
Spreads over the dark ceiling
His paws on the horizon,
Rolling the world like a snowball.
The creature
He glows and says
Doctor. Doctor.
My shadow shivering on the table
You dangle on the leash of your own longing.
Your need grows teeth.
You sliced me loose and said it was creation.
I could feel the knife.
Now you would like to heal that chasm in your side.
But I recede.
I prowl.
I will not come when you call.

Bruce Pennycook

The Canadian composer, Bruce Pennycook, holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in composition from Stanford University (Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics) and a M.Mus. and a B.Mus. in composition from the University of Toronto.

From 1978 to 1987 he was a professor at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario in the Department of Music and the Department of Computing and Information Science. In 1987 he joined the Faculty of Music, McGill University where he formed graduate and undergraduate degree programs in music technology. From 1997-2000 he held the position of Vice-Principal for Information Systems and Technology at McGill University. Pennycook is currently an independent composer, author and consultant living in Montreal.

Pennycook's works for soloist or small ensemble coupled with interactive computer systems have been performed and broadcast widely in Canada, US, Europe and Japan. He has published numerous articles on music and technology and contemporary compositional methods.

For more information visit: www.pennycook.tzo.com

Montreal, 2002

Speeches for Dr. Frankenstein

(I, IV, VII, X)

Music: Bruce W. Pennycook

Text: Margaret Atwood

I I the performer

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system includes a Soprano staff (empty), a Tape staff with the tempo marking *lento, molto sus.*, and a lower staff with a *mf* dynamic. The second system features a vocal line in treble clef with the lyrics "I the per - for - mer", a *pp* dynamic, and a *lunga* marking. The third system includes a lower staff with dynamics *f*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, and *mf*, and another lower staff with a *cresc.* marking and a *ff* dynamic. The vocal line continues with a *lunga* marking and a *p* dynamic.

slower

p (hushed) *accel.* *rit.* *mf* *cresc.* *fp*

In the tense a - re - na gli -- ttered un - der the flou - re-scent moo

rit. *p* *mf* *pressing* *3* *mf* *slower* *ppp*

- - - - n. was bent ma - sked by the ta - ble

"voices"

p *dim.*

f
 saw what fo -
 what fo - cused my in-tent *p*
f *ten.* *ff* *3*
mp *f* *f* *p*
ff *p* *ppp* *mp* *pp*

distracted *mp* faster, spoken *dim. et rit.* - - -
 The em pti ness the air ... FILL-ed with an ether of cheers my wrist extended a scalpel.

"bells" *p*
 "voices" \Rightarrow (sim. - - long fade) *ppp*