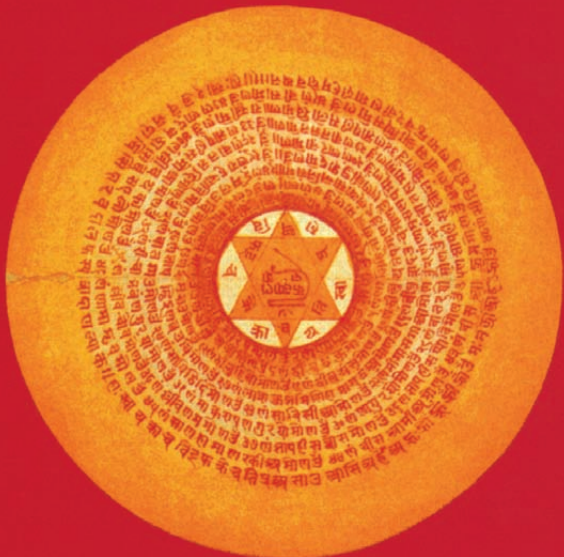


Jonathan Harvey



BHAKTI



Spectrum • Guy Protheroe conductor

Jonathan Harvey

Bhakti

Spectrum · Guy Protheroe *conductor*

1	I	5'54
2	II	2'03
3	II	4'53
4	IV	4'04
5	V	4'24
6	VI	3'32
7	VII	4'30
8	VIII	4'39
9	IX	4'47
10	X	3'12
11	XI	6'19
12	XII	5'06
Total timing		55'55

Philippa Davies *flute* · Robin Canter *oboe*
David Campbell *clarinet* · David Rix *bass clarinet*
Timothy Brown *horn* · Graham Ashton *trumpet*
John Iveson *trombone* · Stephen Pruslin *piano*
Gary Kettel *percussion* · Stoned Williams *harp*
Irvine Arditti *violin* · Alexander Balanescu *violin*
Richard Studt *violin* · Levine Andrade *viola*
Rohan de Saram *cello* · Peter Sidhom *tape operator*

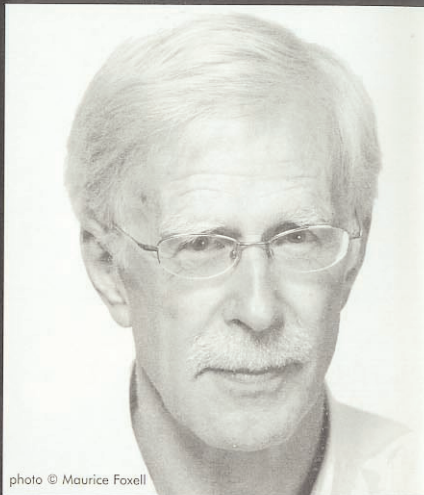


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Jonathan Harvey is Britain's most European composer. Unlike many of his British colleagues, he has kept fully abreast of the latest trends, partly by responding to commissions from many of Europe's leading contemporary music ensembles, but also through the electroacoustic compositions he has produced at IRCAM. His links with the European mainstream can be traced back to an authoritative study of Stockhausen, written in the 1970s, and various other influences have been successfully integrated into a thoroughly distinctive creative personality.

Jonathan Harvey was born at Sutton Coldfield on 3 May 1939. His earliest significant musical experiences were as a chorister at St Michael's College, Tenbury, and after completing his schooling at Repton, he went to St. John's College, Cambridge. Meanwhile personal encouragement from Britten led to composition studies with Erwin Stein and Hans Keller, as a result of which Harvey received a thorough training in serial technique. He completed his Ph.D. at Glasgow in 1964 while also acquiring

practical experience as a professional cellist. He produced a substantial quantity of music during the later 1960s, including the cantata, *Ludus Amoris* (1969), but while these works contain features which are recognisable in the composer's later output greater coherence was achieved following a periodic study with Milton Babbitt at Princeton in 1969-1970. It was at Princeton that Harvey first became interested in electronics.

In contrast to his earlier compositions, Harvey still acknowledges virtually everything he has completed since the early 1970s, beginning with *Persephone Dream* for orchestra (1972). The three expansive works entitled *Inner Light* (1973/1977), scored for increasingly large ensembles with pre-recorded tape, as well as the String Quartet No.1 (1977), reflect Harvey's preoccupation with the mystical and philosophical writings of Rudolf Steiner, especially the expanding potential of a single note, 'and the wish ... to pass from the materialistic to a spiritual element'. Steiner's influence also reinforced the influence of the Austro-German tradition; yet this was counter-balanced by a strong commitment to

English choral music. It was in the 1980s that Harvey successfully fused the two traditions through the electroacoustic works he produced at IRCAM, where he encountered a flourishing school of French composers stemming from Boulez. The first result was *Mortuos Plango, Vivos Voco* (1980), where IRCAM's computers were employed to manipulate the voice of the composer's son and the sound of Winchester Cathedral's great tenor bell. After *Bhakti*, for ensemble and tape (1982), Harvey diversified the use of electronics in the orchestral *Madonna of Winter and Spring* (1986), as well as other ensemble works. He has also continued writing for conventional forces as in his church opera, *Passion and Resurrection* (1981), *Forms of Emptiness*, for choir (1986), and several orchestral scores. The opera, *Inquest of Love* (1991/92) draws together the main threads of his creative imagination. The opera is metaphysical, fusing elements of Christian and Buddhist mysticism, but Harvey's transcendental vision is mediated by an awareness of events in the everyday world, thereby ensuring that the music does not become escapist. Thus, *Inquest of Love* presents Jonathan Harvey's compositional

philosophy in its most detailed form, and this has continued to evolve in several more recent works. Above all, it is a philosophy which has served Harvey very well over many years, and the twelve contrasting movements of *Bhakti* represent a crucial stage in its development.

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BHAKTI

Bhakti was written in 1982, to a commission from IRCAM, Paris. It is in twelve short movements totalling over fifty minutes. There are thirty-six subsections, each one defined by a certain number of instruments playing a certain pitch cell. As there are only twelve types of subsection, each one occurs (with variation) three times, thus making for repetitions over the course of the work.

The musical syntax is symmetrical around a central axis. The ear is unconsciously attracted to hear the harmony not as dissonant over a fundamental bassist as floating free from bass functions and yet rigorously controlled. The tape is composed largely of sounds drawn from the instrumental ensemble transformed and mixed by computer. It has many functions: of dialogue, transformation, memory, anticipation, 'simultaneous translation' and of reaching beyond the instrumental scale to a more universal dimension.

A quotation from the *Rig Veda* is appended at the end of each movement. These Sanskrit hymns were written some four thousand years ago. They are keys to transcendent consciousness.

I Expansion of intervals from one pitch outwards. "There was neither non-existence nor existence then; there was neither the realm of space nor the sky which is beyond. What stirred? Where? In whose protection? Was there water bottomless deep? ... That one breathed, windless, by its own impulse ... Desire came upon that one in the beginning; that was the first seed of mind." 10.129

II A rhythmic movement in which instruments and tape are closely enmeshed. "Like impetuous winds, the drinks have lifted me up. Have I not drunk, Soma?" 10.119

III. A purely instrumental movement without tape. "She of the waters flashed lightning like a falling lightning-bolt and brought me the pleasures of love. From the water was born a noble manly son ... I the lover of Urvashi, long to draw her to me, thought she fills the air and measures the middle realm of space." 10.95

IV. Interweaving melodies and trills.

"Purusha stretches the warp and draws the weft; Purusha has spread it out upon this dome of the sky. These are the pegs, that are

fastened into place; the gods make the melodies into shuttles for weaving." 10.130

V. Some of the third movement is played back on tape, the ensemble adding a 'gloss'.

VI. Follows with scarcely a break from V, and leads the material upwards in an accelerating spiral, pulverising it until it rests suspended on the top as a shimmering continuum. "The celestial coursers, revelling in their strength, fly in a line like wild geese, the ends held back while the middle surges forward, when the horses reach the racecourse of the sky. Your body flies, Swift Runner; your spirit rushes like wind. Your mane, spread in many directions, flickers and jumps about in the forests." 1.63

VII A bell-tone introduces this movement of slow descent without a break. The movement is concerned exclusively with bell-like sounds, some of which repeat ritualistically—a motive that occurs from here on to the end of the piece. "When the drop came to the ocean looking upon the wide expanse with the eye of a vulture, then the sun, rejoicing in the takes on his own names in the third realm."

10.123

VIII. The solemnity is interrupted by a raucous duet between bass clarinet and trombone with tape. A rhythmic movement which finally winds down to repeated G's: G was the original pitch at the beginning of I. "Let them raise their voices and let us raise our voices. Speak your speech to the stones that speak, when you stones, you mountains full of Soma, rush to bring the rhythmic sound to Infra. They speak loudly, excited by the exhilarating drink. They shout to Indra: they have found the honey. Artfully they dance with the sisters that embrace them, making the earth echo with their stampings. The eagles have sent their cry up to the sky. Ardently the dark hinds danced in the meadow. They plunge deep to the rendezvous with the lower stone; they infuse it with floods of the seed of the sun-bright one." 10.94

IX. Ultimate contraction of pitch, expansion of spirit. Three massive G's, mostly electronic, enlivened by internal manipulations of the spectrum. Each lasts a whole minute, and the last reverberates into space. "The quarters of the sky live on the oceans that flow out of her in all directions. The whole universe exists

through the undying syllable that flows from her." 1.164

X. Horn calls across vast spaces grow into an ever-brighter horn solo. The ensemble bursts out at 'dawn'. "Like a dancing girl, she puts on bright ornaments; she uncovers her breast as a cow reveals her swollen udder. Creating light from the whole universe, Dawn has opened up the darkness as cows break out from their enclosed pen. Her brilliant flame has become visible once more; she spreads herself out driving back the formless black abyss." 1.92

XI. Repeats in transformed guise many of the ideas from earlier movements: for instance, a lengthy tape solo repeats the rapid chords of II, with each chord slowed, stretched out and reverberated. The repeated pitches take over eventually. "The bird carries in his heart speech that the divine youth spoke of inside the womb. The poets guard this revelation that shines like the sun in the footprint of order. I have seen the cowherd who never tires, moving to and fro along the paths. Clothing himself in those that move towards

the same centre but spread apart, he rolls on and on inside the worlds." 10.177

XII. Repeats earlier material in more meditative mood, alongside new ideas. "We have drunk the Soma; we have become immortal; we have gone to the light; we have found the gods ... O drop of Soma, flow for Indra." 8.48

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GUY PROTHEROE conductor

Guy Protheroe read music at Oxford University and his career embraces a wide variety of musical styles. In addition to his work with Spectrum he has directed concerts and workshops for many new organisations and appeared as guest conductor with groups as diverse as the Xenakis Ensemble and the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble. Although often associated with music of the avant-garde, he is also involved in more popular music-making; he conducted a centenary production

of John Danworth's jazz-opera setting of T.S. Eliot's *Sweeney Agonistes* and has worked on several albums and live performance with Vangelis.

SPECTRUM

Spectrum numbers among its members some of the most distinguished interpreters of contemporary music. The ensemble has performed at concert series and festivals in Britain, Europe and the USA, promoted its own series in London and made numerous recordings and broadcasts for radio networks. Possibly best known for its interpretations of Xenakis, several of whose works the group has recorded on CD, Spectrum has also worked closely with several leading composers in Britain and the USA. The group began its association with Jonathan Harvey with this performance of *Bhakti*, which was recorded in BBC Maida Vale Studios and followed by a concert performance at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre. The following year he wrote *Song Offerings* in response to a Spectrum commission, and dedicated the score to Spectrum's founders, Guy Protheroe and Ann Manly.

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