

EIGHT SONGS FOR A MAD KING

Music by Peter Maxwell Davies
Text by Randolph Stow and George III

1 The Sentry

Good day to your Honesty.
God guard who guards the gate.
Here is the key of the kingdom.
You are a pretty fellow:
next month I shall give
you a cabbage.
Undo the door!
Who has stolen my key?
Ach! my kingdom is snakes
and dancing, my kingdom is locks
and slithering.
Make room!
Pity me, pity me, pity me.
Child, child whose son
are you?

2 The Country Walk

Dear land of sheep
and cabbages.
Dear land of oaks,
beeches and strangling ivy,
green snakes of ivy, pythons.
God guard trees.
Blue-yellow-green.
Is the world like a
chained man's bruise
I think of God.
God also is a King.

3 The Lady-in-Waiting

Madam let us talk,
let us talk.
Madam I mean no harm.
Only to remember,
to remember what it
was that through silk,
lace, linen and brocade,
swooped on my needle.
To remember.
Madam, let us talk,
talk, talk, talk.
I mean no harm, no harm,
no harm, no...

4 To be Sung on the Water

Sweet Thames,
sweet Thames,
far, have I followed thee,
God guard my people.
Sweet Thames flow, soft.
Burdened by my people.
(deliver me from my people
they are within.)
to Eden garden,
unto Eden garden
in Hanover, Bermuda
or New South Wales.
Sweet Thames, flow soft.
Evacuate my people.
I am weary of this fate.
I am alone.

5 The Phantom Queen

Where is the Queen?
Why does she not visit me?
Esther, Esther,
O my heart's ease.
Have they chained you too,
my darling, in a stable?
Do they starve you,
strike you, scorn you,
ape your howls?
They say some other woman
is your wife, but the Queen's
name is Esther, Esther.
Fall on my eyes, O bride
like a starless night.

6 The Counterfeit

I am nervous,
I am not ill but I am nervous.
If you would know what is the
matter with me
I am nervous.
But I love you both very
well; if you would tell
me the truth.
I love Dr Heberden best;
for he has not told me a lie.
Sir George has told me a lie;
a white lie, he says,
but I hate a white lie!
If you tell me a lie,
let it be a black lie!

7 Country Dance

Comfort ye, comfort ye,
my people with singing
and with dancing with milk
and with apples.
The landlord at the
Three Tuns makes the
best purl in Windsor.
Sin! Sin! Sin!
black vice, intolerable vileness
in lanes, by ricks, at Courts.
It is night on the world,
Even I your King has
contemplated evil.
I shall rule with a rod of iron,
comfort ye my people

8 The Review

My people, I come before
you in mourning,
on my breast, a star.
The King is dead.
A good-hearted gentleman,
a humble servant of God.
a loving husband,
an affectionate sire.
Poor fellow, he went mad.
He talked to the trees,
attacked his eldest son.
disowned his wife,
to make a ghost his
Queen - a ghost his Queen.
So they seized him, whipped him
starved him, jeered in his face,
while he talked he talked he talked
he talked:
they could not shave him,
his mouth was never still.
Sometimes he howled like a dog !
And he veiled the mirrors
not to see himself pass by, for his
eyes had turned to
blackcurrant jelly.
Poor fellow, I weep for him.
He will die howling.
howling, howling.....