JOHN DIMOND – THE WIZARD OF MARBLEHEAD

A MINIATURE OPERA IN FIVE VIGNETTES

by

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Candidate for the Master of Music Degree

ABSTRACT

Throughout history, one trait of the Opera genre has been to bring to life and further illuminate fantastical subject matter. As part of this trend, composers often seek to highlight their own national heritage through their choice of subject matter. The Opera presented herein, *John Dimond – The Wizard of Marblehead*, is set in a Massachusetts shipping village during the period of unrest which led up to the American Revolution, the 1760s. John Dimond was a Seer whose home and property were adjacent to the town cemetery. Legend has it that John Dimond would scream and holler to the ships at sea from atop Old Burial Hill during inclement weather. If you were his friend, he would guide you safely through the storm and squall. If you were his foe, he would likely seek a perilous outcome for you and your crew.

The work is scored for three singers, instrumental quintet, piano and Electronics. The two primary goals of the fixed-media portions are to better convey a coastal setting and to add to the mood of the piece with sounds which cannot be produced with traditional instruments.
The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the Conservatory of Music and Dance, have examined a thesis titled “John Dimond – The Wizard of Marblehead,” presented by Brian A. Lynn, candidate for the Master of Music degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

**Supervisory Committee**

Dr. James Mobberley, DMA, Committee Chair  
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INSTRUMENTATION

Mezzo-Soprano
Tenor
Baritone
Flute
Bb Clarinet (double Bass Clarinet)
Bassoon
Violin
Cello
Piano
Electronics

Approximate Duration – 18 minutes
PERFORMANCE NOTES

*John Dimond – The Wizard of Marblehead* employs fixed media throughout the work. The primary consideration in an electro-acoustic work is timing. For this piece, the conductor should continue to keep time during these four sections at the indicated tempi. There are approximate descriptions of the electronics given at the bottom of the score which should help the conductor identify what he should be hearing as he approaches instrumental entrances. For playback during performance, the digital media and a digital media player or a compact disc and compact disc player could be utilized.

This work itself is, indeed, of the Opera *genre* and operas are meant to be staged. The inspiration for the setting of this work is quite extraordinary because it still exists. In Marblehead, Massachusetts stands a white frame house called the 'Old Brig' (1710). As you face the house, adjacent to right is a Colonial-era cemetery known as Burial Hill (1692) which overlooks a portion of the town and harbor. The stage set should therefore feature a house (stage right) which is open to the audience and a hill (stage left) with gravestones and a path leading toward the top. Another path should lead toward the rear of the stage between the house and hill. Finally, there should be a door (or a threshold of sorts) which separates the house from the hill.
John Dimond - The Wizard of Marblehead
A Miniature Opera in Five Vignettes

A Vignette 1

Molly Dimond (Mezzo-Soprano)

Robert Pitcher (Tenor)

John Dimond (Baritone)

Flute

Clarinet in B♭/Bass Clarinet in B♭

Bassoon

Violin

Cello

Piano

Electronics

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Molly

Robert

John

Fl.

B-Cl/
B-Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

tire town of Marble- head knows all your alterations...

no-body cares, no-body cares, no-
Now hand me my cane and my lantern.
The wind... hear it blowing down from the North.

poco a poco accel.
a tempo $= 88$

Thunder and wind

Rain
Cap'tain Jas-per Mc-Cleland of the E-liza-beth Anne, do you hear me...
Keep four degrees to star-board, run true un-til you reach the Half-way Rock. Captain Ben-ja-min Rowe of the

- - - -

ca. 21"
Het-ty, hear my words, move six degrees to port or you will founder on a shoal!

Harmonic melody enters, settles on unison E natural with whistle and vocal

Pitched whistle glissandos upward

ca. 12"
Molly

Robert

John

Fl.

B♭ Cl./B♭ Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

Can you hear me?

Un - cle John?
Molly

Robert

John

Molly: I have something to ask of you.
poco a poco rit.

\[ \text{Molly} \]

\[ \text{Robert} \]

\[ \text{John} \]

\[ \text{Fl.} \]

\[ \text{Bass Cl.} \]

\[ \text{Bsn.} \]

\[ \text{Vln.} \]

\[ \text{Vlc.} \]

\[ \text{Pno.} \]

\[ \text{Electr.} \]
When I return from the sea will you...
And what if you marry me?
press down on corresponding strings inside piano with left hand while striking piano key with right hand
Vignette 4

spoken - approximate pitch level indicated

Molly

Robert

John

Fl.

B♭ Cl./ B♭ Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.
for being Loy - alists and I fear that my Un - cle will...
You have a perfect fine trade here in

That will what Molly?
Marble-head. Why must you take such a risk?

Perfectly fine? Perfectly fine? Perfectly fine?
1 fix people's shoes! 1 am a simple man with nothing but strips of leather
and fish-weights in my pocket. But Captain Robbie says he will
Molly

Robert

John

Fl.

B♭ Cl./B♭ Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

split all of the gold among all the crew, can't you see?
Molly
Robert
John
Fl.
Bb Cl./Bass Cl.
Bsn.
Vln.
Vlc.
Pno.
Electr.

tell you what I see, I see a dishonest Captain and a crew of ignorant
Because you are running away and you are leaving everything see things my way?
Molly

Robert

John

Fl.

Bb Cl./Bb Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

remain alone, forgotten like the barnacles.
Volley

Robert

John

Fl.

Bass Cl.

Bsn.

pp

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

for - got - ten like the hours and hours I will have spent waiting
Molly

Robert

John

Fl.

B♭ Cl./

B♭ Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

should he e- ver re-turn at all. Am I to spend my life pre- par-ing for our wed- ding.
Pitched instrument sounds and wind
Slowly-developing ambient sounds
Smooth, glassy melody
Waves
Hollow, ambient single pitch
Continue slowly-developing ambient sounds
Reverb pizzicatos
Bullfrog with delay
My Ro-bert, he is sail-ing a-way to-day on the Ply-mouth.

roll bottom to top - top note should be struck simultaneously with instruments
Molly

Lass!

He doesn’t care

Robert

f

John

Then he’s a fool!

Fl.

Bass Clarinet in Bb - transposed

Bs Cl/ Bb Bass Cl.

Bsn.

arco

mp

Vln.

p f ff fp

arco

excessive bow pressure

ord.

Vlc.

arco

mf f ff fp

Pno.

p mp

Electr.
bout po-li-tics or To-ries and nei-ther do I, nei-ther do I!

fl.

Ca'ne he's a fool Fo-oools!

Vln.

nei-ther do I!

Vlc.


Pno.

f

46
Because you are both foolish children!

We're about to set sail.
and I have come to bid you farewell.
a tempo $\frac{d}{=} 88$

R $\frac{d}{=} 76$

Molly

Robert

John

Fl.

B♭ Cl./
B♭ Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.
Molly

Robert

Di - mond, no mat - ter the soil of our hirb!

Fare - well, child.

John

Fl.

Bb Cl./Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

257

257

257

257

257

257

257

257

257

257

257

50
You fail to understand.

There will be war with the
It is true, I have seen the future.

King of England!

It is true, I have seen the future.

It is true, I have seen the future.

It is true, I have seen the future.


S

52
I don't understand, like my uncle, I am different, like my uncle, I don't understand!
So what do you see, Miss Molly Diamond? Can you not see her? You see her? So what, do you see, Miss Molly Diamond?
Molly

Robert

John

Fl.

Bb Cl./
B- Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

see that there is no thing for me here in Marblehead
\textbf{Molly}

\textbf{Robert}

\textbf{John}

\textbf{Fl.}

\textbf{Bb Bass Cl.}

\textbf{Bsn.}

\textbf{Vln.}

\textbf{Vlc.}

\textbf{Pno.}

\textbf{Electr.}

\textbf{When I return}
You are mis-taken,
you will see that I am doing this all for you.
press down on corresponding strings inside piano with left hand while striking piano key with right hand

well...

q = 60

58
Molly

Knows not what he's doing.

Robert

Understand me, dear child. This is not about Robert.

John

Fl.

Bb Cl./Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.
or any other misguided deckhand on that Tory vessel.

You have...
seen in your own visions

There will be war with the King of England!
We must not stand down during this time of great need!

Lightning, thunder, wind and rain
accel. \( \frac{d}{4} \) = 76

Molly

Robert

John

Fl.

Bs Cl./
B- Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

Im-pose-ible, there is a cloud in the sky

Thunder

Wind and rain

Duet of pitched instruments

Downward oscillation

Robert

Robert

Robert

Robert!
\[ J = 60 \]

Molly

Robert

John

\( \text{shouting} \)

\( \text{Un-cle John, no?} \)

\( \text{Captain Thomas Ro-bie of the Ply-mouth Lass hear} \)

Fl.

Bs Cl./Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

\( \text{Thunder and rain, Lightning strike and subsequent thunder} \)

\( \text{Industrial, hollow ambient sounds, Deep oscillation} \)

66
Robert, please hear me, I curse you from this un-named spot. Both

“what I have to say? I curse you from this un-named spot...”

Wind
Thin, glassy melody

Ambient sounds continue
Molly

Robert

John

Fl.

Bs Cl./Bb Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

Chimes

Thunder and wind

Clarinet melody settles on Bb
(starting pitch for Molly)
Robert, please hear me.

John, nest wish and my most fervent prayer!!

Molly

Robert

John

Fl.

Bb Cl./Bb Bass Cl.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Electr.

Hollow, ambient sounds
Out of phase melody

Lightning strike and subsequent thunder

ca. 12"

ca. 8"

Downward oscillation
APPENDIX A

John Dimond – The Wizard of Marblehead
A Miniature Opera in 5 Vignettes

Synopsis

John Dimond – Baritone
Molly Dimond – Mezzo-Soprano
Robert Pitcher – Tenor

Vignette 1

The show opens with dramatic action and a short, boisterous musical attack. John Dimond is hurled onto the stage, the force of which causes him to fall to the ground near center stage. He climbs to his feet and makes his way home. Once inside, his niece, Molly Dimond, lashes out at John, her uncle, about his problem with “the Robies.” But the mind of John Dimond is absent from this matter. It is charting a safe course through the approaching storm. John Dimond proceeds to climb to the top of the town's Old Burial Hill. As he has done before, he hollers out to the ships at sea with the intent of guiding them safely to port.

Characters: Molly Dimond, John Dimond
Score: Page 1 measure 1 to Page 10 measure 90
Approximate Duration: 4:10 (90 measures)
Electronics: 2 sections

Vignette 2

Molly's romantic interest, a young man named Robert Pitcher, enters the stage. He finds Molly weeping near the foot of the hill. He musters her attention and proposes to her. She asks a good many questions of her own, all the while avoiding his proposition. Robert leaves the stage, his blood a degree or two hotter. Molly is left to ponder it all.

Characters: Robert Pitcher, Molly Dimond
Score: Page 11 measure 91 to Page 21 measure 182
Approximate Duration: 4:10 (91 measures)
Electronics: None

Vignette 3

Molly Dimond experiences a short reflective period. She wonders if she will be forgotten (“like the barnacles”). She wonders if she will ever see Robert again. Is she to make preparations for their wedding or his funeral?

Characters: Molly Dimond
Score: Page 22 measure 183 to Page 25 measure 226
Approximate Duration: 1:55 (43 measures)
Electronics: 1 section
Vignette 4

The remaining elements of the plot are divulged during this section. Molly, the only character who fully understands all of the proceedings, explains to her Uncle that her lover is about to ship out on a Robie vessel. Just as John Dimond is expressing his emotional and political discontent (“Fools!”), Robert knocks on the door. The young man begins to speak in youthful, idealistic terms. John is dismissive. He portrays an air of 'other-worldliness' while his niece sorts through the mess of explaining to Robert that she and her uncle are “Seers” and that they have some sort of unearthly ability. Robert, short-sighted as he is, remarks that Molly should “see” how there is nothing for him in Marblehead and that she should “see” that he is “doing it all for her.”

Characters: John Dimond, Molly Dimond, Robert Pitcher
Score: Page 25 measure 227 to Page 34 measure 305
Approximate Duration: 3:30 (78 measures)
Electronics: None

Vignette 5

Molly makes a final plea for the life of her loved one but John Dimond offers little consolation. He cites the imminent conflict with the King of England and that he will not stand aside “during this time of great need!” He ascends once again to the top of Burial Hill and conjures up his own storm and squall. He shouts that it is his “earnest wish” that the ships of both Thomas and his father Johnathan Robie should “perish in the storm that is coming!” Molly is left alone on stage – weeping.

Characters: Molly Dimond, John Dimond
Score: Page 34 measure 306 to Page 42 measure 394
Approximate Duration: 4:15 (88 measures)
Electronics: 1 section
APPENDIX B

John Dimond – The Wizard of Marblehead
A Miniature Opera in 5 Vignettes

A Libretto by Brian Arthur Lynn
2011-2012

Incantations by Dr. Bob Curran
Encyclopedia of the Undead: a Field Guide to Creatures that Cannot Rest in Peace
Published by Career Press, Franklin Lakes, NJ (2006)
(used by permission)

Vignette 1

*Marblehead, Massachusetts – circa 1760

The stage set is dominated by a house and a hill, stage right and stage left respectively. The interior of the house at 42 Orne Street is visible to the audience. On the other side of the stage lies the hill, known by the townspeople as Old Burial Hill, which has many tombstones and a path leading to the top. A narrow path leading toward the rear of the stage separates the house and the hill. The music begins when a man, John Dimond, is pushed onto the stage from a stage left wing. He falls to the ground near center stage. He manages to stand up after a few moments and makes his way to the front door of the house. He attempts to unlock the door with a key but gets frustrated and begins pounding on the door. He is visibly weary. After banging on the door for a few moments it opens. A young woman, his niece Molly, appears at the door.

*Doorway of 42 Orne

Molly Dimond: Uncle John? Are you alright? Why won't you answer?
John Dimond: Let me be....
Molly: Uncle John? Was it the Robies again? The entire town of Marblehead knows of your altercations... nobody cares, nobody cares, nobody cares!
John: Molly, never mind the damned Robies! Now hand me my cane and my lantern.

She retrieves the two items and hands them to her uncle. John Dimond turns and walks toward the hill. Molly exits the house and follows along.

*Base of Old Burial Hill

John: The wind... hear it blowing down from the North. Listen ...

John Dimond climbs the hill. He murmurs and makes physical gestures toward several headstones along the way.

*Atop Old Burial Hill

When he reaches the top he sets down his lantern and cane. He shakes his arms and fists toward the sky as he shouts directives to the captains of two sea vessels.
John: Captain Jasper McClelland of the *Elizabeth Anne*, do you hear me. Keep four degrees to starboard, run true until you reach the Halfway Rock. Captain Benjamin Rowe of the *Hetty*, hear my words. Move six degrees to port or you will founder on a shoal!

After a few moments John Dimond makes his way slowly down the hill.

*Base of Old Burial Hill

Molly: Uncle John? Can you hear me?

John Dimond is oblivious to the world around him as he makes his way into the house. He collapses into a chair at the table. Molly falls to the ground and begins to weep. Robert Pitcher enters from stage left.

Vignette 2

Robert: Molly I have something to ask of you, can you hear me?

Molly: (pulls herself together) I hear you Robert.

Robert: When I return from the sea will you marry me?

Molly: And what if you never return? What if you never return? Please do not board that ship with Captain Tom Robie. My uncle is cross with him and his father for being Loyalists and I fear that my uncle will... (she begins to weep again)

Robert: That he will what, Molly?

Molly: You have a perfectly fine trade here in Marblehead. why must you take such a risk?

Robert: Perfectly fine? Perfectly fine? Perfectly fine? I fix people's shoes! I am a simple man with nothing but strips of leather and fishweights in my pocket. But Captain Robie says he will split all of the gold amongst all the crew, can't you see?

Molly: I'll tell you what I see, I see a dishonest captain and a crew of ignorant fools.

Robert: Damnit, Molly, why don't you ever see things my way?

Molly: Because you are running away and you are leaving everything to chance.

Robert: I'll take my chances.

Robert Pitcher exits to the rear of the stage.

Vignette 3

Molly: He'll take his chances, he'll take his chances? Whilst I remain alone, forgotten like the barnacles, forgotten like the hours and hours I will have spent waiting should he ever return at all. Am I to spend my life preparing for our wedding or his funeral? (she falls to ground weeping again)

Molly picks herself up off of the ground and makes her way into the house.

Vignette 4

*Interior of 42 Orne Street

John: What ever is the problem now?

Molly: My Robert, he is sailing away today on the *Plymouth Lass*!

John: Then he's a fool!

Molly: He doesn't care about politics or Tories...

John: Cause he's a fool.

Molly: ...and neither do I,

John: Fools!

Molly: ...neither do I!
John: Because you are foolish children! (knock knock knock knock knock)
Robert: Molly? We're about to set sail and I've come to bid you farewell!

John Dimond remains seated. Molly rushes to the door. She opens the door and allows Robert into the house. They embrace. She grabs his hands and holds them as she pleads with her fiancé.

Molly: Robert – Don't go! My uncle is at war with the Robies because they are Tories!
Robert: (breaking Molly’s grasp) We are all English, John Dimond, no matter the soil of our birth!
John: Farewell, child. You fail to understand. There will be war with the King of England!
Molly: It is true, I have seen the future.
Robert: Molly, I don't understand!
Molly: I am different, like my uncle. I am a Seer.
Robert: So what do you see Miss Molly Dimond? Can you not see that there is nothing for me here in Marblehead? Molly: I'll pray for you Robert Pitcher.
Robert: When I return you will see that I am doing this all for you.
Molly: You are mistaken, Robert. Fare thee well.

Molly follows Robert as he exits the house. She continues to follow him until she gets to center stage. She stops and watches him exit stage left. Once he is off stage, Molly turns and walks slowly toward the door of her house. She enters the house. John Dimond is sitting down with his head down on a table.

Vignette 5

*Interior of 42 Orne Street

Molly: Uncle John, I implore you. Please have mercy on my Robert. He knows not what he's doing.
John: (looks up) Understand me, dear child. This is not about Robert or any other misguided deckhand on that Tory vessel. (gets up from the table) You have seen in your own visions. There will be war with the King of England! We must not stand down during this time of great need!

John Dimond exits the house and makes his way toward the hill. Lightning and thunder can be seen and heard from the moment John Dimond crosses into the outdoors.

Molly: Impossible, there isn't a cloud in the sky... (short pause) Robert... Robert!

*Exterior of 42 Orne and Old Burial Hill

Molly: Uncle John, no!
John: Captain Thomas Robie of the Plymouth Lass, hear what I have to say! I curse you from this anointed spot...
Molly: Robert, please hear me... Robert...
John: both you and your father Johnathan, master of the Charlotte Rose.
Molly: Robert!
John: May neither of you ever see port again! May both of you perish in the storm that is coming! This is my earnest wish...
Molly: Robert, please hear me
John: and my most fervent prayer!
Molly Pitcher: I will always be yours, Robert Pitcher.

After a few moments John Dimond falls to his knees in apparent exhaustion. Molly is laying on the ground visibly, yet quietly, weeping. The music tapers off and the stage lights fade to black.
Brian Arthur Lynn (born 1971) is a composer, educator and performer from Omaha, Nebraska. He has taught instrumental and vocal music as a school teacher in Kansas City, Missouri at Northeast High School and University Academy Charter School and as a private music instructor in Olathe, Kansas at Spencer's Music Room. His recent compositions include *Run* for Orchestra and *Man Becomes Machine* for Wind Ensemble. He has lived in the Kansas City area since 1990 and has been performing in local ensembles of various genres since 1991, primarily as a vocalist, bassist, guitarist or drummer. As a director, he conducted the Kansas City Missouri School District All-City Orchestra concert (2000) and he was musical director of the Guerilla Theatre production of *Plan 9 From Outer Space* (1999). Also, he is a proud father of a daughter, Aria (6), and a step-daughter, Lily (9).

Mr. Lynn's degrees include a Bachelor of Arts in Music and a Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Missouri – Kansas City. He also earned a Master of Arts in Music degree from U.M.K.C. He has recently completed all of the degree requirements for the Master of Music in Composition degree from the University of Missouri – Kansas City, from which he will graduate in May 2012.