

# Alec Roth – ARION AND THE DOLPHIN – libretto by VIKRAM SETH

opera in nine scenes or two acts

commissioned by English National Opera

ENO Soloists, Community Chorus, Children's Chorus, Bournemouth Sinfonietta, Nicholas Kok (conductor), Rebecca Meitlis (director), Henk Schut (designer), Denni Sayers (choreographer), the Drill Shed, HMS Drake, Royal Navy Dockyard, Plymouth, 14-19 June 1994

Revised version: Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Victoria Memorial Hall, Singapore, 29 June - 1 July 1996

Dutch version (*Arion en de Dolfijn*), translated by Joris Vermeulen: Nelle-fabriek, Rotterdam, 13-16 March 1999

The opera recounts the true story of the young musician Arion, who was rescued from death by a dolphin. Although set in ancient Greece, Vikram Seth's imaginative treatment of the tale gives it a universal and timeless quality which resonates at many different levels.

## SYNOPSIS

click [here](#) for a synopsis of the opera

## FORCES REQUIRED

The opera is suitable for fully professional forces, or for professional forces with community chorus.

### SOLO ROLES:

PERIANDER, Tyrant of Corinth	tenor
ARION, his young court musician	lyric baritone
CAPTAIN of the ship	bass-baritone
1st MUTINEER	baritone
2nd MUTINEER	tenor
DOLPHIN	mezzo-soprano
MESSENGER	boy or girl soprano
SICILIAN SEXTET	soprano/mezzo/alto/tenor/baritone/bass
MASTER OF CEREMONIES	spoken role

### CHORUS (SATB) and CHILDREN'S CHORUS (SA):

GUARDS, SAILORS, SICILIANS, DOLPHINS, FISHERFOLK, PEOPLE OF CORINTH

### INSTRUMENTATION:

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA: 1(+Picc.+Alto) 0 2(2nd+Bass) 0 – 2 1 0 0 – Harp, Keyboard, 2 Percussion – Strings  
Optional Stage Band (Scene 3): Guitar, Mandolin, Double Bass

## DURATION

ca. 105 minutes: PART 1 (Scenes 1-5) ca. 50 minutes; PART 2 (Scenes 6-9) ca. 55 minutes

The opera may be performed with or without an interval between the two parts

## PERFORMANCE MATERIALS

Full Score; Vocal Score; Orchestral Parts

*“Musically Arion and the Dolphin is a work of great beauty. Roth has a keen ear for strange evocative sonorities and his orchestral writing reveals a master hand. Though the music includes Far Eastern features it owes more to the pastoral tradition of the composer's native land; the protagonists, for all their Mediterranean setting, are as English as the pseudo-Greeks in A Midsummer Night's Dream. The score shows Roth as a lyrical rather than dramatic composer, though he can achieve incisive dramatic strokes when needed and his judicious use of minimalism never becomes tedious. Arion is vividly portrayed; his prize song in the music contest is a true bravura piece, but more deeply felt is his plaintive solo to the threatening sailors before he jumps into the sea.”*

(OPERA, February 1999)

## EXTRACTS FOR CONCERT PERFORMANCE

A number of extracts from the opera are performable as concert works:

[Dolphin Songs](#); [Dolphin Dances](#); The Sailors' Song; The Captain's Song; Arion's Lament; Greek Dances; The Duet (Arion and the Dolphin)