

Wings

An Electronic Opera in Three Acts

~ for four sopranos and electronics

Tom Baker

(October 2013, in-progress)

Wings Act 1 Scene 1

Prologue

Narrator and Doctor exchange sentences, reading in a dry, recitative-like voice. Each change of sentence is preceded by a gong-like sound in the electronic score.

Narrator: Tissue expansion works on the principles of biological creep and mechanical creep.

Doctor: Biological creep is a disruption of gap junctions and increased tissue surface area that results in cell proliferation.

Narrator: Mechanical creep is a morphological change in tissues due to stress.

Doctor: Tissue expansion causes the epidermis to become thicker while the dermis becomes thinner, and the skin becomes...

Both: ...hypervascular.

Narrator: Methylmethacrylate is used in craniofacial bone augmentation.

Doctor: To avoid soft tissue burns, it is important to cool it and allow the exothermic reaction to settle down.

Narrator: Average absorption rates of hyaluronic acid (used in lip augmentation) are 20-50% of the original volume over six months.

Doctor: Zyderm...

Both: ...(registered trademark)

Doctor: is made from sterilized bovine collagen and is used to treat wrinkles.

Narrator: Extensive reviews of the safety of silicone performed by the UK Independent Review Group concluded that there was no evidence that...

Both: silicone implants...

Narrator: ...can cause systemic disease.

Narrator: Polyethylene is a synthetic polymer with a simple carbon chain backbone.

Doctor: It is commonly used in the porous form and is commercially known as Medpor...

Both: (registered trademark).

Doctor: It is easy to carve in the operating room and is used in nasal augmentation and ear reconstruction.

Narrator: Vitallium is an alloy of Cobalt and Chromium, and is more resistant to corrosion than stainless steel.

Doctor: It also has a lower incidence of hypersensitivity.

Both: Methylmethacrylate...

Narrator: ...is commonly used as bone cement in orthopaedics.

Both: Polytetrafluoroethylene...

Narrator: ...is used as a synthetic graft in vascular surgery.

Both: Butyl cyanoacrylate...

Narrator: ...is used as a tissue adhesive to seal skin wounds.

Both: Polypropylene...

Narrator: ...is a synthetic polymer that has a variety of uses such as a suture material called Prolene...

Both: (registered trademark).

Wings Act 1 - Scene 2

I Dream

♩ = 52

Soprano

Electronics

(Synth long tones).....

mp

6

intoned
mp

S

Why do we value only the average? Why are we dedicated only to restoring our current notions of the con-

El.

10

S

-ventional, as opposed to letting people explore, if they want, what the possibiliteis are?

El.

14

S

El.

18

S Plastic surgery is the intersection of art and science. It's the intersection of the surgeon's imagination... with human

El.

22

S flesh. And human flesh is infinitely malleable.

El.

26

S The body is a conduit for the soul.

El.

cantabile

30

S The skin and the soul are one.

El.

34

S The skin and the soul are one.

El.

Wings Act 1 - Scene 3
I Dream

38 *intoned*

S
Our bodies change our brains. Our brains are in-finitely mal-leable

El.

42

S
If I were to give you wings, you would develop, quite literally, a

El.

46

S
winged brain.

El.

50 *cantabile* *intoned*

S
I dream of making wings.

El.

54 *cantabile* *intoned*

S
I dream of making wings for human beings.

El.

Wings Act 1 - Scene 3
I Dream

58 *cantabile* *intoned*

S I dream of making wings for you.

El.

62

S I have the blueprints, sketches of the scapel scissoring into the skin,

El.

66

S stretching flaps of torso fat to fashion gliders piped with rib bone.

El.

70

S When the arm strethes, the gliders unfold, and you float on currents of air.

El.

74

S

El.

78

S

Our bodies contain eons. Once, we were single cells, then fish, then birds, then mammals.

El.

82

S

and the genes for all these forms lie dormant on their chromosomes.

El.

86

S

We are a pastiche at the cellular, genetic level.

El.

90

S

Human flesh is infinitely malleable.

El.

cantabile

94

S

The skin and the soul are one.

El.

98

S

The skin. The soul.

El.

102

S

I dream.

El.

106

S

El.

Wings Act 1 - Scene 3

Flying

♩ = 88

Soprano

Mezzo-Soprano

Electronics

mp

intoned mp

If

6

S

you could have wings
would you want them?

Mezzo

intoned mp

I don't know

Yes, if I could fly.

Elec.

10

S

But they would
be really big.

Mezzo

How big?

Elec.

Wings
Act 1 - Scene 3
Flying

14

S
They might brush against
your knees as you walk,
or be bigger than
some doorways.
And what if you could
never take them off?

Mezzo

Elec.
I would still want them.

18

S
If you could never
take them off,
even if you were going
somewhere,
or going to bed,
or eating at a table,

Mezzo

Elec.

22

S
or if you wanted to
pick someone up,
you could never take them off?

Mezzo
Yes,
I would.
I would still want them.

Elec.

Wings
Act 1 - Scene 3
Flying

26

S

Because you could fly?

Mezzo

Yes, because of the flying.

Elec.

30

S

Mezzo

Elec.

33

S

What if they were heavy, or if no one else had them, and even if your children and their children didn't have them?

Mezzo

Yes, I think so.

Elec.

Wings
Act 1 - Scene 3
Flying

37

S
But you would still have arms and legs, and you could still speak, but you had wings, too. You would want the wings, too?

Mezzo

Elec.
Yes,

41

S
And when you were walking around, people would stare at you,

Mezzo
I would want the wings too.

Elec.

45

S
and they wouldn't necessarily understand that you could fly?

Mezzo

Elec.
I understand. I understand that they wouldn't understand.

Wings
Act 1 - Scene 3
Flying

49

S Or if people thought they meant something, something they didn't really mean?

Mezzo

Elec. I would know. I would know what the wings were for.

53

S And if you had them forever, the forever, I mean, that is your life, you would still want them?

Mezzo

Elec. Yes

57

S

Mezzo I would still want them. I would take them. so long as I could fly...

Elec.

Wings
Act 1 - Scene 3
Flying

61

S

Mezzo

Elec.

(Synth long-tones).....

64

S

Mezzo

Elec.

cantabile

that I might fly a - way

(Synth long tones continue).....

65

S

Mezzo

Elec.

that I might fly a - way where the ships

(Synth long tones continue).....

Wings
Act 1 - Scene 3
Flying

66

S

Mezzo

Elec.

that I might fly a - way where the ships of pine wood pass

Detailed description: This system contains measures 66 and 67. The Soprano (S) part has a whole rest in measure 66 and another in measure 67. The Mezzo part has a melodic line starting in measure 66 with the lyrics 'that I might fly a - way where the ships of pine wood pass'. A long slur covers the entire phrase. The Electric (Elec.) part has a whole rest in measure 66 and another in measure 67.

(Synth long tones continue).....

67

S

Mezzo

Elec.

be - tween the dark cliffs.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 67 and 68. The Soprano (S) part has a whole rest in measure 67 and another in measure 68. The Mezzo part has a melodic line starting in measure 67 with the lyrics 'be - tween the dark cliffs.'. A slur covers the phrase. The Electric (Elec.) part has a whole rest in measure 67 and another in measure 68. The system ends with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature.

(Synth long tones continue).....

68

S

Mezzo

Elec.

mp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 68 through 72. The Soprano (S) and Mezzo parts have whole rests throughout. The Electric (Elec.) part has a melodic line starting in measure 68 with triplets and slurs. The system ends with a double bar line and a 6/4 time signature.