

## **A note from Stephanie:**

***Young Goodman Brown* is a 30-minute chamber opera designed as a palindrome in two 15-minute acts for three singers, piano, and tape track.** It is the result of a commission by [The Perspective Collective](#) setting Nathaniel Hawthorne's famous short story by the same name. The opera has legs, and has been performed at numerous fringe festivals in the U.S. and the U.K. since its completion in 2021, and it has received positive public review.

**The opera's composition posed various logistical challenges I set out to resolve.** They include:

- exist as a traveling work that could immerse itself in unusual performance settings,
- run smoothly without a conductor and offer agency to each performer,
- include four necessary characters with only three singers (without one of them doubling), and,
- making the opera as immersive as possible while resolving the above.

**These aims were achieved by:**

- Using extreme care in the setting of vocal lines, always considering (even in the most polytonal sections) that there be musical information that supports the singer and makes sense within the piece's harmonic language and dramatic arc.
- Communicating with the performers throughout the entire composition process, developing characters in a way that resonated with their personal voices.
- Making one character *unembodied*, though not unvoiced: giving the Devil's character to the pianist, with conversational text inserted into the score's piano part which the audience never hears sung but instead hears played. I took care in distinguishing for the pianist when what he/she was playing was character versus orchestration in the current reduction. Some musical character traits of the Devil include the "Ha, ha! Ha, ha!" gesture, and slow 'conversational' delivery in typically low or high registers of the piano.
- Using electronics to create immersion, and transforming the piece into an electroacoustic work in specific sections. I recorded, manipulated sound objects, and soundscaped using LogicProX.

## **The future for this opera:**

I always imagined this opera orchestrated with a full ensemble, and with the idea of making it more immersive by using AR to embody the Devil digitally, allowing this character to be searched-for and viewed only through the audiences' phone screens throughout the opera.

**The excerpt shared showcases** one of the scenes that involves the live performers interacting with/reacting to a tape track (Scene 4), and is followed by a scene with full ensemble (Scene 5) that closes the first act. The audio shared is a live-performance recording from the Wandsworth Arts Fringe Festival in London on June 23, 2023.

## **ROLES – The Perspective Collective:**

FAITH – Erin Brittain, soprano

GOODY CLOYSE – Rachael Basescu, mezzo-soprano

YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN – Grant Mech, bass-baritone

THE DEVIL – Patrick Fink, piano

## SCENE 4: Voices

(with Electronic Tape track)

The Devil lures Young Goodman Brown deeper into the strange and creepy woods. YGB's surroundings grow darker and more haunted, enveloping him in a confusing and maddening abyss. YGB hears other voices he thinks he recognizes, Deacon Gookin's or the Reverend's, that also speak of a "goodly young woman to be taken into communion tonight." The haunted woods menacingly echoes Faith's theme, and YGB is heartbroken at the thought of something happening to his Faith.

### Q CUE RECORDING ON DOWNBEAT

**Grave; Ad lib. (about ♩ = 56)**

Electroacoustic Recording / Male Voice

**Più mosso**

**Agitato**

288 (about 20 seconds)

GC

Spur up.

YGB

Who's there?

### Q CUE RECORDING ON DOWNBEAT

**Grave; Ad lib. (about ♩ = 56)**

(about 20 seconds)

**Più mosso**

**Agitato**

Pno.

*pp* *p*

8<sup>va</sup>-----|

293

GC *3* *3*  
 ...or we shall be late.

YGB  
 Dea-con Goo - kin? Rever- end?

Pno.

295 Male voice

GC  
 There is a good-ly young wo man to be ta -ken in - to com mun ion to night.

296 Hymn in harmony  
 (distant/distorted Faith and Goody Cloyse voices)

GC  
 He'll shield you with a wall of fire, —

YGB  
 A wo - man?

Pno.  
 With a bounce...  
 mp

301

GC

YGB

Pno.

with flam - ing zeal your breast in - spire.

Faith? Not Faith!

Suddenly and faster  
(laughing gesture)

12/8

12/8

12/8

12/8

306

GC

YGB

Pno.

*Ominous; menacing (plucked)*

*(Theme: Here, here, Young Good - man*

Don't laugh at me!

12/8

12/8

12/8

12/8

(plucked "darkness lurks" theme; Faith's theme)

310

GC

Brown.) (Theme:Dark ness lurks where sha -dows once were...)

YGB

Who's there? Who's there!

Pno.

**R** PIANO SOLO  
Adagio; Delicate; Solemn

314

Pno.

*pp* *p* *mp*

*pedaled*

318

Pno.

*mp* *mf*

## SCENE 5: But where is Faith?

YGB suddenly hears Faith cry out “Goodman!” and he immediately cries out in response, “Faith! Faith!” [*Goodman Brown cried out; and his cry was lost to his own ear, by its unison with the cry of the desert.*] Alone in the deep of the woods, accompanied by the tones of a dark and evil procession, Goodman repeatedly questions “But where is Faith? Of all nights in the year, has she tarried away?” In the distance, Faith and Goody Cloyse chorale together in the singing of a familiar hymn.

**S** JARRING! Più mosso ♩ = 86

(the "scream")  
**ff** FAITH

322

Fth

Good-man!

GC

GOODY CLOYSE

**f**

The my - ster - y of sin.---

YGB

**f**

Faith! Faith!\_

**S** JARRING! Più mosso ♩ = 86

Pno.

**ff**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

The score consists of three systems. The first system features three vocal parts: Fth (Faith), GC (Goody Cloyse), and YGB (Goodman Brown). Fth begins with a 'scream' (marked 'ff') and sings 'Good-man!'. GC and YGB enter with a chorale, singing 'The my - ster - y of sin.---' and 'Faith! Faith!\_' respectively. The second system shows a piano accompaniment (Pno.) consisting of 12 chimes, marked 'ff'. The tempo is 'Più mosso' with a quarter note equal to 86 beats per minute.

The clock tower chimes 12 times, again.

326 Heavy ♩ = 68

Fth

GC

YGB

Pno.

**GOODY CLOYSE** *mf*

The

Heavy ♩ = 68

*f*

328

GC

YGB

Pno.

*mf*

mys - ter - y of sin.

But where is Faith? \_\_\_\_\_ Of all nights in the year? Has she

*8va*

FAITH

*mp*

He'll shield you

GOODY CLOYSE

*mp*

He'll shield you

— tar - ried a - way?

*8va*

**T**

332

*cresc. poco a poco*

with a wall of fire, with flam-in' zeal yourbreast in - spire,

*cresc. poco a poco*

with a wall of fire, with flam-in' zeal yourbreast in - spire,

But where is Faith?

**T**

8



335 *mf* *mp*

Fth Bid rag-ing winds their fu - ry cease, and

GC Bid rag-ing winds their fu - ry cease, and

YGB — Of all nights in the year? Has she tar - ried a -

Pno.

337 **U**

Fth hush the temp-est in - to peace.

GC hush the temp-est in - to peace.

YGB way? But where is Faith? But where is Faith?

**U** (DEVIL)  
(Here, here Young Good -

Pno.

339 (YGB hold over ad lib.)

YGB

But where is Faith?!

Pno.

man Brown.)

(Piano: go right into the next section, don't wait.)

♩ = 80

*Lurching forward; like a gush of wind that then dies down mysteriously.*

340

Pno.

*mp* *mf* *poco a poco rit.*

343 *long fermata*

Pno.

**END OF ACT 1**