

## The Whale Savers (2009)

**Duration:** 70'

**Librettist:** Phil Porter

**Instrumentation:** picc.fl.cl.bcl.bsn – perc – keyboards – vln.vla.vlc.db

First performed at the Riverside Studios, Hammersmith, London in December 2009 by W11 Opera for Young People

Smell the salt spray! Hear the crash of the waves on the rocks! Listen to the sea shanties of the fishermen and the song of the whale...

A stranded whale brings excitement to the forgotten fishing village of Farnaway, turning it into the centre of a frenzied media circus. The bored youngsters of the village gain a new sense of purpose from the mission to save the whale, but their elders are tempted by greed to take a deadlier path.

Unless Farnaway can heal its generation divide, the whale will die...

Martin Ward is a composer of music for opera, dance and theatre, as well as for screen and the concert stage. His narrative works explore an eclectic range of styles and genres which reflect the adventurous scope of the stories he has tackled, and many involve the merging of diverse musical elements, both acoustic and electronic. He is the composer of Will Tuckett's Olivier Award winning dance-theatre production of *The Wind in the Willows*, as well as a number of other critically-acclaimed narrative ballets, including *Pinocchio* and *Faeries* for the Royal Opera House and *The Canterville Ghost* for English National Ballet; and four operas including *Skitterbang Island* and the Edinburgh Fringe First nominated *Dr Quimpugh's Compendium of Peculiar Afflictions*.

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# Martin Ward

Clocks

They Came Back

The Fizz

Dr. Quimpugh's Compendium of Peculiar Afflictions

Skitterbang Island

The Whale Savers



'Martin Ward's astonishingly complex score (...we are talking Sondheim levels of sophistication) is a really attractive piece of work...veering from sea shanty to neo-Bernstein to eerie modernist string quartet...modulating, veering around time-signatures, breezy and not at all superficial.'

**(Review of 'The Whale Savers' – Opera Now 2010)**

‘...a soaring collection of songs, composed by the supremely talented Martin Ward...’

**\*\*\*\*\* Review for *Dr Quimpugh*, The Scotsman, August 2012**

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## Clocks (2015)

**Librettist.** Dominic Hingorani

*Clocks* is a new steampunk opera in development after being commissioned by Brolly Productions.

Time is literally running out. A gentleman explorer journeys far from home and discovers a brilliant young immigrant girl as she desperately tries to keep the cogs turning. They are forced to choose the world they know or each other. Set against a backdrop of immigration, exploitation and technological innovation this visually stunning and emotionally gripping opera takes you into the dark world of the clock that is the beating heart of the East End.

## They Came Back (2014)

**Duration.** 25'

**Librettist.** Martin Ward

**Instrumentation.** Electronics

It is the near future and the world is in the grip of a compelling phenomenon. In small but ever growing numbers, the deceased are returning, making brief visitations to their loved ones and delivering hauntingly cryptic messages. What many see as a great unifying human experience touching all of the peoples of the World equally, others seek to use as a divisive tool, proof of a selective God, of an existential order, of another life beyond this world. Desperate politicians struggle to maintain control in the face of this new, greater power. Peaceful gatherings have evolved into riots; religious marches have resulted in massacres; the news is awash with stories of mass-suicide, whilst the World's economies are in turmoil as people give up on the stable lives they thought they knew and embrace this strange reality. The Visited are an anointed chosen few, whilst the majority pray for a Visit, pray to see their loved ones again, to receive a message, to have a place in the hierarchy of this new world order.

## The Fizz (2013)

**Duration.** 70'

**Librettist.** Phil Porter

**Instrumentation.** fl=picc).cl(=bcl) - tpt.trbn - harp - perc - vln.db

First performed at the POSK Theatre, Hammersmith, London in November 2011 by the W11 Opera for Young People.

A youth opera is set when a family business is in crisis. Randall's Replenishing Fizz has been made to the same recipe for generations. But what is the secret ingredient that makes this much-loved cold drink such a hot commodity? And will the Randall family prevent their famous product from being guzzled up by the Prufrock Corporation? This opera is a treat for the whole family.

## Dr Quimpugh's Compendium of Peculiar Afflictions (2011)

**Duration.** 60'

**Librettist.** Phil Porter

**Instrumentation.** pno-vln.vlc

First performed at the Petersham Playhouse, UK in September 2011.

An opera for 3 singers (Soprano, Mezzo and Baritone) and 3 musicians (Violin, Cello and Piano). Devised and written in collaboration with the award-winning playwright Phil Porter, the story finds the esteemed and pioneering brain doctor Dr Quimpugh suffering a long dark night of the soul, questioning his life's work and achievements. He is attended by two nurses who, seeking to raise his spirits, offer up his voluminous casebook as proof of a life well spent. He opens the book and recalls the bizarre and peculiar cases on which his career and reputation were built. The nurses are only too happy to indulge these memories, playing the parts of the weird and wonderful characters who have entered his examination room over the years, but will the doctor find peace of mind by morning? *'...a soaring collection of songs, composed by the supremely talented Martin Ward, each one detailing the bizarre story of a patient the doctor has helped overcome a surreal medical condition. The crazy logic that underpins each story is turned into genuinely moving mini-dramas that find emotion in the unlikeliest of places.'*

\*\*\*\*\* **The Scotsman, August 2012**

## Skitterbang Island (2010)

**Duration.** 40'

**Librettist.** Phil Porter

**Instrumentation.** pno -harp-vln (or recorded soundtrack)

First performed at the Polka Theatre, Wimbledon, London in July 2010.

A puppet-opera which features three performers - two opera singers and a puppeteer, singing and puppeteering the four characters - Skitterbang (the reclusive, but friendly inhabitant of Skitterbang Island); Marie (a diminutive ship-wrecked heroine); Edvard (her highly-strung uncle) and Arnie (a giant, talking Snow Stoot). Skitterbang Island fully embraces opera traditions and is entirely sung. The combination of puppetry and song created a theatrical experience which beguiled its young audiences, playfully immersing them in its tuneful and dramatic world.

*'This is a magical introduction to the world of opera.'*

**TimeOut (Daisy Bowie-Sell), 21 May 2014**