

Opium: Diary of a Cure

An opera in five scenes

Instrumentation

- 1 Flute
- 1 Clarinet in B-flat (written at instrument's pitch)

- 1 Horn in F (written at instrument's pitch)
- 1 Trumpet in B-flat (written at instrument's pitch)
- 1 Tenor Trombone

Timpani: 2 kettles, tuned to A and E  The timpanist is

occasionally called on to play another percussion instrument. See percussion parts for clarification.

Organ: unobtrusive tone, used primarily to match pitch with Mirror. The only exceptions to the pitch matching occur in the Overture, in scene 1a, measures 58-61 in scene 2, and scene 5c. See Rehearsal Score for clarification.

Accordion: Standard keyboard accordion, plays only before lights go up and after lights go down (Overture and scene 5c).

Percussion 1: The first percussionist's set should contain 1 snare drum, 1 triangle, a suspended crash cymbal, a pair of crash cymbals, and a vibraphone.

Percussion 2: The second percussionist's set should contain a snare drum, a set of four toms (either unpitched or roto toms), a bass drum (laid flat) a tam-tam or unpitched gong, and orchestral (tubular) bells.

6 Violins (no 2nd violins)

4-6 Violas

4-6 Cellos

3 Contrabasses, preferably with extension or a fifth string. Those without an extension or a fifth string should double at the octave where required.

Performance Notes

Opium: Diary of a Cure runs between 90 and 100 minutes. If an intermission is desired, it should be placed at the end of scene 2. There are no pauses between sections that make up scenes 1, 3, and 5. (Most of the intra-scene sections have held notes connecting them.) The music in the overture runs continuously into scene 1.

Cast

Mirror

A choir of 12 voices, divided equally between SATB. Choir should either be unseen behind the mirror prop, or should be worked into the design of the mirror itself. Choir members could be involved in events involving the mirror. The sonic effect should be akin to that of a Gregorian chant choir; tone should be even and with minimal vibrato. When two pitches are written, basses and altos should sing the lower pitch in their best octave, tenors and sopranos should sing the upper pitch in their best octave. (*Appears in every section of the opera.*)

Jean

Lyric Baritone. 35 years old, a poet and a drug addict. Through most of the opera the performer plays not Jean, but Jean's spirit, as Jean's body lies in a coma. The body is resurrected during the fifth scene, and the performer then plays Jean the man. (*Appears in all sections of the opera except for sections 1a and 5c.*)

Ho

Tenor. Jean's (former?) lover, an Annamite revolutionary, 29 years old, also recovering from opium addiction in the same hospital. (*Appears in sections 1b, 1c, 3a, 3b, 5a, 5b, and 5c.*)

Edith

Coloratura Soprano. Jean's nurse, 28 years old, in uniform. Addicted to her love of Angel, the orderly. (*Appears in sections 1a, 1d, 2, 4, 5a, and 5b. She has no lines in scene 4.*)

Angel

Tenor. An orderly, Edith's lover, 20 years old. A buffoon, dressed in ill-fitting whites. (*Appears in sections 1d, 2, 4, 5a, and 5b.*)

Doctor

Bass. Older than the others, carries books and equipment on and off stage. An unstable fellow, often nearly hysterical. (*Appears in sections 2, 3a, 4, 5a, and 5b.*)

Priest

Alto. Trouser role. (Male character played by a woman.) Perhaps older still than the Doctor. Exaggeratedly self-assured. (*Appears in sections 3a, 4, 5a, and 5b.*)

Snake

Dancing role. Lives on the other side of the mirror, and emerges periodically during the course of the action.

Opium: *Diary of a Cure* is printed from 12 computer files, divided as follows:

Overture

1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d

2

3a and 3b

4

5a, 5b, and 5c.