MENOTTI

THE UNICORN
THE GORGON AND THE MANTICORE

A Madrigal Fable for chorus and instrumental ensemble
recorded in cooperation with The New York City Ballet
conducted by THOMAS SCHIPPERS
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THIS ENVELOPE IS MADE AND PRINTED IN ENGLAND.
GIAN CARLO MENOTTI

THE UNICORN

THE GORGON

AND

THE MANTICORE

OR

THE THREE SUNDAYS OF A POET

A MADRIGAL FABLE

CONDUCTOR:

THOMAS SCHIPPERS
The Unicorn, The Gorgon and The Manticore was commissioned by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., and was first performed under the sponsorship of the Foundation in the Library of Congress on October 21, 1956. The New York premiere, presented by the New York City Ballet, took place on January 15, 1957, at the New York City Center of Music and Drama.

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Nicholas Magallanes as The Man in the Castle (The Poet) with other members of the New York City Ballet. Left of the Poet is the Unicorn; right, the Gorgon; at his feet, the Manticore. Two ladies of the town stop to stare — scandalized, fascinated, envious.

photo: Radford Bascome
THE UNICORN, THE GORGON AND THE MANTICORE
or, The Three Sundays of a Poet

A Madrigal Fable for Chorus, Ten Dancers and Nine Instruments

Conductor: THOMAS SCHIPPERS

Chorus Master: Walter Baker

CHORUS

Sopranos: Jean Heisey, Betty Hodges,* Hallie Nowland,* Rosemarie Radman, Martha Reynolds, Eva Wolff
Contraltos: Nancy Hall, Mary Hensley,* Anna Julia Hoyt, Carol Jones, Laurel Miller, Jan Ruetz
Tenors: Charles Anderson, Lindsey Bergen, Frank Karian,* Clifton Steere, Lee Wade, Robert Yeager
Basses: Howard Kahl, Raymond Michalski, John Parella, Carlos Sherman, Peter Sliker, Marvin Solley
*soloists

INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE
Julius Baker, flute Theodore Weis, trumpet
Harry Shulman, oboe Charles McCracken, violoncello
Walter Lewis, clarinet Stuart Sankey, bass
Loren Glickman, bassoon Stanley Koor, percussion
Gloria Agostini, harp

Composer and conductor at a recording session of The Unicorn.
photo: Radford Bacconne
**This Madrigal Fable** tells the story of a strange Man in the Castle who "shunned the Countess' parties... yawned at town meetings, would not let the Doctor take his pulse and did not go to church on Sundays."

When he is seen on Sunday "leading by a silver chain a captive Unicorn," the Man in the Castle is mocked by the Townsfolk. But soon following the lead of Count and Countess, they imitate him and "every respectable couple is seen promenading a Unicorn."

On the second Sunday, the Man in the Castle appears at a picnic with a Gorgon, "stately and proud." To the queries of the Townsfolk as to the fate of the Unicorn he answers that since the Unicorn "only liked to gambol and tease" he "quickly grew tired of the fun" and "peppered and grilled him." Soon shocked surprise turns to envy and Gorgons are the rage.

On the third Sunday, the Man in the Castle appears with "the lonely Manticore." He tells the scandalized Townsfolk that the Gorgon "died of murder." Although at first everyone declares that "the man must be out of his mind" the Townsfolk again bow to his influence, and having secretly disposed of their Gorgons they bring the Manticore into fashion.

When the Man in the Castle is "seen no more walking on Sundays his Manticore," the Townsfolk, sure that the beast has met the same fate as the Unicorn and the Gorgon, form a committee and march on the Castle to "stop all these crimes."

There they find the Man dying in the "faithful and harmonious company" of the three animals, "pain-wrought children of a Poet's fancy." They are the dreams of youth (The Unicorn), manhood (The Gorgon), and old age (The Manticore). These creations were easily discarded by his imitators as they were adopted by them only as passing whims. But in the Poet's heart they remained intact, for they were the very essence of his life.

The entire meaning of the fable is contained in the final words of the dying Poet.

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**Cast of Characters**

- The Man in the Castle
- The Count
- The Countess
- The Doctor
- The Doctor's Wife
- The Mayor
- The Mayor's Wife
- The Unicorn
- The Gorgon
- The Manticore

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1 No hunter can catch him, but he can be trapped by the following stratagem: a virgin girl is led to where he lurks and there she is sent off by herself into the wood. He soon leaps into her lap when he sees her and embraces her, and hence he gets caught. (The Book of Beasts, translated by T. H. White, London, 1954; p. 20-21)

2 It is a beast all set over with scales like a dragon, having no hair except on his head, great teeth like Swine, having wings to fly and hands to handle, in stature betwixt a Bull and a Calfe. (ibid., p. 266)

3 It has a three-fold row of teeth... the face of a man with gleaming blood-red eyes... a tail like the sting of a scorpion, and a shrill voice which is so sibilant that it resembles the notes of flutes. (ibid., p. 51)
To Selma Farr

THE UNICORN,
THE GORGON AND THE MANTICORE

I. Introduction

There once lived a Man in a Castle
And a strange man was he.
He shunned the Countess' parties;
He yawned at town meetings;
He would not let the Doctor take his pulse;
He did not go to church on Sundays.
Oh, what a strange man
Is the Man in the Castle!

II. Interlude One: The Dance of the Man in the Castle.

III. First Madrigal

Every Sunday afternoon,
Soft winds fanning the fading sun,
All the respectable folk
Went out walking slowly
On the pink promenade by the sea,
Proud husbands velvety-plump
With embroidered silk-pale ladies.
At four o'clock they all greeted each other;
They spoke ill of each other at six:

LADIES:  "How do you do?"
"Very well, thank you."
"Have you heard?"

GENTLEMEN:  "How do you do?"
"Very well, thank you."
"What do you think of this and that?"
"In my humble opinion:
Bla bla bla bla la la la la la.
"How profound, how clever, how true.
Only you could understand me."
"Thank you."
"Thank you."
"Goodbye."
"Goodbye."
"Isn't she a gossip?"
"Isn't she a fright?"

IV. Interlude Two: Promenade.

FIRST SUNDAY (Band 2)

V. Second Madrigal: Enter the Man in the Castle and the Unicorn.

One Sunday afternoon the proud
Man in the Castle joined the crowd
In their promenade by the sea.
He walked slowly down the quay
Leading by a silver chain
A captive Unicorn.
The townsfolk stopped to stare
At the ill-assorted pair.
Thinking the man insane
Some laughed with pity,
Some laughed with scorn:
**THE TOWNSFOLK:**

"What a scandalous sight
To see a grown-up man
Promenade a Unicorn
In plain daylight!"

"If one can stroke the cat and kick the dog;
If one can pluck the peacock and flee the bee;
If one can ride the horse and hook the hog;
If one can tempt the mouse and swat the fly,
Why, why
Would a man both rich and well-born
Raise a Unicorn?"

"If one can strike the boar with the spear
And pierce the lark with an arrow;
If one can hunt the fox and the deer
And net the butterfly and eat the sparrow;
If one can bid the falcon fly and let the robin die
Why, why would a man both rich and well-born
Raise a Unicorn?"

"If one can skin the mole and crush the snake;
If one can tame the swan on the lake
And harpoon the dolphin in the sea;
If one can chain the bear and train the flea;
If one can sport with the monkey and chatter with the magpie;
Why, why
Would a man both rich and well-born
Raise a Unicorn?"

**VI. THIRD MADRIGAL**

**THE MAN IN THE CASTLE:**

Unicorn, Unicorn,
My swift and leaping
Unicorn,
Keep pace with me, stay close to me,
Don't run astray,
My gentle rover.
Beware of the virgin sleeping
Under the lemon tree,
Her hair adrift among the clover.
She hides a net under her petticoat

**VII. FOURTH MADRIGAL**

**THE COUNT:**

Why are you sad, my darling?
What shall I buy
To make you smile again?
Velvets from Venice,
Furs from Tartary,
Or dwarfs from Spain?

**THE COUNTRESS:**

Why was I ever born?
Ah, my husband dear.
Ah, my master, my lord,
I fear, alas, that you cannot afford
To calm my sorrow.
Why was I ever born
If I must go through life
Without a Unicorn?

**THE COUNT:**

Dry your tears, my pet, my wife.
Whether I swim or fly,
Whether I steal or borrow,
I swear that you shall own
A Unicorn tomorrow.

**VIII. INTERLUDE THREE:**

As the Count and the Countess appear with a Unicorn, the Townsfolk stare at them in surprise.

Soon everyone in town imitates them until every respectable couple is seen promenading with its own Unicorn.
IX. **Fifth Madrigal**: Enter the *Man in the Castle with the Gorgon.*

Behold the Gorgon, stately and proud,
His eyes transfixed but not unaware
Of the envious stare
Of the common crowd.
Behold the Gorgon, tall, big and loud.
He does not see the smiling enemy.
He does not pause to acknowledge
The racket of the critical cricket
Nor to confute the know-how
Of the sententious cow.
He slowly sarabands
Down the street,
Ignoring the hunter
But mixing with the elite,
Fearless and wild,
His wings widespread,
He fascinates the maiden
And frightens the child.

X. **Sixth Madrigal**

**THE TOWNSFOLK:** And what is that,
A Bloody-Nun, a werewolf?

**THE MAN IN THE CASTLE:** This is a Gorgon.

**THE TOWNSFOLK:** And what did you do with the Unicorn, please?

**THE MAN IN THE CASTLE:** He only liked to gambol and tease.
I quickly grew tired of the fun
So I peppered and grilled him.

**THE TOWNSFOLK:** Do you mean . . .

**THE MAN IN THE CASTLE:** Yes, yes, I killed him.

**THE TOWNSFOLK:** Oh, but the man must be out of his mind.
How ungrateful of him, how unkind
To wilfully destroy
The pretty, pretty Unicorn, so gentle and coy!
Had he found something prettier at least—
But look at the Gorgon, the horrible beast!
Wicked is man, patient is God.
All He gives man to enjoy
Man will destroy.
Banish all sleep;
Weep for the dead;
Cover my head
Silence the nightingale;
Muffle the horn and the lute;
Silence the nightingale.
For the Unicorn, slain
By man, will not leap
Ever again.

(SIDE TWO, Band 1)

XI. **Seventh Madrigal**: The Countess has just secretly poisoned her Unicorn.

**THE COUNT:** Why are you sad, my darling?
Gone is the swallow
From your limpid eyes.
Gone is the silver
From your clarion voice.

**THE COUNTESS:** My Unicorn, my Unicorn!
Whether he grazed on
Mandrake or hellebore
Or only caught a chill,
I very much fear
My Unicorn is done for.
He is so very, very ill.
THE COUNT: Do not grieve, my dear. Once he is dead and gone We shall buy a younger one.

THE COUNTESS: My Unicorn, my Unicorn, No younger one could take his place. Besides, they have grown too commonplace. The Mayor’s Wife has one. So does the Doctor’s Wife. Now that my Unicorn is gone I want a Gorgon.

THE COUNT: A Gorgon, ha ha ha ha, God forbid!

THE COUNTESS: Ah me, ah me, you no longer love me. You must love another. Ah me, ah me, that’s clear. I must go back to Mother.

THE COUNT: Bon voyage, my dear.

THE COUNTESS: Abandoned and betrayed I shall take the veil and die a nun.

THE COUNT: Why not an abbess? I couldn’t care less.

THE COUNTESS: Think of our son Who has done no wrong.

THE COUNT: The little monster, take him along. (The Countess bursts into tears.) Oh no, not that, I pray. Calm yourself, my dear. I shall find a Gorgon this very day.

XII. INTERLUDE FOUR: As the Count and the Countess appear at a picnic with a Gorgon, the Townsfolk stare at them in great surprise. Soon all the Unicorns in town are killed and every respectable couple is now seen promenading a Gorgon.

THIRD SUNDAY (Band 2)

XIII. EIGHTH MADRIGAL: Enter the Man in the Castle with the Manticore.

Do not caress the lonely Manticore. Do not, unless your hand is gloved. Feeling betrayed, feeling unloved, So lost is he in cabalistic dreams He often bites the hand He really meant to kiss. Do not caress the lonely Manticore. Although he's almost blind And very, very shy And says he loves mankind, His shining back Will quickly raise its piercing quills. How often as if in jest Inadvertently he kills The people he loves best. Afraid of love, he hides in secret lairs And feeds on herbs more bitter than the aloe. Fleeing the envious, the curious, the shallow, He keeps under his pillow A parchment he thinks Contains Solomon's Seal And will restore his sight. And late at night He battles with the Sphinx.

XIV. NINTH MADRIGAL

THE TOWNSFOLK: And who is that, Methuselah or Beelzebub?

THE MAN IN THE CASTLE: This is the Manticore.

THE TOWNSFOLK: And what of the Gorgon? How is he these days?
THE MAN IN THE CASTLE: He was so proud and pompous and loud
I quickly grew tired of his ways.
First I warned him, then I caged him;
Finally he died.

THE TOWNSFOLK: He died of what?

THE MAN IN THE CASTLE: Of murder.

THE TOWNSFOLK: Oh, but the man must be out of his mind.
How ungrateful of him, how unkind
To slaughter in a cage
The gorgeous, gorgeous Gorgon,
The pride of his age.
Had he found something prettier at least
But this Manticore is a horrible beast.

THE TOWNSFOLK: He died of what?

THE MAN IN THE CASTLE: Of murder.

XV. INTERLUDE FIVE: The Countess secretly stabs her Gorgon.

XVI. TENTH MADRIGAL

THE COUNT: Why are you sad, my darling?

THE COUNTESS: (Mockingly)
Why are you sad, my darling?
I like that, I like that!
Are you drunk, are you asleep
Or just blind?

THE COUNT: I must be all three
For I dreamt you were charming and kind.

THE COUNTESS: I dare say with the exception of you
The whole town is aware
Of my terrible plight.
My Gorgon is lost.
My Gorgon, my Gorgon is hopelessly lost.

THE COUNT: Hardly a reason to weep.
I can now get you a dozen
At half his original cost.

THE COUNTESS: How dare you suggest such a thing!
You have no intuition nor sense.
You are vulgar and dense.

THE COUNT: I bow to your eloquence
But what have I said?

THE COUNTESS: Do you expect me to keep
And pamper and feed
A breed that is common and cheap?

THE COUNT: I shall say no more.

THE COUNTESS: Not even to offer me a Manticore?

THE COUNT: A Manticore! That ghost, that golem, that ghoul
In my house! Never, never!

THE COUNTESS: You are a fool.

THE COUNT: I married you.

THE COUNTESS: You are a mule.

THE COUNT: You are a shrew.

THE COUNTESS: How dare you!...
I faint...

THE COUNT: (Aside)
(Oh, what a wife have I!
Medusa she is and Xantippe.
Still she must share my bed.
I wish I were dead.)

THE COUNTESS: Saying something?

THE COUNTESS: Oh, nothing.
THE COUNTESS: May I then have my Manticore?

THE COUNT: Don’t be a bore!

THE COUNTESS: Oh, why did I marry a Count of no-account
Since I could have married
A Duke or a Prince?

THE COUNT: (Aside)
(Because they were clever and I was a fool.)

THE COUNTESS: Saying something?

THE COUNT: Oh, nothing!

THE COUNTESS: I heard you.
(She slaps him.)

THE COUNT: (Oh, what a wife have I!
Medusa she is and Xantippe.
Oh, what a wife have I!
I wish she would die.)

THE COUNTESS: Do you still refuse?

THE COUNT: You are much too convincing and forceful and deft.

THE COUNTESS: I knew we would finally
See eye to eye.

THE COUNT: Yes,
The one eye I have left.

THE TOWNSFOLK: "Have you noticed
The Man in the Castle is seen no more
Walking on Sundays his Manticore?"
"I have a suspicion."
"Do you suppose?"
"Do you?"
"The Manticore, too?"
"We must form a committee to stop all these crimes.
We should arrest him;
We should splice his tongue
And triturate his bones.
He should be tortured with water and fire,
With pulleys and stones.
He should be put on the rack, on the wheel, on the stake
In molten lead, in
The Iron Maiden.
Let us all go to explore
The inner courts of his castle
And find out what he has done
With the rare Manticore."

THE TOWNSFOLK: Slow, much too slow
Is the judgment of God.
Quick is the thief;
Speedy architect of perfect labyrinths
The sinner.
But God’s law works in Time,
And Time has one flaw:
It is unfashionably slow.
We, the few, the elect,
Must take things in our hands;
We must judge those who live
And condemn those who love.
All passion is uncivil,
All candor is suspect.
We detest all, except
What by fashion is blest.
And forever and ever
Whether evil or good
We shall respect
What seems clever.

XX. Twelfth Madrigal: As they enter the Castle, the Townsfolk see the Man in the Castle lying on his deathbed, surrounded by the Unicorn, the Gorgon and the Manticore.

THE MAN IN THE CASTLE:
Oh, foolish people
Who feign to feel
What other men have suffered,
You, not I, are the indifferent killers
Of the Poet's dreams.
How could I destroy
The pain-wrought children of my fancy?
What would my life have been
Without their faithful
And harmonious company?
Unicorn, Unicorn,
My youthful, foolish Unicorn,
Please do not hide, come close to me.
And you, my Gorgon,
Behind whose splendor
I hid the doubts of my midday,
You, too, stand by.
And here is my shy and lonely Manticore
Who gracefully leads me to my grave.
Farewell, farewell.
Equally well I loved you all.
Although the world may not suspect it,
All remains intact within
The Poet's heart.
Farewell, farewell.
Not even death I fear
As in your arms I die.
Farewell, farewell.

THE CRITICS SAID...
“A charming work.”
Howard Taubman, New York Times

“A singular and engaging combination of ancient contrapuntal harmonies and tart, modern, dramatic values. Its orchestral underpinning, on a chamber-music scale, was fresh and spare, and the ensemble ranged effectively from a quaint lightheartedness to a bitter-sweet melancholy. As the last note died away, the tough audience of musical pros leaped to its feet and called for one curtain call after another.”
Time Magazine

“At the final curtain the critic-studded audience sat on, spellbound with pleasure, and cheered everyone concerned... it is certain that Menotti's lovable bestiary will fast become a popular favorite. It is encouraging to know that such comprehensive creativity is still at work in the world of music-drama.”
Opera News

“A profound effect, deeply emotional and intensely human... Menotti is said lately to have fallen in love with the ancient and honorable madrigal, and well he might have, from the constant freshness and brilliant style he has poured into his newest master stroke. The madrigals abound with wit and tenderness, blessed in the composer's text which is always ingratiating to sing... We may well be in for a rash of madrigal writing in the future but we are not likely to hear words and music so illuminating in concept, so gifted in realization... adding new beauty to the world of music.”
Paul Hume, Washington Post

“When The Unicorn was given its world premiere in Washington this writer found it a thumping fine work — deeply expressive, charged with humor, provocative and wildly appealing in its burst of sentiment. The work's New York debut gave no cause to alter this verdict and, in fact, did nothing less than strengthen it strongly. The truth is that The Unicorn grows grander in stature the more one comes to know it... reaffirms that Mr. Menotti's lyric gifts, theatrical instincts and talents for prosody are surely the most remarkable in our time... At all times the heart is touched and the spirit enriched.”
Jay S. Harrison, New York Herald Tribune

“Menotti's music, more than anything else, made The Unicorn the season's best ballet.”
Life Magazine

GIAN CARLO MENOTTI
Opera Buffa
AMELIA AL BALLO
La Scala Recording
Title role: Margherita Carosio
Lover: Giacinto Prandelli  Husband: Rolando Panerai
Conductor: Nino Sanzogno

This is the story of the first ball of the season. Poor Amelia — all dressed up and nobody to go with... A lady in distress, bedecked in laces and jewels and feathers, sitting at home... while all Milan is going to the ball... and her husband and lover argue!!! B-u-t se donna vuole andare al ballo, al ballo andrò... Listen and hear what happened!

One 12-inch record Angel Album 35140/L

“Extraordinarily fine. The merry score is given an affectionate performance by the Scala forces.”
John Briggs, New York Times

“Menotti’s first opera is in the finest buffa tradition — liltting, frothy and thoroughly delightful.”
Saturday Review

Illustrated Italian-English libretto with introduction by the composer