

CHANDOS
SUPER AUDIO CD

Alwyn MISS JULIE

Anna Patalong
soprano

Rosie Aldridge
mezzo-soprano

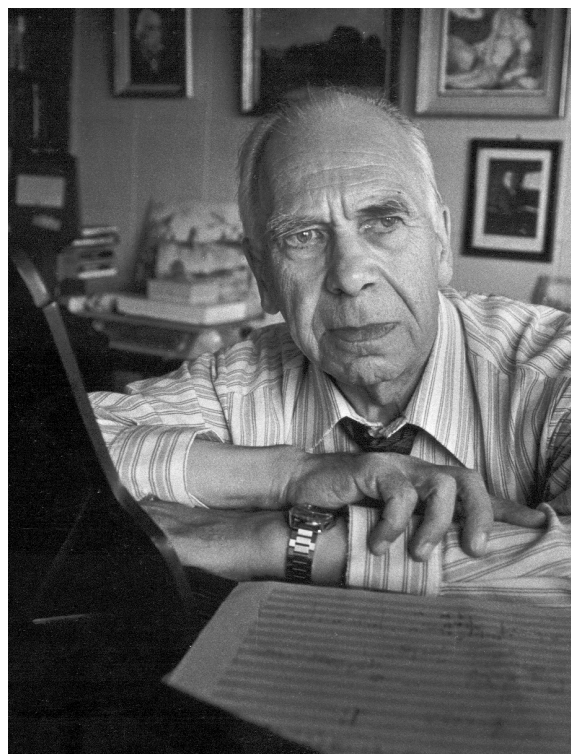
Samuel Sakker
tenor

Benedict Nelson
bass-baritone



SO BBC
Symphony
Orchestra

Sakari Oramo



Courtesy of The William Alwyn Foundation

William Alwyn, 1978

William Alwyn (1905 – 1985)

Miss Julie (1973 – 76)

An Opera in Two Acts

Based on the Play by August Strindberg (1849 – 1912)

Libretto by William Alwyn

Miss Julie.....**Anna Patalong** soprano
Jean, the Count's valet **Benedict Nelson** bass-baritone
Kristin, the cook.....**Rosie Aldridge** mezzo-soprano
Ulrik, the gamekeeper..... **Samuel Sakker** tenor

The action takes place in the Count's country house in Sweden on Midsummer Night in 1895.

BBC Symphony Orchestra

Igor Yuzefovich leader

Sakari Oramo

COMPACT DISC ONE

Acte I

Scene 1

25:40

1	[Orchestral Introduction.] Allegro. Valse Tempo – A tempo, grazioso –	1:04
2	Jean: 'Miss Julie is crazy' –	1:36
3	Kristin: 'But the Count...' –	4:41
4	Jean: 'By God, I'm thirsty!' –	3:18
5	Miss Julie: 'Kristin, Kristin, Kristin!' –	2:28
6	Jean: 'Well, I've travelled around' –	4:28
7	Miss Julie: 'There's a new dance starting' –	2:01
8	Miss Julie: 'You know why I came here tonight?' –	1:48
9	Miss Julie: 'Midsummer Night, O, night of magic' –	3:38
10	Kristin: 'I'm ready, Jean!'	0:34

	Scene 2	35:14
11	[Orchestral Introduction.] Andante sostenuto (Poco adagio) – Poco più mosso (a tempo di valse) – Andante sostenuto – Poco più mosso – Più mosso – Tempo I – Meno mosso – Più mosso (Poco allegretto) –	2:32
12	Jean: 'Kristin, Kristin...' –	3:45
13	Miss Julie: 'Now you can kiss my hand' –	2:33
14	Jean: 'That wouldn't do, either' –	3:51
15	Jean: 'I have no time for dreams' –	2:02
16	Miss Julie: 'Would you like me to dance' –	0:52
17	Jean: 'Playing with fire' –	1:57
18	Jean: 'You don't know what it is to be poor' –	1:42
19	Miss Julie: 'But you can rise, Jean' –	1:55
20	Ulrik: 'A lady went a-roaming...' –	3:00
21	Ulrik: 'She's the queen of the dance' –	1:52
22	Jean: 'You can come out now' –	1:51
23	Jean: 'I know, I know...' –	4:02
24	Jean: 'I can't, not while we're still in this house'	3:15
	TT 60:59	

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act II

1	[Orchestral Introduction.] Lento – Allegro non troppo – Poco più mosso – Lento ma non troppo –	2:37
2	Jean: 'Never again!' –	3:32
3	Jean: 'Now don't lose your head' –	3:34
4	Miss Julie: 'Scum on the surface of water' –	3:20
5	Miss Julie: 'If you want me again' –	4:06
6	Jean: 'If I only had enough money...' –	2:35
7	Miss Julie: 'You sound so cruel, Jean' –	1:36
8	[Orchestral Interlude.] Allegro precipitoso – Poco meno mosso, ma sempre allegro –	0:59
9	Kristin: 'Has she gone?' –	0:47
10	Kristin: 'Whatever you say, I know you were here with the mistress' –	1:38
11	Kristin: 'Class is class, and don't you forget it' –	1:22
12	Kristin: 'We'll get married' –	1:02

13	Ulrik: 'A pretty domestic scene!' -	1:05
14	Kristin: 'I knew I was right!' -	1:40
15	Kristin: 'There's someone upstairs' -	1:45
16	Miss Julie: 'I'm ready now, Jean' -	2:07
17	Jean: 'What the devil is that?' -	1:51
18	Miss Julie: 'He's killed her, killed her!' -	2:33
19	Kristin: 'You're mad! You're both mad!' -	4:55
20	Kristin: 'Well, well! So you're going to elope!' -	1:15
21	Jean: 'The Count's back!' -	1:09
22	Jean: 'You can go, but I can't' -	3:56
23	Miss Julie: 'I <i>must</i> be dreaming' -	2:30
24	Miss Julie: 'Kiss me... before I go!'	1:58
		TT 54:03



Andrew Palmer



Andrew Palmer

Alwyn: Miss Julie

Alwyn and opera

At the age of thirty-two, dissatisfied with his music and determined to discover and refine a mature compositional style, William Alwyn (1905 – 1985) made a break with his past by withdrawing all his unpublished works. Twenty-three years later, in 1961, he did something similarly radical, though for a different reason: he left his wife, home, and professional contacts in London to begin a new life in Blythburgh, Suffolk with the composer Doreen Carwithen (1922 – 2003), whom he later married. By then he had resigned from his teaching professorship at the Royal Academy of Music, had completed an ambitious cycle of four symphonies, and had realised that he no longer wanted to write film scores; so his career was already altering course. But in relocating to the Suffolk coast, he took the additional step of abandoning artistic life in the capital.

Because Alwyn had no intention of giving up composition, this punctuation mark in his career was not a full stop. But it was more than a comma; it was the beginning of a new paragraph. He now had the necessary time and tranquillity to work at his own pace on 'non-commercial' projects that were close

to his heart, and writing (both poetry and prose), painting, and drawing soon assumed a new significance in his life. However, these activities remained secondary to music, and his 'Blythburgh years' saw the composition of the Fifth Symphony (unrelated to the previous four), the Sinfonietta for Strings, a flute concerto, song cycles, and two string quartets. Above all, he was able to devote his creative energies to opera.

By this stage of his career Alwyn was acknowledged as a film composer and symphonist – probably in that order – but not as an opera composer. Yet opera had been of lifelong interest to him. He had written his first operatic work, *The Fairy Fiddler*, while a teenage student at the Royal Academy of Music, and had subsequently played the flute in British opera houses, conducted performances of *Die Zauberflöte* and the British premiere of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mozart and Salieri*, and, at the request of Sir John Barbirolli, completed the orchestration of Hugo Wolf's *Der Corregidor*. His experience as a film composer was arguably even more relevant. The short documentaries with which he had begun his cinematic career were, he recalled,

made on seemingly impossible budgets which strained all my ingenuity and resources to conjure the best possible music from the smallest possible means. For the first time it really made me stop and think how essential is the possession of an unflawed technique for the proper realisation of one's creative ideas.

It was this realisation, in fact, that had persuaded him to withdraw his concert music and to start again.

Meanwhile he had discovered that film music could do more than establish characterisation, suggest mood, and heighten atmosphere: in some cases it could also communicate the unspoken thoughts of an onscreen character even when these were at odds with what he or she was presenting visually. 'Film music', Alwyn explained,

is essentially dramatic music. Not descriptive music (the visuals and sound effects should take care of that), but music which functions to point the dramatic atmosphere of the film – which adds one more emotional plane to an attack which is already being made on the visual sense.

The parallels with operatic composition were not lost on him, and in the course of writing music for approximately two hundred films he had formulated theories of how the medium of opera could be revitalised, both musically and dramatically. His conclusions were that the action should be self-explanatory, without

reference to a detailed synopsis or programme note; arias should serve a dramatic purpose rather than merely provide opportunities for vocal display; for the sake of dramatic coherence, characters should sing only to one another and not to the audience in asides or soliloquies; the use of ensembles should be minimised in order to maintain aural clarity; and, most importantly, the text should be set to vocal lines that reproduce the rhythms and inflections of speech.

It is possible that some of these ideas were suggested by the plays of August Strindberg (1849–1912), which Alwyn had discovered at around the time that he started to compose film music and which he soon came to believe were ideal subjects for the kind of operatic adaptation he wanted to make. Strindberg had promoted a concept of naturalistic drama featuring flesh-and-blood characters whose psychological weaknesses led them into life-altering conflict, and this must have reminded Alwyn of the *verismo* operas of Puccini and Mascagni, which he loved. But the need to earn a living by teaching and by composing for films, not to mention the general interruption to life caused by the Second World War, meant that it was not until twenty years later, after having completed two of his planned cycle of four symphonies and an opera for BBC Radio (*Farewell Companions*), that he began serious work on adapting *Miss Julie*.

His friend Christopher Hassall supplied a libretto, but the collaboration foundered on what Alwyn described as Hassall's

insistence on steadfast adherence to the original play and my own obstinate desire to dispense with all inessential detail, symbolism and moralising, and to retain only the dramatic Strindbergian substance of the play.

An opera, he maintained, is not merely a play with action that is 'spasmodically underlined' by music; on the contrary, music should condition both words and action. The project was therefore abandoned – for a further twenty years, until Alwyn, settled into semi-retirement in Blythburgh, yielded to the urge to compose a full-length opera for the stage.

First came *Juan, or The Libertine*, based on James Elroy Flecker's play *Don Juan* as well as on Baudelaire, Byron, Molière, Nietzsche, and Shaw, and as soon as this was completed, in 1971, he returned to *Miss Julie*. This time he wrote his own libretto, condensing Strindberg's text, replacing verbal symbolism with musical themes and motifs, and – more controversially – introducing a new character. Ulrik, the gamekeeper, acts as substitute for Strindberg's chorus of villagers, whose presence in the opera Alwyn believed would appear contrived, even clumsy; he was also convinced that the absence of a chorus would heighten the claustrophobic, hot-house atmosphere in which the doomed relationship between the two main characters takes place.

Strindberg had been influenced during his 'naturalistic' period by Darwinism, and in the play he explored theories of evolution through the prisms of social class and gender. Miss Julie, a representative of the intransigent and near-extinct aristocracy, was enmeshed in a battle for survival against the ambitious servant class that was willing to adapt by seizing opportunities that life offered; she also embodied Strindberg's concept of the 'modern woman' who was destined to fail in the struggle for equality with men. The play might therefore seem an unlikely choice of subject for Alwyn the unashamed romantic, even allowing for his *prima la musica* approach to operatic composition; yet he found the fate of Miss Julie tragic and fell 'hopelessly in love with her' during the three years in which he wrote the opera.

The reason why he was able to see beyond the anti-romantic nature of the play is the depth of its characters. 'It is one of those dramatic narratives', wrote Rodney Milnes in the essay accompanying the first studio recording of the opera,

in which the words themselves are but the tip of the iceberg; in virtually every sentence the characters say only about a quarter of what they mean.

Most of the rest is symbolism, of which Alwyn had twenty-five years' experience as a film composer.

More surprising, perhaps, is that he set an intimate, chamber-like drama (featuring four soloists, no chorus, and only one set) to music of passionately symphonic sweep. His move to Suffolk had in part been a retreat from what he believed was a hostile or at least unsympathetic musical establishment, one that dismissed his romanticism as outdated and rarely challenged the stigmatisation of 'film composers'; but because these attitudes have softened since his death we can see that the qualities that made him so successful in cinematic music are particularly well-suited to the composition of opera. If the score of *Miss Julie* sounds to some listeners too 'cinematic', this is surely because Alwyn intended film music and operatic music to fulfil similar dramatic functions.

He stated that by far the most important lesson he learned as a film composer was the dramatic use of music in relation to the spoken word, and in *Miss Julie* he deployed techniques that he had honed during many years of reading scripts and watching dialogue being spoken on screen. The most obvious are the recurring three-note motif based on the rhythm of the name 'Miss-Ju-lie', the insistent *ostinato* figures that drive home the meaning of particularly significant phrases, and the echoing (or pre-echoing) of vocal lines that adds emphasis after (or before) they are sung.

Some of the score's subtleties are purely musical. The rhythm of the waltz permeates the opera and initially illustrates the carefree excitement of Midsummer Night festivities, but subsequent harmonic distortions reveal the extent of the nightmare that the protagonists are creating for themselves. The emotional instability of Miss Julie is suggested by high-lying vocal lines that are only loosely attached to a tonal 'centre', while her eventual trance-like state is evoked by music resembling that of the 'hallucination scenes' (often featuring celeste and *tremolando* strings in uncertain tonalities) for which Alwyn the film composer was renowned. And two particular musical intervals or chords feature throughout the score: the seventh, denoting yearning and unresolved desire; and the augmented triad, the dissonance of which symbolises the unrelieved conflict among all four characters. The latter is used most overtly in sinister, bell-like form at almost every mention of the Count – the malevolent fifth character in the opera, who is neither seen nor heard but whose implied presence dominates the action.

Alwyn attained a mastery of orchestration, atmosphere, timing, and word-setting; and nowhere is it more evident than in this, the second of his two 'Blythburgh operas' (and his final work for full orchestra), which was completed in 1976 and first performed for a BBC studio recording the following year. Yet

it has received only one staged production – directed by Benjamin Luxon, the original Jean, at the Norwich Theatre Royal in 1997. 'An opera is written for the theatre', Alwyn wrote at the time of the original BBC performance, 'and must be good theatre as well as good music'; and the sureness of his theatrical instinct was confirmed by the audience response to the concert performance at the Barbican Hall, London, in October 2019 that preceded the current recording. The following morning, the critic for *The Times*, 'still reeling' from the experience, was left wondering,

Why has this intense, brilliantly orchestrated, claustrophobically gripping masterpiece been so neglected since its 1977 premiere?

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Synopsis

The opera is set in the kitchen of the country house of a widowed count in Sweden, at the end of the nineteenth century, and the action takes place on Midsummer Night.

Act I, Scene 1

The Count's staff and servants are celebrating Midsummer at a dance in a nearby barn. The Count is spending the night at his sister's, having been driven there by his valet, Jean, and has left his daughter, Miss Julie, in charge of the house. Kristin, the cook, who is unofficially

engaged to Jean, is waiting for him to take her to the dance. Meanwhile she stirs the contents of a saucepan on the stove: a potion for Miss Julie's lap-dog, on heat, that will keep other dogs away.

When he returns to the kitchen, Jean has already been to the barn and has danced with Miss Julie, whom he found in the arms of Ulrik, the gamekeeper. She has, Jean and Kristin agree, become 'utterly crazy' since her mother took her own life. Jean brazenly opens a bottle of the Count's wine that he has stolen, then starts to make love to Kristin.

They are interrupted by the entry of Miss Julie, ostensibly enquiring about the potion but hoping to lure Jean back to the barn. The erotic tension between them begins to increase, and she tells Kristin to go and change for the dance. She then sings seductively to Jean about Midsummer Night and persuades him not to wait for Kristin.

Act I, Scene 2

It is after midnight when Jean and Miss Julie return from the barn. She alternately taunts him about his peasant background and provokes him sexually. When he eventually kisses her she is shocked and slaps his face, but does not leave. His pride dented, he starts to polish the Count's boots, but she orders him to stop and they soon fall into each other's arms.

Ulrik is heard approaching the kitchen, drunk and singing an innuendo-laden song about them. Jean has just enough time to hide Miss Julie in his bedroom before Ulrik lurches in, demanding to have his own fun with her. Everyone knows that she has fallen for Jean, he reveals, and they are 'laughing their heads off'.

When Ulrik has left, Miss Julie emerges angry, ashamed, and terrified of the Count's reaction. She has no option but to run away, and Jean sees an opportunity to put a long-cherished plan into action: they will go together, and open a hotel in Lugano. They must leave by daybreak, before the Count returns, and meanwhile she can spend the night with him.

Act II

It is dawn, and Jean emerges triumphant from his bedroom. Miss Julie already regrets what has happened but is forced to agree to his plan, which, she now realises, is dependent on her stealing money from the Count. She eventually obeys and goes upstairs.

Kristin enters, and notices two glasses on the table. Disbelieving Jean when he says that he was drinking with Ulrik, she announces that she will avoid the scandal by handing in her notice, after which she and Jean will get married. 'I've got more ambition than *that!*' he sneers. Ulrik returns to apologise for his earlier behaviour but soon begins to fight with Jean.

Miss Julie comes back downstairs, dressed for travel and with a suitcase in one hand. Under her other arm is her dog, which Jean grabs and hands to Ulrik to dispose of outside. A gunshot is heard, and Miss Julie collapses, distraught, while Jean and Kristin hurl accusations at each other.

The ominous ringing of the kitchen bell announces that the Count has returned, and Miss Julie watches helplessly as Jean begins to put on his uniform. 'That bell rules my life!', he apologises. As for their hotel in Lugano, it was merely a dream on Midsummer Night. Half-crazed, she asks him what she should do. He suggests that there is a way out, the way that her mother took: suicide. The bell rings again, and Jean callously pushes Miss Julie aside before climbing the stairs. She picks up his razor from the table (in the concert performance on which this recording is based, the deadly agent was Kristin's potion), then walks slowly and steadily out into the park.

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Trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where she won numerous awards, **Anna Patalong** was a finalist at the Kathleen Ferrier Awards, Francisco Viñas International Singing

Competition, and International Stanislaw Moniuszko Vocal Competition. In 2017 she received a bursary from the International Opera Awards and a Richard Angas Memorial Award. Her studies were supported by the Susan Chilcott Foundation, Musicians Benevolent Fund, Serena Fenwick, and Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation. She has sung Violetta (*La traviata*) at Festival Opera, New Zealand and Longborough Festival Opera, Gilda (*Rigoletto*) and the title role in *Suor Angelica* at Opera Holland Park, Nedda (*Pagliacci*) at Scottish Opera, Brigitta (*Iolanta*) at Opéra national de Paris, Flowermaiden (*Parsifal*) at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Magda (*La rondine*), Marguerite (*Faust*), and Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) at Dorset Opera Festival, Liù (*Turandot*) and Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) at Northern Ireland Opera, Mimi (*La bohème*) at Opera Holland Park and in Rouen and Lübeck, Woglinde (*Das Rheingold*) at Ruhrtriennale, Ino (Silvia Colasanti's *Proserpine*) at the Spoleto Festival dei due Mondi, Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) at the Tobacco Factory, Bristol, and Ännchen (*Der Freischütz*) in Limoges. Anna Patalong has appeared in concert at an Opera Spectacular with the Hallé at Bridgewater Hall, Christmas Spectaculars for Raymond Gubbay and in Bridgewater Hall and Birmingham Symphony Hall, in Vivaldi's Gloria and Magnificat at the Royal Albert Hall, Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* at Gloucester Cathedral, Rutter's *Mass of the*

Children and Britten's *Spring Symphony* at Salisbury Cathedral, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, and a recital of French song at Wigmore Hall.

The British baritone **Benedict Nelson** was an inaugural Harewood Artist with English National Opera, where his roles included Valentin (*Faust*), Demetrius (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Belcore (*The Elixir of Love*), Count (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Figaro (*The Barber of Seville*), Ping (*Turandot*), and the title role in *Billy Budd*. He has sung Britten's *Gloriana* at Teatro Real in Madrid, The Colonel (Mark-Anthony Turnage's *The Silver Tassie*) with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Algernon Moncrieff (Gerald Barry's *The Importance of Being Earnest*) at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*) at Teatro Regio di Torino, Salzburger Festspiele, Verbier Festival, and in Wiesbaden. He has also performed Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*) at Opéra national de Lyon and Opera North, Silvano (*Un ballo in maschera*) at Opera Holland Park, Don Giovanni with Silent Opera, Marcello (*La bohème*), Sid (*Albert Herring*), and Tarquinius (*The Rape of Lucretia*) at Angers-Nantes Opéra, and Ananias (*The Burning Fiery Furnace*) for Scottish Opera at the Lammermuir Festival. Additionally he has sung Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) at Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Jean (William Alwyn's *Miss Julie*) with the BBC Symphony

Orchestra under Sakari Oramo, and is soon to sing Demetrius at Wiener Staatsoper. On the concert platform Benedict Nelson has performed with the Orquestra Gulbenkian, Scottish Opera, Edinburgh International Festival, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Hallé, and Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France.

A graduate of the Benjamin Britten International Opera School at the Royal College of Music and a Jerwood Young Artist at Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 2010, **Rosie Aldridge** was a member of the ensemble at Wiener Staatsoper from 2016 to 2018, where, among others, she sang Annina (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Aksinya (*Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*), Gertrude (*Roméo et Juliette*), Teresa (*La sonnambula*), Madame Larina (*Eugene Onegin*), Marthe (*Faust*), Giovanna (*Rigoletto*), and Roßweiße (*Die Walküre*), as well as Annina (*La traviata*) in a Gala Performance celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Plácido Domingo. She made her debut at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden as Praskovya Osipovna, Bubliki, and Social Commentator (*The Nose*), returning as Aksinya under Sir Antonio Pappano, the Beggar Woman (*Death in Venice*), and Angrboda in the world premiere of Gavin Higgins's *The Monstrous Child*. At Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona she made her debut as the Kabanicha (*Kát'a Kabanová*). Rosie Aldridge has also appeared

at Glyndebourne Festival Opera as the Lady in Waiting (*Macbeth*), at Teatro Real, Madrid as a Blumenmädchen (*Parsifal*) and as Roßweiße (*Die Walküre*), at Opéra national de Lorraine as Nellie Dean (Carlisle Floyd's *Wuthering Heights*), and at English National Opera as Third Lady (*The Magic Flute*), Gertrud (*Hänsel and Gretel*) and Aksinya, directed by Dmitri Tcherniakov.

Winner of The Wagner Society Singing Competition, the tenor **Samuel Sakker** has performed leading roles with opera companies and orchestras internationally, notably Laca (*Jenůfa*) at Opéra de Montréal, Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*) at Opéra de Rennes, Angers-Nantes Opéra, Nederlandse Reisopera, and Cape Town Opera, Don José (*Carmen*) at The Royal Danish Opera, Des Grieux (*Manon Lescaut*) at The Grange Festival, Pollione (*Norma*) at Melbourne Opera, Laertes in the Australian premiere of Brett Dean's *Hamlet* at the Adelaide Festival, Federico (Cilea's *L'arlesiana*) and Sergeant Thibault (Delius's *Margot la Rouge*) at Opera Holland Park, Tikhon and Boris (*Kát'a Kabanová*) at Scottish Opera, Alfredo (*La traviata*) at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, New Zealand Opera, and Melbourne Opera, Florestan (*Fidelio*) at Lyric Opera Ireland, and Ulrik (Alwyn's *Miss Julie*) with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sakari Oramo. In concert Samuel Sakker has performed Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* with the Sydney

Symphony Orchestra and with the New Zealand Philharmonic Orchestra under Donald Runnicles, Lili Boulanger's *Faust et Hélène* with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra and BBC Symphony Orchestra, the title role in Liszt's *Sardanapalo* at the Suoni dal Golfo Festival in Italy, *A Child of Our Time* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, *Das Lied von der Erde* at Stadttheater Klagenfurt and with The Royal Ballet and English National Ballet, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* at the Anghiari Festival in Italy, Mozart's Requiem under Sir Antonio Pappano in Japan, and James Nolan in the inaugural recording of *Doctor Atomic* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under John Adams.

The **BBC Symphony Orchestra** has played a central role in British musical life since its inception in 1930, providing the backbone of the BBC Proms with around a dozen concerts each year, including the First and Last Nights. As Associate Orchestra, it performs an annual season of concerts at the Barbican Centre, London. Strongly committed to twentieth-century and contemporary music, it has recently commissioned and premiered works by Richard Ayres, Brett Dean, Unsuk Chin, Andrew Norman, George Benjamin, and Anna Clyne. It tours throughout the world and has worked regularly with Sakari Oramo, its Chief Conductor, Semyon Bychkov, its Günter Wand

Conducting Chair, Sir Andrew Davis and the late Jiří Bělohlávek, its Conductors Laureate, as well as Brett Dean, its Artist in Association. The Orchestra regularly performs with the BBC Symphony Chorus and together they won the 2015 *Gramophone* 'Best Choral Disc' Award for their recording of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. Central to its life are recordings made for BBC Radio 3 during sessions at its studios in Maida Vale, London, some of which are free for the public to attend. The vast majority of its concerts are broadcast on BBC Radio 3, streamed live online and available for thirty days after broadcast via BBC iPlayer. You can also download BBC programmes onto your mobile or tablet via the BBC iPlayer Radio app. The BBC Symphony Orchestra is committed to innovative education work, ongoing projects including the BBC's *Ten Pieces*, the BBC SO Journey through Music scheme which introduces families to classical music with pre-concert workshops and discounted tickets, and the BBC SO Family Orchestra and Chorus. www.bbc.co.uk/symphonyorchestra

Recipient of the Conductor of the Year award by the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2016, **Sakari Oramo** is Chief Conductor of both the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. He was Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra between 1998 and 2008, Principal Conductor

of the West Coast KKKOLA Opera between 2004 and 2018, and Principal Conductor of the OROBOTHNIAN Chamber Orchestra from 2013 to 2019. After a decade as Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, he has now served as its Honorary Conductor since 2012. In recent seasons he has conducted the Czech Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Boston Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Berliner

Philharmoniker, and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, among many others. An accomplished violinist, Sakari Oramo was originally leader of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and in 2014 made his debut in the BBC Proms Chamber Music series, performing Prokofiev's Sonata for Two Violins with Janine Jansen. His discography includes a highly acclaimed Nielsen symphony cycle as well as recordings of Grieg's Piano Concerto and Nørgård's Symphonies Nos 1 and 8.



Victoria Cadisch

Anna Patalong



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Benedict Nelson

Alwyn: Miss Julie

Alwyn und die Oper

Im Alter von zweiunddreißig Jahren brach William Alwyn (1905 – 1985) mit seiner Vergangenheit und zog alle seine bis dahin unveröffentlichten Werke aus dem Verkehr; er war mit seiner Musik nicht zufrieden und beschloss, einen reifen Kompositionsstil zu suchen und weiter zu entwickeln. Im Jahr 1961, also dreiundzwanzig Jahre später, traf er eine ähnlich radikale Entscheidung, allerdings aus einem anderen Grund: Er verließ seine Frau und sein Zuhause und gab seine beruflichen Kontakte in London auf, um in Blythburgh in Suffolk mit der Komponistin Doreen Carwithen (1922 – 2003), die er später heiratete, ein neues Leben zu beginnen. Zu dieser Zeit hatte er bereits seine Lehrtätigkeit an der Royal Academy of Music aufgegeben, einen Zyklus von vier anspruchsvollen Sinfonien vollendet und erkannt, dass er keine Filmmusiken mehr schreiben wollte; seine Laufbahn entwickelte sich mithin bereits in eine andere Richtung. Mit seiner Umsiedlung an die Küste von Suffolk vollzog er jedoch noch den zusätzlichen Schritt, seinem Künstlerdasein in der Hauptstadt den Rücken zu kehren.

Da Alwyn aber nicht die Absicht hegte, auch das Komponieren aufzugeben, war

diese Zäsur in seiner Laufbahn nicht wirklich ein Punkt, zugleich aber doch mehr als ein Komma – es war der Beginn eines neuen Abschnitts. Er hatte nun die nötige Zeit und Muße, um in seinem eigenen Tempo an "nicht-kommerziellen" Projekten zu arbeiten, die ihm besonders am Herzen lagen, und so gewannen das Schreiben (sowohl Gedichte als auch Prosa), die Malerei und das Zeichnen in seinem Leben schon bald an Bedeutung. Immer aber blieben diese Tätigkeiten zweitrangig gegenüber der Musik, und in seinen "Blythburgh-Jahren" entstanden die (nicht mit den ersten vier zusammenhängende) Fünfte Sinfonie, die Sinfonietta für Streicher, ein Flötenkonzert, Liederzyklen und zwei Streichquartette. Vor allem aber konnte er seine schöpferischen Energien nun der Oper widmen.

In diesem Stadium seiner Laufbahn galt Alwyn als etablierter Filmkomponist und Sinfoniker – wohl in dieser Reihenfolge –, nicht aber als Komponist von Opern. Doch gerade die Oper hatte ihn Zeit seines Lebens interessiert. Sein erstes opernhafte Werk, *The Fairy Fiddler*, hatte er in seiner Teenager-Zeit als Student an der Royal Academy of Music geschrieben, später spielte er in verschiedenen britischen

Opernhäusern die Flöte, dirigierte Aufführungen der *Zauberflöte* und die britische Premiere von Rimski-Korsakows *Mozart und Salieri* und vollendete auf Bitten von Sir John Barbirolli die Orchestrierung von Hugo Wolfs *Der Corregidor*. Seine Erfahrungen als Filmkomponist waren allerdings wohl noch wesentlicher. Die kurzen Dokumentationen, mit denen er seine Kinokarriere begonnen hatte, waren, wie er erinnerte,

mit scheinbar unmöglichen Budgets gemacht worden, die all meine Erfindungsgabe und Kraft forderten, um den kleinstmöglichen Mitteln die bestmögliche Musik zu entlocken. Dies bewog mich zum ersten Mal, innezuhalten und mir darüber Gedanken machen, wie unabdingbar eine solide Technik für die angemessene Umsetzung kreativer Ideen ist.

Tatsächlich war es diese Erkenntnis, die ihn veranlasste, seine Konzertmusik zu kassieren und noch einmal neu zu beginnen.

Inzwischen hatte er entdeckt, dass Filmmusik mehr bewirken kann, als die Charaktere zu etablieren, Stimmungen zu vermitteln und die Atmosphäre zu vertiefen; gelegentlich gelang es ihr auch, die unausgesprochenen Gedanken einer im Bild befindlichen Figur zu vermitteln, selbst wenn diese nicht mit dem übereinstimmten, was die jeweilige Figur visuell darstellte. "Filmmusik", erklärte Alwyn,

ist vor allem dramatische Musik. Nicht beschreibende Musik (darum sollten sich Bild

und Klangeffekte kümmern), sondern Musik, die dazu dient, die dramatische Atmosphäre des Films auszurichten – und damit dem bereits stattfindenden Angriff auf den Gesichtssinn eine zusätzliche emotionale Ebene hinzufügt.

Die Parallelen zur Komposition von Opern waren ihm durchaus bewusst, und im Laufe der Arbeit an den Musiken für rund zweihundert Filme hatte er eine Reihe von Theorien formuliert, wie man das Medium Oper sowohl musikalisch als auch dramatisch wiederbeleben könnte. Dabei kam er zu folgenden Schlussfolgerungen: Die Handlung sollte ohne Bezugnahme auf eine detaillierte Synopse oder ein Programmheft unmittelbar verständlich sein; Arien sollten einem dramatischen Zweck dienen anstatt nur der stimmlichen Zurschaustellung; um des dramatischen Zusammenhangs willen sollten die Figuren einander immer direkt ansingen und nicht beiseite zum Publikum oder im Monolog; die Verwendung von Ensembles sollte minimiert werden, um klangliche Klarheit zu wahren; und vor allem sollte der Text so vertont werden, dass die Gesangslinien Rhythmus und Tonfall der Sprache wiedergaben.

Einige dieser Gedanken waren möglicherweise von den Schauspielen August Strindbergs (1849–1912) angeregt worden, die Alwyn etwa zu der Zeit entdeckt hatte, als er Filmmusiken zu schreiben begann, und die er schon bald für ideale Kandidaten

für die Art von opernhafter Umsetzung hielt, für die er sich interessierte. Strindberg hatte das Konzept eines naturalistischen Dramas vorangetrieben, das Figuren aus Fleisch und Blut präsentierte, deren psychische Schwächen sie in lebensverändernde Konflikte führten – und dies muss Alwyn an die *verismo*-Opern von Puccini und Mascagni erinnert haben, die er besonders liebte. Doch die Notwendigkeit, mit dem Unterrichten und Komponieren von Filmmusiken seinen Lebensunterhalt zu verdienen – ganz zu schweigen von den durch den Zweiten Weltkrieg bedingten generellen Beschränkungen des Lebens – bedeutete, dass Alwyn sich erst zwanzig Jahre später ernsthaft der musikalischen Umsetzung von *Miss Julie* zuwandte; davor hatte er zwei Sinfonien seines geplanten vierteiligen Zyklus vollendet und eine Oper für den Rundfunk der BBC (*Farewell Companions*) geschrieben.

Sein Freund Christopher Hassall lieferte ein Libretto, doch die Zusammenarbeit der beiden scheiterte daran, wie Alwyn schrieb, dass Hassall

eisern darauf bestand, sich eng an das originale Schauspiel zu halten, während ich ebenso hartnäckig insistierte, auf alle unwesentlichen Details zu verzichten, auf Symbolik und Moralisierung, und nur die dramatische Strindbergsche Substanz des Stücks zu bewahren.

Eine Oper, behauptete er, sei nicht einfach nur ein Stück mit Handlung, die "gelegentlich von Musik

untermalt" wird; im Gegenteil, Musik sollte Wort und Tat gleichermaßen bedingen. Das Projekt wurde daher fallengelassen – für weitere zwanzig Jahre, bis Alwyn nach seinem Rückzug nach Blythburgh endlich dem Drang nachgab, eine ausgewachsene Oper für die Bühne zu komponieren.

Als erstes kam *Juan, or The Libertine*, das auf James Elroy Fleckers Schauspiel *Don Juan* sowie auf Baudelaire, Byron, Molière, Nietzsche und Shaw basierte; sobald diese Oper 1971 vollendet war, wandte Alwyn sich wieder *Miss Julie* zu. Dieses Mal schrieb er sein eigenes Libretto – er verdichtete Strindbergs Text, ersetzte verbale durch musikalische Themen und Motive und führte eine neue Figur ein, was durchaus umstritten war. Ulrik, der Wildhüter, dient als Ersatz für Strindbergs Chor der Dorfbewohner, deren Mitwirkung in der Oper Alwyn als gekünstelt und unbeholfen ablehnte; zudem war er der Überzeugung, dass das Fehlen eines Chors die klaustrophobische Enge, in der die zum Scheitern verdamnte Beziehung der beiden Hauptfiguren stattfindet, noch verstärken würde.

In seiner "naturalistischen" Phase war Strindberg vom Darwinismus beeinflusst, und in dem Schauspiel erkundet er Evolutionstheorien aus der Perspektive von Gesellschaftsklasse und Geschlecht. Miss Julie, eine Repräsentantin des kompromisslosen Adels, sieht sich in einen Überlebenskampf gegen die aufstrebende

Klasse der Bediensteten verstrickt, die jede vom Leben gebotene Gelegenheit ergreift, ihre Verhältnisse zu verbessern. Zugleich verkörpert sie Strindbergs Konzept der "modernen Frau", die in ihrem Kampf um Gleichberechtigung gegenüber dem Mann zum Scheitern verurteilt ist. Das Stück könnte mithin für Alwyn, den unverhohlenen Romantiker, eine unerwartete Themenwahl darstellen, selbst wenn man seine *prima la musica*-Haltung bei der Komposition von Opern berücksichtigt; doch er empfand das Schicksal von Miss Julie als tragisch und war ihr während der drei Jahre, in denen er an der Oper arbeitete, "hoffnungslos verfallen".

Dass es ihm gelang, über die antiromantische Natur des Schauspiels hinauszugehen, lag an der Komplexität der Charaktere. "Es handelt sich hier um eines der dramatischen Narrative", schrieb Rodney Milnes in dem Essay, das die erste Studioaufnahme der Oper begleitete,

in denen die Worte selbst nur die Spitze des Eisbergs sind; in nahezu jedem Satz sprechen die Figuren nur etwa ein Viertel von dem aus, was sie meinen.

Das Übrige ist zumeist Symbolik, und darin hatte Alwyn in seinen rund fünfundzwanzig Jahren als Filmkomponist hinreichend Erfahrung gesammelt.

Überraschender ist vielleicht, dass er ein intimes, Kammerspiel-artiges Drama (für vier Solisten, ohne Chor und nur ein Bühnenbild)

mit Musik von leidenschaftlich sinfonischer Dynamik vorsah. Mit seinem Umzug nach Suffolk zog er sich zum Teil auch vor einem in seinen Augen feindseligen oder zumindest unsympathischen musikalischen Establishment zurück, das das ihm eigene romantische Idiom als veraltet ablehnte und die Stigmatisierung von "Filmkomponisten" nur selten hinterfragte; da diese Vorurteile sich seit Alwyns Tod einigermaßen gelegt haben, können wir heute sehen, dass die Qualitäten, die ihn auf dem Gebiet der Filmmusik so erfolgreich sein ließen, sich auch für das Opernfach ganz besonders eignen. Wenn die Musik von *Miss Julie* einigen Hörern zu "cinematisch" klingt, liegt das sicherlich daran, dass Filmmusik und Opernmusik Alwyns Meinung nach vergleichbare dramatische Funktionen zu erfüllen hatten.

Er meinte, die bei weitem wichtigste Lektion, die er als Filmkomponist gelernt habe, sei der dramatische Einsatz von Musik im Verhältnis zum gesprochenen Wort; und in *Miss Julie* kamen Techniken zum Einsatz, die er im Laufe vieler Jahre verfeinert hatte, in denen er unzählige Drehbücher las und sich auf dem Bildschirm gesprochene Dialoge anschaute. Die offensichtlichsten sind das wiederkehrende Dreitonmotiv, das auf dem Rhythmus des Namens "Miss-Ju-lie" basiert, die insistierenden Ostinato-Figuren, die die Bedeutung besonders wichtiger Phrasen unterstreichen, und das

echohafte Aufgreifen (oder die Vorwegnahme) bestimmter Vokallinien, wodurch diese zusätzliches Gewicht gewinnen, nachdem (oder bevor) sie gesungen werden.

Einige der Feinheiten des Werks sind rein musikalisch. Der Walzerrhythmus durchzieht die ganze Oper und illustriert zunächst die sorglose Erregtheit der Festlichkeiten zur Mittsommernacht, die sich anschließenden harmonischen Verzerrungen verweisen bereits auf das Ausmaß des Albtraums, den die Protagonisten sich selber schaffen. Miss Julies emotionale Labilität wird von den hochliegenden Vokallinien suggeriert, die nur lose mit einem tonalen "Zentrum" verknüpft sind, während später ihr Trance-hafter Zustand von Musik evoziert wird, die der der "Halluzinations-Szenen" ähnelt (oft mit Celesta und Streicher-Tremolandi in ungefestigten tonalen Zusammenhängen), für die Alwyn als Filmkomponist berühmt war. Und vor allem tauchen bestimmte musikalische Intervalle und Akkorde immer wieder auf: Die Septime, die für Sehnsucht und unerfülltes Verlangen steht, und der übermäßige Dreiklang, dessen Dissonanz die unverminderte Zwietracht zwischen allen vier Protagonisten symbolisiert. Der übermäßige Dreiklang wird am unverhülltesten in einer düsteren, glockenhaften Form verwendet, wann immer der Graf erwähnt wird – die maliziöse fünfte Figur in der Oper, die man weder sieht noch

hört, aber deren implizierte Präsenz dennoch die Handlung beherrscht.

Alwyn war ein Meister der Orchestrierung, der Atmosphäre, des Timing und der Textvertonung; und nirgendwo wird dies deutlicher als in dieser zweiten seiner "Blythburgh-Opern" (seiner letzten Komposition für volles Orchester), die er 1976 vollendete und die im folgenden Jahr für eine Studio-Produktion der BBC erstmals aufgeführt wurde. Allerdings kam es nur zu einer einzigen Bühnenszenierung – 1997 am Theatre Royal in Norwich unter der Leitung von Benjamin Luxon, dem ersten Jean. "Eine Oper ist für die Bühne bestimmt", schrieb Alwyn zur Zeit der ersten Aufführung für die BBC, "und sie muss gutes Schauspiel ebenso bieten wie gute Musik"; die Sicherheit seines Theaterinstinkts wurde von der Reaktion des Publikums auf die konzertante Aufführung des Werks im Oktober 2019 in der Londoner Barbican Hall bestätigt, die der vorliegenden Aufnahme vorausging. Der Musikkritiker der *Times* fragte sich am folgenden Morgen – "immer noch benommen" vom Eindruck der Aufführung:

Warum ist dieses intensive, brilliant
orchestrierte und auf klaustrophobische Weise
packende Meisterwerk seit seiner Premiere im
Jahr 1977 derart vernachlässigt worden?

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Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

Synopse

Die Oper spielt Ende des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts in der Küche des Landsitzes eines verwitweten Grafen in Schweden; es ist Mittsommernacht.

Erster Akt, Szene 1

Die Angestellten und Bediensteten des Grafen feiern die Mittsommernacht mit einem Tanz in einer nahegelegenen Scheune. Der Graf verbringt die Nacht bei seiner Schwester, wohin ihn sein Kammerdiener Jean gefahren hat; seine Tochter, Miss Julie, hat er zurückgelassen, damit sie das Haus hütet. Kristin, die Köchin, die heimlich mit Jean verlobt ist, wartet darauf, dass er sie zum Tanz ausführt. In der Zwischenzeit rührt sie den Inhalt eines Kochtopfes auf dem Herd – ein Mittel für Miss Julies Schoßhund; das Tier ist läufig und das Mittel soll die Rüden fernhalten.

Als Jean in die Küche zurückkehrt, ist er bereits in der Scheune gewesen und hat dort mit Miss Julie getanzt, die er in den Armen von Ulrik, dem Wildhüter vorgefunden hatte. Jean und Kristin sind beide der Meinung, dass Miss Julie sich seit dem Freitod ihrer Mutter "völlig verrückt" gebärdet. Jean öffnet dreist eine Flasche Wein, die er dem Grafen gestohlen hat, und beginnt, Kristin zu verführen.

Die beiden werden von der eintretenden Miss Julie unterbrochen, die vorgibt, nach dem Mittel für ihren Hund zu schauen, aber

eigentlich Jean in die Scheune zurück zu locken hofft. Die erotische Spannung zwischen den beiden beginnt zu steigen und Julie weist Kristin an, sich für den Tanz umzukleiden. Dann singt sie Jean ein verführerisches Lied über die Mittsommernacht und überredet ihn, nicht auf Kristin zu warten.

Erster Akt, Szene 2

Mitternacht ist bereits vorbei, als Jean und Miss Julie aus der Scheune zurückkehren. Sie zieht ihn wegen seiner bäuerlichen Herkunft auf, gleichzeitig aber macht sie ihm erotische Avancen. Als er sie schließlich küsst, ist sie schockiert und gibt ihm eine Ohrfeige, zieht sich aber nicht zurück. Voller verletztem Stolz beginnt Jean, die Stiefel des Grafen zu polieren, aber sie weist ihn an, damit aufzuhören, und kurz darauf fallen die beiden sich in die Arme.

Nun ist Ulrik zu hören, der sich der Küche nähert; er ist betrunken und singt ein anspielungsreiches Lied über die beiden. Jean hat gerade noch genug Zeit, Miss Julie in seiner Schlafkammer zu verstecken, bevor Ulrik herein torkelt und verlangt, auch selber seinen Spaß mit ihr zu haben. Alle wissen, dass sie sich in Jean verliebt hat, verrät er, und sie "lachen sich darüber kaputt".

Als Ulrik gegangen ist, kommt Miss Julie wieder heraus; sie ist wütend, voller Scham und angsterfüllt vor der zu erwartenden Reaktion des Grafen. Ihr bleibt nur, wegzulaufen, und

da erblickt Jean eine Gelegenheit, einen lang gehegten Plan in die Tat umzusetzen: Sie werden gemeinsam weggehen und in Lugano ein Hotel eröffnen. Vor Tagesanbruch sollten sie bereits unterwegs sein, denn dann kehrt der Graf zurück; in der Zwischenzeit kann sie die Nacht mit ihm verbringen.

Zweiter Akt

Der Tag bricht an und Jean kommt triumphierend aus seiner Schlafkammer. Miss Julie bereut bereits das Geschehene, ist aber gezwungen, seinem Plan zuzustimmen, der, wie sie erst jetzt begreift, nur gelingen kann, wenn sie dem Grafen Geld entwendet. Schließlich gehorcht sie und geht nach oben.

Kristin kommt herein und bemerkt zwei Gläser auf dem Tisch. Jean behauptet, er habe mit Ulrik gebechert, doch sie glaubt ihm nicht und verkündet, sie werde dem Skandal entgehen, indem sie kündigt und sich anschließend mit Jean vermählt. "Ich habe größere Pläne als *das!*", spottet Jean. Ulrik kehrt zurück, um sich für sein früheres Verhalten zu entschuldigen, fängt aber bald an, mit Jean zu streiten.

Miss Julie kommt nun wieder herunter, sie hat sich für die Reise angekleidet und trägt in einer Hand einen Koffer. Unter dem

zweiten Arm hält sie den Hund, den Jean nun packt und an Ulrik weiterreicht, damit der ihn draußen entsorge. Ein Flintenschuss ist zu hören und Miss Julie bricht verzweifelt zusammen, während Jean und Kristin einander mit Vorwürfen überhäufen.

Das unheilvolle Läuten der Küchenglocke kündigt die Rückkehr des Grafen an. Miss Julie schaut hilflos zu, während Jean seine Uniform anzuziehen beginnt. "Diese Glocke bestimmt mein Leben!", erklärt er entschuldigend. Was ihr Hotel in Lugano betreffe, so sei dies nur ein Sommernachtstraum gewesen. Halb verrückt fragt Miss Julie ihn, was sie nun tun solle. Er rät ihr zu dem Ausweg, den schon ihre Mutter genommen habe – Selbstmord. Die Glocke läutet erneut und Jean schiebt Julie herzlos zur Seite, bevor er die Treppe emporsteigt. Sie nimmt seine Rasierklinge vom Tisch (in der Konzertaufführung, auf der diese Einspielung basiert, war das tödliche Mittel der von Kristin gebrauchte Trank), dann geht sie langsam und gefasst in den Park hinaus.

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Andrew Palmer



Benjamin Hope

Rosie Aldridge



Samuel Sakker

Alwyn: Miss Julie

Alwyn et l'opéra

N'étant pas satisfait de sa musique et déterminé à découvrir et affiner un style de composition de maturité, William Alwyn (1905 – 1985) décida à l'âge de trente-deux ans de rompre avec son passé en retirant toutes ses œuvres inédites. Vingt-trois ans plus tard, en 1961, il fit quelque chose d'aussi radical, mais pour une raison différente: il quitta sa femme, son domicile, et abandonna ses contacts professionnels à Londres pour commencer une nouvelle existence à Blythburgh dans le Suffolk avec la compositrice Doreen Carwithen (1922 – 2003), qu'il épousa par la suite. Parvenu à cette date, il avait démissionné de son poste de professeur à la Royal Academy of Music de Londres, terminé un cycle ambitieux de quatre symphonies, et pris conscience qu'il ne voulait plus écrire de musique de film – ainsi sa carrière était déjà en train de changer de direction. Mais en déménageant sur la côte du Suffolk, il prit la décision supplémentaire d'abandonner la vie artistique de la capitale.

Alwyn n'ayant aucune intention de renoncer à la composition, ce signe de ponctuation dans sa carrière n'était pas un point final. C'était

cependant plus qu'une virgule: c'était le début d'un nouveau chapitre. Il avait désormais le temps et la tranquillité nécessaires pour travailler à son rythme sur des projets "non commerciaux" qui lui tenaient à cœur, et l'écriture (poésie et prose), la peinture et le dessin allaient bientôt prendre une nouvelle signification dans sa vie. Toutes ces activités restèrent toutefois secondaires par rapport à la musique, et ses "années Blythburgh" virent la composition de sa Cinquième Symphonie (sans rapport avec les quatre précédentes), de la Sinfonietta pour cordes, d'un concerto pour flûte, de plusieurs cycles de mélodies et de deux quatuors à cordes. Surtout, il put consacrer son énergie créatrice à l'opéra.

À ce stade de sa carrière, Alwyn était reconnu comme compositeur de musique de film et comme symphoniste – probablement dans cet ordre –, mais pas comme compositeur d'opéra. Et pourtant l'opéra l'intéressait depuis toujours. Il avait écrit son premier ouvrage lyrique, *The Fairy Fiddler*, alors qu'il était étudiant adolescent à la Royal Academy of Music; il avait ensuite tenu la partie de flûte dans des orchestres de théâtres lyriques britanniques, dirigé des représentations de *Die Zauberflöte* et la création au Royaume-

Uni de *Mozart et Salieri* de Rimski-Korsakov. Par ailleurs, il avait terminé l'orchestration de *Der Corregidor* d'Hugo Wolf à la demande de Sir John Barbirolli. Son expérience de compositeur de musique de film était sans doute encore plus pertinente. Les courts documentaires avec lesquels il avait débuté sa carrière cinématographique étaient, se souvient-il,

réalisés avec des budgets apparemment impossibles qui mirent à rude épreuve toute mon ingéniosité et mes ressources pour produire la meilleure musique possible avec les plus petits moyens possibles. Pour la première fois, cela m'a vraiment fait arrêter et réfléchir à quel point la possession d'une technique sans faille était essentielle à la bonne réalisation de mes idées créatrices.

Et c'est cette prise de conscience qui le persuada de retirer ses œuvres destinées au concert et de recommencer depuis le début.

Entretiens, il avait découvert que la musique de film pouvait faire plus qu'établir une caractérisation, suggérer une humeur et renforcer une atmosphère: dans certains cas elle pouvait également communiquer les pensées non exprimées d'un personnage à l'écran même quand celles-ci étaient en contradiction avec ce qu'il montrait visuellement. La "musique de film", explique Alwyn,

est essentiellement une musique dramatique.
Pas une musique descriptive (les effets visuels

et sonores devraient s'en occuper), mais une musique dont la fonction est de mettre l'accent sur l'atmosphère dramatique du film – qui ajoute un plan émotionnel supplémentaire à une attaque qui est déjà en cours sur le sens visuel.

Les parallèles avec la composition lyrique ne lui échappaient pas, et tout du long de la composition d'environ deux cents partitions pour le cinéma, Alwyn avaient formulé des théories sur la manière de revitaliser le genre de l'opéra sur le plan musical comme sur le plan dramatique. Ses conclusions étaient que l'action devrait être explicite, sans référence à un livret détaillé ou à une note de programme; les arias devraient servir un but dramatique plutôt que de fournir simplement des démonstrations de virtuosité vocale; dans un souci de cohérence dramatique, les personnages ne devraient chanter que les uns aux autres et non vers le public dans des apartés ou dans des soliloques; l'utilisation des ensembles devrait être minimisée afin de maintenir la clarté auditive; et, plus important encore, le texte devrait être mis en musique sur des lignes vocales reproduisant les rythmes et les inflexions de la parole.

Il est possible que certaines de ces idées lui furent suggérées par les pièces d'August Strindberg (1849 – 1912), qu'Alwyn avait découvertes à l'époque où il commença à composer de la musique de film, et qu'il

considéra rapidement comme des sujets idéaux pour le type d'adaptation lyrique qu'il voulait faire. Strindberg avait défendu une conception de drame naturaliste mettant en scène des personnages de chair et de sang dont les faiblesses psychologiques les conduisaient dans des conflits qui allaient bouleverser leur vie, et cela dut rappeler à Alwyn les opéras veristes de Puccini et de Mascagni qu'il aimait. Mais la nécessité de gagner sa vie en enseignant et en composant pour le cinéma, sans parler de l'interruption générale de la vie provoquée par la Seconde Guerre mondiale, eut pour conséquence que c'est seulement vingt ans plus tard, après avoir composé deux de son cycle prévu de quatre symphonies et un opéra pour la BBC Radio (*Farewell Companions*), qu'il commença à travailler sérieusement à l'adaptation de *Miss Julie*.

Son ami Christopher Hassall lui fournit un livret, mais leur collaboration échoua à cause de ce qu'Alwyn décrit comme étant

l'insistance [d'Hassall] de vouloir adhérer de manière inébranlable à la pièce originale et mon désir obstiné de me dispenser de tous les détails superflus, du symbolisme et de la moralisation, pour ne conserver que la substance strindbergienne dramatique de la pièce.

Un opéra, affirmait-il, n'est pas simplement une pièce dont l'action est "spasmodiquement

souignée" par la musique; au contraire, la musique devrait conditionner à la fois les paroles et l'action. Le projet fut donc abandonné – pendant vingt années supplémentaires jusqu'au moment où Alwyn, installé dans sa semi-retraite à Blythburgh, céda à l'envie pressante de composer un opéra entier pour la scène.

Alwyn commença avec *Juan, or The Libertine*, basé sur la pièce de James Elroy Flecker *Don Juan*, ainsi que sur des textes de Beaudelaire, Byron, Molière, Nietzsche et Shaw, et aussitôt après l'avoir terminé, en 1971, il se tourna de nouveau vers *Miss Julie*. Cette fois, il décida d'écrire lui-même le livret. Il condensa le texte de Strindberg, remplaça le symbolisme verbal par des thèmes et des motifs musicaux, et – de manière plus controversée – il introduisit un nouveau personnage. Ulrik, le garde-chasse, remplace le chœur des villageois de Strindberg, car Alwyn estimait que sa présence dans l'opéra serait artificielle, voire maladroite; il était également convaincu que l'absence du chœur renforcerait l'atmosphère claustrophobique et suffocante dans laquelle se déroule la relation vouée à l'échec des deux personnages principaux.

Au cours de sa période "naturaliste", Strindberg subit l'influence du darwinisme et explora dans sa pièce les théories de l'évolution à travers les prismes des classes sociales et des rapports entre les sexes. *Miss Julie*, une

représentante de l'aristocratie intransigeante et en voie de disparition, se trouve empêtrée dans une bataille pour la survie contre la classe ambitieuse des domestiques qui est prête à s'adapter en saisissant les opportunités que lui offre la vie. Elle incarne également la conception de Strindberg de la "femme moderne" vouée à l'échec dans sa lutte pour l'égalité avec les hommes. La pièce pourrait donc sembler un choix de sujet improbable pour Alwyn le romantique sans honte, même en tenant compte de son approche *prima la musica* en ce qui concerne la composition d'un opéra. Et pourtant, il trouva tragique le sort de Miss Julie, et tomba "désespérément amoureux d'elle" au cours des trois années pendant lesquelles il travailla à son opéra.

La raison pour laquelle Alwyn fut capable de voir au-delà du caractère anti-romantique de la pièce est la profondeur de ses personnages. "C'est l'un de ces récits dramatiques", écrit Rodney Milnes dans l'essai accompagnant le premier enregistrement en studio de l'opéra,

où les mots eux-mêmes ne sont que le sommet
de l'iceberg; dans presque toutes les phrases,
les personnages n'expriment que le quart de ce
qu'ils veulent dire.

Le reste est en majeure partie du symbolisme, dont Alwyn avait vingt-cinq ans d'expérience en tant que compositeur de musique de film.

Plus surprenant, peut-être, est le fait qu'il met en scène un drame intime (quatre solistes,

pas de chœur, et seulement un décor) sur une musique dont le souffle est passionnément symphonique. Son installation dans le Suffolk avait été en partie un retrait par rapport à ce qu'il croyait être un establishment musical hostile ou du moins antipathique qui rejetait son romantisme comme dépassé et mettait rarement en question la stigmatisation portée sur les "compositeurs de musique de film". Mais comme ces attitudes se sont adoucies depuis sa mort, il est maintenant possible de voir que les qualités qui lui ont apporté tant de succès dans sa musique pour le cinéma sont particulièrement bien adaptées à la composition d'un ouvrage lyrique. Si la partition de *Miss Julie* semble trop "cinématographique" à certains auditeurs, c'est sûrement parce qu'Alwyn voulait que la musique de film et la musique d'opéra remplissent des fonctions dramatiques similaires.

Alwyn dit un jour que la leçon de loin la plus importante qu'il avait apprise en tant que compositeur pour le cinéma était l'utilisation dramatique de la musique en relation avec les paroles, et dans *Miss Julie*, il a déployé des techniques qu'il avait perfectionnées pendant de nombreuses années à lire des scripts et à observer les dialogues parlés à l'écran. Les plus évidents sont le motif récurrent de trois notes basé sur le rythme du nom "Miss-Ju-lie", les figures insistantes *ostinato* qui éclairent le sens des phrases particulièrement

importantes, et l'écho (ou le pré-écho) de lignes vocales qui les renforce avant (ou après) qu'elles sont chantées.

Certaines subtilités de la partition sont purement musicales. Le rythme de la valse imprègne tout l'opéra et illustre au départ l'excitation insouciant des festivités de la nuit du solstice d'été, mais les distorsions harmoniques qui suivent révèlent l'ampleur du cauchemar que les protagonistes se créent eux-mêmes. L'instabilité émotionnelle de Miss Julie est suggérée par des lignes vocales aiguës qui sont seulement vaguement rattachées à un centre "tonal", tandis que son état de quasi-transe final est évoqué par une musique ressemblant à celle des "scènes d'hallucination" (utilisant souvent le célesta et les cordes *tremolando* dans des tonalités incertaines) pour laquelle Alwyn le compositeur pour le cinéma était fameux. Et deux éléments musicaux particuliers apparaissent tout au long de la partition: l'intervalle de septième, qui indique le désir ardent et le désir non assouvi; et la triade augmentée, dont la dissonance symbolise le conflit non résolu entre les quatre personnages. Ce dernier est utilisé plus ouvertement sous une forme sinistre et semblable à la sonorité d'une cloche à presque toutes les mentions du comte – le cinquième personnage, malveillant, de l'opéra qui n'est ni vu, ni entendu, mais dont la présence implicite domine l'action.

Alwyn parvint à la maîtrise de l'orchestration, de l'atmosphère, du timing et de la mise en musique des paroles. Et cela n'est nulle part plus évident qu'ici, dans le second de ses deux "opéras Blythburgh" (et sa dernière œuvre pour grand orchestre), qu'il termina en 1976, et qui fut joué pour la première fois sous forme d'un enregistrement studio de la BBC l'année suivante. Pourtant, *Miss Julie* n'a reçu qu'une seule production scénique – mise en scène par Benjamin Luxon, le Jean de la création originale, au Norwich Theatre Royal en 1997. "Un opéra est écrit pour le théâtre", écrivait Alwyn à l'époque de l'exécution originale de la BBC, "et doit être du bon théâtre tout comme de la bonne musique"; et la sûreté de son instinct théâtral fut confirmée par la réaction du public lors de la version donnée en concert au Barbican Hall de Londres en octobre 2019 qui précéda le présent enregistrement. Le lendemain matin, le critique du *Times*, "encore sous le choc" de l'expérience, se demandait:

Pourquoi ce chef-d'œuvre intense, brillamment orchestré et d'une claustrophobie captivante a-t-il été si négligé depuis sa première en 1977?

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Synopsis

L'action de l'opéra se situe dans la cuisine du château d'un comte veuf en Suède à la fin du

dix-neuvième siècle pendant le soir du solstice d'été.

Acte I, Scène 1

Le personnel et les domestiques du comte célèbrent le solstice d'été avec un bal donné dans une grange proche du château. Le comte passe la nuit chez sa sœur où il a été conduit par Jean, son valet de chambre, et a laissé sa fille, Miss Julie, en charge du château. Kristin, la cuisinière, qui est fiancée officieusement à Jean, attend qu'il l'emmène au bal. En attendant, elle remue le contenu d'une casserole sur le poêle: c'est une potion pour la petite chienne en chaleur de Miss Julie, qui éloignera les autres chiens.

Jean est de retour à la cuisine, mais il s'est déjà rendu à la grange où il a dansé avec Miss Julie qu'il trouva dans les bras d'Ulrik, le garde-chasse. Jean et Kristin s'accordent pour dire que Miss Julie est devenue "complètement folle" depuis le suicide de sa mère. Jean ouvre effrontément une bouteille de vin qu'il a volé au comte, et commence à faire la cour à Kristin.

Ils sont interrompus par l'entrée de Miss Julie qui vient sous le prétexte de s'enquérir de la potion, mais qui espère faire revenir Jean à la grange. La tension érotique entre eux commence à augmenter, et elle ordonne à Kristin d'aller se changer pour aller au bal. Elle se met alors à chanter de manière séductrice à Jean à propos de la nuit du solstice d'été et le persuade de ne pas attendre Kristin.

Acte I, Scène 2

Il est minuit passé quand Jean et Miss Julie reviennent du bal. Elle le nargue à propos de ses origines paysannes tout en le provoquant sexuellement. Mais quand finalement il lui donne un baiser, elle est choquée et le gifle, mais elle ne part pas. Blessé dans sa fierté, il commence à polir les bottes du comte, mais elle lui ordonne de s'arrêter, et ils tombent bientôt dans les bras l'un de l'autre.

Ulrik, qui est ivre, s'approche de la cuisine en chantant une chanson pleine de sous-entendus à leur sujet. Jean a juste le temps d'aller cacher Miss Julie dans sa chambre avant qu'Ulrik n'entre, et demande à prendre son plaisir avec elle. Tout le monde sait qu'elle est tombée amoureuse de Jean, lui dit-il, et ils en font tous des gorges chaudes!

Une fois Ulrik parti, Miss Julie sort de la chambre en colère, honteuse et terrifiée par la réaction du comte. Elle n'a pas d'autre choix que de s'enfuir, et Jean voit une opportunité de mettre en œuvre un plan longuement chéri: ils partiront ensemble, et ouvriront un hôtel à Lugano. Ils doivent partir au lever du jour avant le retour du comte, et en attendant elle peut passer la nuit avec lui.

Acte II

C'est l'aube, et Jean sort triomphant de sa chambre. Miss Julie regrette déjà ce qui s'est passé, mais se voyant forcée d'accepter son

plan, elle comprend maintenant que pour réussir, elle doit aller voler de l'argent à son père. Elle finit par céder et monte à l'étage.

Kristin entre dans la cuisine et remarque que deux verres sont sur la table. Incrédule quand Jean lui explique que c'est avec Ulrik qu'il buvait, elle annonce qu'elle évitera le scandale en donnant sa démission, ensuite de quoi elle se mariera avec Jean. "J'ai plus d'ambition ce ça!" ricane-t-il. Ulrik revient pour s'excuser de la manière dont il s'est conduit précédemment, mais bientôt il commence à se battre avec Jean.

Miss Julie redescend, habillée pour le voyage et tenant une valise à la main. De l'autre, elle tient sa petite chienne que Jean lui arrache et donne à Ulrik pour qu'il aille s'en débarrasser dehors. Un coup de feu retentit. Miss Julie, bouleversée, s'effondre, tandis que Jean et Kristin se lancent des accusations.

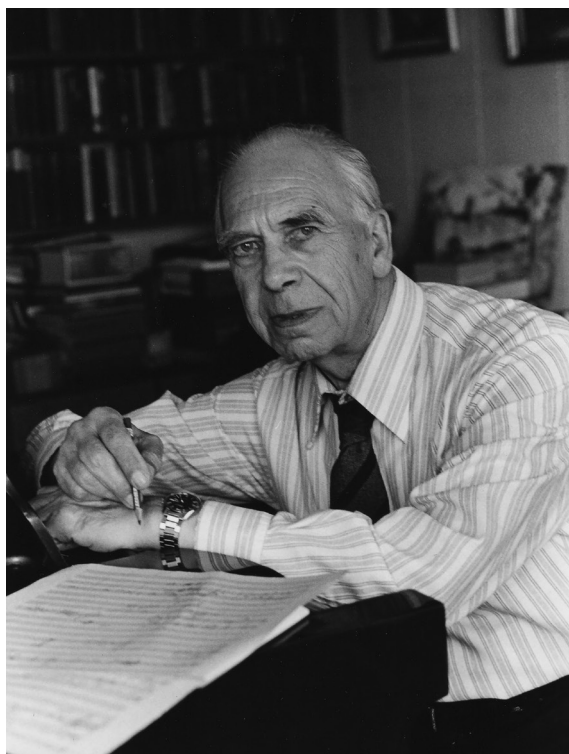
La sonnerie menaçante de la cloche de la cuisine indique que le comte est de retour,

et Miss Julie observe impuissante Jean en train de mettre son uniforme. "Cette cloche gouverne ma vie!", s'excuse-t-il. Quant à leur hôtel à Lugano, ce n'était que le rêve d'une nuit d'été. À moitié folle, elle lui demande ce qu'elle doit faire. Il lui suggère qu'il y a un moyen de s'en sortir, celui qu'avait choisi sa mère: le suicide. La cloche retentit de nouveau, et Jean pousse froidement Miss Julie avant de monter l'escalier. Elle prend alors le rasoir de Jean qui était posé sur la table (dans la version de concert du présent enregistrement, l'agent mortel est la potion préparée par Kristin), puis elle sort lentement et avec fermeté en direction du parc.

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William Alwyn, 1978



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Miss Julie

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

Scene 1

1 [Orchestral Introduction]

Curtain rises.

The kitchen of the Count's country house

A large, old fashioned kitchen with a steep, narrow staircase leading up to the residential quarters. At the foot of the stairs is the entrance to the servants' hall and the maids' bedrooms. The door to Jean's bedroom is next to the entrance. Backstage, a large glass door stands open. To the right of the garden door is a window with a snail mirror slung on the window latch. The kitchen sink stands below the window. Through the door and window can be seen glimpses of the garden and an extensive park. Right stage is a tiled stove with a projecting hood, and next to it a tall kitchen dresser stacked with china, glass, copper saucepans etc. The kitchen is furnished with a large pinewood table and two chairs. On the table is a china ginger-jar filled with lilac. The stove is decorated with tranches of birch twigs, and the floor is strewn with juniper. Prominently placed on one of the walls is a large bell on an oiled spring.

It is Midsummer Night, late in the evening but still light. The sound of dance music can be faintly heard from the distant barn.

Kristin is standing at the stove stirring a saucepan. She is restless, expecting Jean. He enters from the servants' hall. He is wearing a striped livery waistcoat and he carries a pair of riding boots with spurs which he puts down by the table.

Jean

2 Miss Julie is crazy, utterly crazy!

Kristin

Where have you been?

Jean

Crazy! She was leading the dance in the gamekeeper's arms. Utterly crazy!

Kristin

So you've been to the barn, and I thought you were taking the master.

Jean (*unheeding*)

The moment she saw me she dropped her partner, rushed over to meet me and asked me to dance.

Kristin (*angrily*)
So that's where you were!

Jean
And how she could dance!
Her waltzing's divine!
(*He starts to waltz round the kitchen, seizing Kristin and waltzing her round the room.*)
Tra-la, tra-la-la-la...

Kristin (*giggling*)
Let me be! Leave me alone!

(*He releases her and flings himself into a chair. She goes back to the stove and continues stirring the saucepan. She then puts down the spoon and turns to him.*)

Kristin
3 But the Count...

Jean
I took him all right.
A job's a job;
I know my place.
(*He looks up at the bell.*)
When that bell rings
I'm up like a shot.
'Yes, my lord,
what are your orders?'
(*imitating the Count's voice*)
'Polish these boots.'
'As you please, my lord.'
And down I came.

Then that bell rings again;
and back up the stairs!
'Your orders, my lord?'
'It's the coachman's day off.'
'Oh yes, my lord.'
'You must drive me instead.'
'Where to, my lord?'
'To my sister's place.'
'Very good, my lord;
when you're ready, my lord.'
To hell with that bell!
On Midsummer Night
of all times!
Midsummer Night,
when everyone's free
to do as they please!
But I know my place,
and a job's a job.
I took him all right.

Kristin
It's not all that far
but you took a long time.

Jean
On the way back
I looked in at the barn.
I couldn't resist it.
Music and dancing
go to my head!
And there was Miss Julie
leading the dance.
Crazy, utterly crazy!

Kristin
She's always been crazy –
that's nothing new.
But since the Countess died –

Jean
Took poison, you mean –
suicide.

Kristin (*firmly*)
Since the Countess died
she's gone quite mad.

Jean
Utterly crazy, crazy...

Kristin
She shouldn't be here alone.

Jean
Crazy!

Kristin
She ought to have gone with the Count.

Jean
She hates the old man.

Kristin
I'm not surprised.

(*She busies herself at the stove.*)

Jean (*casually*)
What's that you're cooking?

Kristin
I promised Miss Julie.
It's for her dog,
the poor little bitch –

Jean
Watch your tongue!
A dog is a dog in this kitchen.

Kristin
Miss Julie says 'bitch'.

Jean
They can say what they like
above stairs.
But it's not refined.
Neither is she, come to that,
out in the barn
with that gamekeeper lout,
all stinking of sweat!
But how she could dance!
Light as a feather,
and pretty.
What a figure, what arms
and what breasts!

Kristin (*scandalised*)
Jean! Jean!

Jean
And how she can waltz!

Kristin (*indignantly*)
No better than me.
Will you dance with me, Jean,
when I've finished this brew?

Jean
Oh yes.
Yes, if you like.

Kristin
Promise?

Jean
When I say a thing
it's as good as done.

Kristin (*mimicking him*)
When you say a thing
it's as good as done!

(*laughing*)
(*He sits down at the table. He yawns and stretches.*)

Jean
4 By God, I'm thirsty!

Kristin
I'll get you a drink.

(*She goes to the dresser to get a bottle of beer and a glass.*)

Jean
Beer on Midsummer Night!
I can do better than that.

(*He opens the table drawer and produces a bottle of wine.*)

Kristin
That's the Count's special!

Jean
The master won't miss it!

(*He pours out a glassful and takes a long drink.*)

Kristin
You're worse than a thief,
but I have to admire you.
You do what you want,
and take what you want.
But when we are married –

Jean
Married!

Kristin
– you'll have to behave,
or I'll know the reason why!

Jean
When we are married?

Kristin
You promised.

Jean

When I say a thing...

Kristin

...it's as good as done!

Jean

It's as good as done.

Kristin

So you say.

But I'm not sure that I trust you.

All the same, I'm fond of you.

(She starts to stroke his hair affectionately.)

You're not like the others,
like the grooms or the coachman,
or that Ulrik, the gamekeeper.

You're not like them.

You're quite the gentleman!

No wonder Miss Julie singles you out.

But I'm not jealous.

You know your place.

And a cook's as good as a lady

if it's love you want!

(She puts her arms round his neck and fondles him.)

How handsome you are –
so handsome and so strong!

Jean

Easy now!

Kristin

Handsome and strong!

Jean

Easy now!

You know what I'm like
when you get me excited!

Kristin

I like a man that's a man!

Jean

But everyone's crazy tonight.

Miss Julie's crazy,

you're crazy,

and so am I!

(He pulls her onto his lap.)

Kristin

Behave yourself! Behave yourself!

Stop it!

Jean

Why should I? Why should I?

We've done it before.

You've no secrets from me.

(He starts to pull up her skirt, and she giggles and struggles.)

Kristin

No, no, not now,

wait till later...

No, Jean!

Jean
Oh yes, oh yes!

Miss Julie (*off stage*)
5 Kristin, Kristin, Kristin!

Kristin
Let me go, let me go!
It's Miss Julie.

Jean
Miss Julie!

(Kristin hastily tidies her dress. Jean hurriedly hides the bottle of wine in the drawer. Miss Julie enters from the garden. She pretends not to notice Jean.)

Miss Julie (*to Kristin*)
Oh, there you are.
Is it ready?
Can I take it with me?

Kristin
In a moment, Miss Julie.

(Kristin puts her fingers to her lips to remind Miss Julie of Jean's presence.)

Miss Julie (*sotto voce*)
Do you think it will work?

Kristin (*sotto voce*)
I'm sure of it.
It always works.

Miss Julie
Good! How clever you are.

(Jean strolls casually towards them.)

Jean
Are you talking secrets?

(Miss Julie moves towards him and waves him away with her handkerchief.)

Miss Julie
It's no business of yours.

(She lets the handkerchief slip from her hand. Jean picks it up and smells it ostentatiously, then hands it back with a flourish.)

Jean
What a beautiful scent!

Miss Julie
So you're fond of scent
as well as dancing?
You certainly know how to dance.
Where did you learn?

Jean
In Switzerland.

Miss Julie
In Switzerland?

Jean
At the best hotels.

Miss Julie
Where you learned to speak French?

Jean
Mais oui, Mademoiselle Julie.

Miss Julie
Vous êtes bien facile.
You're quite cosmopolitan.

Jean
[6] Well, I've travelled around
from one job to another,
Lausanne, London and Rome,
a waiter at one time
or a gentleman's gentleman,
and now I've come home to settle down.
It was all good experience.
I learned the way of the world,
(slyly)
how to keep my end up,
and how to attract girls!
Oh, I've travelled around
and learnt a few things –
billiards and cards and such like –
in my spare time.

Miss Julie (sarcastically)
Billiards and cards,
and dancing and French!

Jean
Yes, I've travelled around
from city to city,

Lugano, Geneva and Paris.
(lamely)
And now I've come home
to settle down
and get married.

(He shakes his head disbelievingly.)

Miss Julie (ironically)
Kristin's a lucky girl
to marry a man
of so many talents!
What else did you learn
on your travels?

Jean (boldly)
How to deal with young ladies
and, and...
how to make love!

Miss Julie
Tiens, Monsieur!
Remember your place.
(She turns her back on him and goes across to
Kristin at the stove.)
Kristin, is it ready?

Kristin
Nearly, Miss Julie.

(Kristin continues stirring the saucepan. Jean
shows great interest, and strolls casually
across to them.)

Miss Julie (*coyly to Jean*)
Go away, you're not to peep!

Jean
What have you got there?
Some witch's brew for Midsummer Night
to tell your fortune and choose you...
a husband?

Miss Julie
Don't be impertinent!

Kristin
Behave yourself!
You know very well what it is:
for Miss Julie's bitch – I mean, dog –
to keep the other dogs off.

Miss Julie (*with a sidelong glance at Jean*)
Just what I want...
Thank you, Kristin.
Leave it to cool;
I'll come back for it later.
You can go and get dressed now.
You don't want to miss all the fun.

Kristin
Thank you, my Lady.

(*Kristin takes the saucepan off the stove, then
hurries to her bedroom.*)

Jean (*calling after her*)
I'll wait for you.

Kristin (*off stage*)
I shan't be long.

(*Miss Julie and Jean look at each other in tense
silence. Then, in the distance, the band can be
heard.*)

Miss Julie
7 There's a new dance starting.
Come with me, Jean,
come and dance with me.

Jean
But I said I would wait for Kristin.

Miss Julie
Kristin won't mind.

Jean (*hesitating*)
But I promised.

Miss Julie
Promised?

Jean (*hesitating*)
I promised the next dance
to Kristin.

Miss Julie
Kristin! Why Kristin?
You'll have plenty of time
to dance with her
when you're married.
Come along, Jean,
don't waste time!

Jean

But people will talk.

Miss Julie (*flaring up*)

Talk! Why should they talk?

Jean (*with insolence*)

They might think

you were favouring me.

If your Ladyship wants a partner

try Ulrik again.

You seemed happy enough in his arms

though he's sweaty and smells;

or the coachman,

or one of the grooms, or –

Miss Julie

How dare you!

I shall dance with whomever I like!

You are all of you servants,

none of you fit to kiss my shoe!

You will do as you're told

and dance with me.

Jean (*sulkily*)

Whatever you say, my Lady.

An order's an order.

Miss Julie (*with a change of mood – softly*)

It's not an order.

(*coaxingly*)

Come with me, Jean.

Please, Jean.

Jean

Very well. Just to please you, I'll come.

(*He slowly and deliberately takes his best jacket from a peg under the stairs and starts to put it on.*)

Miss Julie

8 You know why I came here tonight?

Jean (*intentionally obtuse*)

Yes, you came to fetch Kristin's medicine.

Miss Julie

You're very provoking!

You know very well

that was just an excuse...

Jean

...to come and fetch me?

Yes, I know.

But you'd no end of partners

to choose from at the barn.

Miss Julie (*passionately*)

But none like you, Jean.

Ah! you dance so well;

you take the lead.

You know how to master me.

And I need a master.

I need one badly.

I need you, Jean.

Jean
Do you really mean what you say?

Miss Julie
Come and see.
(She walks to the garden door and gazes out into the garden, then turns towards him.)

9 **Midsummer Night,**
O, night of magic
when the world can forget
its cares and sorrow,
with no thought for tomorrow.
A night for love
and a night for gladness;
no servant, no master,
no maid and no mistress,
and no one to say 'No'
to our heart's desire.
(He goes slowly towards her.)
Midsummer Night,
O, night of stars
and silver moonlight,
when the lilac is heavy with scent,
and the dew shines bright on the grass,
and the music is heady as wine –
and you can be mine,
and you can be mine!

Both
A night for love,
a night for laughter,
no thought for tomorrow
or what may come after.

Miss Julie
No servant –

Jean
No master –

Miss Julie
No maid –

Jean
And no mistress.

Both
And no one to say 'No'
on Midsummer Night.

(Jean takes her arm, and together they go out into the garden and vanish from sight. The stage is empty, then Kristin can be heard calling as she hurries in.)

10 **Kristin**
I'm ready, Jean!
(She is in her best party dress, with a shawl round her shoulders. She stops abruptly in the vacant kitchen, then runs across to Jean's bedroom door.)
Jean!
(She flings the door open, but there is no sign of him. She walks angrily back to the centre of the stage, glances at the open garden door, flings her shawl on a chair, and spits out one word:)
Bitch!

Curtain

Scene 2
[Orchestral Introduction]

The same, a few hours later
The curtain rises on an empty stage. It is past midnight, and the kitchen is in darkness except for the moonlight that floods in through the open door and window. Jean and Miss Julie enter from the garden. He tiptoes across to the entrance to the servants' hall and the maids' rooms, and listens attentively.

Jean *(calling out softly)*
Kristin, Kristin... Kristin!
(He goes across to Miss Julie.)
She's either asleep
or won't answer.
She's angry because I went without her.
Not that I care!

Miss Julie
A fine sort of wife she'd make you
if she gets annoyed about nothing at all.
(She sits down at the table.)
So she's gone to bed...
She's as fat as butter,
and she probably snores.

Jean
No, she doesn't.

Miss Julie *(archly)*
How do you know?

Jean *(boldly)*
Shall I tell you?

(He gazes at her ardently.)

Miss Julie *(hastily)*
Why don't you sit down?

Jean *(ironically)*
What! Sit down in your presence,
my Lady!

Miss Julie
Supposing I order you to?

Jean
Then of course I'd obey.

Miss Julie
Sit down then –
(He starts to sit down.)
but first get me a drink.

Jean *(hastily)*
There's only beer.

Miss Julie *(sweetly)*
I've simple tastes;
I prefer it to wine.

(Jean gets a bottle of beer and a glass from the dresser.)

Jean

Allow me.

(He pours out a glass. There is a pause while he stands waiting for her to drink.)

Miss Julie

You forget your manners, Monsieur Jean!
A gentleman always drinks with a lady.

Jean

Je ne suis pas un gentilhomme.
But all the same...

(He fetches another bottle of beer.)

Miss Julie

Now drink my health.
(He hesitates.)
Don't tell me you're shy.

(He raises his glass with mock gallantry.)

Jean

To my Lady's health!

Miss Julie

Bravo!

¹³ Now you can kiss my hand.
(Jean gracefully and gallantly does as he is told.)
Well done!
No wonder they call you 'Jean'!

Jean

We shouldn't do this.

Miss Julie

Why not?

Jean

Supposing we were seen...

Miss Julie *(impatiently)*

What of it?

Jean

Tongues start wagging –
it soon gets around.

Miss Julie

What do you mean?

Jean

They were staring at us in the barn.
You weren't exactly discreet.
And drinking alone here at night –
alone with a man!

Miss Julie

Alone! Why, Kristin's in there.

Jean

But asleep.

Miss Julie

Then I'll go and wake her.

(She gets up and starts to go towards Kristin's room, then hesitates, undecided.)

Perhaps you're right.

I should not be here.

(She goes towards the garden door and looks out at the moonlight.)

Let's go out in the park.

I love the moonlight.

It's so romantic!

Come with me, Jean.

Jean

14 That wouldn't do, either.

Miss Julie

Why ever not?

You don't imagine...

Jean

No, not me,
but others might think...

Miss Julie *(hysterically)*

That I'm falling in love
with my father's valet!

Jean

It's been known to happen.

It's been known to happen!

Miss Julie

What do I care what people think,
least of all servants!

If I choose to step down –

Jean

They'll say you fell.

Miss Julie

I don't believe you.

People are nicer than you think.

(She looks out at the moonlit garden.)
(seductively)

And it's Midsummer Night,

if you want an excuse.

(She challenges him with her eyes.)

Come and see if I'm right –

alone in the moonlight,

out in the park.

Jean

You're crazy – utterly crazy!

Miss Julie

Crazy? Everything's crazy –
life, humanity, love and laughter,
scum on the surface of water
till everything sinks

down, down, always down,
sinking, sinking, for ever sinking...

It's a dream I have,
always recurring.

Do you ever dream like that?

Ever like that?

Do you? Oh, do you?

15

Jean

I have no time for dreams.
Besides, I don't want to sink.
I want to rise and climb
till I reach the top –
and never come down.

Miss Julie (*with growing passion*)

If you want to climb
now is your chance!
Come with me in the moonlight,
wander with me in the park
while the air still echoes with music
and the dew is fresh on the grass.
Time is too precious for dreaming,
our moment soon will be gone.
Tonight is the night for our dreams
to come true.
Oh, oh, come, Jean!
(*She takes him by the arm and tries to draw him
towards the garden door.*)
How strong you are!
And such strong arms!
(*She feels his muscles.*)
I do believe you're trembling!

Jean (*much moved*)

Take care, Miss Julie!

Miss Julie (*mockingly*)

Pourquoi, Jean?

Jean

Je ne suis qu'un homme.

Miss Julie

Only a man?
A real man would kiss me!

Jean

Listen, Miss Julie,
listen to me...

Miss Julie

Kiss me, Jean!

Jean

Listen...

Miss Julie

First kiss me.

Jean

All right – you've only yourself to blame.
You're playing with fire!

(*He goes to kiss her but she darts away.*)

Miss Julie

How conceited you are!
A real Don Juan.

Jean

Don't try me too far!

Miss Julie

...or Joseph!

Jean

Miss Julie!

Miss Julie
Do you see me as Potiphar's wife?

Jean
Miss Julie!

Miss Julie
...or Salome?

Jean
Miss Julie, for God's sake!

Miss Julie (*mockingly seductive*)
16 Would you like me to dance
and shed my seven veils
'til I'm naked before you?

Jean
You're crazy!

Miss Julie
Salome! That's who I am –
Salome! Salome!

Jean
You're crazy, you're crazy!

(*He seizes her in his arms and kisses her on the lips.*)

Miss Julie
No, no!
(*She breaks away, and slaps him on the face.*)
How dare you!

Jean (*sullenly, rubbing his cheek*)
Did you mean that?

Miss Julie
Yes, I meant it.

Jean (*bitterly*)
17 Playing with fire,
but the game was too risky.
Well, a game's a game,
and I've had enough.
(*sarcastically*)
If you don't mind,
I've some work to do.

(*He picks up the Count's boots.*)

Miss Julie (*angrily*)
Put those boots down!

Jean
No!
When the Count comes back
and that bell rings,
he'll expect them done.
(*He gets out polish and brushes from the dresser.*)
A job's a job,
and it's not my job
to act playmate to you.

(*He starts to polish the boots.*)

Miss Julie
You're proud, aren't you?

Jean
Perhaps.

(He continues to polish the boots while he roams aimlessly round the kitchen.)

Miss Julie
Have you ever been in love?

Jean
What's that to you?

Miss Julie
Tell me.

Jean
Hundreds of times.

Miss Julie
Really in love?

Jean
No – except once.

Miss Julie
Who was she?
(He does not answer, but stops polishing the boots.)
Tell me who she was.

(He puts the boots carefully down, then looks straight at her.)

Jean
If you must know,
it was you!

(Miss Julie is staggered. She sinks down on a chair.)

Miss Julie
You're mad!
You can't mean it!

Jean
It's true, all the same.
I wouldn't have told you;
I meant to keep quiet.
But now... now...

Miss Julie *(impatiently)*
Yes, yes, go on!

Jean *(with a sudden burst of resentment)*
18 You don't know what it is
to be poor.
Your world is above
and you seldom look down.
But I gazed from below
at the eagles soaring
high over my head...
And I saw you –
a princess, a vision
and I thought
I could die for you.

Miss Julie

I think I understand...

Jean

You *can't* understand!
A dog may lie on a lady's couch,
a horse can be stroked by her hand;
but a servant...

(He shrugs his shoulders and turns his back on her. She gets to her feet and starts to fondle him.)

Miss Julie (*tenderly*)

¹⁹ But you can rise, Jean.
You can climb...
A dog can be petted,
a horse can be stroked,
and a poor farm lad...

Jean (*brusquely*)

I've said too much.
I'm going to bed.

Miss Julie

On Midsummer Night,
on Midsummer Night...
and leave me alone?

(She puts her arms round his neck.)

Jean (*wavering*)

With a servant?
Take my advice and go.

Miss Julie

No, I shall stay.

Jean

Leave me!

Miss Julie

No!

Jean

Leave me!

Miss Julie

No, I shall stay.

Jean

Take my advice.

Miss Julie

Perhaps I can make your dreams come true.

Jean (*passionately*)

Miss Julie, Miss Julie!

Miss Julie

Jean!

(She kisses him as he takes her in his arms. At that moment a voice is heard in the distance. It is the gamekeeper. The voice gets nearer.)

Ulrik (*off stage, drunkenly*)

²⁰ 'A lady went a-roaming,
All in the woods one day,

To look for rambling roses
To make a fine bouquet.
But in the glade she met a lad
So handsome, tall and fair,
With gun in hand and poaching bag,
He caught her in his snare.

Jean *(to Miss Julie in a hoarse whisper)*
Quickly – into the bedroom!
(Miss Julie starts to run towards Kristin's room.)
No, not that way!
In here!

*(Jean hustles her into his own bedroom and
shuts the door.)*

Ulrik
'But roses lose their petals
And a lady's soon undone
If she makes her bed
With a poaching lad
And plays with a poacher's gun.'
(Ulrik comes in through the garden door.)
(drunkenly)
Where is she?

Jean
Who do you mean?

Ulrik
Our darling mistress,
Miss Julie!

Jean
You're drunk!

Ulrik
Not so drunk I didn't see you both
sneaking out of the barn.

*(He takes a drink from a bottle of beer on the
table.)*

Jean
Put that bottle down.
You've had too much already!

Ulrik
But you've had your fling...

Jean
What do you mean?

Ulrik
...Mr High-and-Mighty Jean.

Jean
What are you talking about?

Ulrik

Next dance she has with me!

Come on, where is she?

(He leers knowingly at the bedroom door as Jean blocks the way.)

Where is she?

(He lurches across the room.)

I bet I know!

Jean

You drunken sot!

The dance is over.

Everyone's gone to bed.

Get out! Go home, you fool!

Ulrik

Hard words can't hurt.

Jean

But blows can!

Ulrik *(sentimentally)*

I want my little lady!

What a girl she is,

soft as a rabbit!

And can't she dance!

Next time I shan't be so careful;

I'll hold her tight,

and tickle her waist,

and maybe I'll pinch her bum!

Jean

Be careful what you're saying!

Don't goad me too far!

Careful! Careful!

Mind what you're saying.

That's enough, that's enough,

you've said enough...

(Jean grabs Ulrik and forces him back across the room.)

Jean

You filthy devil, get out!

Miss Julie's not here.

Clear off, and get back

to your ferrets and stoats.

Ulrik

And leave her to creep in your bed?

You're a sly one, Jean,

but you can't fool me!

(He picks up a bottle and waves it in the air.)

Jean

A joke's a joke!

Don't try me too far.

Be careful, be careful!

(He dodges the bottle.)

Ulrik

Here's to our darling mistress!

(He takes a swig at the bottle.)

Jean

Get out, or I'll throw you out!

(Ulrik starts to waltz round the room.)

Ulrik

²¹ She's the queen of the dance
and the talk of the barn.
Do you know what everyone's saying?
(He lurches at Jean and starts to paw him. Jean tries to shake him off.)
When the Count's away
the cat will play!

Jean

I don't believe you.

Ulrik

Cat and mouse with our Jean!
They are laughing their heads off!

Jean

Laughing at me?

Ulrik

Cat and mouse!

Jean

Laughing at me?

Ulrik

Cat and mouse!

Jean

I don't believe it.

Ulrik

Miss Julie has fallen for Jean!
What a lesson you'll teach her in French!

(laughs)

(Jean grabs him and pushes him towards the garden door.)

Jean

Get out, you devil, get out!
The Count shall hear of this!

Ulrik

Aw – right, aw – right,
no need to take on.
(He lurches out into the garden, but stops and turns back with a final gibe.)
Cat and mouse with our Jean!

Jean

Get out! Get out!

(Ulrik turns and goes off, singing raucously.)

Ulrik

'O roses lose their petals
And my lady's soon undone
If she takes off her knickers
For a poaching lad
And plays with his poaching gun.'

(His song and drunken laughter die away to nothing. All is silent. Then Jean goes to the bedroom door.)

Jean

²² You can come out now.
(Miss Julie comes out of the bedroom. She is flushed with shame and anger.)
You heard what he said?

Miss Julie

The drunken beast!

Jean

And that dirty song
about you and me...

Miss Julie

The coward!

Jean

And all of them talking...

Miss Julie

Behind my back!
(passionately)
They're all cowards, cowards!
What shall I do? What shall I do?
My father is bound to hear.
(hysterically)
Oh God...! My father!
I couldn't face *that*!
I can't stay here.
What can I do?

What can I do?
What can I do?

Jean

You must go away.

Miss Julie

But you?

Jean

If the Count gets to know
I shall lose my job.
So we'll both have to go.
(He paces restlessly round the kitchen while Miss Julie watches him, mutely imploring him to find a solution.)

²³ I know, I know...
(hesitatingly)
You must come away with me.
We'll go together.

Miss Julie

But where?

Jean

Abroad! To Switzerland.

Miss Julie

To Switzerland!

Jean *(gaining confidence)*

And when we're there
we'll start a hotel in Lugano.
It's a plan I've always had.

Miss Julie (*ecstatically*)
In Lugano?

Jean
You'll love Lugano.

Miss Julie
Is it beautiful?

Jean
It's always summer,
orange trees and a dark blue lake.

Miss Julie
It sounds wonderful.

Jean
We can start as soon as it's daylight,
before anyone's stirring;
in Malmö for breakfast,
and in three days' time –

Both
Lugano!

Miss Julie
Where it's always summer...

Jean
...and the sun is always shining.

Miss Julie
...orange trees and a deep blue lake.
It sounds wonderful!

Jean
And a deep blue lake.
It will be wonderful.

Miss Julie
But you must give me courage.
Put your arms around me
and say you love me.

Jean
I love you –
you believe that, Miss Julie?

Miss Julie (*tenderly*)
'Miss Julie' no longer.
You can call me 'Julie'.

Jean
Julie? Julie...
No, no,
24 I can't,
not while we're still in this house.
Your father, the Count –
that bell will ring
and I'll lose my nerve.
We must get away
before it is light.

Miss Julie
But tonight?

Jean
You'll be safe with me.

Miss Julie (*doubtfully*)
I could sleep with Kristin.

Jean (*firmly*)
You can sleep with me.

(*He indicates his bedroom.*)

Miss Julie (*hesitating*)
I'll be safe with you....?

Jean
I can promise you that.

Miss Julie
But that drunken beast
may come back.

Jean
I'll bolt the door.
You have nothing to fear.

(*He closes the garden door and bolts it.*)

Miss Julie
Nothing to fear – nothing, nothing...
I have no one left
except you.

(*She watches him as if in a trance. He turns off
the light and enters his bedroom, leaving her in
the faintly moonlit room. The bedroom light is
turned on.*)

Jean (*off stage*)
Come, Miss Julie.

Miss Julie
I'm coming, Jean.

(*She goes slowly into the bedroom. Their
shadows are seen outlined as they embrace.
The door closes, and the curtain falls on a dark
and empty stage.*)

End of Act I

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act II
[Orchestral Introduction]

Curtain rises.

The same, some hours later
*It is early morning and the empty stage is lit by
the red glow of the rising sun. Jean comes out
of the bedroom, followed by Miss Julie. They are
both half-dressed. He sees the Count's boots
and gives them a vicious kick.*

Jean
[2] Never again!

Miss Julie
Why did you do that –
what do you mean?

Jean

Never again polish his boots
and bow and scrape!

Miss Julie

Not ever again, never again.
Tell me you still love me.

Jean

Yes, of course.

Miss Julie

Say you mean it.
Nothing can be the same
after tonight.

Jean (*impatiently*)

No time for sentiment now.
It's getting light
and there's much to be done.
(*He sits down at the table.*)
Sit down there
and listen to me,
and don't interrupt.

Miss Julie (*slowly sitting down*)

How cold you sound!
And only a moment ago
you were kissing me!

Jean

We've other things
to think of now.

The Count will return in an hour or so,
and we must be off before then.
Now, as to our plan...

Miss Julie

What plan?

Jean

The hotel in Lugano.

Miss Julie

But to start a hotel
one needs a lot of money.

Jean

That's where you come in.

Miss Julie

What do you mean?
I've none of my own –
only enough to pay for our fares.

Jean

You've no money?
Neither have I, no money –
so we're back where we started.

Miss Julie

But I must go away.
I can't remain here –
as your lover, your mistress –
and everyone talking
behind my back
and pointing at me.

I couldn't bear it.
 I couldn't bear it!
(hysterically)
 You've got to take me away –
 away from the scandal,
 away from the scandal!
 Sooner or later it's bound to come out;
 sooner or later my father will know.
 My father...!
(She suddenly realises the enormity of her position.)
 Oh God, what have I done?
 Oh God, oh God...

(She bursts into tears.)

Jean *(callously)*
 What have you done?
 No more than plenty of other girls.

Miss Julie *(hysterically)*
 I'm not just one of your sluts!
 I'm not like other girls.
 Oh God, oh God!
 What devil made me think
 you loved me?

Jean
 Love's no use without the money.

Miss Julie
 Oh, you're sordid and horrible!

Jean
 You must take me as I am.
 Don't come the lady with me!
(She sobs hysterically.)
(relenting a little)
 Now don't lose your head.
 I'm not quite as bad as you think.
(He takes the bottle of wine from the table drawer.)
 Have a drink of this,
 and you'll feel far better.

Miss Julie *(aghast)*
 That's my father's wine!

Jean
 Straight from the cellar!

Miss Julie
 You stole it!

Jean
 Of course, why not?

(She jumps up indignantly.)

Miss Julie
 You're a thief! Thief! Thief!
 To think that I've thrown in my lot
 with a thief!
 I must have been mad!
(Pacing up and down.)
 Oh God, what shall I do?
 And you said you'd die for me –
 for a princess, a vision...!

Jean

I made that all up.
You wanted romance
and you got it!

Miss Julie

You brute, you brute,
to trade on my feelings!
You're heartless, you're heartless!
You led me on.

Jean (*scoffing*)

Led you on?
You were quick enough
to let down your drawers
when it suited your fancy!

Miss Julie

How dare you, how dare you!
Get up when you're spoken to!
You're still a servant –
with the vulgar mind
of a servant!

Jean (*in a storm of anger*)

Get out of here.
Get out, get out of here!
I'm not your servant!

(*He goes to strike her.*)

Miss Julie

That's right – hit me!
It's all I deserve!

Hit me, hit me!

(*She sinks to the ground and cowers at his feet.*)

(*sobbing*)

Oh, Jean, how could you?

(*He hesitates, then lowers his fist.*)

Jean

No – I can't –
I can't hit a man when he's down.
I'm sorry.
I shouldn't have said what I did.
I don't like to see you like this –
at my feet.
You, a lady! You, so proud!

Miss Julie (*sobbing and half to herself, as if in a dream*)

4 Scum on the surface of water –
sinking, sinking, down, down,
always down.
But I love you – I love you still.

Jean

Love! You were swept off your feet
for a game on Midsummer Night!

Miss Julie

No, no!
I love you, I love you.

Jean

Do you mean what you say?
You certainly meant it in bed
when you lay in my arms,
naked and mad with desire.
How lovely you were!
*(He stoops down and helps her to her feet, and
puts his arm round her.)*
How lovely you are!
Do you mean what you say?
Do you love me still?

Miss Julie *(passionately)*
I do, I do!

Jean
Then give me a kiss!

(He tries to kiss her, but she thrusts him aside.)

Miss Julie
Not here, not here!
5 If you want me again
you must take me away.
We still have time
to catch our train.
But I need a drink
to give me strength.

*(He pours out a glass of wine. She empties it at
a gulp and holds it out to be re-filled.)*

Jean
It'll go to your head.

Miss Julie

Does it matter, does it matter?

Jean
It's vulgar to get drunk.

Miss Julie *(thoughtfully)*
My mother got drunk...
My mother got drunk,
but she wasn't vulgar.
She kept it so secret
that nobody guessed.
But how she suffered!
So good and so kind.
She wasn't pretty,
but I thought her lovely, so lovely.

Jean
A real lady!

Miss Julie
She wasn't a lady –
I mean the nobility.
Her grandfather died
and left her a fortune.
My father, the Count,
married beneath him,
married for money.
It's all so sordid;
why should I tell you?
He took it all from her
then treated her like dirt.

Jean

So that is why...

Miss Julie (*quietly*)

Yes – she took poison.

Jean

Suicide!

Miss Julie

I'll never forgive him.

Never, never!

I hate him!

I hate all men!

Jean

Do you hate me, too?

You said you loved me.

Miss Julie

I hate you, too!

I'd shoot you like a dog!

Jean (*laughing at her*)

But you haven't got a gun,

so what can you do?

Miss Julie (*distraught*)

I don't know, I don't know.

Oh, take me away, Jean,

just a few days, or a week –

as long as we can

with the money we have –

and then we can die...

Jean

I don't want to die.

Better to start a hotel.

Miss Julie (*eagerly*)

At Lugano,

where the sun is always shining

and the oranges hang on the trees

and the water is always blue...

Jean (*mocking*)

And it's crowded with tourists –

good for hotels!

6 If I only had enough money...

We *must* have the money.

Miss Julie

Money? Money?

But how can we get it?

Jean

From the Count!

He robbed your mother;

now you can get your own back.

It's our only chance.

Miss Julie

No, I can't do that!

I'm not a thief.

Jean

Remember your mother!

Miss Julie

No, no, I can't do it.

Jean

Then the deal is off,
and I stay here.

Miss Julie

Oh, you're as hard as stone!
Talk to me kindly.
Help me, tell me what to do.
I've been a fool –
out of my mind.
But isn't there some way out?
There *must* be some way out.

Jean

Yes, yes, with the money!

Miss Julie (*hysterically*)

I can't, I can't.

Jean

You must!
You hate the Count...

Miss Julie

I can't, I can't...

Jean

Don't say you can't.
You've lost your nerve.
Just do as I tell you. Go upstairs.
Go upstairs for the money.

We've got to have it.

The Count keeps the keys of his safe
in the drawer by his bed.
Get dressed and pack a few clothes,
then come back here.

Miss Julie (*abjectly*)

Come with me, then.
Come with me, come with me.

Jean

What! Go above stairs?
You must be crazy!
I can't go upstairs
unless the Count rings.
Now! Do as you're told
and be quick about it.

*(She slowly starts to climb the stairs, then stops
and turns to him.)*

Miss Julie (*sadly*)

You sound so cruel, Jean.
Speak to me gently.

Jean

An order always sounds cruel.
Now you know what it feels like!

*(She turns away and wearily mounts the stairs.
Jean stands watching her until she disappears
from sight, then he gives a sigh of relief.)*

8 [Orchestral Interlude]

(Jean, with a triumphant grin, walks briskly to the kitchen dresser. Kristin appears at the door of her bedroom, half-dressed. Ignoring Jean, she pretends to busy herself, but at last curiosity gets the better of her. She turns to him.)

Kristin
9 Has she gone?

Jean
Who – who do you mean?

Kristin
You know very well who I mean.
(She goes over to the table and points to the dirty glasses.)
And you've been drinking together!

Jean
Yes, we did have a drink together, me and Ulrik.

Kristin *(shrilly)*
Ulrik? I don't believe you.
You know you can't stand him,
and you told me yourself
he was still at the barn.

Jean *(sulkily)*
All the same, it was Ulrik.

Kristin
Lies, lies! You were always a liar.
Miss Julie was here.
I know when you're lying.

Jean
It was Ulrik, I tell you.
But believe what you like –
It don't matter to me.
(He turns his back on her and goes to the sink.)
Give me my razor.
It's time I got shaved.

Kristin
10 Whatever you say, I know
you were here with the mistress.
A woman always knows
when another's concerned.
(Jean is sulkily silent.)
How could you fall so low,
behaving like that?
How could you?
Look me in the face if you can.
(He maintains a sulky silence and continues shaving with exaggerated care.)
Look me in the face if you can!
Miss Julie!
I'd never have thought it,
that I wouldn't!
Miss Julie, of all people!

Jean *(goaded out of his silence)*
Nag, nag! Nag, nag!
You're just being jealous.

Kristin
Jealous!

Jean
Just because I went dancing –

Kristin (*scornfully*)
Dancing! Dancing!
A pretty dance *you* led her!

Jean
Jealous, that's what you are!

Kristin
Jealous!

Jean
That's what you are – jealous!
Jealous!

Kristin
Jealous of *her*? No! No!
If it had been Clara
or one of the chambermaids,
I'd have scratched your eyes out.
But here with the mistress...

Jean
What's wrong with that?
What's wrong with that?

Kristin
Wrong? It was downright wicked!
I'm not staying here another day –

I'm not staying here,
not in a house where there's no respect
for your betters.

Jean
Betters?
They're no better than us.
I can prove it.

*(He has finished shaving. He cleans his razor
but, distracted by Kristin's tirade, he moves from
the sink towards her, the razor still in his hand.)*

Kristin
No better than us!
You don't know what you're saying.
11 Class is class, and don't you forget it.
Class is class, and the gentry the gentry.
There's some to give orders
and some to obey.
(sanctimoniously)
God made me a cook,
and a cook I'll stay.
Poor Miss Julie! Poor Miss Julie!
To think she'd fall
to a man like you!
It was wicked –
downright wicked!

Jean
Don't blame me.
She led me on.
(hastily)
At the dance, I mean, at the dance.

Kristin

Well, I'm not staying here,
whatever you say.
I shall hand in my notice.

Jean

And then?

Kristin

I'm not staying here.

Jean

And then – and then?

Kristin

I shall hand in my notice.

Jean

And then – and then?

Kristin

¹² We'll get married.

(He stares at her, and puts the razor down on the table.)

Jean

Get married?

Kristin

Yes, as you promised.

Jean

Married to you?

I've got more ambition than *that*!

(He puts on his stiff collar, then automatically comes over to Kristin for her to tie his bow tie. Ulrik, in his outdoor gamekeeper's rig, with his game-bag over his shoulder, and his gun tucked under his arm, lounges into the kitchen unobserved by Jean and Kristin.)

Kristin *(adjusting Jean's tie)*

You can keep your ambition.

We'll see about that.

You've your duty to do,

and don't you forget it.

Jean

I know what's my duty
without you nagging,
nagging, nagging!

Kristin

Don't forget it!

Don't forget it!

(Jean smirks with satisfaction at his reflection in the mirror, while Kristin surveys her handiwork.)

Ulrik *(sarcastically)*

¹³ A pretty domestic scene!

Sweet as a couple of love-birds!

Jean (*sarcastically*)
You've got a nerve,
after last night!

Ulrik (*complacently*)
I admit I wasn't quite sober.

Jean
Sober! You were drunk as a lord!
Blundering in here...

Ulrik
Everyone drinks on Midsummer Night.
So calm down, old man.
I came with the best of intentions.

Jean
Damn you! Be quiet, be quiet!

Ulrik (*maliciously ignoring him*)
The dance was barely half over
when I found I had run out
of partners.
When you've sampled the best
no other will do.
So I came here
to see what I could find.

Kristin (*incredulously*)
You were looking for me?

Ulrik
Well, not exactly.
Let's say a certain lady.

Kristin (*triumphantly*)
14 I knew I was right!
She was here all the time –
Miss Julie, Miss Julie!
Your mistress.

Ulrik
Miss Julie,
our charming mistress!
Or should I say Jean's!

Jean (*furiously*)
Keep your mouth shut,
or I'll –

Ulrik
Or you'll what?
You'd better keep quiet,
or I'll spread it about
that Jean spent the night with Miss Julie!

Kristin
I told you so!
News gets around.
How can I bear it –
all the girls laughing!

Jean
Don't think of yourself,
think of me.
That'd be quite a change!

Jean

Stop it, for God's sake!
Keep your mouth shut!
Stop it, for God's sake!
Stop it, for God's sake!
Stop it! Stop it! Get out! Clear off!
Get out! Clear off
or I'll throw you out.

Ulrik

Steady now, steady! Steady now!
Miss Julie, the darling!
What a plum to fall in your arms!
Some men have all the luck.
Some men have all the luck!

Kristin

What shall I do? What shall I do?
You're nothing but brutes!
Taking advantage. Poor Miss Julie!
Poor Miss Julie!
You're nothing but brutes.
Brutes! Brutes! Brutes!
Brutes – you're nothing but brutes!

(Jean grapples with Ulrik and tries to hustle him out through the door.)

Ulrik *(laughing)*

Steady now, steady!
Steady, steady!
(mockingly)
Oh, what a plum,
so ripe and juicy!
Our darling Miss Julie!

Jean

Get out, clear off!
Get out, get out!
Get out, get out!
I'll kill you for that!

Ulrik

Steady now, steady!
No harm meant,
no harm meant!

(Kristin, who has been watching the men with grim satisfaction, suddenly looks up at the stairs. She has heard a noise up above.)

Kristin

Stop it! Stop it!
Be quiet!

15 There's someone upstairs –
I heard someone moving.

Jean *(hastily)*

It's only Clara – drawing the curtains.

Kristin

Clara? It can't be.
She's still asleep.
That girl's bone lazy.
Do you think it's the Count
come home already?

Jean *(briskly)*

If it is, he'll be ringing.
You'd better buck up
and get dressed.

Kristin (*as she leaves*)
God help us! What a morning!

Jean (*to Ulrik*)
Now you clear off!
You've done enough damage already.
Clear off, and leave me alone.

Ulrik
I'm sorry, I'm sorry, old man.
It was only a lark.

Jean
Only a lark!

(*Ulrik starts to leave.*)

Ulrik
Well, I must get on my way.
I've my rounds to do,
and a shot at a rabbit will do me good!

(*Ulrik is already at the garden door when Miss Julie appears at the top of the stairs. She is dressed for travel, with a suitcase in one hand and her pet lap-dog under her arm. She does not see Ulrik, who has stopped at the garden door and who now watches, a sardonic smile on his face.*)

Miss Julie (*slowly*)
16 I'm ready now, Jean.
Everything's packed.
I've got all I need.

Jean
Have you got the money?

Miss Julie
Yes, enough for a start.

(*She puts her suitcase down.*)

Jean
Good girl! I knew you'd have the spirit
when it came to the point.

Miss Julie
But why aren't you dressed?

Jean
Kristin's awake and –

Miss Julie
Kristin? Does she suspect?

Jean
No, not a thing.
But we must be off
before she comes back.
My bag's in the bedroom.

(*Jean turns to hurry off, but stops as he sees Ulrik. Miss Julie sees him at the same moment. Ulrik saunters into the kitchen.*)

Ulrik (*insolently*)
So you're going to leave us;
run off with our Jean.
Well, I don't think much of your taste.

(Miss Julie stares at him, wide-eyed with horror.)

Jean *(furiously)*
Damn you! Clear off,
and leave us alone!

Ulrik *(ignoring Jean and sidling up to Miss Julie)*
And where would you be going?
And wouldn't the Count like to know!

Miss Julie *(hysterically)*
He mustn't know, he mustn't know!
Oh, my God!

Ulrik *(wheedling)*
That's all right, little missy.
I shan't give you away, I shan't give you away.
You can go to the devil
for all I care!
But first,
put your dog down
and give me a kiss!

*(He tries to kiss her, but Jean grabs him and
pulls him away and turns furiously on Miss
Julie.)*

Jean *(pointing to the dog)*
17 What the devil is that?
What's that dog doing here?

Miss Julie *(fondling the dog)*
My darling own pet,
I can't leave you behind.

Jean *(roughly)*
You're off your head!
We can't take a blasted dog around.
Give it to me.

Miss Julie
No, no! Don't be so cruel.
I must take her with me.

Jean
Give it to me, give it to me!

Ulrik
Steady now, steady!

Miss Julie
I can't leave her here
with no one to love her.
I'd rather you killed her!

Jean *(brutally)*
Right! Then give her to me.

Ulrik
Steady now, steady!

Miss Julie
I can't, I won't, I won't!

Jean
But I can, and I will!
(He grabs the dog and hands it to Ulrik.)
Here – take this.

Take this vermin away
and shoot it!
Or wring its neck!

Miss Julie
No, no! No, no!

(She tries to stop Ulrik, but Jean seizes her and puts his hand over her mouth to gag her.)

Ulrik *(maliciously)*
My kind of job!
That's what I'm paid for.
(He dangles the dog in front of Miss Julie's face, then stuffs it into his gamekeeper's bag, winks at Jean and walks briskly to the door, where he stops and turns.)
Goodbye and good luck!
I can't wait to see the Count's face
when he knows!

(Ulrik goes out. Miss Julie breaks loose from Jean's grasp.)

Miss Julie *(screaming)*
Ulrik, Ulrik, come back, come back!
(She tries to run after him, but Jean holds her back.)
(to Jean)
Kill me! Kill me! Kill me too!
I hate you, I hate you!
I wish to God I'd never seen you!
I wish I'd never been born!

(A gunshot is heard off stage as Ulrik shoots the dog.)

18 **He's** killed her, killed her!
(Kristin hurries in.)
Kristin, Kristin!
Help me, help me!

(She sobs hysterically on Kristin's shoulder.)

Kristin *(coldly)*
What's all this mean –
shouting and screaming?
A pretty sight, I must say!
Jean, what have you been up to?

Miss Julie *(half whispering)*
Kristin, Kristin, listen to me.
I'll tell you everything.

Jean *(roughly)*
Don't listen to her.
She's off her head!

Miss Julie
Listen, Kristin, you *must* –
and you will understand.

(Kristin pushes her away.)

Kristin
You're dressed for a journey
and packed your bag.

Where are you off to?
(*to Jean*)
But isn't the master back?

Jean
Not yet, not yet – a false alarm.

Miss Julie (*imploringly*)
Listen, Kristin, listen...

Kristin
I don't want to hear.
If *you're* going away,
that's the best thing for you;
but if you think you're taking my Jean
I'll soon put paid to that.

Miss Julie (*wringing her hands*)
Oh, what shall I do?
You're a woman, Kristin,
you are my friend.
You must try to help me.
I can't stay here,
neither can Jean.
We must go abroad.

Kristin
19 You're mad!
You're both mad!
Is it true, Jean?

Jean (*sulkily*)
We've got enough money
to start a hotel.

Kristin (*derisively*)
Start a hotel!
You're mad, you're crazy!

Miss Julie (*eagerly*)
But you can come too, Kristin,
and take over the kitchen.
That would be lovely.
Oh, say you'll come,
and we'll all be happy.
Oh, say you'll come, dear Kristin!

(*She throws her arms round Kristin and starts
to fondle her.*)

Kristin (*coldly*)
You're mad! You're mad!

Miss Julie (*urgently*)
You've not been abroad.
It's fun going by train –
to Switzerland,
to Lugano!
It's always summer there
and the lake's as blue as heaven,
and the oranges are balls of fire
in Lugano, in Lugano!
We'll start a hotel –
Jean's hotel.
I shall be hostess,
and you head cook
with lots of servants.

And we'll all grow rich,
and take a house on the lake;
and the sun will always shine –
not often, of course...
Sometimes it will rain,
and then, and then –
we'll come home –
again...

(Kristin has listened to her in stony silence.)

Kristin
Do you really believe that?

Miss Julie (*utterly crushed*)
Do I... believe... all that?

Kristin
Yes, all that rigmarole!

Miss Julie
I don't know...
I don't believe anything
any longer...
(She sinks down dejectedly on the chair by the table.)
...nothing, nothing at all...

(Her voice trails off in utter despondency.)

Kristin (*to Jean*)
20 Well, well!
So you're going to elope!

Jean
I wouldn't say that.
But it's a good scheme
and it might work.

Kristin
Now listen to me!
If you think I'm going
to work for that bitch –

Jean
Watch your tongue
when you speak of your mistress.

Kristin
Mistress indeed!

Jean
Yes, your mistress.

Kristin
Well, well!
Listen to him!

Jean
Yes, listen to me for a change!
Miss Julie's your mistress.
Who are *you* to turn up your nose!

Kristin
She behaved like a slut,
a common slut!

Jean
Be careful!

Kristin
I know my station,
if *she* doesn't.

Jean
Your station!

Kristin
I've never messed around
with the stable lads –

Jean
No, you hooked yourself
to a nice steady chap –

Kristin
So steady you steal the Count's wine!
Yes, *steal!*

*(Miss Julie puts her hands over her ears in
horror at this sordid squabble.)*

Jean
Steal! Who takes a cut
off the grocery bills
and bribes from the butcher?
From the butcher, from the butcher!

Kristin (*furious*)
You thief! You've got no shame!
First steal from the Count,
then steal your mistress!

Jean
Keep your foul mouth shut,
or I'll –

*(He picks up the razor and waves it
threateningly.)*

Kristin
Thief, thief!
You wouldn't dare!
Thief, thief! Thief, thief!

Jean
Shut up, you devil,
or I'll cut out your tongue!

*(Suddenly the bell rings with a harsh, jangling
clamour. Miss Julie leaps to her feet. Jean and
Kristin look up at the vibrating bell on the wall
as though mesmerised. Jean drops the razor on
the table.)*

Jean
21 The Count's back!

Kristin
It's the master!

Miss Julie
My father! Oh God!

Jean
He'll be wanting his boots.

Kristin

He'll be wanting his breakfast.

Miss Julie

Jean! What shall I do? What *shall* I do?

Kristin

Where's that Clara,
the lazy slut?

(She runs off to rouse Clara.)

Miss Julie

Kristin! Kristin! Don't leave me!

*(She turns to Jean in despair, but he is putting
on his valet's striped waistcoat.)*

Jean, what are you doing?

We can't stay here – we can't, we can't!

Jean

22 You can go, but I can't.

It's that bell – it saps my strength.

It rings and rings till I've answered its call.

I'm sorry, Miss Julie, truly I am.

You can call me a coward,

but I can't help it.

That bell rules my life!

*(He picks up the Count's boots and
automatically begins to give them a final polish.)*

Miss Julie

But our hotel in Switzerland –
in Lugano?

Jean

Just a dream –

a dream on Midsummer Night.

I was mad then –

we were both of us mad.

Miss Julie

But the money – the money?

Jean *(carelessly)*

Put it back, put it back.

Miss Julie

I can't, I can't!

Why did I take it?

I must have been mad.

You are right – I was dreaming.

And now I feel so tired, so tired –
so tired...

Help me now, Jean.

Order me, order me and I'll obey you.

Do one last thing for me:

save my honour, save my name.

You must know what I ought to do.

Then tell me, tell me.

I'll do what you say.

*(Jean puts down the boots. He glances at the
razor on the table near where she is standing,
then looks her in the face, but she appears
mesmerised.)*

I'm so tired, so tired.

23 I *must* be dreaming –

everything is hazy.

I only see your face...

And your eyes are glowing
like coals in the fire!
A fire that's dying, dying –
all blurred and white like ashes.
*(The morning sunlight streams into the room,
illuminating Jean. She rubs her hands together
as if warming them by a fireside.)*
It's so warm and lovely,
so light and so peaceful!

Jean *(slowly and quietly)*
There's one thing you *can* do.
There's one way out for both of us:
the way your mother took.
(He looks significantly at the razor on the table.)
(Miss Julie looks at the razor.)
Not here, but out in the park.

Miss Julie *(with touching gratitude)*
Oh, thank you, thank you!
Now I'll find peace at last.
*(The bell rings a second time. Jean picks up the
Count's boots and begins to walk, like a robot,
towards the stairs. She bars his way.)*

24 Kiss me... before I go!
Just one last kiss!

(He brushes her aside.)

Jean *(coldly)*
Je vous en prie, mademoiselle.

*(She watches him as he goes up the stairs.
When he has gone, she turns and picks up the
razor from the table. Then, slowly, with a firm
step, she walks out, as if in a trance, through
the garden door into the park. The curtain falls
on an empty stage.)*

End of the Opera

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Chandos 24-bit / 96 kHz recording

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Thuresson: CM 402 (main sound)

Schoeps: MK22 / MK4 / MK6

DPA: 4006 / 4011

Neumann: U89

CM 402 microphones are hand built by the designer, Jörgen Thuresson, in Sweden.

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Sakari Oramo

CHANDOS

Soloists/BBC Symphony Orchestra/Oramo

CHSA 5253(2)

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CHANDOS

ALWYN: MISS JULIE

CHSA 5253(2)

William Alwyn (1905–1985)
MISS JULIE (1973–76)

An Opera in Two Acts

Based on the Play by August Strindberg (1849–1912)

Libretto by William Alwyn

Miss Julie..... Anna Patalong soprano

Jean, the Count's valet Benedict Nelson bass-baritone

Kristin, the cook Rosie Aldridge mezzo-soprano

Ulrik, the gamekeeper Samuel Sakker tenor

The action takes place in the Count's country house in Sweden on
Midsummer Night in 1895.

BBC Symphony Orchestra

Igor Yuzefovich leader

Sakari Oramo

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