# RAYMOND YIU 

# THE ORIGINAL CHINESE CONJUROR <br> A Musical Diversion Suggested by the Lives of Chung Ling Soo <br> (2003-06) <br> Libretto by Lee Warren 

Full Score


Printed in England.

## Dramatis Personae

William Robinson
Dot Robinson
Alexander Herrmann, Voice of Ching Ling Foo (Low)
Chai Ping
Soldier, Audience Member, Donald Stevenson, Newspaper Boy,
Announcer, Reporter and Harry Elson, Voice of Ching Ling Foo (High)

## Baritone Mezzo Soprano <br> Bass

Counter Tenor

Tenor

## Content

Prologue Soldier (silent), Robinson (silent), Herrmann
Scene 1 Herrmann, Dot, Robinson, Audience Member, Donald Stevenson
Scene 2 Newspaper Boy, Robinson
Scene 3 Robinson, Herrmann
Scene 4 Announcer, Herrmann, Robison
Scene 5 Dot, Reporter
Scene 6 Dot, Robinson, Herrmann
Scene 7 Dot, Chai Ping, Robinson
Scene 8 Chai Ping, Robinson, Dot, Harry Elson, Herrmann, Voices of Foo (High and Low)
Scene 9 Dot, Chai Ping, Robinson, Harry Elson, Herrmann
Scene 10 Robinson, Dot, Chai Ping
Scene 11 Herrmann, Robinson, Dot, Chai Ping
Scene 12 Herrmann, Robinson, Dot, Chai Ping, Soldier
Note: Names listed in order of appearance.

## Note on Scene 12

Musically, this scene is conceived for speaking voice (Herrmann), whose words are echoed by four singing voices, with harmonic background provided by the ensemble. The written parts for the singing voices can be interpreted as guidelines if they prove to be too difficult, except where fragments from previous scenes should be executed as accurately as possible.

To achieve the desired effect with improvisation, the singer must listen to the text recited by the speaking voice, pick up vowels that are obvious, and elaborate on them using the pitches indicated. Cues if real ired maybe taken from the chords sustained by the instruments.

Duration: 70'00'

## Instrumentation:

Clarinet (doubling Bass Clarinet)
Accordion
Piano (doubling Celesta, Toy Piano, Finger Cymbals, Chinese Temple Block,, Whirling Tube (in G) and Chinese Gong)
Percussion 2 Wood Blocks, Almglocken, Button Gongs, Chinese Gong, Chinese Palm Balls, Chinese Temple Blocks (large and small), Claves, Crotales Finger Cymbals, Glockenspiel, Gun Shot (on stage), Hi-Hat, Jew's Harp Marimba, Mark Tree, Metal Wind Chime, Pedal Bass Drum (optional as part of the Drum Kit), Rin (low), Small Chinese Clash Cymbals, Snare Drum, Suspended Cymbal, Tam-Tam, Tanggu, Triangle, Whirling Tube (in G)

Violin
Double Bass (doubling Small Chinese Clash Cymbals, can be shared with percussionist)

## World Première

$15^{\text {th }}, 17^{\text {th }}$ and $18^{\text {th }}$ June 2006, Southwold Pier, Aldeburgh, Suffolk.
$1^{\text {st }} 2^{\text {nd }}$ and $7^{\text {th }}$ July 2006, Almeida Theatre, Islington, London.
Richard Morris as William Robinson
Sophie Louise Dann as Dot Robinson
Paul Leonard as Alexander Herrmann
Andrew Watts as Chai Ping
Phillip Sutton as Harry Elson and other roles
Almeida Ensemble, conducted by Timothy Redmond.
Production directed by Martin Duncan.
Design by Francis O'Connor.
Lighting Design by Chris Ellis.

## Commission

The Original Chinese Conjuror was commissioned and developed by Aldebuigh Almeida Opera with the support of the Genesis Foundation.

## Acknowledgements

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## The Set

The stage set should suggest a vaudeville theatre, but must be flexible enough to fluidly represent both on stage and off stage moments, as well as Herrmann's workshop, a street and Robinson's living room.

I imagine it as a dark box with some tables and small props, just enough to suggest the necessary places. Obvious footlight across the front.

## Note on Magic

The magic that is performed in the opera is technically very basic and could easily be learnt in half a morning after a trip to a magic shop.

It would also be possible however to perform without using any magic tricks at all. For example, when Herrmann vanishes a flower, he could simply toss it behind him. In this case, we would rely on Robinson's reaction to tell the audience that he had seen magic. I leave it entirely to the discretion of the director and the actors.

Lee Warren






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Herrmann turns and looks upstage as William Robinson enters. He is dressed similarly to Herrmann, but more shabbily
Dot moves to her place at his side, between Herrmann and Robinson and becomes both the assistant and continues her











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Herrmann: (a flower appears) Delightful girl.
Robinson: I've seen enough of your show to know how to improve it, Mr Herrman.
Herrmann: Improve MY show...?
Robinson: Yes. Except the Bullet Catch. That's astounding, Mr Herrmann.
Herrmann: Herrrrmann.
Robinson: Herrrrmann.
Herrmann: Verrrry gooood.
Robinson: Verrrry gooood
Herrmann: Yes. (Pause) Herrmann knows exactly how you could help in his show. Have you ever become somebody else, Mr Rrrobinson?
Robinson: Please call me Billy. No, I've done an Arab act, but that didn't work out .
Dot: Except for my dancing! They loved that!
Herrmann: Well, we're going to worrrk at it. I need your obvious skill. You have a good eye for tricks, but the performance is awful







Donald Stevenson starts writing as Herrmann, Dot and Robinson exit. As Donald Stevenson finishes writing, his notepad transforms

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