

# REVIEWS

## WAKE UP, IT'S TIME TO GO TO BED!

### BOSTON GLOBE REVIEW

August 11, 1978 / Richard Dyer, critic

Writing about the premiere concert staging of *Wake Up, It's Time To Go To Bed!* at the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music

"Soundrama causes stir at Fromm Festival! The Soundrama actually takes place in a single moment—the moment that hovers between one thing and its opposite. Keats talked about it in a line; Joyce expanded it into *Finnegan's Wake*. Our Orpheus has a crowded mind early in the morning, and in it childhood memory, present loss, and future resolution are simultaneous presences. Like the primordial beginnings of Wagner's *Das Rheingold* it recalls the dawn-garglings of Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe*. Why, one wonders, should the Fromm Foundation subsidize someone's therapy — On the other hand, great art is supposed to be therapeutic for those who make it and for those who respond to it. And it was hard not to respond to this piece. Conflicting and compelling personality emerge from it. I was fascinated and oddly moved."

### VILLAGE VOICE REVIEW

June 5, 1979 / Leighton Kerner, critic

Writing about the premiere full production of *Wake Up, It's Time To Go To Bed!* at the Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival

"Itchily innovative composers still can work in New York's popular musical theater. Exhibit A: Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* at the Uris. Exhibit B: Carson Kievan's triple bill of *The Temporary & Tentative Extended Piano, Multinationals & The Heavens*, and *Wake Up, It's Time To Go Bed!* at the Public. There may be others. I hope so. Nevertheless, taking into account the recorded samplings I've heard from the competition, I have to salute these two shows and none other for fighting the good fight against music-theater solely of, by, and for the tired

businessman. As a builder of music–theater constructions, Kievman is a wizard! Orpheus as a modern artist–musician is depicted in music of isolation. Jazz–like riffs murmur, moan, wail, and scream from separate cells of shadow, the cumulative effect is often overpowering? Kievman and his musicians conspire to reveal a theater where music is not content to accompany speaking, singing, or dancing, and is not inclined, no matter how entertainingly, to imitate non–musical components, but takes over, instrumentally pure, tolerating no accomplice–arts. To the extent that Kievman’s present work achieves this, it is stunning!"

## NEW YORK TIMES REVIEW

May 17, 1979 / Ken Emerson, critic

Writing about the premiere full production of *Wake Up, It's Time To Go To Bed!* at the Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival

"The Mark Brothers (including cousin Karl) meet the new music in Carson Kievman's madcap program of three Soundramas, collectively titled: *Wake Up, It's Time To Go To Bed!* Mr. Kievman has lavished comic ingenuity upon scoring and staging... the piece is so entertaining that it's hard to knit your brow while your laughing uproariously, the music is enthralling! Tours de Farce!"

## INTRODUCTION

*WAKE UP, IT'S TIME TO GO TO BED!* is about a journey to recover from loss of love. In it the Orpheus Myth is modernized to show a man in the grip of pain and confusion – A psycho music–drama that follows our hero (Orpheus) into the "hell of his mind," and back. I wrote this piece to be (initially) listened to in the morning, as incentive to get up. Until I wrote this piece, I hadn't wanted to get out of bed because of despair and depression due to a loss. This piece reflects my own personal struggle to break through certain destructive cycles, both creative and emotional. After being strongly moved by Marcel Proust's "Remembrance of Things Past," I became interested in the state of mind which occurs only at the moment after sleep and before consciousness. This work was initially written in the mornings (at the MacDowell Colony) to try and capture that magical place where the mind intuitively might understand that which we "normally" cannot. Instead of falling out of bed at two in the afternoon, I awakened at seven–thirty in the morning every day for several months. By doing so I was able to capture that

peculiar consciousness which only occurs just before waking up. The myth of Orpheus has been substantially reinterpreted in order to make it a vehicle for a journey to recover from modern loss. My entire life was changed by this confrontation. The freedom gained from a child's insight is symbolized by morning.

As each member of the audience enters the theater, they receive a program. Inside the program is a sealed envelope, with these words on the front: *"Personal, do not open until the soprano has opened hers onstage."*

**Orpheus, in Greek mythology, poet and musician, the son of the muse Calliope (see Muses) and Apollo, god of music, or Oeagrus, king of Thrace.** He was given the lyre by Apollo and became such an excellent musician that he had no rival among mortals. When Orpheus played and sang, he moved everything animate and inanimate. His music enchanted the trees and rocks and tamed wild beasts, and even the rivers turned in their course to follow him.

Orpheus is best known for his ill-fated marriage to the lovely nymph Eurydice. Soon after the wedding the bride was stung by a viper and died. Overwhelmed with grief, Orpheus determined to go to the underworld and try to bring her back, something no mortal had ever done. Hades, the ruler of the underworld, was so moved by his playing that he gave Eurydice back to Orpheus on the one condition that he not look back until they reached the "upperworld." Orpheus could not control his eagerness, however, and as he gained the light of day he looked back a moment too soon, and Eurydice vanished. In his despair, Orpheus forsook human company and wandered in the wilds, playing for the rocks and trees and rivers. Finally a fierce band of Thracian women, who were followers of the god Dionysus, came upon the gentle musician and killed him. When they threw his severed head in the river Hebrus, it continued to call for Eurydice, and was finally carried to the shore of Lesbos, where the Muses buried it. After Orpheus's death his lyre became the constellation Lyra. (For the importance of Orpheus in Greek religious history, see Orphism.)

"During the first preview performance of "Wake Up, It's Time to Go To Bed!," "Multinationals & the Heavens" & "The Temporary & Tentative Extended Piano" a triple bill of my music-theater works at the Public Theater in NYC (produced by Joseph Papp), a screaming match, as well as a fist-fight broke, out in the audience, temporarily suspending the performance and requiring theater personnel to activity get involved and quiet the disturbance. The limited run production opened the following week and went on to 63 sold-out critically acclaimed performances." Carson Kievman

# CAST & INSTRUMENTATION

Orpheus (Actor), Eurydice (Mezzo Soprano), Man 1 (High Tenor – also plays Tibetan bells, Man 2 (Baritone), Man 3 (Bass – also plays Tibetan bells), Boy Orpheus (Actor), 2 or 3 additional children, Optional Chorus (stage version).

Flute (Piccolo), Bass Clarinet (Bb, tenor saxophone), 2 Percussion, Performance Tape, Harp, Piano, 2 Violins and Contrabass