



OPERA CLASSICS

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BRITTEN

The Turn of the Screw

Langridge • Lott • Pay • Hulse • Cannan • Secunde

Aldeburgh Festival Ensemble

Steuart Bedford



2 CDs

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

The Turn of the Screw

An opera in a prologue and two acts

Libretto by Myfanwy Piper after the original story by Henry James

The Prologue	Philip Langridge, Tenor
The Governess	Felicity Lott, Soprano
Miles } young children in her charge	Sam Pay, Treble
Flora }	Eileen Hulse, Soprano
Mrs Grose, the housekeeper	Phyllis Cannan, Mezzo Soprano
Quint, a former manservant	Philip Langridge, Tenor
Miss Jessel, a former governess.....	Nadine Secunde, Soprano

Aldeburgh Festival Ensemble

The Brindisi Quartet

Jacqueline Shave, Violin I • Patrick Kiernan, Violin II
Katie Wilkinson, Viola • Jonathan Tunnell, Cello

Stephan Williams, Double-bass • Jennifer Stinton, Flute / Piccolo / Bass Flute
Nicholas Daniel, Oboe / Cor anglais • Joy Farrall, Clarinet / Bass clarinet • Rachel Gough, Bassoon
Richard Watkins, Horn • Aline Brewer, Harp • David Corkhill, Percussion
David Owen Norris, Piano / Celesta

Steuart Bedford

CD 1: ACT I 53:06

1	The Prologue	3:07
2	Theme: Scene 1 - The Journey	3:22
3	Variation I: Scene 2 - The Welcome	4:00
4	Variation II: Scene 3 - The Letter	3:56
5	Variation III: Scene 4 - The Tower	5:37
6	Variation IV: Scene 5 - The Window	9:57
7	Variation V: Scene 6 - The Lesson	4:57
8	Variation VI: Scene 7 - The Lake	7:07
9	Variation VII: Scene 8 - At Night	11:03

CD 2: ACT II 53:17

1	Variation VIII: Scene 1 - Colloquy and Soliloquy	8:45
2	Variation IX: Scene 2 - The Bells	8:20
3	Variation X: Scene 3 - Miss Jessel	6:43
4	Variation XI: Scene 4 - The Bedroom	6:22
5	Variation XII: Scene 5 - Quint	2:14
6	Variation XIII: Scene 6 - The Piano	4:28
7	Variation XIV: Scene 7 - Flora	4:20
8	Variation XV: Scene 8 - Miles	12:05

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

The Turn of the Screw

On 12th January 1895 Henry James noted a ghost-story told him at Addington by the Archbishop of Canterbury, a tale of two young children left to the care of servants in an old country-house and first corrupted by them and then haunted by their ghosts. It was this story that became James's novella *The Turn of the Screw* and that served Benjamin Britten as the basis of his challenging opera, written at remarkable speed in response to a commission for a new opera to be staged at the Venice Biennale. There had been considerable demands on the composer's time. In the first place there was the composition of the coronation opera *Gloriana*, duly mounted at Covent Garden in 1953, and then a severe attack of bursitis in the right shoulder had made writing with the right hand impossible. In the event the new chamber opera was written in the space of four months, from March 1954, and duly staged at La Fenice in Venice on 14th September.

The original novella by Henry James, whether entirely the result of archiepiscopal anecdote or influenced by events in the writer's own family, has puzzled many readers. As in the opera, the story is seen through the eyes of the governess, a young woman sent to take charge of two children, Miles and Flora, at Bly, a country-house in East Anglia. Angelic and seemingly perfect in behaviour, the children are soon shown to have within them elements of precocious evil, apparently the result of their corruption by the man-servant Peter Quint and their former governess, Miss Jessel, both now dead. Quint and Miss Jessel return, however, as ghosts, luring the children to evil. The problem unresolved by Henry James, but left to the imaginative speculation of the reader, lay in the question as to the reality of the ghosts

and the state of mind of the new governess. In Britten's opera the ghosts seem real enough, Quint an embodiment of evil, an interpretation which seems to accord with the composer's own views, although this has been disputed.

The libretto for the new opera was entrusted to Myfanwy Piper, wife of the artist John Piper, who had collaborated with Britten on the décor of *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Albert Herring*, *Billy Budd* and *Gloriana*. She worked closely with the composer, who had his own increasingly clear ideas of how the opera should be shaped. Musically the casting of the two children posed obvious problems. While finding a boy to take the part of Miles was no very great challenge, it was much more difficult to find a girl to take on the even more demanding rôle of Flora, a younger sister to Miles. In the first production, and often in later ones, it has been found necessary to cast an adult singer in the rôle. Other problems that arose for the first staging lay in the inevitably complicated lighting plot and the rapid changes of scene. In Venice, and in the first recording of the opera, the part of Quint and the Prologue was taken by Peter Pears and that of Miss Jessel by Arda Mandikian. Joan Cross, the first Ellen Orford, sang the part of Mrs Grose, the housekeeper at Bly, and Jennifer Vyvyan that of the otherwise unnamed Governess. The parts of Miles and Flora were taken by David Hemming and Olive Dyer. The work is scored for flute, doubling piccolo and alto flute, oboe, doubling cor anglais, clarinet, doubling bass clarinet, bassoon, horn, percussion, harp, piano, doubling celesta, string quartet and double bass. The miraculous and evocative use of these instruments ranges from the seemingly idyllic to the menacing, with the celesta colouring the exotic music of Quint,

its harmony reflected in the use of the harp for Miss Jessel.

The musical structure of *The Turn of the Screw* is more than ingenious. Scenes are introduced by variations on a twelve-note theme, each on a different key centre, ascending in the first act and descending in the second. Britten, in one way, shows what tonal use

Synopsis

CD 1

The story as told by Henry James is read by a narrator, and in Britten's opera it was decided to introduce the work with a *Prologue* ①, a literary device that had been used more extensively in *The Rape of Lucretia* and had its place in *Billy Budd*. This is sung by the tenor, accompanied by the piano, ② after which the theme is announced by the piano, leading to the first scene, *The Journey*. The Governess, to the sound of the coach in which she is riding, is making her way to Bly, apprehensive of what she may find there and anxious to please her employer, a young man, off-hand, bold and gay, as we have been told, but with no time for his wards, left in the charge of an old housekeeper.

③ The first variation of the theme, started by the violins and piano, based on B, a tone higher than the original theme itself, increases in excitement. In the second scene, *The Welcome*, Miles and Flora are excited at the arrival of their new governess, worrying Mrs Grose with their questions and practising their bows and curtsies in anticipation, as they have been taught. The Governess arrives and approaches her charges timidly. Mrs Grose has nothing but praise for the children, so clever and so lively, but too much for her.

④ As the children lead the Governess away to

may be made of a twelve-note theme, his treatment of it avoiding Schoenbergian techniques that had become increasingly fashionable among composers at the time. The theme consists of an ascending series of fourths, inverted as fifths, and much harmonic use is made of the interval of a fourth.

show her the house, the second variation is heard, the theme, now centred on C, starting in the bassoon and double bass, a contrast with the lively scampering of the children. The screw starts to tighten with the third scene, *The Letter*, bringing news that Miles has been expelled from his school, described as an injury to his friends. Neither the Governess nor Mrs Grose can believe this, their view of things emphasized by the sight of the children outside, playing a singing game, *Lavender's blue*. The Governess resolves to take no action, a course in which Mrs Grose supports her.

⑤ The third variation, with its rhapsodic flute and centring on D, offers an air of rural serenity, in which there seems, for a moment, a latent threat. The following scene, *The Tower*, finds the Governess in the garden in early evening. The tower can be seen, and, not quite easy in her mind, she wishes that her employer could see how well she is doing. At this moment, to the characteristic sound of the celesta, a figure is seen on the tower, perhaps the children's guardian, she thinks. Soon she realises this is a stranger and is alarmed.

⑥ The agitation of the Governess continues in the following variation, with its repeated plucked chords, the tonal centre now E, heard from the piano and double bass. *The Window*, the fifth scene, is set in the hall at Bly, where Miles and Flora play with their hobby-horse, singing and acting *Tom, Tom, the*

Piper's son. The Governess is heard calling them, but as she comes in, they ride out. She lingers for a moment, glances at the window, and sees a strange man looking in, his presence suggested again by the celesta. She is agitated and tells Mrs Grose what she has seen, describing a man that the housekeeper recognizes as Peter Quint, the Master's valet, a man who had been free with everyone, with little Master Miles, as well as with Miss Jessel, the children's former governess. Both of them, she tells the Governess, are now dead: Miss Jessel went away to die, while Quint fell on the icy road, struck his head and lay there till morning. She continues to ask if there is no end to Quint and his dreadful ways. The Governess is determined to protect Miles from this evil, Mrs Grose understands nothing of this, but will support her.

7 The fifth variation, centred on F, leads to *The Lesson*, in the schoolroom, where the Governess is hearing Miles recite his gender rhymes, as found in Kennedy's Latin Primer and memorised by every schoolboy. Flora echoes Miles, making a game of it, and suggesting they do history. The Governess urges Miles to continue, at which he sings a strange song that is at the heart of the opera, a seeming mnemonic on the possible meanings of the word *malo*, clearly suggesting evil, a song that Miles claims he found himself and likes.

8 Centred on G, the sixth variation has something idyllic about it, a preparation for *The Lake*, the seventh scene, set by the lake in the park on a sunny morning. The Governess has a book and Flora a doll, as she recalls her geography lesson, naming the lake itself as the Dead Sea, to the apprehension of the Governess, but in seeming innocence. Flora sings a lullaby to her doll. As the lullaby ends, the figure of Miss Jessel appears at the other side of the lake, clearly seen by Flora. The Governess urges Flora away, and the voice

of Miles is heard calling them. Left alone, she realises that both children are in the power of these evil ghosts.

9 The sound of the celesta suggests what is to come, the theme, centred on A flat, heard from the horn. *At Night*, the seventh scene, brings the seductive melismata of Quint, seen eventually on the tower, while Miles, in his night things, watches, fascinated, from the garden below. Harp clusters bring the ghost of Miss Jessel, calling Flora, who now appears at the window. The two ghosts wait for their willing prey, disappearing as the Governess appears in the porch and Mrs Grose at the window. Mrs Grose takes Flora away, while Miles confesses to the Governess that he is bad.

CD 2

1 The second act starts with the eighth of the fifteen variations, the clarinet suggesting Quint's seductive singing, the flute the sounds of the night, the harp Miss Jessel, and other elements the mystery and evil that lies in the place. The order of tonal centres is now inverted, starting with A flat. *Colloquy and Soliloquy*, set nowhere, finds Miss Jessel recriminating with Quint and offering herself as his companion. Quint, however, seeks a friend of another kind, one to corrupt, and so 'the ceremony of innocence is drowned'. Miss Jessel too seeks a companion, and both join together in the words of W.B. Yeats that are the essence of their colloquy and of the opera: 'the ceremony of innocence is drowned'.

2 Now centred on F sharp, the ninth variation introduces *The Bells*, the second scene, set in the churchyard. Miles and Flora are heard singing their version of a psalm, mingled with a gender rhyme. They are sitting on a table tomb, as the Governess and Mrs Grose enter. The housekeeper finds comfort in the bright morning and in the apparent innocence of the

children, playing together. The Governess, however, is convinced that Miles and Flora are not with them, but with the others, who can destroy them. Mrs Grose tells her she should write to their guardian, but the Governess doubts what she can say, that either the children are mad or she is. Mrs Grose takes Flora into the church, and Miles, alone with the Governess, asks when he is to go back to school, finally offering what seems to her to be a challenge, as he goes off into the church. The voices of Mrs Grose and the children are heard from the church, as the Governess runs off, seeking an escape from a place she sees as poisoned by evil.

③ The tenth variation, descending a semitone to F, introduces the third scene, *Miss Jessel*. The Governess enters the schoolroom, to find Miss Jessel sitting at her desk and rising to lament her own downfall, to the horror of the Governess, waiting, ready for the child. The Governess tries to challenge her, but the ghost cannot answer her. She determines, as Miss Jessel disappears, to write to the children's guardian. The instruments suggest the words of her letter, which she reads aloud, once it is finished.

④ Bass clarinet and alto flute introduce the eleventh variation, based on E flat, and leading to the fourth scene, *The Bedroom*. Miles is sitting on the edge of his bed, his jacket and shoes off. A candle is burning. He sings his ambiguous song of evil, *Malo*, interrupted by the Governess, who tries to gain his confidence, and tells him that she has written to his guardian. She tries to find out what happened at school and what is happening at Bly, but the voice of Quint is heard, calling for him. The candle goes out, to the agitation of the Governess, but it was Miles who blew it out.

⑤ The twelfth variation, centring on C sharp, is marked *Quick and urgent*. Here the voice of Quint, himself seen perhaps in silhouette, urges Miles to take

the letter. In the fifth scene, *Quint*, he urges Miles in the most seductive terms to steal the letter from the schoolroom desk, which the boy finally does, taking it back to his bedroom.

⑥ Now based on C, the following variation serves to introduce Miles's piano practice in the sixth scene, *The Piano*, its musical allusions to traditional piano studies immediately evident. As Miles plays, the Governess and Mrs Grose listen to him, while Flora plays at cat's cradle by their side. Miles starts showing even more of his prowess at the piano, while Mrs Grose, who has been sitting with Flora, begins to nod off, lulled deliberately by Flora, who slips away. The Governess suddenly realises that Flora has gone and rouses Mrs Grose to come with her to find the girl, leaving Miles, who has clearly used his piano-playing to distract the attention of the Governess from his sister.

⑦ In the fourteenth variation, on the centre B flat, Miles celebrates his triumph. Mrs Grose is heard calling Flora, as the seventh scene, *Flora*, opens, the little girl now by the lake, watching. Mrs Grose scolds her gently for running away from them, but the Governess sees Miss Jessel on the other side of the lake. Mrs Grose, however, can see nothing. Flora shrilly accuses the Governess of being cruel, horrible, hateful and nasty, insisting that she cannot see anybody. Mrs Grose takes Flora back to the house, leaving the Governess deserted, now hated by her charge.

⑧ The fifteenth variation makes use of all the twelve notes, as it leads to the eighth scene, *Miles*. Mrs Grose and Flora appear in travelling clothes, ready to leave. The Governess moves towards them, but Flora turns her back. Mrs Grose, however, has heard enough from Flora, as she slept, to convince her that the Governess is right, her reaction reflected in a harp phrase that recalls her first revelation to the Governess

of Quint's evil. She tells her, however, that her letter to their guardian never went. The original tonal centre of A has now been reached, as the Governess resolves to save Miles. She still wants the boy to reveal what has happened, but the voice of Quint is heard, in increasingly urgent warning. Quint can now be seen on the tower, urging Miles not to tell the Governess their secrets. She wants the boy to admit to this evil, by

declaring Quint's name, which he finally does, running into the arms of the Governess. The voice of Quint is heard, bidding him farewell, but Miles is dead. She repeats the boy's song, *Malo*, asking what they have done to him, between them.

Keith Anderson

Philip Langridge

Philip Langridge was born in Kent and studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London. He is one of the world's most distinguished singers, whose musical and dramatic qualities ensure that he is in constant demand throughout Europe, the United States and Japan. In recognition of these qualities, he was made a Commander of the British Empire in the Queen's Birthday Honours of 1994. He has also received a number of other awards, including the prestigious Olivier Award for *Osud*, the Singer of the Year Award from the Royal Philharmonic Society and The Worshipful Company of Musicians' Santay Award. He was awarded the NFMS/Charles Groves Prize 2001 for his outstanding contribution to British Music. His remarkable versatility and command of a wide variety of styles is reflected in his extensive discography, ranging from the early classical period to the present day. These recordings have gained him two Grammy Awards (*Moses und Aron* and *Peter Grimes*), the Gramophone Award (*War Requiem*) and a Classic CD Award (*The Turn of the Screw*). On video he can be seen in *Peter Grimes*, *Billy Budd*, *Idomeneo*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *From the House of the Dead*, *Wozzeck*, *Oberon*, *Jenůfa* and *Oedipus Rex*, which won the Classical Music Award. International festivals and opera houses with which he is particularly closely associated include Salzburg, the Metropolitan Opera New York, La Scala, Milan, Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Glyndebourne, Edinburgh, and the English National Opera. In concert Philip Langridge has appeared with the world's major orchestras and leading conductors.

Felicity Lott

The English soprano Dame Felicity Lott was born in Cheltenham on 8th May 1947 and started learning the piano when she was five, having her first singing lesson at the age of twelve. At first she decided against a professional singing career and read French and Latin at London University to become an interpreter. During a stay in France she continued to take singing lessons at the Conservatoire of Grenoble, and in 1969, returned to London to take up her singing studies at the Royal Academy of Music. In 1975 she made her début at the English National Opera as Pamina in Mozart's *Magic Flute*, in 1976 she took part in the first performance of Henze's opera *We come to the River* at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. In that year she also began her long relationship with Glyndebourne, where, after rejecting her for the chorus three times, she was offered the rôle of the Countess in *Capriccio* for the touring opera, and in 1977 she appeared at the Festival for the first time, as Anne Trulove in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. Since then, Dame Felicity Lott has appeared at all the great opera houses of the world, including Vienna, Milan, Paris, Brussels, Munich, Hamburg, Dresden, Berlin, New York and Chicago in rôles ranging from Fiordiligi in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* to The Governess in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* and Blanche in Poulenc's *Les dialogues des carmélites*. She has also turned her attention to operetta, singing the title rôle in Lehár's *The Merry Widow* at Glyndebourne in 1993, and appearing in *Die Fledermaus* in Chicago and in *La belle Hélène* in Paris. As a concert artist, too, Dame Felicity has worked with nearly all major orchestras and festivals under such conductors as Carlos Kleiber, Georg Solti, Bernard Haitink, James Levine, André Previn, Neeme Järvi, Klaus Tennstedt, Andrew Davis, Kurt Masur and many more. Her repertoire includes among others works by Handel, Bach, Mahler, Brahms, Elgar and Walton. She also has an unrivalled reputation in song repertoire, Lieder, chansons and songs by British composers. Her affection for songs is reflected in her founder membership in the *Songmakers' Almanac*, founded in 1976 by the pianist Graham Johnson, her accompanist since student days. Dame Felicity has received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Sussex, Loughborough, London, Leicester, Oxford and from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. By the French Government she was awarded the titles Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 1990 and Chevalier dans la Légion d'Honneur in 2001. In 1990 Felicity Lott was also made a CBE, and in 1996 she was created a Dame Commander of the British Empire.

Nadine Secunde

The American soprano Nadine Secunde has appeared in many of the European opera houses, notably at the Bavarian State Opera, singing the title rôle in *Arabella* and that of Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*. Hamburg Opera, appearing as Katya Kabanova and as Elsa in *Lohengrin*, the Vienna State Opera, as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* and in *Tannhäuser*, and the Paris Opéra, where she took the rôle of Chrysothemis in *Elektra*. Her Covent Garden début was also in *Elektra*, conducted by Sir Georg Solti. A member of the Cologne Opera, her rôles there have included Katya, Elsa, Elisabeth, Chrysothemis, Agathe (*Der Freischütz*), Ariadne, Marie (*Wozzeck*) and Lisa in *The Queen of Spades*. In recent seasons she has appeared regularly at the Bayreuth Festival, making a triumphant début there in 1987 in a new production of *Lohengrin*, produced by Werner Herzog. The following summer she appeared at Bayreuth as Sieglinde in Harry Kupfer's controversial production of *Die Walküre*, conducted by Daniel Barenboim, which has since been recorded for video. Nadine Secunde made her American début at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in Peter Sellars' highly acclaimed production of *Tannhäuser*, after which she was immediately re-engaged for a new August Ewarding production of *Elektra*. Other important engagements have included her Los Angeles début as Cassandre in a new production of *Les Troyens*, and her San Francisco début as Chrysothemis. Important orchestral engagements have included her American début with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Andre Previn in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, concert performances of *Elektra* under Seiji Ozawa with the Boston Symphony and London Symphony Orchestras, and performances of Berg's *Seven Early Songs* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in the *Towards the Millennium* concert series conducted by Simon Rattle. Her recordings include *Elektra* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Seiji Ozawa for Phillips, and the demanding rôle of Renate in Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* for Deutsche Grammophon, with Neeme Järvi and the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra. Two videos have recently been released, *Die Walküre* with Barenboim in Bayreuth and *Tannhäuser* with Mehta in Munich.

Phyllis Cannan

Phyllis Cannan was born in Scotland and trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and the London Opera Centre. The mezzo-soprano made her début in 1974 in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. From 1980 to 1983 she sang a variety of rôles at Covent Garden in London. She has been invited to appear at all the major British opera houses and also at the Glyndebourne Festival. In 1983 she switched to the soprano repertoire playing rôles such as Santuzza, Tosca and Senta to great acclaim. Alongside her stage career, she has also been a successful recitalist, particularly in the field of oratorio, both in Britain and abroad.

Eileen Hulse

Eileen Hulse was born in London, and after an initial career as a teacher she studied at the National Opera Studio, was accepted by Y.C.A.T. and rapidly made her mark as one of Britain's leading coloratura sopranos. Opera performances have taken her to La Fenice in Venice, the Châtelet in Paris, the Music Centre in Los Angeles, to Lucerne and to Nantes, singing rôles including Constanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Terésias in *Les Mamelles de Terésias*, Pamina, and Queen of the Night, a rôle she has sung with Glyndebourne Touring Opera and Opera North. She also appeared with the latter in Michael Berkeley's *Baa, Baa Black Sheep*, which was recorded for television. She sang the Maid in *Powder Her Face* by Thomas Adès, to considerable critical acclaim with the Royal Flemish Opera in Antwerp and Ghent. Eileen Hulse appears frequently with the major British orchestras, and abroad has collaborated with orchestras in Sweden, Belgium, Germany and Russia. Her varied repertoire is shown in her recordings, which also include songs by Erik Satie, orchestrated songs of Richard Strauss, Schoenberg's *Herzgewächse*, and the concerto by Glière for coloratura soprano and orchestra.

Steuart Bedford

Steuart Bedford is recognised as one of today's leading experts on the works of Benjamin Britten. As a result of his former collaboration with the composer, he has conducted Britten's operas throughout the world, including the world première of *Death in Venice* in 1973, which was followed by the first recording of the work. From 1974 to 1998 he was one of the Artistic Directors of the Aldeburgh Festival eventually becoming Joint Artistic Director with Oliver Knussen. Steuart Bedford has an extensive operatic repertoire and has worked with many of the world's greatest opera companies including English National Opera, the Royal Opera Covent Garden, Metropolitan Opera, Opera North, Scottish Opera, Opéra de Paris, Brussels Opera, Monte Carlo Opera, Lausanne Opera, San Diego Opera, Santa Fe Opera Festival, Canadian Opera Company, Vancouver Opera, and the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. He is also highly regarded for his interpretations of the works of Mozart, with acclaimed performances at the Garsington Opera and elsewhere. Although opera commitments take up much of his time, Steuart Bedford conducts concert engagements, both in Britain and abroad, and has toured Australia, New Zealand, South America and Scandinavia. He has worked with the English Chamber Orchestra (with whom he has toured all over the world), the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Northern Sinfonia, City of London Sinfonia, Teatro Colón, Gurzenich Orchestra, Orchestre National de Bordeaux Aquitaine, Orchestre Philharmonique de Montpellier, Dortmund Philharmonic and the BBC Orchestras.

1 The Prologue

It is a curious story.

I have it written in faded ink - a woman's hand,
governess to two children-long ago.

Untried, innocent, she had gone first to
see their guardian in London;
a young man, bold, offhand and gay,
the children's only relative.

The children were in the country with an
old housekeeper.
There had been a governess, but she had gone.
The boy, of course, was at school,
but there was the girl,
and the holidays, now begun.

This then would be her task.

But there was one condition:
he was so much engaged;
affairs, travel, friends, visits, always something,
no time at all for the poor little things -
she was to do everything-
be responsible for everything-
not to worry him at all-no,
not to write, but to be silent,
and do her best.

She was full of doubts.

But she was carried away:
that he, so gallant and handsome,
so deep in the busy world,
should need her help.

At last "I will", she said.

ACT ONE - Theme**2 SCENE I - The Journey**

*The lights go up on the interior of a coach.
The Governess is in travelling dress.*

GOVERNESS

Nearly there.

Very soon I shall know, I shall know what's
in store for me.

Who will greet me? The children.....the children.
Will they be clever? Will they like me?
Poor babies, no father, no mother. But I shall love
them as I love my own, all my dear ones left
at home,

so far away-and so different.

If things go wrong, what shall I do?

Who can I ask, with none of my kind to talk to?
Only the old housekeeper, how will she
welcome me?

I must not write to their guardian,
that is the hardest part of all.

Whatever happens, it is I, I must decide.

A strange world for a stranger's sake.

O why did I come?

No! I've said I will do it, and for him I will.

There's nothing to fear. What could go wrong?

Be brave, be brave. We're nearly there.

Very soon I shall know.

Very soon I shall know.

The light fades

3 VARIATION I

SCENE II - The Welcome

The lights go up on the porch at Bly. Mrs Grose, with the children dancing about.

MILES and FLORA

Mrs Grose! Mrs Grose! Will she be nice?

Mrs Grose! Will she be cross?

Why doesn't she hurry? Why isn't she here?

Will she like us? Shall we like her?

MRS GROSE

Quiet, children!

Lord! How you do tease! Will she be this, will she be that, a dozen dozen times I do declare.

You'll see soon enough. Now quietly do!

Miss Flora, your pinafore!

She gives Flora a little good-natured tidying shake, and pats Miles's hair, smooths down her own apron.

Master Miles, your hair!

Keep still dearie, or you'll wear me out.

Now show me how you bow.

Miles bows.

How do you curtsy?

Flora curtseys. The children continue bowing and curtseying until Mrs Grose stops them.

Here she is now.

Enter Governess

GOVERNESS

You must be Mrs Grose?

I'm so happy to see you... so happy to be here.

MRS GROSE [*curtseying*]

How do you do, Miss. Welcome to Bly!

GOVERNESS

This must be Flora? And Miles?

Flora curtseys. Miles bows.

GOVERNESS

How charming they are, how beautiful too.

The house and park are so splendid, far grander than I am used to.

I shall feel like a princess here.

Bly, I begin to love you.

MRS GROSE

I'm happy, so happy that you've come, Miss.

Miss Flora and Master Miles are happy, so happy that you're here too.

They're good children, yes, they are, they're good, Miss.

They're lively, too lively

for an ignorant old woman.

They wear me out, indeed they do.

My poor head isn't bright enough - the things they think up!

I'm far too old a body for games, Miss, far too old,

and now they'll do better with a young thing as lively as they are themselves.

Master Miles is wonderful at lessons,

and Miss Flora's sharp too.

Yes, they're clever -

they need their own kind,

they're far too clever for me!
They'll do better now,
they'll do better with a young thing.
(Pardon the liberty, Miss)
They'll do better now you're here!

MILES and FLORA

Come along! Come along! Do!
We want to show you the house.
We want to show you the park.
Don't stay talking here any more!

MRS GROSE

Quiet, children! Lord, How you do tease!
In a trice they'll be dragging you all over the park!

GOVERNESS

No, they must show me everything!
For Bly is now my home.

The scene fades as the children lead the Governess into the house.

4 VARIATION II

SCENE III - The Letter

The lights fade in on the porch at Bly, to the side of which more of the house is now visible, including a low window. Mrs Grose enters.

MRS GROSE

Miss! Miss! A letter for you.

The Governess comes out of the house.

Here!

She hands it to the Governess who reads it quietly.
[aside]

A good young lady, I'll be bound,
and a pretty one too.
Now all will be well, we were far too long alone!

GOVERNESS

Mrs Grose! He's dismissed his school.

MRS GROSE

Who?

GOVERNESS

Little Miles.

MRS GROSE

Miles!

GOVERNESS

What can it mean - never go back?

MRS GROSE

Never?

GOVERNESS

Never! O, but for that he must be bad!

MRS GROSE

Him bad?

GOVERNESS

An injury to his friends -

MRS GROSE

Him an injury -I won't believe it!

GOVERNESS

Tell me, Mrs Grose, have you ever known Miles
to be bad?

MRS GROSE

A boy is no boy for me if he is never wild.
But bad, no! No!

GOVERNESS

I cannot think him
really bad, not Miles
Never!

*The children are seen at the window, quietly playing
together.*

FLORA and MILES

Lavender's blue, diddle, diddle,
Lavender's green,
When I am King, diddle, diddle,
You shall be Queen.

Call up your men, diddle, diddle,
Set them to work,
Some to the plough, diddle, diddle,
Some to the cart.

Some to make hay, diddle, diddle,
Some to cut corn,
While you and I, diddle diddle-

GOVERNESS and MRS GROSE

See how sweetly he plays,
and with how gentle a look
he turns to his sister.
Yes ! The child is an ange!
It is nonsense-never a word of truth.
It is all a wicked lie.

MRS GROSE

What shall you do then?

GOVERNESS

I shall do nothing.

MRS GROSE

And what shall you say to him?

GOVERNESS

I shall say nothing.

MRS GROSE

Bravo! And I'll stand by you.
O Miss, may I take the liberty ?

Mrs Grose kisses her. The scene fades.

5 VARIATION III

SCENE IV - The Tower

*The lights fade in again on the house. The tower is
now visible. It is evening, sweet summer. Enter the
Governess strolling.*

GOVERNESS

How beautiful it is.
Each day it seems more beautiful to me.
And my darling children enchant me more
and more.
My first foolish fears are all vanished now,
are all banished now -
those fluttering fears when I could not forget
the letter -
when I heard a far off cry in the night and once a
faint footstep passed my door.
Only one thing I wish, that I could see him -
and that he could see how well I do his bidding.

The birds fly home to these great trees,
I too am at home.
Alone, tranquil, serene.

Quint becomes visible on the tower

GOVERNESS
Ha ! 'Tis he!

Quint looks steadily at her, then turns and vanishes.

No! No! Who is it? Who? Who can it be?
Some servant - no! I know them all.
Who is it, who? Who can it be?
Some curious stranger?
But how did he get in?
Who is it, who?
Some fearful madman locked away there?
Adventurer? Intruder?
Who is it, who?
Who can it be?
Who?

The scene fades

6 VARIATION IV

SCENE V - The Window

*The lights fade in on the interior of the hall at Bly with
a window. Flora and Miles ride in on a Hobby Horse.*

MILES and FLORA
Tom, Tom, the piper's son
Stole a pig and away he run.
Pig was eat and Tom was beat,
Tom ran howling down the street.

MILES
Now I'll steal the pig! I'll steal the pig!

FLORA
Go on then, go on!

MILES and FLORA
Tom, Tom, the piper's son!
Stole a pig and away he run -

MILES
Now chase me! Chase me!

FLORA
I'll catch you.

MILES and FLORA
Pig was eat and Tom was beat,
Tom ran howling down the street.

FLORA
Let's do it again! Let's do it again!

GOVERNESS [*off*]
Children! Are you ready? Run along then ...

MILES and FLORA
Tom, Tom, the piper's son ...

They ride out as the Governess comes in.

GOVERNESS
I'll follow.

MILES and FLORA [*off*]
Stole a pig and away he run. (Etc.)

The Governess looks about for a moment, picks up a pair of gloves and is about to go out when she looks up and sees Quint appear suddenly in the window. They gaze at each other. He disappears. She runs out and looks through the window, as Quint had done. Mrs Grose enters, as the Governess rushes back into the room.

MRS GROSE

Ah! My dear! You look so white and queer.
What's happened?

GOVERNESS

I have been frighten'd.

MRS. GROSE

What was it?

GOVERNESS

A man looked through the window, a strange man.
But I saw him before, on the tower.

MRS GROSE

No one from the village?

GOVERNESS

No.

MRS GROSE

A gentleman then?

GOVERNESS

No! Indeed no!

MRS GROSE

What was he like?

GOVERNESS

His hair was red, close-curling, a long, pale face,
small eyes.

His look was sharp, fixed and strange.

He was tall, clean-shaven, yes, even handsome.

But a horror!

MRS GROSE

Quint ! Peter Quint

Dear God, is there no end to his dreadful ways?

GOVERNESS

Peter Quint - who is that

Tell me, Mrs Grose! Do you know him, then?

MRS GROSE

Dear God!

She weeps.

GOVERNESS

Mrs Grose, what has happened here, in this house?

MRS GROSE

Quint, Peter Quint, the master's valet.

Left here in charge.

It was not for me to say, Miss,

no indeed, I had only to see to the house.

But I saw things elsewhere I did not like.

When Quint was free with everyone,

with little Master Miles!

GOVERNESS

Miles?

MRS GROSE

Hours they spent together.

Yes, Miss. He made free with her too,

with lovely Miss Jessel, governess to those pets,
those angels, those innocent babes,
and she a lady, so far above him.
Dear God! Is there no end!
But he had ways to twist them round
his little finger.
He liked them pretty, I can tell you, Miss -
and he had his will, morning and night.

GOVERNESS
But why did you not tell your master?
Write to him?
Send for him to come?

MRS GROSE
I dursn't. He never liked worries.
'Twas not my place. They were not in my charge.
Quint was too clever.
I feared him - feared what he could do.
No, Mr. Quint, I did not like your ways!
And then she went. She couldn't stay, not then.
She went away to die.

GOVERNESS
To die? And Quint?

MRS GROSE
He died too.

GOVERNESS
Died?

MRS GROSE
Fell on the icy road - struck his head,
lay there till morning, dead!
Dear God, is there no end to his dreadful ways?

GOVERNESS
I know nothing of these things.
Is this sheltered place the wicked world where
things unspoken of can be?

MRS GROSE
Dear God!

GOVERNESS
Only this much I know;
things have been done here that are not good,
and have left a taste behind them.
That man, impudent, spoiled, depraved.
Mrs Grose, I am afraid, not for me, for Miles.
He came to look for Miles,
I'm sure of that, and he will come again.

MRS GROSE
I don't understand.

GOVERNESS
But I see it now, I must protect the children,
I must guard their quiet, and their guardian's too.
See what I see, know what I know,
that they may see and know nothing.

MRS GROSE
Lord, Miss!
Don't understand a word of what you say!
But I'll stand by you. Lord, Miss, indeed I will.

The scene fades

7 VARIATION V

SCENE VI - The Lesson

The lights fade in on the Schoolroom. The Governess is hearing Miles's Latin lesson. Flora is "helping".

MILES

Many nouns in *is* we find
To the masculine are assigned:
Amnis, axis, caulis, collis,
Clunis, crinis, fascis, follis,
Fustis, ignis, orbis, ensis,
Panis, piscis, postis, mensis,
Torrus, unguis and canalis,
Vectis, vermis, and natalis,
Sanguis, pulvis, cucumis,
Lapis, casses, manes, glis.
Many nouns in *is* we find
To the masculine are assigned:

GOVERNESS

That's good, Miles, you've learned that well!
Now say for me-

FLORA

Can't we stop now?
Let's do history! Boadicea
on her chariot ! Look at me!

GOVERNESS

Don't tease, dear! We must do Miles's Latin.
Come now! What else do you remember?
Now think.

MILES

Malo, I would rather be
Malo, in an apple-tree
Malo, than a naughty boy
Malo, in adversity.

GOVERNESS

Why, Miles, what a funny song!
Did I teach you that?

MILES

No, I found it. I like it. Do you?

The scene fades.

Malo, Malo, Malo.

B VARIATION VI

SCENE VII - The Lake

*The lights fade in on the lake in the park. The
Governess and Flora wander in (the Governess with a
book, Flora with a doll).*

FLORA

O rivers and seas and lakes!
Is this lake in my book?

GOVERNESS

No dear, it's far too small.

FLORA

Small? It's huge! It's a great wide sea!

GOVERNESS

Then you must name it.
Come Flora, what seas do you know ?

FLORA

Adriatic and Aegean
Baltic, Bosnian and the Caspian,
Black, and Red and White and Yellow.

Medi-medi-terra-anean.

And... and... and... the Dead Sea!

GOVERNESS

And this one?

FLORA

Is the Dead Sea...

How can a sea be dead?

GOVERNESS

They call it dead because nothing can live in it.

FLORA

Then I wouldn't go in it, and neither would Miles.

*They settle down, Flora with her doll on the ground,
the Governess on a bench, with her book.*

FLORA

Go to sleep, my dolly dear. Go to sleep!

GOVERNESS

Sing to her dear, dolly must sleep wherever you
choose.

FLORA

Dolly must sleep wherever I choose.

Today by the dead salt sea

Tomorrow her waxen lids may close

On the plains of Muscovy.

And now like a Queen of the East she lies,

With a Turk to guard her bed,

But next, when her short-lived daylight dies,

She's a shepherdess instead.

But sleep, dear Dolly, O sleep and when

You are lost in your journeying dream

The sea may change to a palace again,

For nothing shall stay the same ...

That's right, my darling.

How good you are.

Go to sleep.

*She goes on rustling and patting the doll, pulling the
coverlet on, arranging reeds over her head ... she
turns round deliberately to face the audience as Miss
Jessel appears at the other side of the lake. The
Governess looks up from her reading and sees Miss
Jessel, who disappears.*

GOVERNESS

Flora! Come along!

We must go now, go, and find Miles.

MILES

[shouting, off]

Hullo! Where are you, you two ?

GOVERNESS

There he is! Go to him! Go to him!

MILES *[off]*

Hullo!

Flora runs out.

GOVERNESS

Miss Jessel ! It was Miss Jessel!

She returns too - she too - she too -

And Flora saw, I know she saw, and said nothing!

They are lost! Lost!

I neither save nor shield them.

I keep nothing from them.

Oh I am useless, useless. What can I do?

It is far worse than I dreamed.

They are lost ! Lost ! Lost!

The scene fades.

9 VARIATION VII

SCENE VIII - At Night

QUINT [*unseen*]
Miles! Miles! Miles!

The lights fade in on the front of the house and the tower. Quint is on the tower. Miles in the garden below him, in his night things.

MILES
I'm here ... O I'm here!

QUINT
I am all things strange and bold,
The riderless horse,
snorting and stamping on the hard sea sand,
The hero-highwayman plundering the land.
I am King Midas with gold in his hand.

MILES
Gold, O yes, gold!

QUINT
I am the smooth world's double face,
Mercury's heels feathered with mischief
and a God's deceit.
The brittle blandishment of counterfeit.
In me secrets and half-formed desires meet.

MILES
Secrets, O secrets!

QUINT
I am the hidden life that stirs
When the candle is out;
Upstairs and down, the footsteps barely heard.

The unknown gesture, and the soft,
persistent word,
The long sighing flight of the night-winged bird.

MILES
Bird!

QUINT
Miles!

MILES
I'm listening.

QUINT
Miles!

MILES
I'm here!

QUINT
Miles!

MISS JESSEL
[*unseen*]
Flora! Flora! Come!

QUINT
Miles!

The lights come up on Flora at the window and Miss Jessel by the lake.

FLORA
I'm here, O I'm here

MISS JESSEL
Come!

MILES

I'm listening, I'm here!

QUINT

Miles!

MISS JESSEL

Their dreams and ours
can never be one,
They will forsake us.
O come to me! Come!

FLORA

Tell me, what shall I see there?

QUINT [*to Miles*]

What goes on in your head, what questions?
Ask, for I answer all.

MISS JESSEL

All those we have wept for together;
Beauty forsaken in the beast's demesne,
The little mermaid weeping on the sill,
Gerda and Psyche seeking their loves again,
Pandora, with her dreadful box, as well.

QUINT

[*to Miles*]

What goes on in your dreams?
Keep silent! I know, and answer that too.

MISS JESSEL

That knowledge and ours
can never be one.
They will despise us.
O come to me, come!

QUINT and MISS JESSEL

On the paths, in the woods, on the banks,
by the walls, in the long, lush grass,
or the winter leaves, fallen leaves, I wait.

On the paths, in the woods, on the banks,
by the walls, in the long, lush grass,
or the winter leaves, I shall be there,
you must not fail.

GOVERNESS [*approaching*]

Miles! Where are you?

MRS GROSE

[*approaching*]

Flora! Are you there?

MISS JESSEL

Flora! Come to me!

FLORA

Yes! I shall be there ...

MILES

I shall never fail ...

QUINT

Come! Miles!

The Governess appears in the porch, Mrs Grose at the window. Quint and Miss Jessel disappear. The Governess runs to Miles.

GOVERNESS

Mrs Grose! Go to Flora!

MRS GROSE

Why whatever's going on?
Miss Flora out of bed!

GOVERNESS

Miles!
What are you doing here?

Mrs Grose takes Flora away from the window.

MILES

You see, I am bad, I am bad, aren't I?

*Miles goes into the house followed by the Governess,
as the lights fade.*

CURTAIN

CD 2

ACT II

I VARIATION VIII

SCENE I - Colloquy and Soliloquy

*The lights fade in on Quint and Miss Jessel. The scene
is undefined.*

MISS JESSEL

Why did you call me from my school-room
dreams?

QUINT

I call? Not I! You heard the terrible sound of the
wild swan's wings.

MISS JESSEL

Cruel! Why did you beckon me to your side?

QUINT

I beckon? No, not I! Your beating heart to your
own passions lied.

MISS JESSEL

Betrayer! Where were you when in the abyss
I fell?

QUINT

Betrayer? No, not I! I waited for the sound of my
own last bell.

MISS JESSEL

And now what do you seek?

QUINT

I seek a friend.

MISS JESSEL

She is here!

QUINT

No! self-deceiver.

MISS JESSEL

Ah! Quint, Quint, do you forget?

QUINT

I seek a friend,
Obedient to follow where I lead,
Slick as a juggler's mate to catch my thought,
Proud, curious, agile, he shall feed
My mounting power.
Then to his bright subservience I'll expound
The desperate passions of a haunted heart,
And in that hour
"The ceremony of innocence is drowned".

MISS JESSEL

I too must have a soul to share my woe.
Despised, betrayed, unwanted she must go
For ever to my joyless spirit bound.
“The ceremony of innocence is drowned”.

The ghosts come together.

QUINT and MISS JESSEL

Day by day the bars we break,
Break the love that laps them round,
Cheat the careful watching eyes,
“The ceremony of innocence is drowned”,
“The ceremony of innocence is drowned”.

*The light fades out on Quint and
Miss Jessel and fade in on the Governess.*

GOVERNESS

Lost in my labyrinth I see no truth,
only the foggy walls of evil press upon me.
Lost in my labyrinth I see no truth.
O innocence, you have corrupted me.
Which way shall I turn?
I know nothing of evil, yet I feel it,
I fear it, worse imagine it.
Lost in my labyrinth, which way shall I turn?

The lights fade.

2 VARIATION IX

SCENE II - The Bells

*The lights fade in on the churchyard with a table
tomb and indications of a church.*

MILES and FLORA
[chanting off]

O sing unto them a new song:
let the congregation praise him.
O ye works and days:
bless ye the Lord.

They walk in like choir boys.

O ye rivers and seas and lakes:
bless ye the Lord.
O amnis, axis, caulis, collis,
clunius, crinis, fascis, follis:
bless ye the Lord.
Praise him and magnify him for ever!

*The children settle themselves on the tomb as the
Governess and Mrs Grose enter.*

MRS GROSE

O Miss, a bright morning to be sure.

GOVERNESS

Yes.

MILES and FLORA

O ye tombstones and trees: praise him.

MRS GROSE

Bright as the Sunday morning bells,
how I love the sound.

GOVERNESS

Yes.

MILES and FLORA

O ye bells and towers: praise him.

MRS GROSE

And the dear children,

how sweet they are together.

GOVERNESS

Yes.

MILES and FLORA

O ye paths and woods: praise him.

O ye frosts and fallen leaves: praise him.

O ye dragons and snakes, worms and feathered
fowl:

rejoice in the Lord.

MRS GROSE

Come, Miss, don't worry.

It will pass I'm sure.

They're so happy with you.

You're so good to them.

We all love you, Miss.

MILES and FLORA

O Mrs Grose, bless ye the Lord:
may she never be confounded.

GOVERNESS

Dear good Mrs Grose,
they are not playing,
they are talking horrors.

MRS GROSE

Oh! Never!

GOVERNESS

Why are they so charming?
Why so unnaturally good?
I tell you they are not with us,
but with the others.

MRS GROSE

With Quint and that woman?

GOVERNESS

With Quint and that woman.

MRS GROSE

But what could they do?

GOVERNESS

Do! They could destroy them.

MRS GROSE

Miss! You must write to their uncle.

GOVERNESS

That his house is poisoned,
the children mad - or that I am?
I was charged not to worry him.

MRS GROSE

Yes. He does hate worry.

GOVERNESS

I shall never write to him.
Can you not feel them round about you?
They are here, there, everywhere,
and the children are with them,
they are not with us.

MRS GROSE

Come, Miss, don't worry. It will pass I'm sure.
They're so happy with you,
you're so good to them.
We all love you so.
Never you mind, we'll be all right, you'll see.

MILES and FLORA

O ye paths and woods: bless ye the Lord.

O ye walls and towers: bless ye the Lord.

O ye moon and stars, windows and lakes:

Praise him and magnify him for ever.

MRS GROSE

Come, Miss! It is time we went in.

Come to church, my dear, it will do you good.

Flora! Miles! Come along dears.

Mrs Grose takes the children off towards the church. She goes in with Flora. Miles hangs back and then comes up to the Governess.

MILES

Do you like the bells? I do!

They're not half finished yet.

GOVERNESS

No.

MILES

Then we can talk and you can tell me when

I'm going back to school.

GOVERNESS

Are you not happy here?

MILES

I'm growing up, you know. I want my own kind.

GOVERNESS

Yes, you're growing up.

MILES

So much I want to do, so much I might do ...

GOVERNESS

But I trust you, Miles.

MILES

You trust me, my dear, but you think and think...
of us, and of the others.

Does my uncle think what you think?

Miles goes off into the church.

MRS GROSE, FLORA and MILES

[from the church]

Praise him and magnify him for ever!

GOVERNESS

It was a challenge!

He knows what I know, and dares me to act.

But who would believe my story?

Mrs Grose? No - she's no good. She has doubts.

I am alone, alone.

I must go away now, while they are at church;

away from those false little lovely eyes;

away from my fears, away from the horrors;

away from this poisoned place; away, away!

The lights fade as she runs away.

3 VARIATION X

SCENE III - Miss Jessel

The lights fade in on the school-room. The Governess enters immediately. Miss Jessel is sitting at the desk.

GOVERNESS

She is here! Here, in my own room!

MISS JESSEL

Here my tragedy began, here revenge begins.

GOVERNESS

Nearer and nearer she comes,
from the lake, from the stair.

MISS JESSEL

Ah, here I suffered, here I must find my peace.

GOVERNESS

From the stair, from the passage.

MISS JESSEL

Peace did I say? Not peace,
but the fierce imparting of my woe.

GOVERNESS

From the passage, into the very heart of my
kingdom.

MISS JESSEL

I shall come closer, closer, and more often.

GOVERNESS

There she sheds her ghastly influence.
She shall not!
She shall not! I won't bear it!

MISS JESSEL

So I shall be waiting, waiting,
hov'ring ready for the child.

The Governess braces herself to speak directly to her.

GOVERNESS

Why are you here?

MISS JESSEL [*rising*]

Alas! Alas!

GOVERNESS

It is mine, mine, the desk.

MISS JESSEL

Alas! Alas!

GOVERNESS

They are mine, mine, the children.
I will never abandon them.

MISS JESSEL

Alas alas, I cannot rest.
I am weary and I cannot rest.

GOVERNESS

Begone! Begone! You horrible, terrible woman!

*Miss Jessel disappears. The Governess sinks down
in her place.*

I can't go - I can't,
but I can no longer support it alone.
I must write to him, write to him now.

*She goes to the desk and writes, and then reads what
she has written.*

GOVERNESS [*reading*]

"Sir - dear Sir - my dear Sir
I have not forgotten your charge of silence,
but there are things that you must know,
and I must see you,
must see and tell you, tell you at once.
Forgive me."
That is all.

The scene fades.

4 VARIATION XI

SCENE IV. The Bedroom

The lights fade in on Miles, sitting restlessly on the edge of his bed with his jacket and shoes off. The room is lit by a candle.

MILES

Malo, Malo than a naughty boy
Malo in...

The Governess is seen approaching the room.

I say, what are you waiting for?

She comes in.

GOVERNESS

Why Miles, not yet in bed? Not even undressed.

MILES

O I've been sitting, sitting and thinking.

GOVERNESS

Thinking? Of what were you thinking?

MILES

Of this queer life, the life we've been living.

GOVERNESS

What do you mean by that? What life?

MILES

My dear, you know. You're always watching.

GOVERNESS

I don't know, Miles, for you've never told me,
you've told me nothing,

nothing of what happened before I came.
I thought till today that you were quite happy.

MILES

I am. I'm always thinking, thinking.

GOVERNESS

Miles, I've just written to your guardian.

MILES

What a lot you'll have to tell him.

GOVERNESS

So will you, Miles.

Miles changes his position, but does not answer.

Miles - Dear little Miles,
is there nothing you want to tell me?

Miles shifts again.

QUINT [unseen]

Miles - are you listening?

GOVERNESS

Miles, what happened at school?
What happened here?

Miles turns away from her.

QUINT

[unseen]
Miles - I am here.

GOVERNESS

Miles, if you knew how I want to help you,
how I want you to help me save you.

QUINT [*unseen*]

Miles - I'm waiting, I'm waiting, waiting, Miles.

Miles shrieks, and the candle goes out.

GOVERNESS

O what is it? What is it? Why, the candle's out!

MILES

'Twas I who blew it, who blew it, dear!

The scene fades.

5 VARIATION XII

During this variation the silhouette of Quint may be seen.

QUINT

So! She has written.
What has she written?
What has she written?
What has she written?

She has told all she knows.
What does she know?
What does she know?
What does she know?

It is there on the desk,
there on the desk.
Easy to take,
easy to take,
easy to take!

SCENE V - Quint.

Miles is seen hesitating in his room.

QUINT

Take it!
Take it!
Take it!

Miles creeps across the stage to the school-room desk.

QUINT

Take it!
Take it!
Take it!

*Miles takes the letter back again to his bedroom.
The lights fade.*

6 VARIATION XIII

SCENE VI - The Piano

Miles is seen sitting at the piano, playing. The Governess and Mrs Grose are hovering about, listening. Flora is sitting on the floor, playing at cat's cradle.

GOVERNESS and MRS GROSE
O what a clever boy;
why, he must have practised very hard.

MRS GROSE
I never knew a little boy so good.

GOVERNESS
Ah yes, there is no mistake,
he is clever, they both are.

MRS GROSE

They've come on wonderfully
well with you, Miss.

GOVERNESS

My dear, with such children anything is possible.

She takes Mrs Grose aside and whispers.

I've done it! I've written it!
It's ready for the post.

MRS GROSE

That's right, Miss. I'm sure that's right.

GOVERNESS

[*aloud to Miles*]

Go on, dear.

Mrs Grose is enjoying it.
We're all enjoying it.

GOVERNESS and MRS GROSE

O what a clever boy!
I never knew a little boy so good.

*The Governess stays by the piano, hanging over Miles.
He finishes his first piece and turns the pages for the
second.*

MRS GROSE

And Miss Flora, playing at cat's cradle.
There's a nimble-fingered little girl.

She settles down near Flora.

MRS GROSE and FLORA

Cradles for cats
Are string and air.

If you let go

There's nothing there.
But if we are neat
And nimble and clever
Pussy-cat's cradle will
Go on for ever.

*During this conversation Miles begins showing off at
the piano.*

FLORA

Mrs Grose, are you tired?

MRS GROSE

Well, my head do keep nodding.
It's this warm room.

FLORA

Shut your eyes then and you shall have a cradle ...

GOVERNESS

Ah, Miles! Miles!

FLORA

... a cradle, Mrs Grose's cradle!

MRS GROSE

And Master Miles's playing.

FLORA

Go to sleep! Go to sleep!

GOVERNESS

Ah, Miles! Miles!

Flora slips away unnoticed.

Ah, Miles! Miles!

She stops him suddenly.

GOVERNESS

Flora! Flora! Mrs Grose!
Wake up! She is gone!

MRS GROSE

What? Who, Miss?

GOVERNESS

Flora's gone, gone out to her.
Come, we must go and find her!

MRS GROSE

Lord, Miss!
But you'll leave the boy?

GOVERNESS

O I don't mind that now, he's with Quint!
He's found the most divine little way
to keep me quiet while she went.
Come! Come!

They rush off as Miles goes on playing triumphantly.

7 VARIATION XIV

SCENE VII - Flora

*The scene fades in on Flora by the lake, watching.
The Governess and Mrs Grose are heard, calling.*

MRS GROSE

Flora!

GOVERNESS

Flora!

MRS GROSE and GOVERNESS
Flora!

MRS GROSE

There she is!
Fancy running off like that,
and such a long way, too,
without your hat and coat.
You are a naughty girl!
Whatever made you leave us all?

GOVERNESS

And where, my pet, is Miss Jessel?

Miss Jessel appears on the other side of the lake.

GOVERNESS

Ah! She is there!
Look! She is there! [*pointing*]
Look, you little unhappy thing!
Look, Mrs Grose! She is there!

MISS JESSEL

Flora! Flora! Do not fail me!

MRS GROSE

Indeed, Miss, there's nothing there.

GOVERNESS

Only look, dearest woman, don't you see,
now, now!

MISS JESSEL

Nothing shall they know.

MRS GROSE [*to Flora*]

She isn't there, little lady, nobody is there.

GOVERNESS

But look!

FLORA

I can't see anybody, can't see anything,
nobody, nothing, nobody, nothing;
I don't know what you mean.

MRS GROSE

There's nobody there.

MISS JESSEL

We know all things, they know nothing.
Don't betray me. Silence! Silence!

MRS GROSE

She isn't there.
Why poor Miss Jessel's dead and buried,
we know that, love. It's all a mistake.

FLORA

You're cruel, horrible, hateful, nasty.
Why did you come here?
I don't know what you mean.
Take me away!
Take me away!
I don't like her!
I hate her!

GOVERNESS

Me!

MRS GROSE

Yes, it's all a mistake,
and we'll get home as fast as we can.

There, there, dearie,
we'll get home as fast as we can.

GOVERNESS

Yes! Go! Go! Go!

MISS JESSEL

Ah! Flora, Flora, do not fail me. Flora!

FLORA

I can't see anybody, can't see anything,
nobody, nothing.
I don't know what she means.
Cruel, horrible, hateful, nasty, we don't want you!
We don't want you!
Take me away, take me away from her!
Hateful, cruel, nasty, horrible.

*Flora and Mrs Grose go off, comforting one another.
The Governess watches them go, while Miss Jessel
slowly disappears.*

GOVERNESS

Ah! my friend, you have forsaken me!
At last you have forsaken me.
Flora, I have lost you.
She has taught you how to hate me!
Am I then horrible?
No! No! But I have failed, most miserably failed,
and there is no more innocence in me.
And now she hates me! Hates me! Hates me!

The scene fades.

8 VARIATION XV

SCENE VIII - Miles

The lights fade in on the house and grounds. Mrs Grose and Flora appear in the porch, dressed for travelling. Flora has her doll and a little bag. The Governess walks towards them. Flora deliberately turns her back. Mrs Grose comes to meet her.

GOVERNESS

Mrs Grose.

MRS GROSE

O Miss, you were quite right, I must take her away. Such a night as I have spent -

She cries.

No, don't ask me.

What that child has poured out in her dreams - things I never knew nor hope to know, nor dare remember.

GOVERNESS

My dear, I thought I had lost you, thought you couldn't believe me, my dear.

MRS GROSE

I must take her away.

GOVERNESS

Yes, go to their uncle. He knows now that all is not well, he has had my letter.

MRS GROSE

My dear, your letter never went, it wasn't where you put it.

GOVERNESS

Miles?

MRS GROSE

Miles must have taken it.

GOVERNESS

All the same, go, and I shall stay and face what I have to face with the boy.

Mrs Grose goes quickly to Flora and takes her off.

O Miles - I cannot bear to lose you!

You shall be mine, and I shall save you.

Miles saunters on.

MILES

So, my dear, we are alone.

GOVERNESS

Are we alone?

MILES

O, I'm afraid so.

GOVERNESS

Do you mind, do you mind being left alone?

MILES

Do you?

GOVERNESS

Dearest Miles, I love to be with you - what else should I stay for?

MILES

So, my dear, for me you stay?

GOVERNESS

I stay as your friend, I stay as your friend.
Miles, there is nothing I would not do for
you, remember -

MILES

Yes, yes. if I'll do something now for you.

GOVERNESS

- to tell me what it is then you have on your mind.

Miles looks desperately round, but cannot see Quint.

QUINT

[*unseen*]
Miles!

GOVERNESS

I still want you to tell me.

MILES

Now?

GOVERNESS

Yes - it would be best, you know.

QUINT

[*unseen*]
Beware! Beware!

Miles looks about again.

GOVERNESS

What is it, Miles? Do you want to go and play?

MILES

Awfully! I will tell you everything. I will!

QUINT

No!

MILES

But not now.

GOVERNESS

Miles, did you steal my letter?

Quint appears on the tower.

QUINT

Miles! You're mine! Beware of her!

*The Governess sees Quint and pushes Miles around so
that he cannot see him.*

GOVERNESS

Did you? Did you?

MILES

No. Yes. I took it.

GOVERNESS

Why did you take it?

Quint turns away.

MILES

To see what you said about us.

Quint descends the tower.

QUINT

Be silent!

GOVERNESS

Miles, dear little Miles, who is it you see?

Who do you wait for, watch for?

QUINT

Do not betray our secrets!
Beware! Beware of her!

MILES

I don't know what you mean.

GOVERNESS

Who is it, who?
Say - for my sake!

QUINT

Miles, you're mine!

MILES

Is he there, is he there?

GOVERNESS

Is who there, Miles? Say it!

QUINT

Don't betray us, Miles!

MILES

Nobody, nothing.

GOVERNESS

Who? Who? Who made you take the letter?
Who do you wait for, watch for?
Only say the name and he will go for ever,
for ever.

QUINT

On the banks, in the woods, remember Quint!
At the window, on the tower,
when the candle is out,

Remember Quint!

He leads, he watches, he waits, he waits.

MILES

Peter Quint, you devil!

The boy runs into the Governess's arms.

GOVERNESS

Ah, Miles, you are saved, now all will be well.
Together we have destroyed him.

QUINT

Ah Miles, we have failed.
Now I must go. Farewell! Farewell, Miles!
Farewell!

GOVERNESS

No, what is it, what is it?
Miles, speak to me, speak to me!
Why don't you answer?
Miles, Miles, Miles!

She realises the boy is dead and lays him down on the ground.

Ah! Miles! Malo, Malo! Malo than a naughty boy.
Malo, Malo in adversity.
What have we done between us?
Malo, Malo, Malo, Malo.

CURTAIN

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Based on the novella of the same name by Henry James, Britten's opera *The Turn of the Screw* may be seen as a duel between the forces of good and evil. The story is seen through the eyes of a young woman sent to take charge of two children, Miles and Flora who, although seemingly angelic and perfect in behaviour, are soon shown to have within them elements of precocious evil. Britten's genius for creating vivid musical atmosphere is exercised in full through his evocative orchestration, the 'screw' gradually tightening until its culmination in an intensely dramatic and spine-chilling conclusion.

Benjamin
BRITTEN
(1913-1976)

The Turn of the Screw

The Prologue / Quint	Philip Langridge
The Governess	Felicity Lott
Miles	Sam Pay
Flora	Eileen Hulse
Mrs Grose	Phyllis Cannan
Miss Jessel	Nadine Secunde

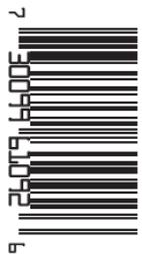
Aldeburgh Festival Ensemble • Stuart Bedford

CD 1	53:06	CD 2	53:17
1 The Prologue	3:07	1-8 Act II	53:17
2-9 Act I	49:59		

Recorded in October, 1993 in The Concert Hall, Snape Maltings, Aldeburgh, UK
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8.660109-10

 Playing Time
 1:46:23


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