RICHARD BARRETT

DARK MATTER

For 19 performers, electronics and installation by Per Inge Bjørlo

Commissioned by Cikada, ELISION and the Deutsche Akademischer Austauschdienst

Dedicated to Iannis Xenakis

First performance, original version: 16 November 2001, Powerhouse Theatre, Brisbane
Revised and completed version 14 March 2003, Haus der Berliner Festspiele (Maerzmusik)
I am he who came into being in the form of Khepera, I became the creator of what came into being, the creator of all that came into being; after my coming into being, many were the things which came into being, emanating from my mouth. No heavens existed, no earth existed, no plants or creeping things existed in that place; I raised them out of the primeval waters, from a state of inactivity. No place wherein to stand could I find. I worked a charm upon my heart. I laid a foundation in Truth and constructed every attribute. I was alone, for I had not yet spat in the form of Shu, nor had I emitted moisture in the form of Tefnut, nor existed another who worked with me. I laid a foundation by means of my own will, And there came into being the multitudes of things which came into being of the things which came into being from out of the things which came into being by births, from out of the things which came into being by their births. I, even I, had union with my clenched hand, I joined myself in an embrace with my shadow, I poured my own seed into my mouth, I spat in the form of Shu, I emitted moisture in the form of Tefnut. Saith my father Nu, "They weaken my eye in their wake, Since for aeons they proceeded from me after I became three gods from one, that is, from out of myself, after I came into being in this earth. Shu and Tefnut were therefore raised up in the inert waters wherein they were, and they brought my eye to me in their train. After therefore I had united my members I wept over them, and there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their seasons. And there came into being men and women from the tears which came forth from my eye, and it raged against me after it came and found that I had made another in its place. I endowed it with the power which I had made. Having approached therefore its place in my face, afterwards therefore it rules this earth in its entirety. the seasons fall upon their plants; I endowed it with what it had taken possession of. I came forth in the form of the plants, all of the creeping things, and all of creation. Shu and Tefnut gave birth to [Seb and] Nut. Seb and Nut gave birth to Osiris, Horus-Khent-an-maa, Set, Isis, Nephthys from the womb, one after another they give birth and multiply in this earth.
Translations and translation adapted from E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (New York: Dover, 1969; originally published in 1904). The inclusion of vowels in transliterations of ancient Egyptian is hardly more than a convenience, allowing the words to be vocalised by scholars in the absence of any notation of vowels in the hieroglyphs, besides which the pronunciation is unlikely to have remained the same over 3,000 years, that is, more than twice the time-interval between Anglo-Saxon and modern English. The transliteration augments Budge’s approximations with the results of some more recent research, and some musically-motivated “inaccuracies” of my own: it would certainly mean nothing to an ancient Egyptian: but compare the Shomyo chanting by Japanese Buddhist monks, which gives Japanese phonetic values to the Chinese characters in the sacred texts, ending up meaningless in either language. Egyptologists concentrate on the contentious meanings of words (and Budge’s “literal” translation is itself impenetrable enough in places) rather than their pronunciation – for who would want to attempt to speak (let alone sing) a language so laden with obscurity and so long dead?

2/3 transmission I/ khasma
Hesiod, *Theogony* 736-745

ένθα δὲ γῆς δυοφερής καὶ Ταρτάρου ἦροεντος
πόντου τ’ ἀτρυγέτοι καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἄστερόεντος
ἐξείπος πάντων πηγαὶ καὶ πειρὰτ’ ἔσοιν
ἀργαλῆ’ εὐρώντα, τά τε στυγεύσαι θεοὶ περ,
χάσμα μέγ’, οὐδὲ καὶ πάντα τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐναιαυτὸν
ὀδας ἱκοτ’, εἰ πρῶτα πυλέων ἐντοσθε γένοιτο.

άλλα κεν ἐνθά καὶ ἐνθά φέροι πρὸ θέουλα θευλῆς
ἀργαλέν’ δείνων δὲ καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ
τοῦτο τέρας ’’Νυκτός δ’ ἐρεβεννής οἰκία δεινά
ἔσπηκεν νεφέλης κεκαλυμμένα κυανέσιν.

ent’a de ges dno̓p’eres tartar ε.ero.entes
pointu tatrtygetoi.o kai uranu astero.entes
hekse.es panton pegai kai perate.asin
argaleu.enta ta te styge.usi t’e.oi per
k’aزمeg ude ke panta telesp’oron es eni.auton
udas hikoite prata pyle.an entost’e genioto
ala ken ent’a kai ent’a p’eroi pro t’v.eila t’v.eles
argale.e denon de kai at’anatosisi t’e.oisi
tuto teras nyktois derbenes oikia dena
hesteken nep’eiles kekalymena kvane.eis

There of murky earth and misty Tartarus and barren sea and starry sky, of all these things are the springs in a row
and the grievous, dank limits which even the gods detest; a great gulf, nor would one reach the floor for the whole
length of a fulfilling year, if one were once within the gates. But hither and thither storm on grievous storm would
carry on; dreadful even for immortal gods is this portent; and the dreadful halls of gloomy Night stand covered with
blue-black clouds.

Translations of this and the following four texts used in *khasma* are adapted from Kirk, Raven and Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*. Phonetic transliteralations by RB, based on current hypotheses (considerably more secure than in the case of ancient Egyptian).

**Hippolytos, Ref 1, 13, 2-3 (on Demokritos and Leukippos)**

(... ἀπείροις δ’ εἰναι κόσμους καὶ μεγέθει
diaφέροντας,
ἐν τοι τῇ μῇ ἐνιαὶ ἤλιον μηδὲ σελήνην,
ἐν τοι τῇ μείζῳ τῶν παρ’ ἤμιν καὶ ἐν τοι τῇ πλείων.
εἰναὶ δὲ τῶν κόσμων ἄνιοα τὰ διαστήματα καὶ τῇ μὲν
πλείως,
τῇ δὲ ἐλάττως, καὶ τοὺς μὲν αὐξάσθαι, τοὺς δὲ
ακμάζειν,
τοὺς δὲ φθεινειν, καὶ τῇ μὲν γίνεσθαι, τῇ δ’ ἐκλέπειν.
φθείρεσθαι δὲ αὐτοὺς ὑπ’ ἀλλήλων προσπίπτοντας,

aperus denai kozmus kai meget’h e diap’h erontas
en tisi de me enai helion mede selenen
en tisi de mezda tan par hamin kai en tisi ple.na
enai de tan kozman anisa ta diastemata kai tei men
ple.us
tei de elatos kai tus men auksest’h ai tus de akmadzen
tus de p’h’in enai kai tei men ginest’h ai tei dekepen
p’h’erest’h ai de autus hypalcIan prospiptontas.

...and there are innumerable worlds, which differ in size. In some worlds there is no sun and moon, in others they are
larger than in our world, and in others more numerous. The intervals between the worlds are unequal; in some parts
here are more worlds, in others fewer; some are increasing, some at their height, some decreasing; in some parts
they are arising, in others failing. They are destroyed by collision with one another.

This and the following two texts are originally in prose, here divided into lines according to phrasing and punctuation.
Anaxagoras, from fr.12

Mind controlled the whole rotation, so that it began to rotate in the beginning. And it began to rotate first from a small area, but now it rotates over a wider and will rotate over a wider area still.

Melissos, fr.2

Since then, it did not come to be, but is, it always and always will be, and it has no beginning nor end but is unlimited. For if it had come to be, it would have a beginning (for it would have begun coming into being at some time) and an end (for it would have ended coming into being at some time). But since it neither began nor ended, it always was and always will be and it has no beginning nor end; for what is not entire cannot be always.

Herakleitos, fr.12 & 91

Upon those that step into the same rivers different and different waters flow ... They scatter and ... gather ... come together and flow away ... approach and depart.

(fragmented in the original)
I invoke you, blessed one, broad-winged Dream, messenger of that which is to come, greatest oracle to mortals: in silence you approach during sweet sleep, whispering to mortal souls you awaken their minds, and secretly send down the divine decrees into their slumber. Serenely you reveal the future to serene souls, always kind to those who are honourable, sacred, and pure, attending all holy observance, inspiring the dreams of mystics, with pleasing hope and bliss, your visions reveal how best to mitigate the sorrows of destiny, what rites shall please the gods, and the means to appease their anger. Always tranquil is the death of a pious soul, whose life your dreams admonish and defend; but from the wicked you turn away, adverse to blessing the unworthy, your form unseen, the spirit of distress; finding no means to stop approaching evil, they tremble with fear and are blind to the future. Now, blessed one, I pray to you to clarify for us the message of the gods.

Translation RB.

5 De vita coelitus comparanda
Orphic Hymn no.86, to Oneiros

7 Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae
Lucretius, De rerum natura, 1.1102-1110

Translation RB.
Car enfin qu’est-ce que l’homme dans la nature? Un néant à l’égard de l’infini, un tout à l’égard du néant, un milieu entre rien et tout. Infiniment éloigné de comprendre les extrêmes, la fin des choses et leur principe sont pour lui invinciblement cachés dans un secret impénétrable, également incapable de voir le néant d’où il est tiré, et l’infini où il est englouti.

For, after all, what is man in nature? A nothing in comparison with the infinite, an absolute in comparison with nothing, a central point between nothing and all. Infinitely far from understanding these extremes, the end of things and their beginning are hopelessly hidden from him in an impenetrable secret. He is equally incapable of seeing the nothingness from which he came, and the infinite in which he is engulfed.

Translation J.M. Cohen. This text forms part of one of the accompanying materials compiled by Iannis Xenakis for his electronic composition La légende d’Eer.

Notes on pronunciation

1. **The Empire of Lights**
   The International Phonetic Alphabet notation of the text uses a few symbols which are not encountered in European languages:
   - ʔ = glottal plosive
   - ʕ = voiced pharyngeal fricative (‘ayn in Arabic, like pronouncing [a] while gargling
   - ʜ = intermediate between [h] and [x]
   - q = like [k] but at back of throat

2/3. **transmission I / khasma**
   Regarding the pronunciation of ancient Greek, here and in succeeding sections: [r] is always an ‘alveolar trill’; [:] in the text of De vita coelitus comparanda indicates a long vowel in the metrical scheme of the text; all paired vowels form diphthongs unless a syllable break, [·], is placed between them. Every symbol on the phonetic translation is clearly pronounced and distinguished.

5. **De vita coelitus comparanda**
   The notated pronunciation is a (musically-motivated) combination of various supposed usages through the history of ancient Greek, since the texts were written in the early Christian period, though long assumed to be much more ancient, especially in the Renaissance, when the philosopher Marsilio Ficino was accustomed to use them as magical incantations, sung to his own improvised accompaniment on the lira da braccio. This fact was obviously a determining factor in the present composition.

From performing notes by RB
Acknowledgements

For their assistance in making the composition of this work possible I should like to thank Frank Baldé, the Samuel Beckett Estate, Ingrid Beirer and the DAAD, Per Inge Bjørlo, Konrad Boehmer, Daryl Buckley and the musicians of Elision, Sten Cranner, Christian Eggen and the musicians of Cikada, Karlheinz Essl, Thorbjørn Tønder Hansen, Folkmar Hein, John James, Murray Kane, Thomas Meadowcroft, Matthias Osterwold and the Berliner Festspiele, Russell Tandy, Zane Trow and the Powerhouse staff, Vilém Wagner and Ute Wassermann.