

DAVID HARSENT

BIOGRAPHY, JAN 2011

David Harsent has published ten full collections of poetry and several limited editions, and has received a number of literary awards, including the Eric Gregory Award, the Geoffrey Faber Award, the Cheltenham Festival Prize, two Arts Council Bursaries and a Society of Authors Travel Fellowship. His most recent collection, *Night* – published in January 2011 – is Poetry Book Society Choice for Spring 2011, and shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize. His previous book, *Legion*, won the Forward Prize for best collection 2005 and was shortlisted for both the Whitbread Award and the T.S. Eliot Prize. His *Selected Poems* was published in June 2007, and was shortlisted for the Griffin International Poetry Prize.

His English versions of poems written under siege in Sarajevo by the Bosnian poet Goran Simić, have been widely praised, and were incorporated by Nigel Osborne into his opera Sarajevo as well as forming the basis for Radio and TV programmes. He is currently working on English versions of poems by Yannis Ritsos.

Harsent has collaborated with composers (most often with Harrison Birtwistle) on commissions from the Royal Opera House, the Proms, The Nash Ensemble, the Prussia Cove Festival, VARA (Holland), BBC Radio and Channel 4 TV. Pieces have been performed at ROH, the Royal Albert Hall (Proms), the Concertgebouw, The Megaron (Athens), the South Bank Centre and Carnegie Hall. *Gawain* and *The Woman and the Hare* have been issued as CDs, and *The Minotaur* as a DVD. Several pieces have been performed on radio and television.

Harsent paid his way in life first by working as a bookseller then, for twelve years, as a publisher, during which time he was Editorial Director at Arrow Books, Andre Deutsch and finally at Severn House, where he also ran his own imprint. Since leaving publishing he has made his living as a freelance writer, while continuing to publish collections of poetry and to write libretti.

Recent works, and work in progress, include *Night*, a new collection of poems (due Jan. 2011); *The Minotaur*, a full-length opera for the ROH with Harrison Birtwistle (premiered April 2008); a novel, *The Wormhole*; a stage play, *Psychodrama* (in development); a “green” opera, *The Hoop of the World*; and the operas *The Corridor* (also with Birtwistle) and *Crime Fiction* (with Huw Watkins), both of which opened in 2010. *Night* is Poetry Book Society Choice for 2010, and shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize.

Harsent is a Visiting Professor at Sheffield Hallam University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.