

DAVID HARSENT

BIOGRAPHY, JAN 2009

David Harsent has published nine full volumes 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, *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 were shortlisted for the Griffin International Poetry Prize.

His English versions of poems written under siege in Sarajevo by the Bosnian poet Goran Simic, 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. 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 by writing crime fiction (novels currently translated into fourteen languages), television scripts and screenplays, while continuing to publish collections of poetry and to write libretti.

Forthcoming work, and work in progress, includes a new collection of poems (in hand); *The Minotaur*, a full-length opera for ROH with Harrison Birtwistle (premiere April 2008); a novel, *The Wormhole*; a stage play, *Psychodrama* (in development); *The Hoop of the World* (a 'green' opera: currently being composed); and three new opera projects (one for Music Theatre Wales, the other two for Aldeburgh).

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