

DOROTHY HEWETT

libretto for
CHRISTINA'S WORLD

ORIGINAL TYPESCRIPT

Dorothy Hewett's Libretto for Christina's World.

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Opera

When the ~~play~~ opens we see, downstage centre, a wheelchair containing the life-size dummy of a crippled middle-aged woman in modern dress. She has her back to the audience. Behind the wheelchair, also with back to audience, stands her son. The husband and daughter face the audience. We see them all only in silhouette. Projected onto the cyclorama is the blowup of the skeletal, burnt-out farmhouse, brooding and shadowy. The air is full of noise, the call of seabirds, wind, surf, a ship's buoy sounding over water.

CHRISTINA: (voice over as young girl, singing)

This is the wide country
I lived in when I was young
the great clouds over it
the hawk in the high sky hung

"
Hung upside down like a metal bird
fixes time in his fatal eye
the mice run circles, ^{the} plovers cry
till I hardly know in that hurtling sky'
which of the three wild things am I
murderer, victim, recorded cry.

THE HUSBAND:

~~HE:~~

The hawk spins round like a weathervane.

CHRISTINA:

The seed spills bitter, the hawk turns slow.
Under the rainbow arch will lie
the girl with the haystack hair awry,
her legs outflung and her brief blood dry
while the bumpkin boy goes whistling by
with gravel-rashed knee and weeping eye.

ALL:

THE SON:

~~HE:~~

DAUGHTER:

And the hawk in the high sky hung.

VOICES OVER:

Christina, Christina, Christina.

Wind, surf, seabirds etc take over the soundtrack, and out of these sounds we begin to distinguish music and human voices — such a medley of sounds it is hard to distinguish the human from the elemental world. Gradually CHRISTINA'S MIDDLE-AGED VOICE emerges clearly on the soundtrack singing.

CHRISTINA: (voice over as middle-aged woman, singing)

Let us go to Mad Fish Bay
by the Black Mountain
where the gannets cry all day
and the kelp washes in.

CHRISTINA: (cont) Where the restless, unending wave
searches along the shore
for the conch shell with the message inside
that ends — I am here,
I have not forgotten.

THE SON: Christina making daisy chains
under Black Mountain.

THE DAUGHTER: Rich man, poor man, beggarman, thief,
grief is love and love is grief.

ALL: (chanting) Albatross, sea-eagle, sandpiper, tern,
gannet and seagull, tide on the turn.
Mullet and blackfish, salmon and whale,
cockles and mussels, put salt on his tail.

SON: Alive, alive-o, alive, alive-o.

FATHER: Cockles and mussels, alive, alive-o.

DAUGHTER: I sell seashells by the sea shore.

ALL: We sell seashells by the sea shore.

HUSBAND: I am the husband, the father,
the silent one.

SON: I am the ~~son~~, SON

~~the shell-shocked soldier, the son,
who never answered her cries.~~

DAUGHTER: I am the daughter,
of that ~~is~~ Christina, so young,
lovely and lost in the foam.

ALL: And we'll never go home to Black Mountain.

THE SON pushes the wheelchair towards the cyclorama. HUSBAND and DAUGHTER move slowly backstage and exit. Farmhouse blow-up fades out. The cyclorama, back-lit, takes on the appearance of a glitter mirror-surface or the surface of the sea. THE VOICES grow more insistent.

VOICES OVER: Christiná, Christina, Christina.

All sound cuts out. CHRISTINA DUMMY is now facing the cyclorama. Clock begins to tick louder and louder, until the sound fills the stage.

CHRISTINA: (voice over as middle-aged woman) ~~sings~~

The clock starts to tick,
and the tide starts to flow.
There's a shimmer and glow
and the girl in the mirror is floating,
home to Black Mountain, home to the house
under the hill.

CHRISTINA DUMMY is pushed off-stage by the SON. VOICES OVER
whisper like the tide:

Christina...

A GIRL appears in front of the cyclorama, as if coming from its
mirror-surface. She is the YOUNG CHRISTINA, dressed in the fashion
of forty years ago, but a romantic, rather timeless costume. She
is hesitant, a dream-figure who moves onto the stage as if born from
a chrysalis. She is hung with daisy chains, and as she moves she
picks off the petals. They drift around her as she sings.

YOUNG CHRISTINA: (sings)

Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor,
rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief.

There are three men in my life
Tom, Dick and Mad Harry.

Tom has hair like new-mown hay
Harry's wits have gone astray
and Dick has nothing at all to say
There are three men in my life.

Dick is a beggar man, Harry is barmy
Tom is the thief who stole my heart
Gulls on the ocean, mice in the granary
The heart bleeds white when the winters start.

The wind starts up and blows like a bellows
Storms in the chimney, rain on the sea
Dick reads books and Harry's wool gathering
Tom will never come home to me.

There are three men in my life
Barmy Harry and silent Dick
Tom the thief who ran far away
Fishing for truth and coming home empty
I live alone overlooking the bay
with Tom, Dick and Mad Harry.

~~Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor,
rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief.~~

ENTER TOM *in fisherman's jersey, trousers tucked into sea-boots. He carries a rifle. There should not be any attempt, except in his costume, to make him look any different to the son.*

CHRISTINA: *(speaking)* Who are you?

TOM: *(speaking)* I'm the boy who works on the farms.

CHRISTINA: I'm the girl who lives in the house on the hill.
(sings) Who are you?

TOM: *(sings)* Tom the ~~sad~~^{bad} boy, Tom the sad boy,
Tom from over the mountain.
Who are you?

CHRISTINA: *(like an echo)* Who are you?
Christina lives with Dick and Mad Harry.

TOM: Christina making daisy chains
under Black Mountain.

They move towards each other, and take hands for a DUET.

DUET: TOM AND CHRISTINA

CHRISTINA: I invented you
one pearly morning
when the dew was on the grass.

TOM: I invented you
one starfish morning
high-tide and gannets calling.

BOTH: I invented you.

CHRISTINA: Tom the hay-carter,
Tom the fish-trapper,
I invented you for me.

TOM: Tom the bad boy,
Tom the sad boy,
Tom from over the mountain.

CHRISTINA: Christina in the old house
with the windy chimney
~~lives with Dick and Mad Harry.~~

TOM: Christina making daisy chains
by Mad Fish Bay.

BOTH: Stay for me there,
Stay for me always,

...stay...

CHRISTINA and TOM *settle down with his head on her lap.*

CHRISTINA: What's it like on the other side of Black Mountain?
I've never been over it. I've never seen the world.

TOM: Well, there's cities and rivers and trains and ships.

CHRISTINA: I've seen the ships sailing by.

TOM: I'll get on one of them ships one of these days and go
I'll go round the world like a whale, blowin' the breath
out of me nostrils. (He laughs)

CHRISTINA: Then take me.

TOM: You wouldn't fit in.

CHRISTINA: Anywhere you'd belong, I'd belong.

TOM: You've got to stay here.

CHRISTINA: Why? It'd go on just the same — Mad Fish Bay and the
Black Mountain.

TOM: And Dick and Harry?

CHRISTINA: A gale could bump the house flat and they'd go on just the
same, reading and gabbling, gabbling and reading till
Doomsday. That's why my mother walked into the
sea. She couldn't bear it any longer. They'd never
notice I'd gone.

TOM: I bet they'd notice alright. They'd be after me with the
shotgun.

CHRISTINA: That's only for foxes.

TOM: And I'd be the fox — after their soft spring chicken.

CHRISTINA (half afraid):
~~Don't - don't. I don't like it - I don't.~~
He chases after her mockingly, growlingly

CHRISTINA (half afraid):
Don't - don't. I don't like it — I don't.
He catches her, kisses her lingeringly.

TOM (a challenge):
Don't you?
He breaks away.

I want to drift out with the tide.

CHRISTINA: Dick wouldn't do anything to you and Harry's
shell-shocked from the last war in France.

TOM: You've got to be here for me when I get back.

CHRISTINA (hesitant):
I don't know. Would you always come back?
Would you?

TOM: Like the peregrine falcon, back to your wrist
in the spring.

They kiss and TOM exits slowly, throwing her kisses. Stage darkens a sea-bird calls piercingly. CHRISTINA RISES and moves towards her chair, taking up her sewing.

CHRISTINA: (SINGING SOFTLY)

Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor,
rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief.

A soft light on stage. DICK ENTERS carrying several books. He silently takes the other chair. A middle-aged man, withdrawn, dressed shabbily and conservatively. They sit reading and sewing quietly. This is a moment of stasis as evening comes down. There is harmony in the domestic picture. ~~The music for this transfixed time should be harmonious and serene.~~ Light slants down from sea and sky and turns the stage into a cathedral-like space. The scene should resemble one of the domestic paintings of the old Dutch masters. When HARRY ENTERS he breaks it. HARRY and TOM should be similar enough to be startling to the audience, but not enough to confuse. Harry should look much older than his prototype. His clothing should be wild and ragged, an old army coat and grey, askew wig. He is carrying a child's pail full of sea shells. Coming to himself, he sits down onstage, laying out his treasures childishly...

HARRY: (CHANTING SOFTLY)

I sell sea shells on the sea shore
I sell sea shells on the sea shore

DICK and CHRISTINA take no notice of him. HARRY begins to sing...

HARRY'S SONG

Three corpses lie in a trench at Loos
hi-ho, hi-ho...
Blood on their breasts and shit ⁱⁿ their trews
hi-ho, hi-ho
I sell sea shells on the sea shore
Shells and shrapnel are howling high
A trench to rot in, a trench to die
Ten feet across and five feet high
hi-ho, hi-ho
I sell sea shells by the sea shore

DICK (reading aloud in a flat voice):

When General Haig commenced his attack on the Somme
60,000 men fell within ten minutes.

HARRY: (muttering rapidly)

Get on then, get on, get on. Come on you, get on.
Get on there, get on, you bastard can't you get on.

HARRY: (*sings*) Get on, get on, to the shrapnel fire
 Get on you dirty swine
 Over the top and strung on the wire
 From asshole to breakfast time

 The poison gas made us start to cough
 Rolls of barbed wire as high as walls
 Our legs blew off and our heads blew off
 So they strung us up by the balls

~~I sell sea shells by the sea shore~~

DICK: (*reading*) There were nearly nine million and a half
 British soldiers in France and Belgium in 1916.

HARRY:
 A shit and a woodbine for breakfast we had
 we was all done in
 and the end of it all me bonny lad
 nobody loses, nobody wins
 ...we was all done in...

DICK: General Petain said: 'You can't fight the Hun
 and the mud at the same time.' (*He shakes with silent
 laughter*)

HARRY: I sell sea shells on the sea shore

CHRISTINA: (*speaking*) He never speaks. He just reads aloud.

HARRY: (*speaking*) He's full of words.

CHRISTINA: I want some words for myself. I want him to speak to *me*.

HARRY: Words choke him, he doesn't dare.

CHRISTINA: You speak to me.

HARRY: Words running over, tumbling, whirling, chaos is life,
 chaos is richness. Dick's pushing the chaos back. He
 lives without hope.

CHRISTINA: (*to herself*) I met a boy by the sea shore, one pearly
 morning. Tom the hay-carter, Tom the fish-trapper.
 Did I invent him because I needed him?

HARRY: To be without hope is an act of murder.

A FOX YELPS, the yelping grows louder...

CHRISTINA: *(sings)*

Red cloud in the moonlight
my fox, my darling
he comes over Black Mountain
and yelps at the moon.

HARRY: *(speaks)* There's something outside.

DICK: *(speaks without looking up)* The wind in the chimney.

CHRISTINA: *(sings)* My wolf in sheep's clothing
when nobody's looking
he crosses the mountain.

HARRY: *(speaks)* I can hear footsteps padding...

CHRISTINA: My fox, my darling
he creeps into the fowlyard
and steals all the chickens...

DICK: *(speaks impatiently)* It's only the wind.

CHRISTINA: He moves like the wind moves
and flattens the grasses...

HARRY: *(shouts, starting up)* It's a fox after the chickens!

HE rushes over, picks up the rifle in the corner and stands guard.

DICK: *(sighing)* When you go there'll be nothing...

CHRISTINA: *(singing & sewing)*

He's biting off chicken heads
there's a squawking and beating
blood drips from his chops
and he grins as he runs...

HARRY: *(speaks)* There isn't a sound. *(He puts up the rifle)*
There's nobody there.

CHRISTINA: *(singing, exultant)*

He's over Black Mountain
like a cloud, like a comet
ruff touched with silver
paws pressing the dew.

DICK: *(speaking)* It's always the same.

CHRISTINA: *(sings, smiles softly)*

My fox... my darling...

HARRY: *(sings)*

There's another war coming over the mountain
I've seen the soldiers in ^{the} town...
conch and cowrie, nautilus, coral...

(He begins to sort his shells back into the bucket)

There's another war coming over the mountain
More good boys gone into the sea

Cockles and mussels, alive, alive-o!

Alive, alive-o, alive, alive-o,

singing cockles and mussels, alive, alive-o!

I sell sea shells on the sea shore.

HE EXITS, chuckling and muttering. The night has come down.
The music picks up the sounds of wind roaring outside, the crash
of the waves. DICK lights the lamp on the little table.

Quietly CHRISTINA folds up her sewing...

CHRISTINA: *(speaks)* Goodnight Father.

There is no reply. She moves downstage quickly and stands as if
waiting. TOM'S VOICE sings softly off...

TOM: *(offstage)* Who goes round my house by night,
only poor young Tom.

(He enters behind her, puts his hands over her eyes, then speaks.)

I've come to say goodbye.

CHRISTINA: *(cries out)* Goodbye?

She swings around. He holds her. SPOKEN DIALOGUE follows...

TOM: I'm off. The town's full of soldiers. I don't want
to get caught in the draft.

CHRISTINA: I'm coming with you.

TOM: You can't come.

CHRISTINA: Why not? Why not?

TOM: I'm goin' tuna fishin', Esperance and the Ninety Mile
Beach, Israelite Bay to Eden. Them great fish leap out
of the sea like unicorn. *(He nuzzles her neck)* Like
you an' me'll leap in the hay tonight.

CHRISTINA: *I don't know. I don't know if it's right.*
Will you come back to me?

TOM: I said — like the peregrine falcon.

They kiss and move off, arms round each other.

TOM: (*sings softly*) Tom, Tom, the devil's son
Stole a heart and away he run.

CHRISTINA: (*sings softly*)
Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,
grief is love and love is grief.

THEY EXIT. DICK is left alone on stage. Wind and sea music
~~and the soundtrack.~~

DICK'S SONG

I was the father who never caught his great fish,
who hugged to himself the ultimate mystery,
I was the husband who wished and wished for love
while my wife walked into the sea.

Rocky and stones and trees cried out of the silence,
everything spoke, everything shouted a lie,
the shrine I made for her was the ultimate swindle
when her death began to die.

My daughter runs in the night to meet a lover,
my mad brother sings by the shore, counting his shells,
I live in an iron mask in the circle of lamplight,
each one of us shut up in separate hell.

Even the clock has a tick to break the silence,
the sea eagle screams on the wind and eerily,
the white owl tears at the feathered flesh of her lover,
but I am buried fathoms deep under the sea,
I am buried fathoms deep under the sea.

He blows out the lamp and sits until darkness slowly covers the
stage. EXITS under cover of music and darkness. Music fades and
all we can hear is the amplified tick of the clock...tick, tick,
tick. The SHIP'S BUOY SOUNDS, then the CLOCK STRIKES SEVERAL TIMES.

CHRISTINA and HARRY enter, move centre dragging a SEA CHEST which
is spotlighted. She kneels, opens the chest, and begins to take out
various articles of clothing. Harry helps her, tossing the clothes
about madly...

CHRISTINA: (*sings*) The tide runs out and the tide runs in,
the mountain's lost in cloud.
My mother once had a wedding ring
and a gown for a funeral shroud.

CHRISTINA: *(her song, cont.)*

He'll come today or he'll come tomorrow,
He'll end my waiting, he'll end my sorrow.

HARRY: *(chants)* I sell sea shells by the sea shore.

During this song CHRISTINA dresses herself up in a wedding veil, HARRY sets a circlet of white flowers on her head, and hands her a withered bouquet of daisies. CHRISTINA promenades around stage with Harry holding her train.

CHRISTINA: Tom, Tom, over the mountain
I can see you lost in the town
Tom, Tom, hurry home quickly
I'm dressed up in my wedding gown
He'll come today or he'll come tomorrow
He'll end my waiting, he'll end my sorrow

HARRY: I sell sea shells on the sea shore.

CHRISTINA: I had a lover whose name was Tom
a golden boy to look upon
I loved him well but he wouldn't stay
so my reward is this wedding day
He'll come today or he'll come tomorrow
He'll end my waiting, he'll end my sorrow

HARRY: I sell sea shells on the sea shore.

CHRISTINA: The tide runs out and the tide runs in
the mountain's lost in cloud
my mother once had a wedding ring
and a gown for a funeral shroud.

HARRY: *(sings)*

Long ago when I was a boy
I used to shout out ship ahoy
Get me a boat and let me float
away from the Black Mountain
It's sweet to go but it's sweeter to stay
for weddings and funerals at Mad Fish Bay
I'll pick up your train and catch your bouquet
under the Black Mountain
I sell sea shells, I sell sea shells
I sell sea shells on the sea shore

During the song HARRY gambols around her like a crazy wedding guest throwing confetti. But now the spell is broken. CHRISTINA moves away to the lamp and lights it. She stares out into the darkness. HARRY, like a disappointed child, sits cross-legged picking the withered bouquet to pieces. CHRISTINA moves across and curls up in the chair. Moonlight floods the stage. There is the sound of CHURCH BELLS tolling far off.

HARRY: (chanting) He loves me, he loves me not, he loves me, he loves me not.

CHRISTINA: (sings) I'll light a lamp in the window tonight
to see you home.
I'll start from my sleep & think I hear you coming
but it's only the wind coming over Black Mountain
~~or a sea eagle cruising the coast of Mad Fish Bay~~

VOICES OVER: (high, unearthly) Christina, Christina...

HARRY: (sings)
Three corpses lie in the trench at Loos
hi-ho, hi-ho
making daisy chains when the dew was on the grass
hi-ho, hi-ho, hi
(The voice dies away like the thin sound of a seabird crying)

CHRISTINA: Outside the sea thuds
the great heart rocking me
and my grief as it rocked us
in each other's arms
and I said listen to the sea
feeling that nothing could part us
that we had in some way come through
but the house is dark and I sit
counting the hours
~~making another song for you~~
you forget my face, I forget yours
truly there is ^{nothing} in the world
~~nothing~~ so strange as love

HARRY: (chanting) Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,
grief is love and love is grief.

CHRISTINA goes back to the chest, takes the lamp with her and places it beside her. She drops the wedding veil and the circlet of flowers inside.

CHRISTINA'S MAD SONG

Spring has come & gone but he hasn't come
 to my wrist like the peregrine falcon
 Summer is over, the neap tide swells
 as I swell, but nobody noticed it
 Only Mad Harry laughed, you're getting fat Christina

HARRY: (*giggling*) You're getting fat Christina.

CHRISTINA *kneels down by the trunk, holding her body as if in pain.*
She resumes her song...

When the time came
 I crouched in the sand dunes
 bearing down, biting my lips
 like an animal
 ; (*Seabird screams*)

I saw the little face
 between my legs
 puckered to cry

*Slowly she turns back to the trunk. She takes out a SHAWL and
 bundles it up into the semblance of a baby. She rocks it against
 her breast. HARRY mimes the rocking with her. There is a wild,
 concerted screaming of GULLS.*

CHRISTINA'S LULLABY

The baby's head was covered in down
 like a nightjar

HARRY: Lulla, lulla, lullaby

CHRISTINA: I wrapped him up and I laid him down
 like a white star
 with a night-light for company
 I sent him out to sea

HARRY: Lulla, lulla, lullaby
 she sent him out to sea

*She lays the bundle on top of the trunk, carefully places the light
 beside it, rises and slowly, mournfully, moves back towards Harry.
 He rises and stands beside her.*

CHRISTINA: The waves lapped soft on the beach that night
 up, up and down

HARRY: Lulla, lulla, lullaby.

CHRISTINA: The little lamp burned with a steady light
up, up and down
As I waved it away from me
it disappeared in the sea

HARRY: Lulla, lulla, lullaby
it disappeared in the sea

HARRY and CHRISTINA *stand solemnly waving, then join hands and circle the stage dancing and chanting together.*

HARRY & CHRISTINA:

We sell sea shells by the sea shore
conch and cowrie, nautilus, coral
cockles and mussels, alive, alive-o.
Alive, alive-o, alive, alive-o,
cockles and mussels, alive, alive-o.

They exit dancing. DICK ENTERS. He sits in his chair and sings...

LAMENT FOR A DROWNED CHILD

Seven days rolled in the autumn tide
the child swung home and rose
in Mad Fish Bay

Crabs at his lips
the blue flesh barnacled
he metamorphosed on the empty beach
come back from there with trailing arm
a fin a down of hair cast in a pool

Seven days a wonder sailors wept
and knelt to see him pass
the currents turned his face towards home
what home, what shore can take him now
not fish or child but beast
magicked from ruin in the pearly deep

Anemones open
from his gaping sides
the sea-grapes cluster
none dare to touch
he floats and he divides

Music rises to a wild crescendo. ENTER HARRY carrying a GUN and dragging a STRAW MAN dressed in SOLDIER'S UNIFORM.

HARRY: (*speaks*) I heard a fox after the chickens.

Music continues as CHRISTINA ENTERS and, trance-like, moves across stage. She kneels beside the straw man, takes his head on her lap. DICK crosses and stands with Harry. There is a PEAL OF THUNDER, the sky is dark with storm clouds.

CHRISTINA'S LAMENT OVER POOR TOM

He is lying in a ditch by the side of the road on Black Mountain
that road he took so many nights
whistling, carrying his gun

he has gone hunting for foxes over Black Mountain
his time has run out and he will not come again

HARRY and DICK dance around Christina and the straw man singing...

Tom, Tom, the devil's son
stole a heart & away he run
the heart was eat & Tom was beat'
& Tom went howling down the street

CH: The rain drips down ~~on~~ his face with an eerie whisper
a few black clouds are scudding over the crag
and he lies here in the ditch with his arm bent queerly
like a hank of dirty rag

HARRY and DICK: All the neighbours start to shout
Tom, Tom of Bedlam's out
Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief
Grief is love and love is grief

CH: I had a lover who died in a ditch in the rain
like an exiled wolf, like an imprisoned fox in the brain
his bite drew blood, I'll carry the scar for ever
but he won't come home again

SHE RISES, turns and moves away, her back to audience, head bowed in grief.

HARRY and DICK: Who goes round my house by night
only poor young Tom
Who does wrong, who does right
who's the guilty one

HARRY kneels with the straw man's head cradled in his arms. DICK moves slowly back to his chair, takes up his book again. A thin, high VOICE OVER fills the stage..

VOICE OVER: Christina, Christina...

The cyclorama glows as CHRISTINA moves slowly towards it, singing,

and seems to vanish into its surface.

CHRISTINA: The clock starts to tick
and the tide starts to flow
there's a shimmer and glow
and the girl in the mirror is floating
home to Black Mountain
home to the house under the hill

She vanishes, the light drains from the stage, the music continues, mysterious and haunting. Only HARRY is left spotlighted, holding the straw man in his arms.

HARRY:

POOR TOM'S SONG

Poor Tom's a-cold, poor Tom's a-cold
he's wet with rain, beset with storm
I'll carry him inside the house
and light a fire to keep him warm

The house will blaze, the stars will set
his bones will burn, his song be sung
and there'll be nothing left at all
of this poor thing of straw and dung

He'll never whistle on the hill
when the white moon begins to rise
I'll set him up to scare the crows
to peck his ribs and steal his eyes

And empty on the empty sky
his coat will flap till fold on fold
it rots away like sodden crap
poor Tom's a-cold, poor Tom's a-cold

HE EXITS dragging the straw man after him. THE CLOCK TICKS more and more loudly, amplified like a heart beat. The stage is filled with a fiery glow, then the skeletal farmhouse emerges on the cyclorama with the theme of 'Let us go to Mad Fish Bay'... Blackout. Wind, surf, seabirds, the ship's buoy and the medley of whispering voices that rise to a crescendo and take over the soundtrack. Lights up. THE CHRISTINA DUMMY is centre stage in the wheelchair with the SON standing beside her. THE HUSBAND stands stage left, THE DAUGHTER stage right. For the first time we see that the Christina Dummy's face is absolutely featureless.

THE SON: *(speaks)* She wants to go back.

THE HUSBAND: *(speaks)* There's nothing left to go back to. Her father's dead, her mother walked into the sea, her mad uncle burned the house down. He was never right in the head.

RECITATIVE

DAUGHTER: She wants to go back.

HUSBAND: She sits there all day...

SON: with a bee in her bonnet...

DAUGHTER: and a gnat in her brain...

HUSBAND: and truly I cannot bear the sight of her sitting.

CHRISTINA VOICE OVER: *(middle-aged)* Who are you?

HUSBAND: I am the husband who never caught his great fish.

SON: I am the son who kissed her and wished her dead.

CHRISTINA VOICE OVER: *(young)* I am the maiden all forlorn
who milked the cow with the crumpled horn...

ALL: in this the house that we all built.

CHRISTINA VOICE OVER: *(middle-aged)* Who are you?

HUSBAND: I am the husband who tried and tried and tried
I was dumb with words, my wife walked into the sea

DAUGHTER: I am the daughter who turned from the look in her eyes.

SON: I am the son who never answered her cries.

CHRISTINA VOICE OVER: *(young)*

I am the maiden all forlorn
who fell in love with a unicorn
and never came home again

ALL: And the sky came down and the earth began to tilt
in the house that we all built

During this section the light dies off the stage, the blow-up of the skeletal house fades out. The family, silhouetted against a pearly cyclorama, EXIT slowly, leaving the CHRISTINA DUMMY centre stage alone.

CHRISTINA VOICE OVER: *(middle-aged)*

Let us go to Mad Fish Bay
by the Black Mountain
where the gannets cry all day
and the kelp washes in

where the restless unending wave
searches along the shore
for the conch shell with the message inside
that ends: I am here, I have not forgotten.

Music introduction, and YOUNG CHRISTINA appears before the cyclorama and sings...

I am the wild girl in the heart
I am the self gone free
tied to no man, no child
who haunts the sea

I swim deep water
under circling gulls
stone arms round drowned sailors
cold kiss on their skulls

My blind eyes stare at the rim
where the sky meets the sea
I rock, cradle and hum
my stone arms squeeze

Who would change places with me
out there where the tide turns
sufficient and sunless as self
who cannot suffer or burn

VOICES OVER: Christina, Christina...

A seabird cries.

CHRISTINA VOICE OVER: *(middle-aged)* I am here, I have not forgotten

THE END