

FULL MOON IN MARCH

OPERA IN ONE ACT BY JOHN HARBISON

LIBRETTO ADAPTED FROM W. B. YEATS' PLAY BY THE COMPOSER

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Queen D'Anna Fortunato

The Swineherd David Arnold

First Attendant Cheryl Cobb

Second Attendant Kim Scown

BOSTON MUSICA VIVA

(Nancy Cirillo, violinist; Katherine Murdock, violist; Joel Moerschel, cellist; Fenwick Smith, flutist; Laura Grundstrom, oboist; William Wrzesien, clarinetist; Randall Hodgkinson, pianist; Dean Anderson, percussionist) Richard Pittman, conductor

JOHN HARBISON

FULL MOON IN MARCH

Boston Musica Viva; Richard Pittman, conductor

JOHN HARBISON (b. 1938, Orange, NJ) took a leave of absence from M.I.T. in 1982 to accept a Residency with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, funded by Exxon Corp., the Rockefeller Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts, and administered by Meet the Composer. He has received many commissions for his compositions, from the Fromm, Koussevitzky, Rockefeller, and Naumburg foundations, and from the Boston Symphony (100th anniversary), New Haven Symphony (90th) and San Francisco (75th). Three of his premieres, *Piano Quintet*, *Mottelli di Montale*, and *Variations* for clarinet, violin and piano took place as part of his residency in 1981 with the Santa Fe Chamber Festival.

Harbison does most of his composing, including the present piece, near Token Creek, Wisconsin. His music is on CRI SD 293, 313, 436 and 440. He writes:

“The title, FULL MOON IN MARCH, is less simple than it seems: in Yeats' astrological—metaphysical system, the full moon has a special place in Phase 15, a phase of complete and unexplainable beauty, where unity can be achieved and opposites united. March represents the ending of one cycle and the creation of a new one. The characters in this drama meet at a moment of mythic truth, remote from motivation or even the need to explain.

“This opera was written in a non-reflective state, well before any effort to understand the matter beyond the absorption of the images. After composing, in the effort to rationalize the urge to do it, certain themes came strongly into relief: the problem of reconciling our physical and spiritual nature . . . the image of the artists as suitor to a cruel and all-powerful Music. But these are after the fact.

“As in an earlier opera, *Winter's Tale*, the intent is to make an emblematic ritual—opera—which circumvents certain realistic conventions without giving up the bedrock operatic essentials of melody and drama.

“After Yeats invited the collaboration of musicians in the presentation of his plays, he became fully aware of the change in chemistry that can result: 'The orchestra brings more elaborate music and I have gone over to the enemy. I say to the musicians: Lose my words in patterns of sound as the name of God is lost in Arabian arabesques. They are a secret between the singers, myself, yourself. The plain fable, the plain prose of the dialogue, Ninette de Valois' dances are there for the audience. They can find my words in the book if they are curious, but we will not thrust our secret upon them.’”

The first performance of this opera took place in Sanders Theatre, Cambridge, Mass., on April 30, 1979, with the same cast as the one heard on this recording. The stage director was Nicholas Deutsch, with scenic and costume design by Campbell Baird.

D'ANNA FORTUNATO made her orchestral debut with the Boston Symphony as Madame Larina in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* in 1973. As a concert and oratorio soloist, Ms. Fortunato has appeared nationwide and has made chamber music appearances with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (with whom she has also recorded), the Boston Musica Viva, the Boston Symphony Collage, and the Fromm Foundation. CHERYL COBB has been a soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Musica Viva, the Rochester (NY) Philharmonic, and the Richmond (VA) Symphony Chamber Players. She is head of the voice department of the Extension Division of the New England Conservatory, and is on the faculty at Lowell University. DAVID ARNOLD has appeared with the Chicago Symphony under Georg Solti, the Atlanta Symphony under Robert Shaw, the Baltimore and Houston Symphonies under Sergiu Comissiona, and for six seasons with the Boston Symphony. His opera credits include a highly acclaimed debut with the New York City Opera in *Pearl Fishers*. KIM SCOWN has performed with the symphony orchestras of San Francisco and Houston, the Rochester Philharmonic, and several times with the Boston Symphony under Seiji Ozawa. He sang the Boston premieres of *Wozzeck* (*Der Hauptmann*) and *Gurrelieder* (*Klaus-Narr*) under Gunther Schuller. He repeated the role of the Second Attendant in Harbison's *FULL MOON IN MARCH* in his debut performance with the San Francisco Opera. RICHARD PITTMAN, founder-conductor of the Boston Musica Viva, is orchestra conductor and teacher of orchestral conducting at the New England Conservatory of Music. He has made numerous guest conducting appearances with orchestras in this country and abroad, including the National Symphony, the London Sinfonietta, the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, the BBC Welsh Symphony, and the BBC Symphony in London. BOSTON MUSICA VIVA is one of America's foremost contemporary chamber ensembles. The group has performed more than 260 works here and in Europe including over 55 world premieres of new and commissioned works. *FULL MOON IN MARCH* was presented on a double bill with Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale* which was repeated a number of times at different locations including Tanglewood.

FULL MOON IN MARCH

Adapted from W. B. Yeats by the composer.

FANFARE

(only the players visible to the audience)

THE ATTENDANTS' FIRST SONG

(Two Attendants stand before the inner curtain.

During Verse III, they open the inner curtain.)

Both Attendants:

Every loutish lad in love
Thinks his wisdom great enough,
What cares love for this and that?
To make all his parish stare,
As though Pythagoras wandered there.
Crown of gold or dung of swine.

Should old Pythagoras fall in love
Little may he boast thereof.
What cares love for this and that?
Days go by in foolishness,
O how great their sweetness is
Crown of gold or dung of swine.

Open wide those gleaming eyes,
That can make the loutish wise.
What cares love for this and that?
Make a leader of the schools
Thank the lord, all men are fools.
Crown of gold or dung of swine.

(The Attendants bow, and take seats near the audience.)

RECITATIVE I

(The Queen sits on her throne, regally attired,
and veiled. She stretches and yawns.)

The Queen:

Some man has come, some terrifying man,
For I have yawned and stretched myself three times.
Admit him, Captain of the Guard . . .

Both Attendants:

He comes.

(The Attendants rise and supervise the Swineherd's entrance, afterwards returning to their places. The Swineherd enters. He is bearded, a half-savage mask covers the upper part of his face.)

The Swineherd:

The beggars of my country say that he
That sings you best shall take you for a wife.

The Queen:

He that best sings his passion.

The Swineherd:

And they say
The kingdom is added to the gift.

The Queen:

I swore it.

The Swineherd.

But what if some blind aged cripple sing
Better than wholesome men?

The Queen:

None I abhor can sing.

THE SWINEHERD'S ARIA

Queen, look at me, look long at these foul rags,
At hair more foul and ragged than my rags;
Look at my scratched foul flesh. Have I not come
Through dust and mire? There in the dust and mire
Beasts scratched my flesh; my memory too is gone,
Because great solitudes have driven me mad.
But when I look into a stream, the face
That trembles upon the surface makes me think
My origin more foul than rag or flesh.
Queen, look at me, look long at these foul rags,
Have I not come through dust and mire?

RECITATIVE II

The Queen:

But you have passed through perils for my sake,
Come a great distance. I permit the song.

The Swineherd:

Kingdom and lady, if I sing the best?

The Queen:

We say that song is best that moves us most,
No song has moved us yet

The Swineherd:

You must be won.
At a full moon in March, those beggars say.
That moon has come, but I am here alone.

The Queen:

No other man has come.

The Swineherd:

The moon is full.

THE QUEEN'S ARIA

Remember through what perils you have come;
That I am crueler than solitude,
Forest or beast. Some I have killed or maimed
Because their singing put me in a rage,
And some because they came at all. Men hold
That woman's beauty is a kindly thing,
But they that call me cruel speak the truth,
Cruel as the winter of virginity.
But for a reason that I cannot guess
I would not harm you. Go before I change.

ARIOSO

The Swineherd:

My mind is running on our marriage night,
Imagining all from the first touch and kiss.

The Queen:

What gives you that strange confidence? What makes
You think that you can move my heart and me?

The Swineherd:

Because I look upon you without fear.

The Queen:

Only God looks upon me without fear.

The Swineherd:

Desiring cruelty, he made you cruel.
I shall embrace body and cruelty.

The Queen:

If trembling of my limbs or sudden tears
Proclaim your song beyond denial best,
I leave these corridors, this ancient house,
What do I gain?

The Swineherd:

A song – a night of love,
An ignorant forest and the dung of swine.

DUET

(The Queen moves downstage, the Swineherd moves upstage)

The Queen:

I led him, that I might not seem unjust,
From point to point, established in all eyes
That he came hither not to sing but to heap
Insult on my head

The Swineherd:

She shall bring forth her farrow in the dung,
But first my song – what nonsense shall sing?

The Queen:

Send for the headsman, Captain of the Guard.

The Swineherd:

What should I ask? What do these features matter?

The Queen:

I owe my thanks to God that this foul wretch,
In spite of his daring has not dared
Ask me to drop my veil

The Swineherd:

When I set out
I picked a number on a magic wheel.
I trust that wheel, as every lover must.

The Queen:

My face is pure.
Had it but known the insult of his eyes
I had torn it with these nails.

The Swineherd:

At stroke of midnight when the winter dies,
A Queen shall kiss a swineherd's mouth.

The Queen:

Bring me his severed head.
A severed head! She took it in her hands:
She stood all bathed in blood; the blood begat.
Her body in her sleep conceived a child.

The swineherd:

A severed head!

There is a story in my country of a woman
That stood bathed in blood – a drop of blood
Entered her womb and there she begat a child.
She sank in bridal sleep.

The Queen:

O foul, foul.

(The Queen turns toward the Swineherd, her back to the audience, and slowly drops her veil. The Swineherd looks at her as if hypnotized, and is seized and led out by the Attendants.)

THE ATTENDANTS' SECOND SONG

(The Attendants reappear, and close the inner curtain.)

Both Attendants:

He had famished in a wilderness,
Braved lions for my sake,
And all men lie that say that I
Bade that swordsman take
His head from off his body
And set it on a stake.

He swore to sing my beauty
Though death itself forbade,
They lie that say, in mockery
Of all that lovers said,
Or in mere woman's cruelty
I bade them fetch his head.

O what innkeeper's daughter
Shared the Byzantine crown?
Girls that have governed cities,
Or burned great cities down,
Have bedded with their fancy-man
Whether king or clown;

Gave their bodies, emptied purses
For praise of clown or king,
Gave all the love that women know!
O they had their fling,
But never stood before a stake
And heard the dead lips sing.

(The attendants open the inner curtain. The Queen is revealed standing as before, the dropped veil at her side. She holds above her head the severed head of the Swineherd, on a stake. The head is more emblematic than realistic, mask-like. The Queen is wearing red gloves. There are red patches on her dress.)

THE FIRST ATTENDANT'S ARIA

First Attendant:

Her lips are moving.

Second Attendant:

She has begun to sing.

(Holding the head on a stake, the Queen gradually turns toward the audience)

First Attendant:(singing as Queen):

Child and darling, hear my song,

Never cry I did you wrong;

Cry that wrong came not from me

But my virgin cruelty.

Great my love before you came,

Greater when I loved in shame,

Greatest when there broke from me

Storm of virgin cruelty.

THE QUEEN'S DANCE (first part)

(The Queen dances, moving almost imperceptibly at first.)

Second Attendant:

She is waiting.

(The Queen places the head on her throne.)

First Attendant:

She is waiting for his song.

Second Attendant:

The song he has come so many miles to sing.

First Attendant:

She has forgotten that no dead man sings.

Second Attendant (as Queen):

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

He has begun to laugh.

First attendant:

No; he has begun to sing.

THE SECOND ATTENDANT'S ARIA

(The Queen continues her dance, still contained, mainly following the piano rhythms.)

Second Attendant: (singing as the Head):

I sing a song of Jack and Jill.

Jill had murdered Jack;

The moon shone brightly;

Ran up the hill, and round the hill,

Round the hill and back.

A full moon in March.

(The Queen in her dance moves in and out near the Head, alluring and refusing.)

Jack had a hollow heart, for Jill

Had hung his heart on high;

The moon shone brightly;

Had hung his heart beyond the hill,

A-twinkle in the sky

A full moon in March.

(The Queen takes up the head and lays it on the ground near the throne.)

First Attendant (laughing as Queen):

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Second Attendant:

She is laughing. How can she laugh,

Loving the dead?

First Attendant:

She is crazy. That is why she is laughing.

(laughing again as Queen): Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

THE QUEEN'S DANCE (final part)

(The Queen begins a dance of adoration before the head . . . She takes up the head and dances with it . . . Still dancing, with great intensity, she kisses the head . . . She shivers and sinks down, holding the head to her breast.)

(The Attendants rise, regard the Queen dispassionately, and stand by the inner curtain.)

THE ATTENDANTS' FINAL SONG

(The Attendants close the inner curtain.)

Why must these holy haughty feet descend

From emblematic niches, and what hand

Ran that delicate rattle through their white?

My heart is broken, yet must understand,

What do they seek for? Why must they descend?

For desecration and the lover's night.

I cannot face that emblem of the moon
Nor eyelids that the unmixed heavens dart,
Nor stand upon my feet, so great a fright
Descends upon my savage, sunlit heart.
What can she lack whose emblem is the moon?
But desecration and the lover's night.

Delight my heart with sound: speak yet again.
But look and look with understanding eyes
Upon the pitchers that they carry: tight
Therein all time's completed treasure is:
What do they lack? O cry it out again.
Their desecration and the lover's night.

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CASCANDO
REALIZATION OF SAMUEL BECKETT'S RADIO PLAY
BY CHARLES DODGE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Opener John Nesci
Voice Computer synthesis based on a reading by Steven Gilborn
Music Computer synthesis based on Voice

Realization made at the computer centers of Columbia University and the City University of New York and the Center for Computer Music at Brooklyn College.

CHARLES DODGE

CASCANDO

realization made at the computer centers of Columbia University and the City University of New York and the Center for Computer Music at Brooklyn College

CHARLES DODGE (b. 1942, Ames, Iowa) has long been recognized as an accomplished composer of computer music. He was one of the first composers to use computer speech and speech music synthesis in composition. He studied composition at the University of Iowa, Aspen, Tanglewood and Columbia University. Among his teachers were Richard Hervig, Darius Milhaud, Arthur Berger, Gunther Schuller, Jack Beeson, Chou Wen-chung and Otto Luening. He studied electronic music with Vladimir Ussachevsky and computer music with Godfrey Winham and has done research in computer music at the Bell Telephone Laboratories. He was Visiting Research Musician at the University of California at San Diego, and he has been Visiting Composer-in-Residence at the M.I.T. summer course in computer music on several occasions. Most of his works since 1970 have been recorded, including those on CRI

SD 300 and 348. In 1980, he became Professor of Music at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York where he is director of the Center for Computer Music and Coordinator of Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in Composition. CASCANDO is dedicated to his wife, Katharine Schlefer Dodge.

CASCANDO is Charles Dodge's realization of Samuel Beckett's radio play of 1963. Like Beckett's *Words and Music*, *Cascando* has three characters: Opener ("Dry as dust"), Voice ("low, panting"), and Music. "Music" is not characterized by Beckett, but he indicates very precisely in the published play (with rows of dots) where it is to "speak" alone, sound together with Voice, or be overlaid with a comment from Opener. Thus, as Vivian Mercer has remarked in her *Beckett/Beckett*, *Cascando* could be described as a kind of libretto, and it and *Words and Music* "inaugurate a new genre—invisible opera."

This "libretto" attracted Dodge when, finishing his *Speech Songs* (CRI SD 348) in 1972, he began looking for other material for his "pitched speech" composition. At first the Beckett play seemed too long for the purpose, but Dodge ended up using it entirely, word for word, (plus, of course, music for Music). He worked at it, off and on, for more than five years. Beckett gave Dodge permission to "musicalize" *Cascando*, but initially withheld rights to public presentation. However, on receiving a copy of the finished tape in the spring of 1978, he wrote, "Dear Mr. Dodge: Thank you for your letter of April with the tape of your CASCANDO. Okay for public performance." (Dodge finds the "your" flattering, and we shall see presently how accurate it is.)

There are about as many interpretations of the meaning of Beckett's drama as there have been interpreters of it. Perhaps the narrative Voice is that of Opener himself, the former trying desperately to tell the very last story — to "finish it . . . then sleep . . . no more stories . . . no more words." — while the latter (austere, confident, presiding) opens and closes the bits of story and music, aware (as Hugh Kenner says in *A Reader's Guide to Samuel Beckett*) that he is "incomprehensible to censorious folk called 'they'":

They say, That is not his life, he does not live on that. They don't see me, they don't see what my life is, they don't see what I live on, and they say, That is not his life, he does not live on that.

Pause.

I have lived on it. . . pretty long.

The story that Voice tries to tell is about a man called Woburn, going out at night on a familiar search ("same old coat . . . same old stick"), who keeps falling (= *cascando*) ". . . on purpose or not . . . can't see . . . he's down . . . that's what counts," in mud, in sand, in stones, finally in the bilge of an oarless, tillerless boat "heading out...vast deep...no more land." Voice breathlessly follows Woburn, dying to end his story (" . . . to see him . . . say him"), hoping that "this time . . . it's the right one." Music is with Voice in this quest; Opener comments, perhaps with wonderment, "From one world to another, it's as though they drew together." But, at the close, although Woburn clings on (to the boat? to the narrating Voice which cries "come on . . . come on" together with Music?), there is only extinction. (The last word of the play, a direction, is "*Silence.*")

The three characters of the drama are realized by Dodge in three different ways: Opener is represented by a normal speaking voice (that of actor John Nesci); Voice is represented by synthesized pitched speech derived from a reading of the part by another actor (Steven Gilborn); Music is represented electronically, but it is derived from, and relates directly to, the opening speech of Voice. It may be useful to describe the various steps along the way to the final composition, partly to insist on the close relationship between computer-aided synthesis of sound (as Charles Dodge does it) and traditional ways of composing — to insist, that is, on the profound musicality of Dodge's CASCANDO.

Dodge began by composing the basic part for Voice, from start to finish. Both rhythm and pitch are notated conventionally, but separately. Both were arrived at empirically, not according to any “system.” The rhythms are close to natural speech rhythms. The pitch-successions are freely chromatic but not twelve-tone; they were chosen, says Dodge, “to capture the spirit of what I thought the Voice was like.” Also, Beckett's many repetitions of words and phrases—but in many different contexts—were taken into account: “I tried to use the same pitch-successions for the same words, when they recur. The problem became how to compose a pitch-pattern for a particular word that would be suitable in all of the contexts in which it occurs.” The pitch-patterns of individual words, then, became recognizable musical motifs, and their recurrence is a significant factor in the integration of the work.

The separation of rhythm and pitch components facilitated things at the next stage of composition. Steven Gilborn recorded the Voice part, reading it in the rhythms Dodge had given it but not attempting to reproduce the pitch-patterns. That recording was run through a computer, programmed so as to convert it from analog to digital state—to a stream of numbers—and to analyze the material on the tape in infinitesimal detail: the computer analysis is of some 24 attributes of sound, of which four are printed out: (1) high frequency amplitude; (2) low frequency amplitude; (3) ERRN, a relationship between (1) and (2) which helps distinguish between voiced and unvoiced phonemes; and (4) the average pitch, expressed in cycles per second. The print-out consists of pages and pages of lines of “frame numbers,” each line representing the four attributes at 1/120 of a second. The beginning (only) of the sound of the “c” in Voice's first line, (“if you could finish it”), for example, looks like this in the computer analysis of Gilborn's reading:

Fr. No	High Fr. Amp.	Low Fr. Amp	ERRN	Avge. Pitch
704	5.066860	38.038544	0.017743	214.285706
705	4.550298	46.835800	0.009439	98.684204
706	44.208771	195.746399	0.051007	98.684204

With the print-out of the computer analysis, Dodge had a finely detailed picture of the Voice part, with the rhythmic component more or less as he wished it. Next came a re-synthesis of Voice, based on the Gilborn reading as analyzed by the computer (and the analysis studied by Dodge) but now introducing the desired pitch-successions and the quality of the sound. The latter, Dodge had decided, was to have both pitch and noise components in about equal measure, “as though you made simultaneously a pitched voice and a whispered voice.” This resulted in the strained, rasping character of Voice — slightly repellent but poignant, too.

Now the synthesized Voice was re-converted to analog tape, and, with razor blade and splicing tape, Dodge went to work editing it, to make sure that all the timings were just the way he wanted them. This, then, was the Voice part.

In Dodge's realization of *Cascando*, Opener's part is left unmusicalized: it is simply a recording of an actual human voice. This was taped separately, the actor who read it going through the part a few times, Dodge choosing the best take of each passage. The parts for Voice and Music, however, *are* musicalized. There are eight “solos” for each, alternating as the piece unfolds, and at times they engage in “duets.” Having finished the composition of the Voice, and the tape-editing of the Opener, Dodge turned to Music. How was it to relate to Voice (if at all), and how were the two to interrelate (if at all) during the duets?

Dodge decided to relate Music's quality of sound to that of Voice by having it, too, consist in equal-mixture pitch and noise, and he decided that the pitch-succession of the two would also be related:

“What I finally settled on was that the sound-quality of Music would be directly derived from the recording of Voice— by feeding the synthesized Voice back into the computer and doing further operations on it to eliminate its intelligibility but to magnify its pitch-and-noise quality—its musicality. It was to be almost as if you trained on the Voice a microscope so powerful that the larger patterns, forming words, would be imperceptible; only the microscopic details would be apparent. Or as if you took a magnifying glass to a photo in a newspaper and viewed the individual dots, all of varying shades of grey.

“Also, the pitch-patterns of Music, I decided, would be related directly to those of Voice's opening speech, but greatly elongated.”

The latter relationship—between the pitch-patterns of Music and those of Voice—is based on an inversion of the latter. However, each of the pitches thus derived is greatly protracted, and there are many overlappings of pitches, so that, to the ear, the derivation of Music from the opening speech of Voice is hardly perceptible.

On the relationship between Voice and Music in their duets (of which there are five): Throughout the play, Voice is very fragmentary; it constantly starts and stops. Says Dodge:

“I wanted to capture something of that in the music, but not to have the music starting and stopping. So what I did was to “track,” in the computer, the way Voice starts and stops. When the voice is “on” — that is when the computer, in “reading” the Voice parts, finds that there is sound — it emphasizes pitch qualities. When it finds that there is silence, it emphasizes noise qualities.”

Another kind of relationship between Voice and Music in the duets was derived from the fact that speech has two kinds of syllables, voiced and unvoiced. The word “story,” for example, consists of two voiced syllables (“o-ry”) preceded by an unvoiced one (“st-”). The predominance of noise or pitch at any given moment in Music's part was partly determined by the nature of Voice's syllables at that moment, and by the order of voiced vs. unvoiced syllables. In short, Voice “triggers” Music, which is why in the duets Music often seems to well up shortly following Voice: there is a tiny time-lag.

The actual mixing of the Voice/Music duets was done in the computer, as the last pre-editing act. Then came the job of putting everything together: spoken voice (Opener), synthesized voice (Voice), synthesized music (Music), and the duets. By January 1983, Dodge's CASCANDO (“your” Cascando, said Beckett) was complete.

H. Wiley Hitchcock

Director, Institute for Studie in American Music at Brooklyn College

STEVEN GILBORN is a professional actor whose favorite medium is the stage. He has performed leading roles at regional theaters all around the country: among those roles are Prospero, Brutus, Malvolio, and Benedick. He has also worked extensively in radio, television and film, his most recent movie appearances being in *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute* and *Vamping*. CASCANDO is his third collaboration with Charles Dodge. JOHN NESCI has worked with Charles Dodge on recordings of

Richard Kostelanetz's *He Met Her in the Park* and the radio serial *Lights from Below*. Nesci has appeared in films and on television and the stage. His work includes productions with Mabou Mines, La Mama Etc., Sam Shepard and Robert Wilson. Originally from Chicago, Nesci lives and works in New York City.

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(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)