

# Stewart Copeland

## Operas

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Recipient of the Hollywood Film Festival's first Outstanding Music in Film Visionary Award, a Grammy nominee for his 2005 CD "Orchestralli" and a 2003 inductee to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Stewart Copeland—the former drummer and founder of The Police—has been responsible for some of the film world's most innovative and ground-breaking scores.

Copeland's most recent concert work is *Gamelan D'Drum*, commissioned and premiered by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra in February 2011 with the world percussion group D'Drum as soloists. Other works include the ballets *Lear* for the San Francisco Ballet (choreographed by Victoria Morgan) and *Prey* for Ballet Oklahoma; *Arise Awake* for chorus and orchestra for the Brighton Festival; the opera *Holy Blood and Crescent Moon* for the Cleveland Opera; *Horse Opera* for Channel Four; and the chamber opera *The Cask of Amontillado* (after Edgar Allan Poe's time-less tale). London's ROH2 commissioned and premiered Copeland's second Poe chamber opera, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, as part of its Opera Shots series in April 2011.

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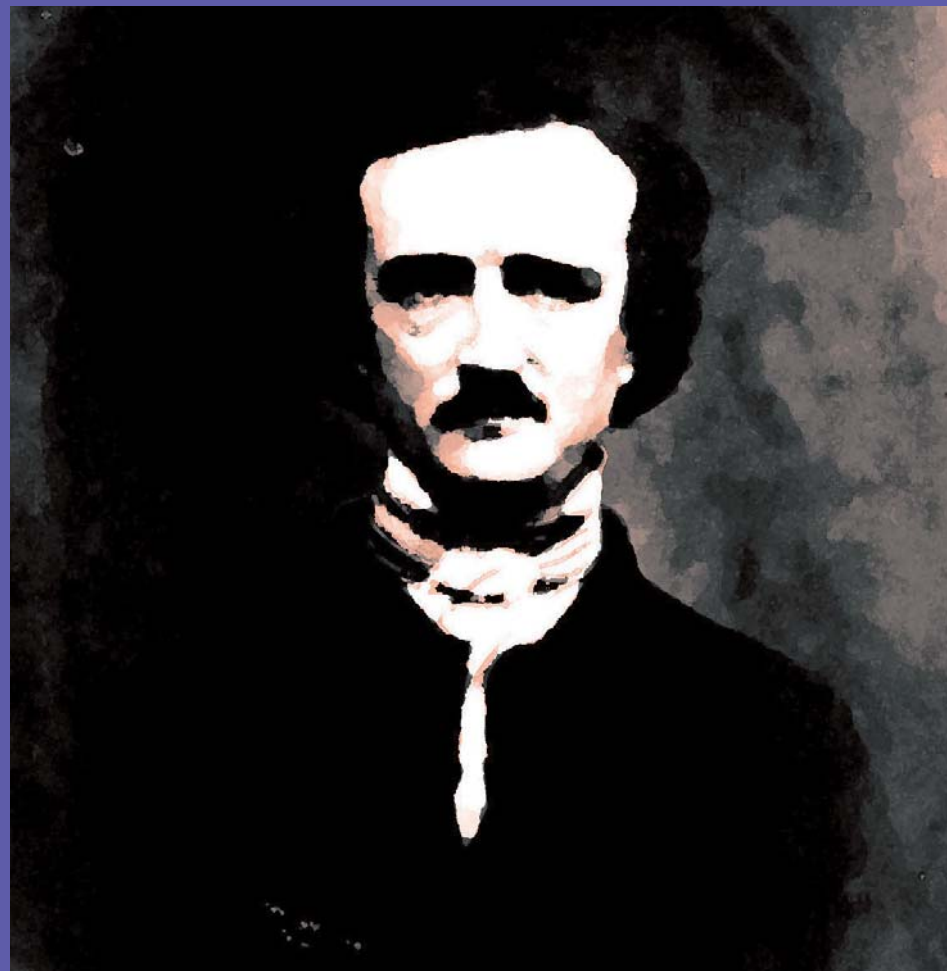
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# The Tell-Tale Heart



Chamber Opera in One Act, 2010

Libretto in English by Stewart Copeland,  
based on the story by Edgar Allan Poe

DURATION: 31 minutes

ORCHESTRATION

perc, pf, vn, va, vc, db

## CAST

EDGAR: *Baritone*

ALAN: *Tenor* (also POLICE OFFICER ONE)

SHADOW EDGAR: *Bass-baritone* (also POLICE OFFICER TWO)

NEIGHBOR ONE: *Soprano* (also CRONE PRISONER)

NEIGHBOR TWO: *Mezzo-soprano* (also YOUNG PRISONER)

## WORLD PREMIERE

April 8, 2011

Royal Opera House Covent Garden — ROH2 “Opera Shots”

## SYNOPSIS

If Mark Twain could be called the Beatles of American literature then Edgar Allan Poe would be the Rolling Stones. The stories seem to come from a very dark place, but Poe was able to communicate very broadly. He's a giant of American letters but inhabits the murky, dark corners of fear and torment – which makes him a strange icon for such an upbeat nation.

*The Tell-Tale Heart* is the story of a hideous crime and the perpetrator's resulting descent into madness. The author was such an odd fish and the account is so convincing that it's tempting to see a genuine confession in the tale. In his pre-Freud, pre-Jung era, Edgar Allan Poe didn't know much about the mechanics of psychology but was able to intuit, in a penetrating way, the workings of a murderous but clearly functioning mind.

The story is perfect for opera – the loquacious murderer expounds his manic inner logic as the throbbing guilt consumes him. The language of the original text drips with lust for the deed. It soars, it gloats and it marches with the rhythm of false conviction. Even though all ends badly, the obdurate narrator just can't help but admire his evil work. It's the throbbing part that I particularly like.

— Stewart Copeland

## REVIEWS

“...Copeland perpetuated the stentorian tone of melodrama underscoring it with a febrile piano and percussion led combo whose louche jazz inflections accentuated the sleaziness whilst slightly wrong-footing us musically. Assorted glissandi in strings and timpani only added to the queasiness - and when, at last, Edgar ripped the victim's heart from beneath the floorboards the method really did descend into madness.”

— *The Independent*

“Copeland, founder and ex-drummer of The Police, provides a score true to himself, jazzy, swingy, with maybe a nod to Stravinsky at times, and with some distinctive writing for percussion. Otherwise the instruments are strings and piano... It's good!”

— *The Opera Critic*

# The Cask of Amontillado

Chamber Opera in One Act, 1993

Libretto in English by David Bamberger,  
based on the story by Edgar Allan Poe

DURATION: 25 minutes

ORCHESTRATION

perc, pf, synth, db

## CAST

FORTUNATO: *tenor*

MONTRESOR: *baritone*

## WORLD PREMIERE

March 1994

HOLDERS Easter Season, Barbados



## SYNOPSIS

*The Cask of Amontillado*, based on the story by Edgar Allan Poe, is a criminal's account of a crime committed fifty years earlier — a crime for which he was never caught but now confesses.

Montresor, convinced that he has been slighted by his fellow nobleman Fortunato, devises a plan for revenge. During carnival, he lures the unsuspecting and intoxicated Fortunato into his wine cellar with the promise of sampling a rare cask of Amontillado. Once there, Montresor takes advantage of his friend's inebriation and quickly chains him to the wall of a stone niche. Amidst the pleas and cries of his friend, Montresor mocks him and walls up the niche, condemning Fortunato to die, forever entombed in the wall.

