



Heathcote Williams
Whale Nation

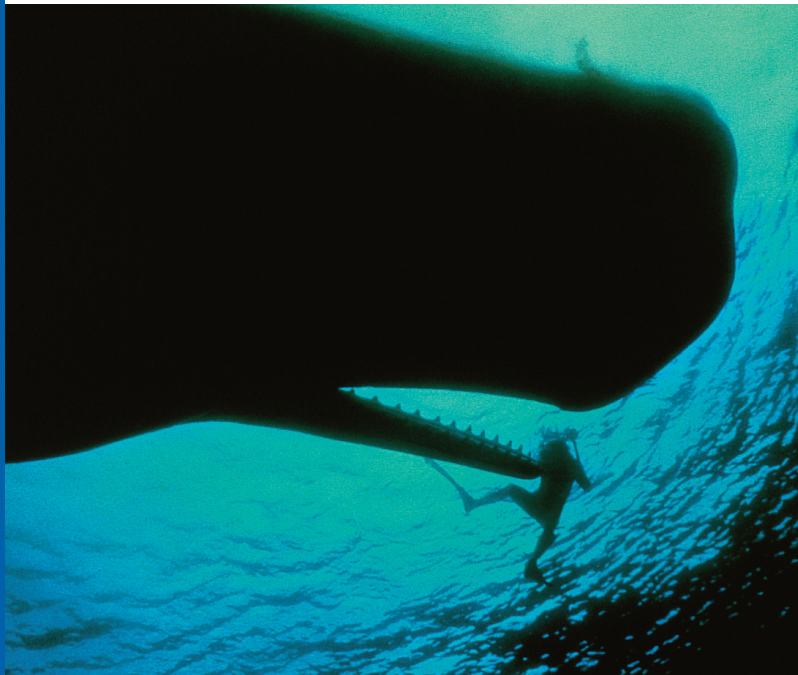
THE
COMPLETE
TEXT

UNABRIDGED

POETRY

Read by **Heathcote Williams**
with **Harry Burton** and **Caroline Webster**

2
Compact
Discs



CD 1**Whale Nation**

1	Ancient evolution	2:28
2	Intelligence	1:01
3	Whale games	2:56
4	Lyrical litanies	6:49
5	Echo location and communication	3:02
6	Gargantuan dimensions	4:36
7	To the mating grounds	7:57
8	Maternal instincts	1:41
9	At the hands of man	7:21
10	Materialist societies	5:48
11	The disappearing species	2:35
12	The dolphin – divine and exploited	4:14
13	Death and destruction	4:26
14	The dominant species	2:30

Total time on CD 1: 57:32

CD 2

On the Nature of Whales

1	Facts and Figures	5:31
2	Song	11:42
3	Behaviour	13:02
4	Comment	3:18
5	Hunting	6:40
6	Products	6:56
7	Profits	7:02
8	Myths and Legends	5:56
9	Comment	3:29

Total time on CD 2: 63:42

Total time on CDs 1 and 2: 2:01:14

Heathcote Williams

Whale Nation

'O ye whales and all that move in the waters...'
'Benedicite' – THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

Actor/writer Heathcote Williams had already started work on what was later to become his poem, *Sacred Elephant*, when in the mid-1980s he started, inexplicably, to have vivid extended dreams about whales. Director Ken Campbell, on hearing this, encouraged him to write a piece about these mysterious creatures for his underwater theatre in Liverpool. So *Whale Nation* came into being, a celebratory epic portraying the history, life and habits of whales and dolphins and their exploitation at the hands of man.

It was performed many times in a stage production with pictures and whale song, initially by the author himself and then toured extensively by actor Roy Hutchens in venues as varied as The National Theatre and the Natural History Museum, London and the Steinhart Aquarium, San Francisco.

The poem was published by Jonathan Cape in 1988 and was coupled with an

extraordinary anthology of facts and figures, *On The Nature of Whales*.

The poet Ted Hughes wrote: 'The poem is overwhelming...brilliant, cunning, dramatic and wonderfully moving, a steady accumulation of grandeur and dreadfulness and never any sense of exploiting the subject for poetic or literary effects, just a measured unfolding of real things from the heart of the subject.'

Undoubtedly a work of this kind has stirred consciences all over the world. In presenting the subject and its stark realities in such an uncompromising manner, it has been a catalyst both in environmental and emotional terms. Performances have inspired the creation of branches of the environmental group Greenpeace; and many people have related that the poem has directly challenged their thoughts and views on today's society, its ever increasing

materialism and ruthless greed.

More recently, the book has been described as an icon of anti-consumerism.

Whale Nation has been a best-seller world wide and has, therefore, touched many peoples but it is significant that despite strenuous efforts, the book has still not been published in Japan, Norway or Russia – the three nations which still maintain their right to whale.

In 1983, the explorer and adventurer Thor Heyerdahl wrote, 'it is not everybody's fortune to have had bedside company with whales in their own free playground, but those of us who have feel an urge to support the growing majority of mankind that demands that the tiny minority who threatens the remaining whale species with complete extinction for personal economic gains should be forced to leave the whales in peace until able to multiply for the benefit of future generations on this planet.'

Whale Nation was the first of a series of extended poems written by Heathcote Williams on subjects of environmental concern. The others, which have also had a considerable effect, are: *Falling for a Dolphin* (1988); *Sacred Elephant* (1989) and *Autogeddon* (1991).

Although they brought Williams' work to

a broad public, he had already established himself as a poet and playwright – his *AC/DC* was produced at London's Royal Court and won numerous awards in the UK and the US. Other plays include *Hancock's Last Half Hour*, and *The Immortalist*. As an actor he has been equally versatile, playing Prospero in Derek Jarman's film of *The Tempest* and Dr Haggage in *Little Dorrit*.

Notes by Sarah Butcher

**The music on this recording is taken from
the NAXOS and MARCO PÓLO catalogues**

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Czecho-Slovak RSO/Adrian Leaper
- BACH** MASS IN B MINOR 8.550585-6
Capella Istropolitana/Christian Brembeck
- MOZART** REQUIEM 8.550235
Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus/Zdenek Kosler
- BRAHMS** SYMPHONY NO 1 8550278
BRT Philharmonic, Brussels/Alexander Rahbari
- DEBUSSY** LA MER 8.550262
BRT Philharmonic, Brussels/Alexander Rahbari
- CIURLIONIS** THE SEA 8.223323
Slovak Philharmonic/Juozas Domarkas

WHALE MUSIC

- LES CHANTS DE LA BALEINE A BOSSE WSCD 00291
by courtesy of World of Sounds, France.

Cover picture: Photograph by Paulo Curto/The Image Bank



Harry Burton is a highly versatile actor. A familiar figure in British theatre, in London's West End and the Fringe, he has become equally known for taking leading operatic roles including Mozart (Figaro and Leporello) and Rossini (Dandini) at the South Bank, the Vienna Festival and on TV. He is also regularly seen on TV



Caroline Webster works extensively in UK TV, radio and theatre. She has appeared in no fewer than four Alan Ayckbourn plays – three of them directed by the playwright – both in Scarborough and the Royal National Theatre, London.

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Whales are a widely distributed and diverse group of fully aquatic placental marine mammals. They are an informal grouping within the infraorder Cetacea, usually excluding dolphins and porpoises. Whales, dolphins and porpoises belong to the order Cetartiodactyla, which consists of even-toed ungulates. Their closest living relatives are the hippopotamuses, having diverged about 40 million years ago. The two parvorders of whales, baleen whales (Mysticeti) and toothed whales (Odontoceti), are thought to have diverged from each other about 34 million years ago. Photographer JosÃ© Javier Delgado Esteban was awarded First Prize in Wildlife / Animals for the entry entitled Whale Nation: Humpback Whales of the South Pacific selected from more than 3,000 entries. Tweet. Home. Whale Nationunknown. The nation in which Whales are supreme. Sea world contains whales apart of Whale Nation. by ImAWhale135 April 19, 2018. 0. 0. Get a Whale Nation mug for your buddy. Buy the domain for your travel site. whalenation.fun.