

I've been working on a big Ariadne project, *Ariadne of Knossos*, for some years now. *The Sacred Dance* is a movement from this larger work. In 1995 I came across information that suggested that there was an earlier, feminist version of the Ariadne myth. While the Greek myth of Ariadne is a great one with lots of dramatic potential, it had always bothered me that she was such a weak female character, one who'd betray everything and everybody for the first cute guy who came along, as well as being portrayed as such a passive character, one who could be abandoned so easily. I'm trying to create a pre-Hellenic Ariadne, which isn't easy, since it occurred before writing, or at least writing that we've been able to decipher (i.e., before Linear B).

Ariadne was actually a goddess and/or queen of Crete in neolithic Minoan Crete (Knossos was the capital of Crete), which was matrilineal at the time and had goddesses but no gods. The bull was a sacred symbol in Minoan Crete. Crete was conquered by the Greeks (the Achaeans and Dorians), who were extremely patriarchal, about 1500-1100 BCE. The Greeks had a habit of creating myths to justify their conquest of a territory, or to show a common lineage. Thus, Ariadne was transformed from a goddess to a whimsical girl who would betray her country for a handsome stranger; the bull was turned from a sacred symbol into a murderous monster; and Theseus was transformed from a murderous conqueror into the ideal Athenian (in this as well as many other Greek myths). There are a lot of conflicting and contradictory strands of the myth, which are all compelling. I believe that there is no definitive version of the myth, all strands of the myth being hopelessly intertwined, so I'm trying to incorporate them all into my piece. This nonlinear approach is fitting, since the labyrinth is so central to the myth of Ariadne. At the end of the twentieth century, the moment has certainly come, not only to lament Ariadne, but also to restore to her her ancient rights."

MARY JANE LEACH is a composer/performer whose work reveals a fascination with the physicality of sound, its acoustic properties and how they interact with space. In many of her works Leach creates an other-worldly sound environment using difference, combination, and interference tones; these are tones not actually sounded by the performers, but acoustic phenomena arising from Leach's deft manipulation of intonation and timbral qualities. The result is striking music which has a powerful effect on listeners. Critics have commented on her ability to "offer a spiritual recharge without the banalities of the new mysticism" (*Detroit Free Press*), evoking "a visionary quest for inner peace" (*Vice Versa Magazine*), and "an iridescent lingering sense of suspended time." (*Musicworks Magazine*) Leach's music has been performed throughout the world in a variety of settings, from the concert stage to experimental music forums, and in collaboration with dance and theatre artists. Recordings of her work are on the Lovely Music, New World, XI, Wave/Eva, and Aerial compact disc labels