

Miriam

(a music theater trilogy)

William Osborne

Stage Directions

Set. Downstage left a simple, small wooden table and a chair. Downstage right a simple mirror as illustrated by Figure 2. Upstage center, a wooden box with a lid on hinges. The lid opens up stage. A mask (as described below under the name “Daphne”) is hanging from a hook at the top center of the side of the box facing the public.) To the stage left side of the table is a trombone stand (if applicable.) These furnishings should be simple and have a unity of style and appearance. The positioning of the items should form an isosceles triangle whose sides are about four or five meters long.

Props. On the table is a set of “Russian Dolls” (small painted, wood dolls that all fit inside each other), a clear glass pitcher of water, a glass, and a small notebook with a pencil. A red negligee is hanging on the mirror. Inside the box is an apron with four pockets that contain a baby bottle, a baby’s shoes with the laces tied together, a baby’s rattle, and a little doll that squeaks when squeezed. The box also contains a bottle of pills; a disassembled trombone; a long beige dress (nice but not too fancy, see) that is worn by pulling it over the head; a whimsical concert jacket (e.g. black with red lapels). (*For alternatives to the trombone see the note at the end of the text.*)

Costume. Miriam is wearing a beige slip and a beige housecoat. She and her clothing have a bedraggled look of desperation, meaninglessness and boredom. The slip, housecoat and dress all of a unity of style and light beige color. (See Figure 1.)

Masks. The box also contains three plaster or paper papier machè masks created with a unified style. The performer enters with a fourth mask.

Mary. A young, naive girl with a blond pigtail. The mask is held in front of one’s face by the pigtail and held stable by placing a finger on or in its mouth.

Myrtle. A puffy, round depressed face of an obese, middle-aged woman, colorless, mostly white and gray. Over this mask is latex mask

of the same person, flesh colored with heavy make-up, red lips, eye shadow, rouge, and short frayed, artificial looking red hair. The first mask is held on the performers face by a small elastic headband. The second fits firmly over the first mask and is suddenly removed revealing the mask beneath. Both masks convey a sense of desperation.

Morticia. A haughty, elegant, patrician looking mask with the lips somewhat puckered as if drawing on a cigarette or cigarette holder. The mask is held in front of the face by a handle on the performer’s left side.

Daphne. A woman with the twiggy branches of a tree forming her hair. The mask should have a ritualistic, majestic and somewhat terrifying appearance.

Light. The stage is lit in three general regions. Stage left illuminates the table and area around it, stage right lights the mirror and its general area, while a third lamp fills the center stage area. There should be adequate cross-over between the light of all three regions. The middle light also illuminates Miriam completely when she stands at the box. The light should descend at about a 70 degree angle and if possible leave a more or less triangular shape on the stage floor. The performer should be able to vary the appearance of the masks by raising her face to the light or by dipping her head and shadowing them. An additional spot adds intensity to the downstage center area. As the performer moves from the box to down stage center she moves to brighter light with a gentle continuous cross-over. A tight spot is focused to illuminate the “Daphne” mask when hanging on the front of the box. And a final spot, coming somewhat from the side, illuminates Miriam when she sits profile on the box. As Miriam moves about the stage, the general spots are brightened or dimmed to highlight the area she occupies.

The stage directions are coordinated with the tracks of the performance CD.

Performance Instructions for the Trombone Lament

- 1. The symbol in Figure 1 indicates a vibrato approximately a half tone in width played about a quarter tone above and below the indicated pitch. It is modelled after the vibrato used in Japanese Shakuhachi music. Width and speed vary according to expressive nuance.
- 2. The F-horn tuning slide is removed for the duration of the work. Notes played through the open tube of the F-horn are indicated by the noteheads in Figure 3.

Figure 1

Vb ~~~~~

Figure 2



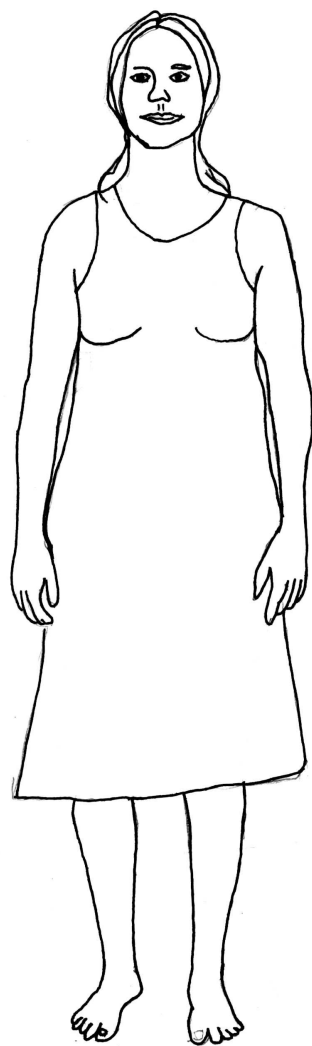


Figure 1

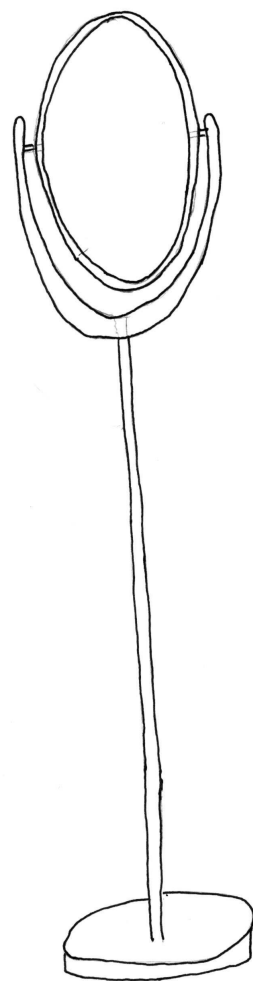


Figure 2

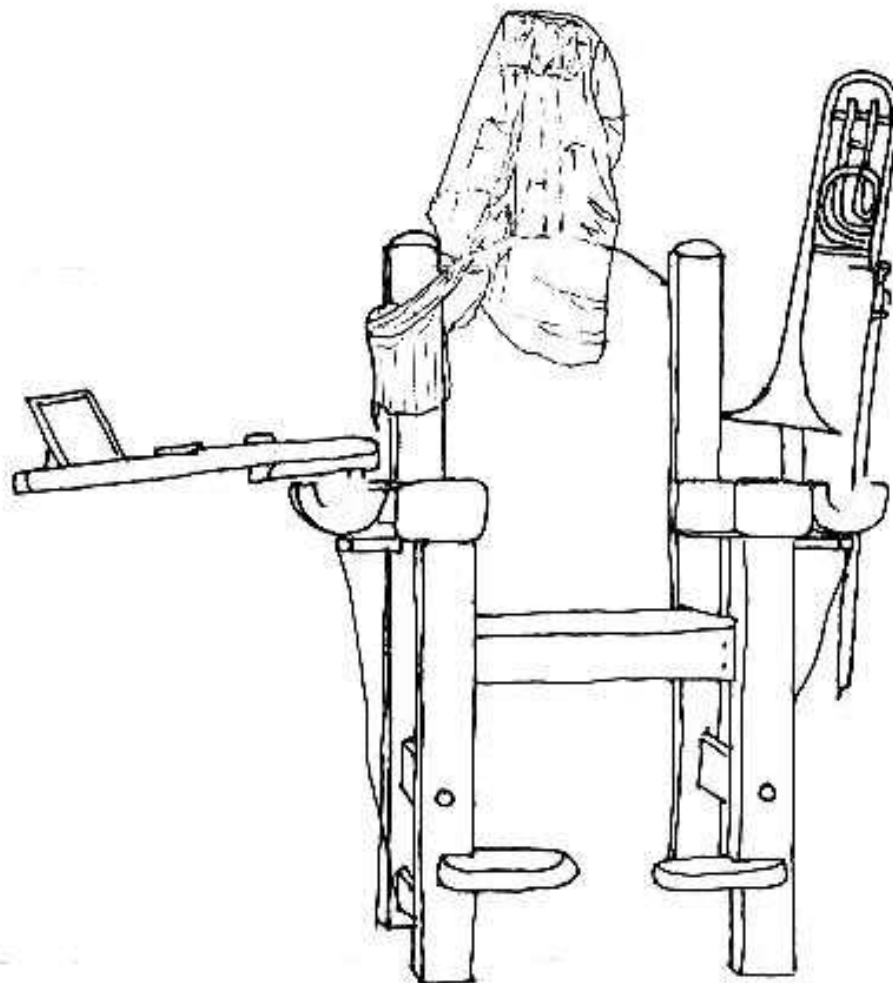


Figure 3

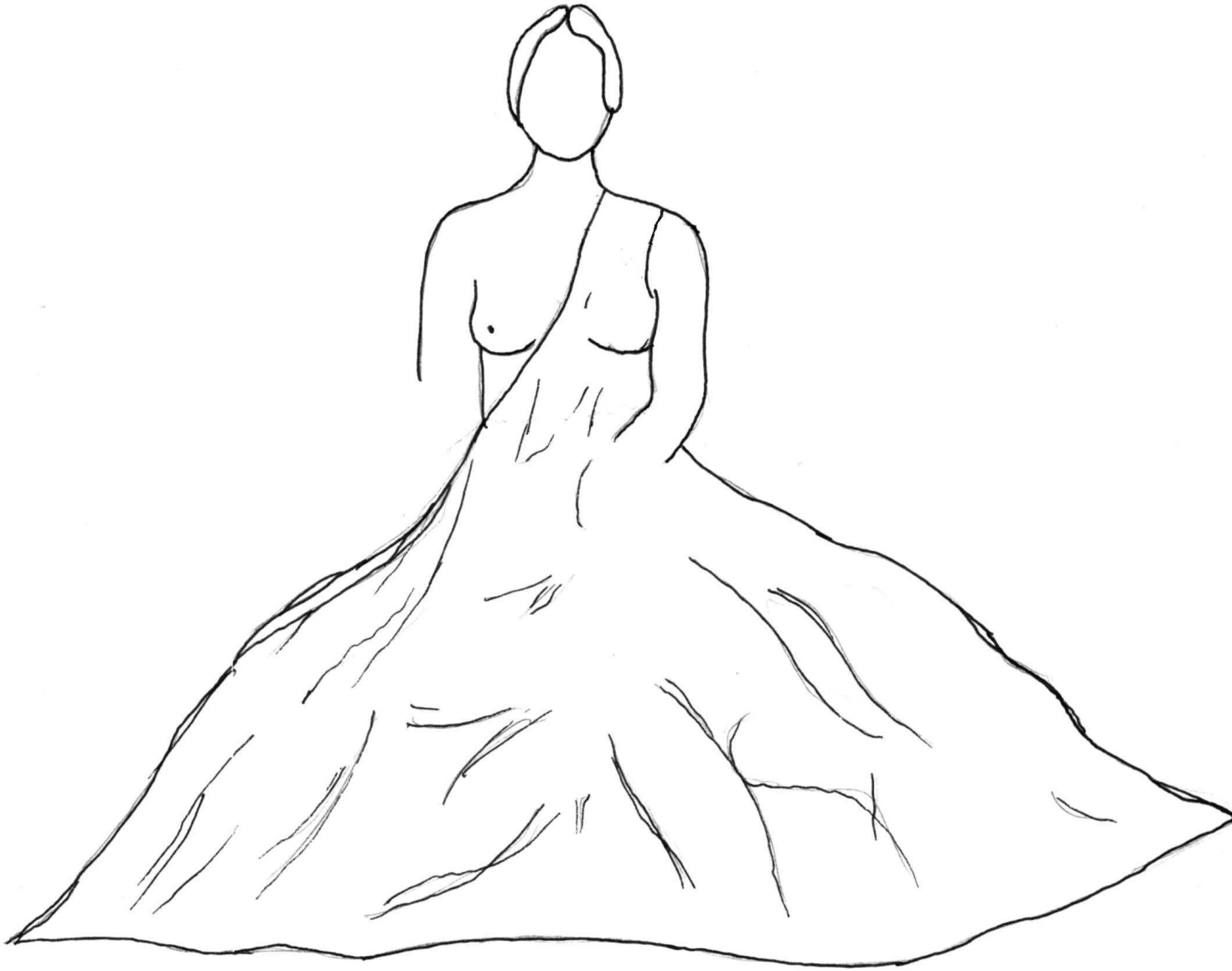


Figure 4

for Abbie

Miriam

Part II: The Mirror

(For computer controlled digital piano and instrumental performance artist.)

William Osborne

1

As the music begins, Miriam enters from stage left and moves slowly to the center stage spot. She is holding Daphne's mask in front of her with both hands, arms extended in front of her. She turns to the audience and puts on the mask, pausing briefly, arms extended slightly outward from her sides, palms forward. (The mask does not have a headband; it balances on her head when slightly tilted back.)

2

She raises her arms one at a time and feels the twig-like hair of the mask, tilting her head to each side respectively.

11

16

16

Musical score for measures 21-24. The score is written for piano in G major. Measures 21-22 are in 7/16 time, measure 23 is in 8/16 time, and measure 24 is in 12/16 time. The melody is in the right hand, and the bass line is in the left hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

She lowers her arms and tilts her head forward letting the mask fall into her hands. She raises her real face to the audience for an instant,

Musical score for measures 25-27. The score is written for piano in G major. Measures 25-26 are in 7/16 time, measure 27 is in 9/16 time. The melody is in the right hand, and the bass line is in the left hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#). An *8va* marking is present above measure 25.

then quickly turns and goes to the box,

Musical score for measures 28-29. The score is written for piano in G major. Measures 28-29 are in 12/16 time. The melody is in the right hand, and the bass line is in the left hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

hangs Daphne's mask on a hook on the side facing the audience, rummages in the box and finds Mary's mask.

Musical score for measures 30-31. The score is written for piano in G major. Measures 30-31 are in common time (C). The melody is in the right hand, and the bass line is in the left hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

4

With a quick gesture she puts the mask on at the beginning of the three chord figure.

She coyly goes to front center stage on her tip toes while brushing back the mask's hair with her fingers, once on each side, extending her arm completely with each brush.

She puts her finger to her mouth, rubs her eye with her fist, brushes away a tear on her cheek with her finger tips, puts her finger back in her mouth, and dips her head up and down coyly, using the light to effect. *(Use extensions for all of these gestures.)*

33

33

5

6

6

5

She snaps off the mask at the three chord figure, looks at it, over to the mirror, back to the mask, strokes its hair,

38

38

7

6

16

16

16

then snaps the mask back on at the three chord figure.

She brushes the mask's hair, once on each side, with her finger tips.

6

43

43

16

16

16

15^{ma}

With gracefully extended movements she places her chin in her hand, and dips her head coyly.

She makes a startle gesture on the last flourish (upper arm extended parallel to the floor, forearm at right angle, fingers extended and spread.) She removes the mask, and holds an expression on her real face for an instant, before going to the box.

She goes to the box and rummages for Myrtle's mask.

At the three chord figure she puts the mask on (including its latex cover) and spins around to face the audience.

She slowly moves to front center stage looking slightly upward, rolling her face around with inviting sensuality,

and moving her hips to the thumps in the music in a burlesque type of dance.

57

61

At the low note at the end of the phrase, she suddenly removes the latex make-up cover mask, holding it with her fully extended arm pointing upward at a 45 to 60 degree angle. (This reveals the mask underneath it.) She leans her head slightly back and to one side at the same angle as her extended arm, in a gesture of grief and anguish.

8^{va}-----

66

8^{vb}-----

9

She looks at the audience (through the mask.)

Musical score for measures 69-70. The score is written for piano in 12/16 time. Measure 69 features a complex melodic line in the right hand with many accidentals, while the left hand has a simple bass line. Measure 70 continues the melodic development in the right hand. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

10

As she returns to the box she removes Myrtle's mask,

Musical score for measures 71-72. Measure 71 continues the melodic line from the previous section. Measure 72 shows a change in the right hand's melody, becoming more rhythmic. The left hand provides a steady bass accompaniment. The key signature remains one flat.

puts it back in the box and rummages for Morticia's mask.

At the three chord figure she places the mask over her breast and turns to the audience.

Her real face has a haughty and seductively glamorous pose.

Musical score for measures 73-74. Measure 73 features a complex chordal texture in the right hand. Measure 74 shows a change in the right hand's melody, becoming more rhythmic. The left hand provides a steady bass accompaniment. The key signature remains one flat.

11

With exaggerated glamour she brings an imaginary cigarette to and from her mouth. *(With fully extended gestures.)*

8va -----

Same gesture with cigarette as before.

8va -----

She moves to stage right. On the last beat of the phrase she puts the mask in front of her face...

and falls into a seductive, glamorous pose standing profile to the public.

8va -----

She moves to center stage and falls into a pose on the last beat of the first phrase.

8va -----

She extends her arm and moves her index fing in a gesture saying "come here," coordinating it with a seductive roll of her shoulder.

87 87 87

8va 8va 8va

On the final flourish she brings her forearm back over her right breast.

She snaps off the mask (on the three chords,) crossing her forearms at her breast. Her real face is facing the audience stage right.

She holds for an instant and flows back to the box.

90 90 12 90

8va 8va

Still at the box, using fully extended gestures she puts on Annie's mask, puts its chin in her hand, dips her head coyly, and repeats the startled gesture, then returns the mask to the box.

94 94 94 94

8va 8va

She holds Myrtle's make-up mask in the direction of the audience and makes it mouth work like a hand puppet. She protrudes her finger from its mouth and wiggles it like a tongue.

Musical score for measures 97-100. The score is in 9/16 time. The right hand (treble clef) features a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, including triplets in measures 98 and 99. The left hand (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes, also featuring triplets in measures 98 and 99. Measure 100 contains a whole note chord in the right hand and a whole note bass line in the left hand.

As she takes Morticia from the box, the dolls on the table distract her attention. She returns the mask to the box.

She goes to the table and seats herself.

Musical score for measures 101-103. The score is in 12/16 time. The right hand (treble clef) features a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, including triplets in measure 101. The left hand (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 102 includes a measure rest in the left hand. Measure 103 contains a whole note chord in the right hand and a whole note bass line in the left hand. A dashed line labeled '8va' indicates an octave shift in the right hand for measures 102 and 103.

Musical score for measures 104-107. The score is in 12/16 time. The right hand (treble clef) features a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, including triplets in measure 104. The left hand (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 105 includes a measure rest in the left hand. Measure 106 contains a whole note chord in the right hand and a whole note bass line in the left hand. Measure 107 contains a whole note chord in the right hand and a whole note bass line in the left hand. A dashed line labeled '8va' indicates an octave shift in the right hand for measures 104 and 105.

She takes the Russian dolls apart (ten of them,) arranging their top and bottom halves in a line on the table with fetish-like precision.

2nd doll.

106

3rd doll.

108

4th doll.

5th doll.

110

112

6th doll.

This system contains measures 112 and 113. Measure 112 features a complex piano texture with multiple sixteenth-note runs in both the treble and bass staves. Measure 113 continues this texture, with a dense cluster of notes in the treble staff. A label '6th doll.' is positioned above measure 113.

114

7th doll.

8th doll.

This system contains measures 114 and 115. Measure 114 shows a continuation of the piano texture, with a label '7th doll.' above it. Measure 115 features a more active treble staff with many sixteenth notes, while the bass staff has fewer notes. A label '8th doll.' is positioned above measure 115.

116

9th doll.

This system contains measures 116 and 117. Measure 116 has a complex piano texture with many sixteenth notes in both staves. Measure 117 continues this texture, with a label '9th doll.' above it.

118

10th doll.

This system contains measures 118 and 119. Measure 118 features a complex piano texture with many sixteenth notes in both staves. Measure 119 continues this texture, with a label '10th doll.' above it.

In the remaining time she straightens the line of dolls.

She looks at the box.

120

15 She goes to the box.

123

She takes her disassembled trombone out of it, slide in one hand and bells section in the other, her arms extended a bit from her body. She twirls, showing her love for her instrument, and assembles it.

126

131

135

She bends over at the hips and rears back to play pointing the trombone upward.

139

She suddenly pauses a moment in consternation, because she realizes she just saw a run in her nylons.

She places the trombone on an instrument stand next to the table, puts her foot on the chair, examines the run, then removes the nylons.

142

16

146

150

150

She rummages in the box...

17

She goes to the box and puts the nylons in it.

154

154

8va

...looking for her negligee but can't find it. Still holding the lid open, she looks around the room for it and notices it hanging on the mirror and goes to it.

157

157

At the three chords, she holds it against her chest as if trying it on.

Holding the negligee over her chest, she dances backwards towards the box kicking each leg out to its own side in a sexy burlesque.

She dances forward...

161

18

kicking each leg across the other.

She twirls the negligee over her head while rolling her breasts. A sneeze begins to build up. She sneezes into the negligee on the cluster. She looks at the stain, rolls her eyes, and tosses the negligee away -- upward and to the side.

167

19 She returns to the box and rummages for her apron.

175

178

She puts it on by looping its neck strap around her neck at the three chord figure.

20

183

183

She twirls to center stage. *8va*-----,

In the following passages, she removes various objects (with widely extended gestures) from...

187

187

each of the apron's four pockets continuing to hold each in her hands: a baby bottle, baby shoes, a baby's rattle, and a little doll that squeaks when squeezed. (She drapes the shoes over her forearm via their tied together laces.)

190

190

192

192

194

194

8va

The doll is the last and in the lower left hand pocket.

196

196

8va

She raises her arms and the objects into the air in a gesture of supplication, as if pleading to God. She lowers her arms with the unison of the final run down of the section as she squeaks the doll.

198

198

8va

She drops the objects on the floor and takes off the apron.

21

She flows back to the box.

200

200

8va

Puts the apron back in it, and removes a long, light beige dress, and puts it on.

203

Musical score for measures 203-206. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff (treble clef) begins with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 9/16 time signature. It contains a complex melodic line with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The lower staff (bass clef) also begins with two sharps and a 9/16 time signature, featuring a similar complex melodic line. Measure 204 ends with a double bar line. Measures 205 and 206 show a change in the upper staff to a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 9/16 time signature, while the lower staff remains in two sharps and 9/16 time.

207

Musical score for measures 207-211. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff (treble clef) is mostly empty, with rests in measures 207, 208, 209, and 210, and a final measure (211) with a 9/16 time signature. The lower staff (bass clef) contains a continuous melodic line. Measures 207, 208, and 209 have a 9/16 time signature, while measures 210 and 211 have a 7/16 time signature.

212

Musical score for measures 212-216. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff (treble clef) has rests in measures 212, 213, and 214, followed by a melodic line in measures 215 and 216. The lower staff (bass clef) contains a continuous melodic line. Measures 212, 213, and 214 have a 9/16 time signature, while measures 215 and 216 have a 7/16 time signature.

217

Musical score for measures 217-221. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line. The lower staff (bass clef) contains a melodic line. Measures 217, 218, and 219 have a 9/16 time signature, while measures 220 and 221 have a 7/16 time signature.

The dress now on, her attention is drawn to Daphne's mask (hanging on the box) slightly before the rising music comes to an end.

She stands to the side of the mask so that she is visible in profile, and touches its twig-hair with four graceful gestures.

221

221

22

8va

On the last gesture she takes the mask and immediately flows into a waltz.

224

224

8va - (only top notes 8va)

Holding the mask in front of her, she waltzes about three steps stage left, fully extending the mask in the direction she is moving (keeping its face directed toward the audience) then about three steps right in the same manner.

228

228

8va

Musical score for measures 230-231. The score is written for piano in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The right hand features a complex, rapid sixteenth-note pattern, while the left hand plays a more melodic line with some grace notes. The measures end with a repeat sign.

She puts the mask on at this flourish (taking care not to be late,) and steps forward a little

She continues waltzing, stage left then right, extending her arms in the

Musical score for measures 232-233. The right hand continues with a rapid sixteenth-note pattern, and the left hand plays a melodic line. The measures end with a repeat sign.

direction of her movement at the end of each phrase. (As before, the mask is held in position by tilting the head slightly back.)

Musical score for measures 235-236. The right hand continues with a rapid sixteenth-note pattern, and the left hand plays a melodic line. The measures end with a repeat sign.

236

(top notes only)

8va

236

238

238

She steps forward to front, center stage.

240

8va

240

She raises her arms one at a time and feels the twig-like hair of the mask, tilting her head to each side respectively. She moves her arms in front of her and lowers them to her eyes, fingers extended and spread. Her fingers slide down her face to a prayer position under her chin.

23

8^{va}

Musical score for measures 243-246. The score is written for piano in 9/16 time. It features a complex melodic line in the right hand with many accidentals and triplets, and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. Measure numbers 243, 243, and 246 are indicated at the start of the staves.

She raises her arms above her head together with looking up at the same angle to a position of supplication. She lowers her arms and tilts her head forward letting the mask fall into her hands. She raises her real face to the audience for an instant.

Musical score for measures 247-250. The score continues the previous system, with the right hand playing a series of chords and the left hand providing a steady accompaniment. Measure numbers 247, 247, and 250 are indicated at the start of the staves.

She returns to the box.

Musical score for measures 251-252. The score shows a change in the right hand's melody, with more frequent accidentals. Measure numbers 251 and 251 are indicated at the start of the staves.

She rehangs the Daphne mask on the box, takes the apron from the box and puts it on.

15^{ma}

Musical score for measures 253-256. This system features a very dense and complex texture with many notes and accidentals in both hands. Measure numbers 253 and 253 are indicated at the start of the staves.

255

15^{ma}

She picks up the objects she dropped on the floor.

255

258

15^{ma}

She sees the trombone an instant before the low thump in the music. (Optional stage directions may be created for other instruments or for non-instrumental performances.)

258

261

She goes to the trombone, admires it, and picks it up. When the music re-begins, she moves the slide in unison with the music.

26

She plays the instrument.

261

261

267

During the interlude she sets down the trombone, takes her apron straps in her thumbs with an...

16

15^{ma}

267

267

...expression of discouragement and disgust, then goes to the box, removes the apron and puts it in the box.

15^{ma}

270

270

She takes a whimsical concert jacket (e.g. black with red lapels,) goes to the mirror and looks in it, straightens her hair, conducts to the music for a moment.

273

273

276

276

She takes her trombone.

She twirls with the music.

279

She gets ready to play.

She plays.

27

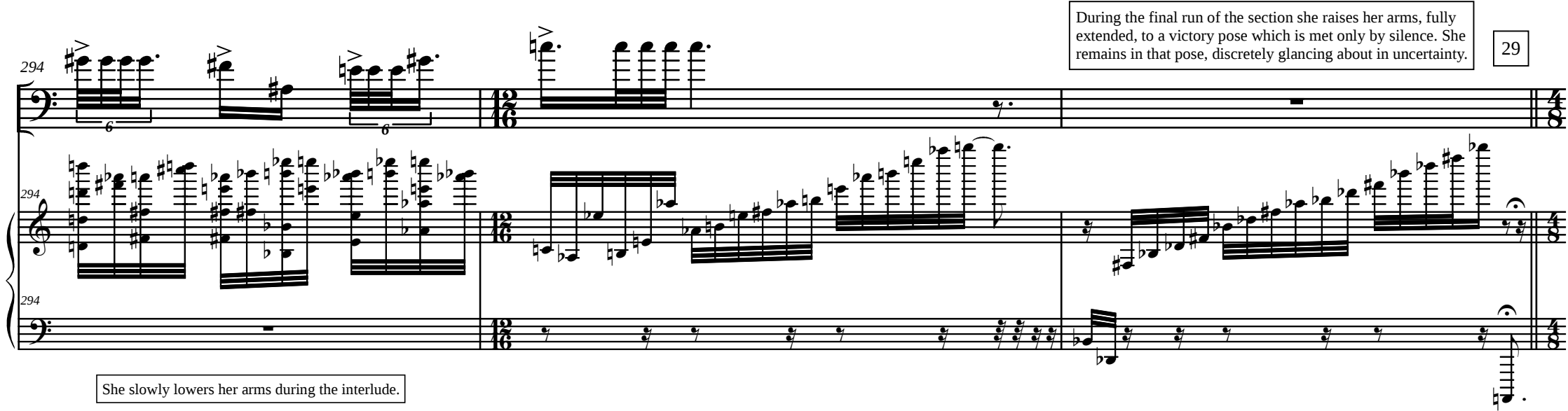
281

gliss.

[illegible]

During the final run of the section she raises her arms, fully extended, to a victory pose which is met only by silence. She remains in that pose, discretely glancing about in uncertainty.

29



She slowly lowers her arms during the interlude.

30

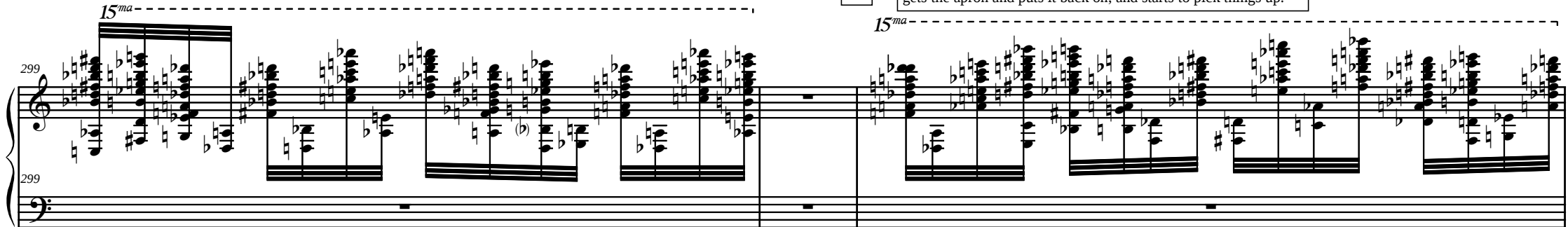
15^{ma} - - - - -



31

She grudgingly and sadly takes off the jacket, puts it on the table, gets the apron and puts it back on, and starts to pick things up.

15^{ma} - - - - -



15^{ma}

302

During the interlude she regains her enthusiasm, tosses the things she has picked up aside...

305

308

takes the trombone and twirls with it.

311

313

Musical score for measures 313-314. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

32

She plays.

315

Musical score for measures 315-316. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in bass clef, and the piano accompaniment is in treble clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

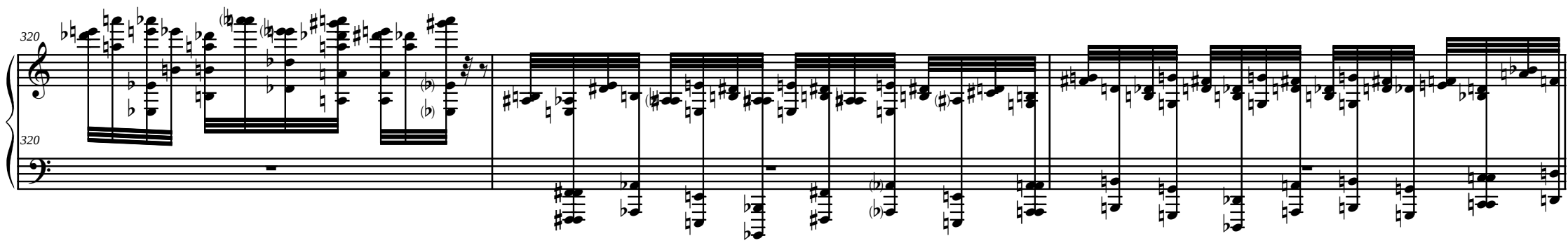
317

During the interlude she puts the jacket back on over the apron, almost dancing and bouncing with joy.

317

Musical score for measures 317-318. The system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in bass clef, and the piano accompaniment is in treble clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

320



323



33 She plays three improvisatory figures, and three half step rising figures, pauses with the music, and ends with a high glisses followed by a low interval of perfect fifth

325



328

328

328

15

15

15

This system contains measures 328, 329, and 330. Measure 328 begins with a bass clef and a whole note chord. Measure 329 continues with a series of eighth notes in the bass and a complex sixteenth-note pattern in the treble. Measure 330 concludes with a final chord in the bass and a descending sixteenth-note scale in the treble. The system ends with a double bar line and the measure number 15.

331

331

331

15

15

15

This system contains measures 331, 332, and 333. Measure 331 starts with a bass clef and a whole note chord. Measure 332 features a complex sixteenth-note pattern in the treble and a series of eighth notes in the bass. Measure 333 concludes with a final chord in the bass and a descending sixteenth-note scale in the treble. The system ends with a double bar line and the measure number 15.

333

333

333

333

335

Improvise wildly to the end of measure 338. Cut off suddenly in time with the music.

335

335

335

337

337

337

342

34 She puts the trombone on the stand, takes off her jacket and apron, draping each over the trombone, and seats herself at the table..

15^{ma}-----

339

339

343

35

She reassembles the dolls, occasionally nervously brushing back her hair with her hand.

2nd doll.

348

348

351

351

3rd doll.

354

354

4th doll.

5th doll.

357

357

6th doll.

7th doll.

8th doll.

9th doll.

10th doll.

She continues to straighten her hair and fidget with the assembled dolls.

36 She goes to the box,

373

373

This system contains measures 373 and 374. The music is in 12/16 time. Measure 373 features a complex piano accompaniment with many beamed sixteenth notes in both staves. Measure 374 continues this texture, with the right hand having a few rests.

rummages for a bottle of pills, returns to the table with them, puts a handful of the pills in the glass on the table, pours water into the glass from the pitcher, twirls the glass to stir them.

375

375

This system contains measures 375 through 379. Measures 375 and 376 have a melody in the right hand while the left hand plays a steady accompaniment. Measures 377 and 378 feature rests in the right hand, with the focus on the piano accompaniment in the left hand. Measure 379 has a melody in the right hand.

380

380

This system contains measures 380 through 383. Measures 380 and 381 have rests in the right hand. Measures 382 and 383 feature a melody in the right hand. The piano accompaniment in the left hand is continuous throughout.

384

384

This system contains measures 384 through 388. Measures 384 and 385 have rests in the right hand. Measures 386 and 387 feature a melody in the right hand. Measure 388 has a melody in the right hand and a final chord in the left hand.

389

She slowly moves the glass to her lips. The pitcher is still in her right hand held at about neck level.

On the last chord she pours the water remaining in the pitcher over her head. Pause. *The playback CD is paused.*

She slowly sets the glass and pitcher on the table. She stands, takes the jacket and apron off the trombone, drops them on the floor, returns to the box with the instrument and sits profile on its stage right side. The light fades to only a spot on Daphne's mask and a spot on Miriam (coming somewhat from the side she facing.) She plays the instrument.

394

Lacrimosa e lento

400

mp *piu mosso* *mp*

407

f *mp* *molto accellarando e crescendo* *poi a tempo*

422 *Vb* *pp* *multiphonic (sing upper note)* *multiphonic* *subito ff*

431 *Come sopra*

438 *morendo poco a poco*

38 After the lament the piano music is resumed and the general light slowly rises, but to a dimmer level than before. She places the trombone on its stand and seats herself at the table.

445

39 She tears a sheet of paper from the notebook, writes a short note and leaves it on the table.

451

455

455

She takes the glass with the dissolved pills, slowly goes to the Daphne mask, stands

459

profile to its stage right side, and looks at it for a moment. *The light fades to only the box and mask.* She kneels into a profile fetal position facing the mask from the stage right side.

459

464

464

469

469

40

The light slowly fades to black by the final set of chords.

473

473

478

478

484

484

41

If continuing on to Part II: The Chair, execute a quick transition during the low piano chords. Remove all props for The Mirror and roll the chair into position (see figure 3.) When the transition is complete fade the music to silence and skip to the next track with the pause button on. Begin playback according to the appropriate entrance for Part II.

Repeat as needed.