

## Miriam, Part I: The Mirror

**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 as described below.

Track number:

### **Daphne**

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 slightly tilted back head.)
2. --The music becomes active. 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.
  - 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.

### **Mary**

*(As always, articulate all gestures with well extended limbs.)*

3. --She quickly turns and goes to the box, hangs Daphne’s mask on a hook on the front of it, rummages in the box and finds Mary’s mask.
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 her 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. *(Remember extensions for all of these gestures.)*
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, and snaps the mask back on (again at the three chord figure.)
6. --She brushes the mask’s hair, once on each side, with her finger tips. 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.

### **Myrtle**

7. --She goes to the box and rummages for Myrtle’s mask.

8. --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, (but without interfering with the movement of the mask.)
9. --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. She looks at the audience.

### **Morticia**

10. --As she returns to the box she removes Myrtle's mask, 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.
11. Her real face has a haughty and seductively glamorous pose. With exaggerated glamour she brings an imaginary cigarette to and from her mouth during the runs at the ends of the phrases. (*With fully extended gestures.*)  
--On the first phrase of the second period she moves to stage right. On the last beat of the phrase she simultaneously puts on the mask and falls into a seductive, glamorous pose standing profile to the public.  
--She continues to use the mask, in and out of profile, with smoking gestures as before.  
--During the third period, she moves to center stage and falls into a pose on the last beat of the first phrase.

--She extends her arm and moves her index finger in a gesture saying "come here," coordinating it with a seductive roll of her shoulder. On the final flourish she brings her forearm back over her right breast.

12. --At the final chords of the section she snaps off the mask, 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.

### **Mask Review**

--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.

--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.

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

### **Dolls**

14. --She seats herself and takes all the dolls apart, arranging their top and bottom halves on the table with fetish-like precision.
15. --She looks at the box, goes to it, 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.

--She bends over at the hips and rears back to play pointing the trombone upward. She suddenly pauses a moment in consternation, because...

16. --she realizes she just saw a run in her nylons. She places the trombone on its stand next to the table, puts her foot on the chair, examines the run, then removes the nylons and puts them in the box.

### **Neglige**

17. --She rummages in the box 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.
18. --At the three chords, she holds it against her chest as if trying it on and dances backwards towards the box kicking each leg out to its own side.
  - On the second phrase she dances forward kicking each leg across the other.
  - On the third phrase 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.

### **Apron**

19. --She returns to the box, rummages for her apron.
20. --She puts it on by looping its neck strap around her neck at the three chord figure and twirls to center stage. She removes various objects (with widely extended gestures) from each of its four pockets: 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.) The doll is the last and in the lower left hand pocket.

--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.

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

### **Dress**

21. --She flows back to the box, puts the apron back in it, and removes the long light beige dress, and puts it on. Her attention is drawn to Daphne's mask slightly before the rising music comes to an end.
22. --She stands to the side of the mask so that she is visible in profile, and touches its twig-hair with four graceful gestures.
  - On the last gesture she takes the mask and immediately flows into a waltz. 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.
  - At the flourish at the end of the first period, she puts the mask on and steps forward a little (taking care not to be late.)
  - She continues waltzing, stage left then right, extending her arms in the direction of her movement at the end of each phrase. (As before, the mask is held in position by tilting the head slightly back.)
  - At the end of the final phrase of the section she steps forward to front, center stage.

### **Daphne**

23. --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.  
--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.

Trombone Section (see next page.)

### **Dolls**

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

### **Pills**

36. She goes to the box, 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.
37. 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 of the track she pours the water remaining in the pitcher over her head. Pause.  
*The playback CD is paused.*

### **Miriam's Lament**

38. 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 trombone 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 "Miriam's Lament."

### **Final Scene**

39. *After the lament the piano music is resumed and the general light slowly rises, but to a dimmer level than before.* After a short pause, she returns to the box, places the trombone on its stand, and seats herself at the table.
40. She tears a sheet of paper from the notebook, writes a short note and leaves it on the table.
41. She takes the glass with the dissolved pills, slowly goes to the Daphne mask, stands 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. The light slowly fades to black by the final set of chords.
41. *During the low piano chords execute a quick transition to "The Chair." Remove all props for "The Mirror" and roll the chair for Part II (see Figure 3.) into position. 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.*

***Alternatives to the trombone.** Optional stage directions and/or adaptations of the music can be created for other*

*instruments. Performers who do not play an instrument can omit the instrumental part and replace it with choreography. The lament can be omitted, sung as a vocalise, or a recording of the trombone used to accompany choreography.*