Ohio Impromptu

(A setting of the play by Samuel Beckett for tenor, actor and piano.)

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L: Listener.
R: Reader.
As alike in appearance as possible.

Light on table mid stage. Rest of stage in darkness.
Plain white deal table, say 3' x 4'.
Two plain armless white deal chairs.

L seated at table facing front towards end of long side audience right.
Bowld head propped on right hand. Face hidden. Left hand on table. Long black coat.
Long white hair.

R seated at table in profile center of short side audience right.
Bowld head propped on right hand. Left hand on table. Book on table.
Before him open at last page.
Long black coat. Long white hair.

Lento; crescendo poco a poco (3' = 48)
tell

In a last attempt to obtain

relied he moved from where they had been so long together to a single room on the far bank.

From its single window he could see the down-stream extremity of the Isle of Swans.
Out to where nothing ever happened. Back to where nothing ever happened.

From this he had once half hoped some measure of relief might follow.

Flow.
Day after day

he could be seen slowly pacing the list.

Hour after hour

In his long black coat, no matter what the weather,
Quarter rest

At the tip he would always pause.

to dwell on the receding stream.

How in joy-ous ed does its two arms con-

flown and flowed u-his-ed on. Then turn and his slow steps re-trace.
Più cantabile ma non più lento

In his dreams he had been warned against this change.

See the dear face and hear the unspoken words.

Come sopra

Stay where we were so long alone together, my shade will comfort you.
Come sospirando.

In this extremity his hold terror of night

laid hold on him again.

After so long a lapse, that as if never been.
so long a lapse that as if never been.

re-doubled force the fearful symptoms described at length page forty paragraph four.

(starts to turn back pages. Checked by L's hand.)
Subito come sopra

White nights now again his portion.

As when his heart was young

No sleep no braving sleep till dawn of day
Meno messo e più quieto

Little is left to tell. One night as he sat trembling, head in hands from head to foot a man approached and said

I have been sent by—and here he named the dear name—to comfort you. Then drawing a worn volume

From the pocket of his long black coat he sat and read till dawn. Then disappeared with
(P-P)

Some time later he appeared a

word

and this time without preamble.

sat and read it through a-

again at the same hour with the same volume.

then disappeared without a word.
So
time
to
unhedled
he
would
read
the
sad
tale

through
And
the
long
night
Then
dis-

peered
word
With never a word exchanged they grew to be as one.

Till the night came at last when having closed the book and done at hand he did not disappear but sat on without a word.

Finally he said...
heard the un-spoken words.
No need to go to him again, even were it in your power.

Come sopra.

So the sad tale a last time told they said.
on though turned to stone

Through the sin

gle window dawn shed no light. From the street no sound of reawakening

Or was it that buried in who knows
rallentando

what thoughts they paid no heed?

Sospeso, quasi lontano, meno mosso (f=ca. 54)

To light of day. To sound of re-awakening. What thoughts who knows. Thoughts, no, not thoughts.

(Simultaneously they lower their right hands to table, raise their heads and look at each other, unblinking. Expressionless.)

mollo rallentando a dimuendo  (Fade out)

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