Rockaby

(A setting of Samuel Beckett's Rockaby for voice, four trombones, and piano.)

William Osborne
Notes

Light
Subdued on chair. Rest of stage dark.
Subsided spot on face constant throughout, unaffected by successive fades.
Either wide enough to include narrow limits of rock, or concentrated on face.
When still or at mid-rock, then throughout speech face slightly swaying in and out of light.
Opening fade-up: First spot on face alone. Long pause. Then light on chair.

W
Prematurely old. Unkempt gray hair.
Huge eyes in white expressionless face.
White hands, holding ends of armrests.

Eyes
Narrow, closed, now open in unblinking gaze. About equal proportions section 1, increasingly closed 2 and 3, closed for good halfway through 4.

Costume
Black lace, high-necked evening gown.
Long sleeves. Jet sequins to glitter when rocking. Incongruous frivolous head-
dress set askew with extravagant trimmings to catch light when rocking.

Attitude
Completely still till fade-out of chair. Then in light of spot head slowly inclined.

Chair
Pale wood highly polished to gleam when rocking. Footrest. Vertical back. Rounded inward curving arms to suggest embrace.

Rock
Slight, Slow. Controlled mechanically without assistance from W.

Voice
Lines in italics spoken by W with V.a.
a little softer each time.
W's "More" a little softer each time.
Towards end of section 4, say from "saying to herself" on, voice gradually softer.

Composer's Notes
1. Follow the author's notes explicitly.
2. Every note is preceded by an accidental except repeated notes or patterns.
3. The music and V should be recorded multi-channel and remixed stereo with the piano subdued and the trombones very soft, reverberated, distant, and ephemeral.
4. The voice sounds one octave lower than written. It should sound authentic and untrained, sometimes more spoken than sung.

* Underlined in score.
Rockaby

William Osborne

(A setting of Samuel Beckett’s play for woman’s voice, four trombones, and piano)

Fade up on W in rocking chair facing front downstage slightly off centre audience left.

Rock and voice together.

Semplice e non troppo cantabile

till in the end the day came in the end came close of a long day when she said

all eyes all sides
V: high and low for another another creature like herself... a little like going to and fro all eyes all sides high and low

Piano

till in the end close of a long day to herself whom else time she stopped time she stopped

V: For another

Piano

Trombone

V: going to and fro

Piano
V:

going to and fro all eyes like herself all sides high and low for another another like herself

Piano

a little like going to and fro.

V:

till in the end close of a long day to herself whom else
time she stopped going to and fro

Piano

Lento
Together echo of "time she stopped," coming to rest of rock, faint fade of light.
W: so in the end close of a long day went back in the end went back in

V: saying to her self whom else time she stopped time she stopped going to and to

Piano

W: so in the end close of a long day in the end went and sat

V: at her window quiet at her window facing other win - dwon

Piano
saying to herself when else time she stopped time she stopped

she was going to and sometimes she went and sat

at her window quiet at her window only window facing other windows other only windows all eyes all sides high and low for another another like herself

it's like another living soul another living soul

Together: echo of "living soul", coming to rest of rock, faint fade of light.
V:

never mind a face behind the pane
burnished eyes like hers

Piano

V:

a blind up like hers

Piano

Trombone

no more

Trombone

an- other creature there somewhere
there behind the pane

V:

till the day came in the end came cloud of a long day
when she said to herself whom else time she stopped
time she stopped
sitting at her window
quiet at her window
only window
facing other windows
other only windows all eyes all sides high
and

Trombone I
Trombone II

Together: echo of time she stopped, coming to rest of rock, faint fade of light.

Piano

V.
"Rock and voice together.

So in the end close of a long day went down in the end went down down the steep stair let down the blindfold down

right down into the old rocker mother rocker where mother sat all the years all in black best black Sat and rocked rocked

till her end came in the end came off her head they said gone off her"
 VN: head but harmless no harm in her dead one day no right dead one night in the rocker in her best black head fallen and the rocker rocking rocking away so in the end

 VN: close of a long day went down in the end went down down the stair step down the blind blind down right down into the old rocker those arms at last and rocked rocked with closed eyes closing eyes she so long all eyes

 VN: Relaxed eyes all sides high and low to and fro at her window to see be seen till in the end close of a long day to herself
Trombone I

V: when she stopped

Piano

Trombone I

V: so in the end close of a long day went down down the steep stair let down the blind and down right down into the old rocker and rocked rocked saying to herself no

Piano

V: done with that the rocker these arms at last saying to the rocker rock her off stop her eyes rock
Together: echo of "rock her off," coming to rest of rock, slow fade out.