

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. Subdued 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. Final fade-out: first chair. Long pause with spot on face alone. Head slowly sinks, comes to rest. Fade out spot.

W

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

Eyes

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

Costume

Black lacy 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 Va 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

W = Woman in chair.
V = Her recorded voice.

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

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Effinero e lontano (♩ = ca. 42)

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

Trombone *p*

Piano *pp*

Rock and voice together.

W:

Trombone *mp* More

Semplice e non troppo cantabile

V:

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

mp

Piano *p* *l.v.*

Trombone *pp*

V:

to herself whom else time she stopped time she stopped going to and fro all eyes all sides

mp

Piano *pp* *sba* *b0* *sba* *sba*

V:

high and low for another an- other like herself another creature like herself

a little like go- ing to and fro all eyes all sides high and low

Piano

crescendo *diminuendo*

V:

for another

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

Piano

Trombone

lontano

pp

V:

going to and fro

all eyes all sides high and low for another an-other living soul one other living soul

Piano

calando