



DAUGHTER OF COLCHIS.

DAUGHTER OF COLCHIS

This is a legend of emotional conflict emerging from the halls of some New England house.

Many a woman living in these houses was a daughter of Colchis in her secret heart. A strangely passionate outward chastity often cloaked a Fury whose madness was the fanatical domination of desire.

The legend concerns a Man and a Woman.

The Man is led by a dream in the guise of a Muse.

The Woman is dominated by a Fury.

It is between the Woman and the Fury that the real conflict takes place.

COLCHIS WAS the barbaric land from which Medea came.

DAUGHTER OF COLCHIS

TIME:

About the time of a tale by Poe or Hawthorne.

PLACE:

A New England house.

CHARACTERS:

THE passer-by

The Woman

Her Fury

The Man

His Muse

DAUGHTER OF COLCHIS

I have used the form of a Greek play as an outline for the dramatic action. It is in no sense a Greek play and this need not go into the program, but as I could not give a musical outline that would be as clear as this, I send it to you. I see it in this form and will work to it in my mind later.

As you see, it has the recurrence of a rondo form in that there is a scene that is dramatic and then an ode that is more lyrical. I feel that the last scene, 4, is the culmination of inevitable development of the first scene. But where the Scene 1 is a more or less simple statement of the rest, ss, brooding quality, the last scene is an interweaving of material. It should be as though all material swept to a crescendo of virtuosity, sensation in that scene. Emotionally it is a pushing back into areas of human experience that are dangerously near limits of human experience.

The Paean is a return to the Lyric and is tragic, beautiful and moving. It is a return to the human with all the poignancy that involves.

The Exodus is short, swift and direct.

I feel this to be tragic in the classical sense without being sad. It is not defeated or frustrated but is a legend of human emotional experience that is common to all in lesser or greater degree. Although I have placed the action as taking place in New England, the music need be in no

sense regional or folk in quality. it has no human aspect except as you see fit to employ that area. I do not see it as rural or Christian but is more a universal pattern.

I find it hard to see it on piano and yet it must be possible to tour. Would it be possible to use winds, brass and percussion? I feel that the percussion should not be used as primitive instruments but rather as delicate instruments of the nerves. I feel that even a Mexican water drum might be used to make hidden areas of feeling objective, rather than as excitements, or accents. Also I should like to use the Voice as an instrument without words. It should have the unhuman quality that certain Negro, Indian, or gypsy voices have at times of great emotional stress, when it becomes an abstract of sensation. Only the Fury uses the voice.

DAUGHTER OF COLCHIS

Outline of characters:

The passer-by

This character assumes the aspect of a neighbor but is not such as a gossip. In the form of the piece she fills the role of the Greek chorus, the link between the audience and the characters.

She is of New England aspect, detached, heroic. She opens and closes the piece as though it were a tale she is unfolding.

The Woman

This is the Daughter of Colchis, who was Medea. She is beautiful and monstrous as the dark female force, possessive and essentially un-human at times of emotional conflict. The real conflict takes place not between the Man and her, but between the Woman and her Fury, herself.

She wears at the opening a large cloak of the period. This cloak is used thru out. When it is taken off at the various moments it reveals her in the three characterizations of herself - the sorceress, the Beloved, the Potential murderess.

Characters - cont.

The Man

He is the poet, the dreamer, the free masculine spirit. He is never quite possessed by the woman altho he is at times under her spell. It is his dream in the guise of a Muse that leads him.

The Muse

She is the opposite of the Woman. She is tall, calm, heroic. She will be dressed as the classical Greek muse, because that is how she would have appeared to a poet of that period.

The Fury

She is the inner aspect of the Woman. She will also be dressed in the Greek costume. She is like our concept of a Maenad, mad, but in a formal sense, almost like a convention of madness. She will be thinner than the Muse, and not so tall. I feel her to be higher in pitch than the Muse. It is she who will use her voice as sound, if we use it.

Outline of Action

PROLOGUE:

This is a short overture, and curtain rises $\frac{1}{2}$ m.

PARADOS:

Passer-by, Muse, Fury $1\frac{1}{2}$

SCENE 1:

The Woman and Man 2

ODE 1:

Man and Muse. Passerby. 2

SCENE 2:

Woman and Fury $2\frac{1}{2}$

ODE 2:

Man and Fury 2

SCENE 3:

Duet - Woman and Man $2\frac{1}{2}$

ODE 3 :

Duet - Woman and Fury $1\frac{1}{2}$

SCENE 4:

SOLO - Woman , climax with company 4

PAEAN:

Duet, Man and Woman;

Solo, Women 1

EODOS:

Passerby $\frac{1}{2}$

20 min.

Action

PROLOGUE:

This is in the nature of a short overture. It takes place before the curtain rises and serves to set the piece.

PARADOS:

The curtain rises, revealing the Woman and Man seated center stage. This ~~be~~ will be either two chairs or a designed piece that makes the whole look like a portrait of the period of Poe's or Hawthorne's tales. The Woman wears a large ~~cloak~~. At back stage to right and left stand the figures of the Muse and Fury, formally ~~arranged~~ one on each side of the stage. They should ~~either~~ ~~either~~ wear the high shoes of the Greek tragic stage or be slightly elevated so as to look taller and of heroic aspect. They are dressed with the elegant formality of the Greek stages, not in "Greek drapes". The whole piece should have a richness, a thinly veiled barbaric quality. The action is -

The passer-by enters. She has a short dance that is more in the nature of a statement about the stage. This whole serves almost as an introduction of characters.

The muse and Fury slowly encircle the stage, establish in their relationship to the Man and the Woman. They exit, as to leave the stage free for the development of the piece.

SCENE 1:

As they exit, the Woman rises and encircles the stage like some dark ~~hair~~ bird or sorceress. There is a short dance

that keeps encircling the Man who sits as ~~the~~ unaware at first. He becomes increasingly aware of the hint of barbaric sorcery. As she finishes beside him, The Man and the Woman suddenly stand facing each other as tho they were under some deadly spell. There is an instant of desperate awareness.

This breaks.

The Man turns:

ODE 1:

This is a ~~lyric~~ lyric strain and the Muse enters. It should be that in the midst of his love for this woman his work or dream carries him from her to another ~~ew~~ world of his own ~~cre~~ating.

There is a hosrt solo passage ~~for~~ the Muse. Then the Man joins her and there is a duet. It has a coolness, an ecstasy that is remote, with a kind of hieratic dance movement. This culminates in Exit of the two. It is as tho she exits first and after a second, perhaps of silence, she follows.

As part of the Ode the Passer-by enters with ~~an~~ characteristic dance pattern in relationship to the Woman and the audience and exits.

SCENE 2:

There is a violent movement by the Womzn. There is the strange eerie cry from th Fury off-stage and she enters. There is a short solo by the Fury. It is a kind of desperate seducti on of the Woman to proceed into the area of intense anger. The Fury whips the cloak from the Woman spinning her into a frenzied turn.

As the cloak that made her the Woman of the period falls

from her she is revealed as the beautiful, sinister Barbarian. Her dress will be brilliant, and of no period, but rich and ornamented.

There follows a duet between the Woman and the Fury. The Fury sits and directs the Woman who acts as though she were hypnotized. She is directed as an orchestra is directed. At times it is slow and hypnotic, at times wild and fast. The Woman is as though under the domination of an outside unlawful force, which she accepts.

She is spun off the stage leaving the Fury wrapped in her cloak and in her place.

ODE 2:

The Man enters. He has a ^{short}~~long~~ solo passage. It is as though he were still under the spell of the Muse. It is again essentially lyric in quality but strong, heroic, open. It finishes with him seating himself beside the Woman as he supposes.

The passer-by again enters and crosses the stage in a characteristic way with the same quality of uniting the stage and audience. She exits.

The Man turns to the Woman and touches her as though to resume his association with her. The Fury rises and flames against him as though to consume him. The presages the last dance of the Four of them I feel. This instant of terror is held.

SCENE 3:

The Woman enters with a rush and interposes herself be-

tween The Man and the Fury.

She is the beloved as he remembers her as a bride. The Fury recedes. There follows a duet between the Man and the Woman. This is such a scene as might have been imagined by Poe as having taken place between himself and his Ligeia. It is ecstatic, sensuous, at the same time, sinister. It holds no peace. This leads to an exit of the Man and Woman.

ODE 3:

There follows a duet between the Muse and the Fury. It is as though they were fighting for supremacy. It is not a fight of human beings, but rather of forces. It is formal. By that I mean that is it theatric- as tho it took place in a highly formal theatre. It is reminiscent of two Amazons. The Muse is vanquished in that she is driven from the scene. The Fury is in control. She stands on the chair.

Again the Passer-by crosses the stage making her accustomed relationship with the audience. She performs her pattern and exits.

SCENE 4:

The Woman as the Jealous One enters. She is malignant, glittering, a true daughter of Goldis at last. There is a solo. It is brooding, a kind of sinister incantation, ancient, ritualistic - ^{as} - tho some dark force were being invoked.

At times, she is queenly, at times like a wounded animal, at times gentle in an unholy way; she is demonic, inhuman, a force rather than a woman.



The Muse enters as tho summoned. She is caught in the cloak of the Woman, which is held by the Fury. The scene is reminiscent of the death of Jason's bride by the cloak that Medea sent her.

The man enters. There follows a tragic dance for the Four of them. It is a kind of perverted square dance with the Fury as the caller. It is like a witches' sabbath. This is broken by the Woman. It is tho she broke the spell over her.

She does this by a definite violent movement such as striking the Fury. There is a breathless moment between The Man and the Woman as the others separate, and resume the positions as the beginning of the piece.

PAEAN:

There follows a tragically tender solo by the Woman, merging into a duet with the Man. This is a return to the lyric, the first time the Woman has entered that area of action. It is a return to the human. It is poignant, beautiful and heroic that is universal in its suffering. The two finish seated as in the beginning.

EXODOS:

The passer-by crosses the stage as before. It is short, simple, and swift in its ending.

At the end all are in the original positions as in the beginning as the curtain falls. Just before the end the Passerby moves directly forward on the stage to the audience and makes her last movements to them. It finishes simply.