

Pendulum Clocks

Libretto of the chamber opera-research for two performers

by ***Rahilia Hasanova***

Soprano who is able to play on percussion instruments and dance

Baritone who is able to play on all types of **Clarinets** (in Eb, Bb, A, Bass) and also on percussion instruments

Percussions:

Glass bottles and/or jars (various sizes) for having different sounds/pitches and filled separately by beans and/or chicken pies

Plastic bottles and/or canisters (also various sizes) filled separately by beans, chicken pies, and lentils

Soup plates

Jingle bells (beaded)

Stainless steel saucepans with covers

Forks and spoons

Wooden mallets (for drumming the table on the stage as a percussion instrument) and other “domestic” percussions

Wind (garden) chimes

Clapping/tapping (and to vocalize at the same time)

Woman – she is pretty and talkative

Man – he is serious, hard-working, but is not talkative

They are in their kitchen: unities of time, place, and action.

There is a big table on the stage. All percussion instruments should be on this table. However, it could be two small tables for placing the instruments more comfortable for performers.

Woman tries to show how hard to prepare a dinner and acts shaking bottles and jars: she is cooking (from the beginning to the end).

Man tries to fix something broken, an iron, for example, and attempts to show how hard he works (from the beginning to almost the end). He must hide under the table small jewelry box for making a surprise effect at the very end of the opera. There are two bracelets (made with jingle-

bells) inside of this box. This is his secret and nobody must know or even imagine it. This must be a surprise for Woman and an audience.

At the beginning they interact like they don't understand and listen to each other. But at the end they find a consensus.

Time by time they should interact with audience looking for understanding and making pantomimic gestures.

"MIE pose" is a frozen gesture.

*Woman needs to have a black large scarf or pelerine on a chair.

W: (*shaking 'bean' jars, making noise and acting like she is cooking*)

Chuck-chock, chuck-chock...

W: ...The Pendulum...the Pendulum...

Chuck-chock, chuck-chock...

M: (*interrupting her several times*) I am trying to concentrate...

W: (*unexpectedly*) A layer of damp sand spread on the floor of the choir, each swing would make a light furrow, and the furrows, changing direction imperceptibly, would widen to form a breach, a groove with radial symmetry – like the outline of a mandala, a mystic rose...

M: (*calling to memory*)

O Rose, thou flower of flowers, thou fragrant wonder,
Who shall describe thee in thy ruddy prime,
Thy perfect fullness in the summer time,
When the pale leaves blushing part asunder
And show the warm red heart lies glowing under?

W: (*trying to return him to the reality*) That was when I saw
the Pendulum... the Pendulum... the Pendulum...

M: I am trying to concentrate...

W: It proves the rotation of the earth. Since the point of... of... of...
Of... (*if something would hurt her finger*) suspension doesn't move...

M: ...Why doesn't it move?

W: Well, because a point...the central point... (*from slow speech, accelerating up to tongue-twister*)... I mean, the one right in the middle of all the points you see... it's a geometric point...you can't see it because it has no dimension... it can't move... not right... or left... not up or down... So it doesn't rotate with the earth... (*very slowly and reproaching*)...You understand?

M: But the earth turns...

W: (*speedily and desperately*) It can't even rotate around itself... There is no "itself" ...

M: But the earth turns...

W: The earth turns, but the point doesn't...

M: I am trying to concentrate... just to concentrate...

W: The earth turns, but the point doesn't... That's how it is...

M: I am trying... trying... I am trying...

W: Just take my word for it! (*repeating speedily several times*)

M: I guess it's the Pendulum's business!

W: (*quietly but angrily*) Stupid... (*murmuring*)... the Pendulum...
the Pendulum...

M: I am trying to concentrate...

W: I am trying to cook...

M: You are not cooking...

W: I am... I am cooking...

M: No... you are not... You are not cooking...

W: Yes, I am... I am cooking... (*she suddenly stops, making ironic look at him and mocking*)... (*acrimoniously*)...Talking-cooking...

M: I am trying to fix... I am trying to concentrate...

W: (*unexpectedly*)... Daisy...

M: (*pause... he looks incomprehension*)

... Daisy... Hmmm... Daisy-Daisy... Daisy... Who is Daisy?

W: Daisy family... Everlastings have small, globular flower heads clustered at the top of their pale, woolly stems...

M: I am just trying... (*trying to breach her nonstop speaking*)

W: Black-eyed Susan or Robin... Robin-plantain...each daisy-like flower, with its numerous golden-yellow rays and chocolate button... blooming in spring, from April to June... Superficially it looks like an Aster... but need not be mistaken...because Asters are strictly flowers of...of... of... of... (*like something hurts her finger again*) late summer and autumn...

M: (*getting angry*) The stars are everywhere tonight,
 Above, beneath me and around;
 They fill the sky with powdery light
 And glimmer from the night-strewn ground;
 For where the folded daisies are
 In every one I see a star!

W: I am just trying to cook... I am cooking... the Pendulum...
 ...the Pendulum...

M: (*discontentedly*) Fine words do not produce food!

W: In the world all things are two and two... Love is composed of a
 single soul inhabiting two bodies... (*showing 'voila'*)... Aristotle...

M: (*loosing a patience, ironically*) Buzzwords do not produce a dinner!

W: Only from the heart can you touch the sky... (*in bad part but showing an
 arrogance*)... Rumi... Hmmm... Jalaluddin Rumi...

M: I am trying to work and concentrate... (*trying to have a pacification*)

W: ... the Pendulum... the Pendulum... It's the story of two lovers in
 Verona who...

M: Shakespeare's story...

W: ... the tragic love is probably most famous love story...

M: ... the Pendulum... the Pendulum... (*interrupting and teasing*)

W: A borrowed clarinet does not finish a tune!

M: If you are building a house and a nail breaks, do you stop building, or
 do you change a nail?

W: ... the Pendulum... the Pendulum... the Pendulum of Foucault proves
 that the earth rotates... Mandala... the Flower of live...

M: I have tried to concentrate... I have just tried...

W: Birdsong, wind, the water's face.

Each flower, remembering the smell:
 I know, you're close by...

M: This is now. Now is. Don't postpone till then.

Spend the spark of iron on stone.

Sit at the head of the table.

Dip your spoon in the bowl.

Seat yourself next to your joy

and have your awakened soul pour wine.

Branches in the spring wind,
 easy dance of jasmine and cypress.
 Cloth for green robes has been cut from pure absence.
 You're the tailor, settled among his shop goods,
 quietly sewing...

W: ... jasmine and cypress... (*dreamily and calling to memory*)
 From timid jasmine buds,
 that keep their odour to themselves all day,
 But, when the sunlight dies away,
 Let the delicious secret out
 To every breeze that roams about...

M: (*softening*) The stories of lovers who believed in each other and their love even if the whole world was against them still inspire and often make us sad...

W: (*tongue-twisting without emotions*) A closer investigation of the greatest love stories in history reveals that many of the most famous lovers met a tragic end... As I was trying to say... Romeo and Juliet...
 Tristan and Iseult...Paris and Helen...

M: ... (*dreamily*) Orpheus and Eurydice... Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal...

W: ... Lancelot and Guinevere...

M: ... Leila and Majnun...

W: ... Cleopatra and Mark Antony...

M: (*gobbling*) ...Bonnie and Clyde... (*abruptly cutting conversation because he is hungry*)

W: (*changing her voice, threateningly, warming to one's role, suddenly putting on a black scarf or pelerine like a judge and pointing out to him*)... Several neighbors heard her bloodcurdling screams, not yours!

M: (*sighing, losing interest*)... I was trying to concentrate...

W: (*trying to change a direction of a conversation and desperately*)...the Pendulum... the Pendulum ...the clock pendulum...

M: What?

W: (*very fast*)...Sundials... Moon phase dials... calendar dials... spring-driven clocks... water clocks... early mechanical clocks... astronomical clocks... Foucault pendulum...

M: What?

W: ...Marine chronometers... electric clocks... analog clocks... digital

clocks... atomic clocks... electric clocks... quartz clocks...
multi-display clocks...

M: (*loudly*)...Tactile clocks... audible clocks... alarm... alarm... alarm
clocks...

W: (*fast*) ...the Pendulum... the Pendulum... Pendulums are used to
regulate pendulum clocks...

M: (*wearily*) I had just tried...just tried... I am tired...

W: (*faster*) ...**a pendulum clock** is a clock that uses a pendulum... a
swinging weight, as its timekeeping element... The advantage of a
pendulum for timekeeping is that it is a harmonic oscillator. It swings
back and forth in a precise time interval dependent on its length, and
resists swinging at other rates. The pendulum clock was the world's
most precise timekeeper...the pendulum clocks must be stationary to
operate...

M: ...the Pendulum... the Pendulum...(*angrily*)

W: ...the pendulum... the Pendulum...(*fearless*)
mercury pendulum... gravity-swing pendulum... Royal pendulum...
torsion pendulum... vacuum pendulum...

M: Are you cooking or talking?

W: (*she doesn't care acting like a theater hero*) "My dear man, it seems to me
you would win great honor for yourself if you went for help to save our
lives"

M: "Your own, by the way, is also in great danger" ...

(Sudden blackout and noise... the iron on the table is lightened.

Man is too frustrated but this is just his fantasy... After a mess

*in his head and sudden lightening of the stage, he is stopping to think bad but for some
strange reason he is questioning an audience... maybe for some advice?..)*

M: ...No?..

W: We never know how high we are
Till we are called to rise;
And then, if we are true to plan,
Our statures touch the skies...

M: (*interrupting*)... It's near dinnertime...

M/W: Who has no found the heaven below
 Will fail of it above.
 God's residence is next to mine,
 His furniture is love.

M: (*gently*) ...It's already dinnertime...

W: ... the Pendulum... the Pendulum... A **pendulum clock** is a clock that uses a pendulum... the pendulum clock was invented by Christian Huygens, who actually was inspired by investigations of pendulums by Galileo... Galileo... Galileo... (again like something hurts her finger)

M: ...dinnertime...

W: ...Galileo discovered the key property that makes pendulums useful timekeepers... Industrial Revolution... and 'voila'...

M: (*interrupting*)...Computer real time clocks... radio clocks...

W: ...Slave clocks...(*pause and then*)
 ... Slave clocks, used in large institutions and schools... kept time with a pendulum, but were wired to a master clock... a master clock... master clock in the building, and periodically received a signal to synchronize them with the master... the master... A pulse from the master clock triggered later versions without pendulums...

M: ...the master clock... grandfather clock...

W: ...400-day clock or... perpetual clock or... anniversary clock... (*pause*)
 ...anniversary clock ... sometimes given as a wedding memorialization gift... gift...

M: ...a memorialization... a memory... (*mocking*) a memorial...

W: (*speaking aside*) "Good talkers are little doers"
 (*but continuing to press him*)...banjo clocks... bracket clocks... bracelet clocks...bracelet...

M: It was to late for man,
 But early yet for God;
 Creation impotent to help,
 But prayer remained our side.
 How excellent the heaven,
 When earth cannot be had;
 How hospitable, then, the face
 Of our old neighbor, God!

W: ...musical clocks... pipe organ clocks... bracket... bracelet clocks...
 bracket clocks... bracelet... gift... gift... gift...

M: (*screaming and staying face to face*)...cuckoo... cuckoo... cuckoo...
 speaking clocks... cuckoo... cuckoo... talking
 clocks...cuckoo...cuckoo...cuckoo... cuckoo clocks...

W: I am talking... speaking... talking and cooking...

M: ...King Shahriyar and Sheherazade... Tarzan and Jane...

W: ...Krishna and Radha...

M: ...Adam and Eve...

W: ...Perseus and Andromeda...

M: (*very angrily*)...Othello and Desdemona...

<p>A silente darkened scene shoving man's imagination - ad libitum.</p>

W: ... The love of women
 Is made attractive to men.
 God has arranged it: how can they avoid
 What god has arranged?
 Inasmuch as God created women
 So that Adam might take comfort in her,
 How can Adam be parted from Eve?
 Woman is a ray of God.
 She is not that earthly beloved:
 She is creative, not created.

M: ...the Pendulum... the Pendulum... (*showing the fixed iron*)
 Everything that is made beautiful and fair and lovely
 Is made for the eye of the one who sees...

W: (*gently and gratefully*)...400-day clock or... perpetual clock or... anniversary clock... (*pause*)
...anniversary clock ... sometimes given as a wedding gift... gift... bracelet clocks... a bracelet...

M: ...bracelets?

W: ...a bracelet...

M:(*giving her the small box that was hidden under the table*) ... the bracelet...

W: (*surprised by the present and showing her tremendous happiness she intensively shakes this box, making noise*) ...the bracelet... the bracelet clock... (*She puts on jingle-bells-bracelets*)

W: The Pendulum... the Pendulum...(joyful)

M/W: The Pendulum... the Pendulum...

W: (*looking at her bracelet and demonstrating it to audience*)
... the Pendulum... the Pendulum...

M: ... The earth turns!

(*She is happy because she has her anniversary gift...
He is happy because she is happy...*)

Baltimore, June 14, 2014

Used quotes by

Umberto Eco "Foucault's Pendulum"

Jalaluddin Rumi "The book of Love"

Emily Dickinson "Collected Poems"

Samuel Carr "ode to Flowers"

Roger Tory Peterson "Wildflowers"

Charlotte and Wolf Leslau "Africa proverbs"
Wikipedia free encyclopedia