

Leonore

By

William Osborne

Old woman, 66, two wheeled grocery cart, enters singing "So ein Tag" and seats herself on a park bench. Feeds pigeons. We hear her thoughts from a pre-recorded tape of the actor's voice.*

(The can be perform by a man and entitled "Leonard." Make small gender adaptations to the text as necessary.)

So ein' Tag so wunderschön wie Heute
So ein Tag so wunderschön wird's nie.

She seats herself.

Here I am again little birdies. Been comin' here for a year since my retirement.

Pause.

And always sayin' I was gonna play for you.

Pause.

Never have. Can't seem to get in shape anymore, or get inspired, or some other trouble...

Long pause. Fumbles in bag, brings out banana.

Besides, what interest do you have to hear an old worn-out trombonist playing old worn-out excerpts?

She pulls down a portion of the banana peel.

Seems better to just be quiet.

Finishes peeling banana, takes bit.

Besides, can't play with your mouth full...gets all sorts of gunk in the trombone.

Takes another bite of banana, sits a moment, bored.

Wonder if the old thing still works.

Short pause.

If I still work.

Fumbles in bag and brings out music.

Anyway, I brought my music.

Leafs through music.

Must've played this stuff fine hundred times.

Fumbles in bag, brings out and sets up music stand. Carefully sets music on stand. Takes bite of banana. Throws some food to pigeons. Brings trombone out of bag, puts it together, tries to test slide unsuccessfully, consternation on face, releases slide lock, moves slide with some difficulty.

Gotten rusty. Everythin's getting' so old.

Brings music closer.

Can't even see anymore.

Stands up and announces to imaginary audience:

And now ladies and gentlemen...and birdies... I perform for you the orchestra trombone excerpt of all excerpts, Ravel's Bolero.

*She makes a ludicrous warm-up noise. Dust flies out of bell.***

She looks down bell non-plussed.

Gotta warm up you know. Been a while.

Starts Bolero but breaks into a coughing fit in middle. Regains composure.

Funny how the old lip goes. Nothin' to show after all these years.

Pause

Can't seem to keep goin'.

She tries excerpt again, comically but successful.

What do you think of that birdies?

Pause.

Just as boring as it ever was.

Looks into mouthpiece still in horn, seems curious, takes slide off, mouthpiece out, looks down blow pipe, makes face of total disgust.

Gotta quit eating those bananas before I play.

Fumbles in bag, brings out toothbrush, brushes teeth, spits behind her, sets toothbrush down. Flits through excerpts to "Die Walküre."

And now birdies, I perform for you "Ride of the Walkuries."

Sits down and plays, suddenly cutting off in the middle. With bored disgust:

What bullshit.

Pause.

Music like that could've only come out of Munich.

Pause.

They were all sick men, those composers. No wonder we're all nuts, the orchestra's under the influence of a bunch of sickos! Sick, every one of them.

Long pause.

Hmm. Maybe that's why we're sick, too.

Long pause.

At least anyway, the conductors are sick. What kinda person would wanna stand up there and tell everyone what to do?

Short reflection.

Maniacs!

Pause.

But of course, what kind of people would sit there for thirty years and let themselves be told what to do?

Pause. Dry laugh.

Puppets! Maniacs and puppets, that's what composers want.

Pause.

Well Birdies, I was an orchestra puppet for thirty years and I'm supposed to be proud of it. Got my gold wristwatch and gave a little speech.

Pause.

Seems I'd finally get around to doin' somethin' on my own. Make somethin' interestin' out of this damned slushpump. Do somethin' different!

She tries feebly to make something new, vaguely sounding like
"Pond."

No ideas!

Pause. Flitting through music.

Well, there's always Strauss, better'n nothin', I suppose. A creator of maniacs and puppets...like me. No wonder so many were Nazis. Write a non-Jewish "Midsummer Night's Dream" and then make-up for it by building drums for the little kiddies.

Pause. Bitterly:

So they can march better.

Pause.

And are we puppets any better?

Long pause.

Birdies, here's "Till" for you.

Puts trombone near mouth.

Written by President of the Reich's Musikkammer. Sickos, they were all sickos.

She plays "Till."

Till Puppenspiel.

Pause. Sarcastically:

"Mein Heldenleben." Two hundred times I must of played it. Seems they'd get sick of hearing it...all those heroes out there. Anyway, I'm done with all that. Free! Free to sit here and play for the pigeons. Thirty years I played in that orchestra. Musta played "Leonore" two hundred times, the two notes over and over for twenty minutes. Typical trombone part. The same two notes over and over in the same piece played over and over.

Pause.

I'd done just as well to've thrown those concert-hall-pigeons corn like I'm throwin' you.

Pause.

But this day's special Birdies.

Getting excited, she fumbles in bag for mute and pulls trombone's trigger tuning slide out.

This day's special. I'm free. Free.

Pause. Tests new sounds as in "Pond."

Just gotta build up the courage, that's all. Leap! Leap into the light!

Long pause.

But where's the courage?

Pause.

Too many years in that orchestra, I suppose. First bassoon always walkin' around with his mouth puckered up like a hen's ass. There were times when

one wondered why that trumpet player didn't unzip his pants and play on his penis directly.

Pause.

Leaves one feeling as if she ought to be dead...as if she were dead. Sixty-six years old and trying to begin living.

Pause.

Seems no place to go from here.

Pause.

Might as well be at peace.

Plays part of "Pond."

Thirty years of abuse and degradation but one doesn't care after a while. No different than all those other pigeons scavenging about.

Pause.

Same dull Puppenspiel everyday.

Pause.

Those heroes.

She plays more of "Pond."

Well birdies, maybe it's time for me to go home again. Another day and no song.

Pause.

Just more silence.

Pause.

One stops playing and it's so utterly quiet birdies...so utterly quiet.

Long pause. She plays "Pond".

**Learn the melody from the demo CD or website recording.*

*** Attach coil of tubing (such as plastic tubing sprayed gold) to the trigger area of the trombone with one end near the mouthpiece and the other sticking upward. Fill the tube with flour and blow it out.*

Performance Instructions

1. The symbol in Figure 1 indicates a vibrato approximately a half tone in width played about a quarter tone above and below the indicated pitch. It is modelled after the vibrato used in Japanese Shakuhachi music. Width and speed vary according to expressive nuance.
2. The symbol in Figure 2 indicates a trill or tremolo created with the F-horn trigger.
3. The F-horn tuning slide is removed for the duration of the work. Notes played through the open tube of the F-horn are indicated by the noteheads in Figure 3.
4. Create mutliphonics by singing the upper and playing the lower pitch. Explore the intonation and balance to create the fullest resonance.

Figure 1 Figure 2 Figure 3

Vb ~~~~~ *Fr* ~~~~~

The image shows three measures of musical notation on a single staff. The first measure, labeled 'Figure 1', contains a whole note with a wavy line above it and the label 'Vb'. The second measure, labeled 'Figure 2', contains a whole note with a wavy line above it and the label 'Fr'. The third measure, labeled 'Figure 3', contains two notes: the first is a whole note with an 'x' above it, and the second is a dotted quarter note with a diamond above it. The staff begins with a bass clef and a common time signature.

Pond

Lento

Abbie Conant and
William Osborne

Vb *pp* *poco* *rall. e dim* *ppp* *(subtones)* *Vb* *8ba* *ppp* *rall. e dim.*

p *rall. e dim.* *rall. e dim.* *rall. e dim.* *rall. e dim.*

mp *pp*

I *VII* *Vb* *I* *VI* *Vb* *(breath attack)* *Vb*

Vb *Vb* *Vb* *II* *Vb* *Vb* *Vb* *Vb*

cres. poco a poco *mf* *f* *f*

(keep slide in continual motion, create a doppler effect)

To coda *pp* *III* *I* *V* *V* *II*

II *III* *I* *II* *III* *II*

pp *III* *II*

Harmon mute *close gradually* *close gradually*

II *III* *IV* *V* *I* *II* *III* *IV*

p

(gradual opening and closing of mute)

III II III VI I VI I II III IV V

p

close gradually

I II III IV III II III VI I VI I

close gradually

mp

Fr. (trill with trigger)

Fr.

senza sordino
multiphonic (sing upper note, play lower)

3 3

pp < > pp < >

Fr.

Vb

(subtones)

Vb

pp < > p < > pp < > pp < >

8ba

Vb

Vb

3 3

pp < > p < > pp < > ppp

VI

D.C. al Coda

Coda

Vb

pp

Vb

(subtones)

Vb

8ba

ppp rall. e dim.