

The Enchanted Stone
Chamber Opera in One Act

By Martin Halpern

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Composer, 2009)

Freely based on W.B. Yeats's play *The Pot of Broth*

Time: the early 20th century

(Lights come up on the kitchen of Sibby Coneely's house. Upstage center, a stove with a large pot on it, and a cupboard beside it. Stage right, the frame of a half-opened door.)

1 *Andantino* ♩ = 36

Piano *mp*

(A Tramp, in his early thirties, enters right.)

3 *Poco piu* ♩ = 40

Pno. *mf*

(He crosses to the door and peers in.)

(He mimes
knocking on
the door.)

5 *f*

Pno.

7

Tramp

Hel-lo! Is an - y - one with-in?

7 *mp* *mf* *mp*

Pno.

(Getting no response, he slips in through the door and crosses to the stove.)

Pno.

9

mf

(He lifts the lid off the pot and looks inside.)

Tramp

11

Noth - ing. —

Pno.

11

f

mp

f

(He replaces the lid and turns toward the audience.)

Tramp

13

Poco meno ♩ = 36

Noth - ing but boil - ing wat - er.

Pno.

13

mf

mp

Tramp

15

How ti - red I am from walk - ing,

Pno.

15

mf

17

Tramp

and fast - ing since this time yes - ter - day.

Pno.

mf

18

Tramp

And this the on - ly house for miles a - round

Pno.

19

Tramp

where I can hope to find my din-ner. But the name on that door

Pno.

21

Tramp

is not a hop - ful one: the wid - ow Sib - by Co - nee - ly,

Pno.

23

Tramp

known for her pride as host - ess for those in high sta - tions,

Pno.

f

25

Tramp

but oth - er - wise, the mean - est of mi - sers,

Pno.

26

Tramp

who'd skin a flea for its hide. It is said

Pno.

mf

28

Tramp

that if all the saints from heav - en came bare - foot be - fore her,

Pno.

30

Tramp

beg - ging for a scrap to eat, she'd send them hung - ry on their way.

Pno.

32

Tramp

So how will I get a-round her,

Pno.

34

Tramp

if there's no char - i - ty in her for low - ly crea - tures like me?

Pno.

(He takes a small stone out of his pocket.)

36

Tramp

Well there is this stone I picked up to

Pno.

38

Tramp

scare off that yel-ping dog be-fore. Might it pos-sib - ly serve me here,

Pno.

Detailed description: This block contains the first system of music, measures 38 and 39. The Tramp part is written in bass clef. The lyrics are: "scare off that yel-ping dog be-fore. Might it pos-sib - ly serve me here,". The Piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and slurs.

(He takes a pouch out of his other pocket.)

40

Tramp

in a diff -'rent way? To-geth - er with *this* per-haps.

Pno.

Detailed description: This block contains the second system of music, measures 40 and 41. A stage direction is written above the Tramp part: "(He takes a pouch out of his other pocket.)". The Tramp part is in bass clef with lyrics: "in a diff -'rent way? To-geth - er with *this* per-haps." The Piano accompaniment is in treble and bass clefs, featuring slurs and triplets.

42

Tramp

Fine bouill - on pow - der made by the priests,

Pno.

Detailed description: This block contains the third system of music, measures 42 and 43. The Tramp part is in bass clef with lyrics: "Fine bouill - on pow - der made by the priests,". The Piano accompaniment is in treble and bass clefs, featuring slurs.

44

Tramp

which that kind - ly vic - ar gave me _____ to cook a broth for my - self

Pno.

46

Tramp

by drop - ping it in boil - ing wat - er. And a thick and tas - ty broth it was, —

Pno.

48

Tramp

— with the sweet - est ar - o - ma.

Pno.

f

49

Tramp

Yes, ——— that might work!

Pno.

mf

(Putting the stone and pouch
back into his pockets)

50

Tramp

It might just work, if I keep my wits a-bout me. ———

Pno.

mp

(Sibby, mid-thirties,
comes quickly
through the door,
holding a plucked
chicken.)

52

Tramp

For sure-ly it's been by those wits that I've won me man - y a din-ner!

Pno.

ff

54 *Piu mosso* ♩ = 44

Sibby
(Turning to her) You dared walk in here un-in - vi - ted?

Tramp
A-ha! The la - dy of the house!

Pno.

56 *Poco meno* ♩ = 40

Tramp
For - give me, mad - am. I knocked, think - ing you were in.

Pno.
mp *ff*

58 *Piu mosso* ♩ = 48

Sibby
You're out to steal some - thng!

Tramp
Oh no!

Pno.
mp

Meno mosso ♩ = 44

59

Tramp

I'd nev-er steal an-y-thing from an-y-one, as God is my wit-ness!

Pno.

mf *f*

61

Sibby

Then you're one of those beg-gar-men who in-fest the count-ry-side.

Pno.

mf *f*

63

Sibby

Well you may quit this house at once! There's noth-ing for you here.

Pno.

mf

Rit. -----

Meno mosso $\bullet = 36$

65

Tramp

If I were a beg - gar - man,

Pno.

66

Tramp

it's from com - mon folks I'd be beg - ging,

Pno.

67

Tramp

not a grand la - dy like your - self,

Pno.

68

Tramp

who is on - ly used to the com - pan - y of high - up no - ble peo - ple.

Pno.

70

Sibby

Piu mosso ♩ = 44

Some of whom are com - ing la - ter for the feast I'll pre - pare them.

Pno.

f

72

Sibby

Poco meno ♩ = 40

So off with you now!

Tramp

You mis - take me, mad - am,

Pno.

mp *mf*

74

Tramp

if you think I've come ask - ing.

Pno.

75

Tramp

It's giv - ing I'm more used to.

Pno.

76

Tramp

I was nev - er yet in a house where there would - n't be wel - come for me

Pno.

78

Sibby

And just what is it

Tramp

if I was to re-turn.

Pno.

80

Sibby

the likes of you may have to give?

Pno.

f

(Taking the stone out of his pocket)

81

Tramp

Some-thing I'm sure will int-'rest you. I hold here an ob-ject

Pno.

mp

83

Tramp

small of size and light of weight, but heav - y with en - chant - ment.

Pno.

mf

85

Sibby

En - chant - ment?

Tramp

If you knew how I came by it,

Pno.

87

Tramp

you would - n't ques - tion that word. So please bear with me a while, —

Pno.

mp

89

Tramp

day! — as I tell you how it hap - pened.

Pno.

90

Sibby

Ve - ry well, but brief - ly!

Tramp

Thank you.

Pno.

mf *f* *mp*

91

Poco meno ♩ = 36

Tramp

One af - ter - noon, not long a - go, I was out with my faith - ful dog

Pno.

mf

93

Tramp

chas - ing a hare through the thick - et,

Pno.

94

Tramp

when all of a sud - den he stopped short, my dog, at the edge of a grav - el pit,

Pno.

96

Tramp

and star - ted shiv - er - ing all o - ver. I came up be - side him,

Pno.

f *mp*

98

Tramp

and there be - fore us sat _____ a lit - tle old man.

Pno.

100

Tramp

But more than just an old man, see - ing how fright - ened my dog was

Pno.

mf

102

Sibby

Piu mosso ♩ = 44

I said brief - ly!

Tramp

at the ve - ry sight of him. Yes.

Pno.

f

Meno mosso $\bullet = 36$

104

Tramp

Bear with me a mo-ment long - er. For you see, the strange thing was,

Pno.

mp

106

Tramp

he seemed fright - ened too, by my shiv - er - ing dog.

Pno.

mf

107

Tramp

So reach - ing deep in - to his pock - et, he drew out this stone,

Pno.

109

Tramp

held it out to me, and said,

Pno.

110

Tramp

"Call off your dog and I'll give you this."

Pno.

f

111

Tramp

"What is it?" I asked. But all he'd answer was,

Pno.

mp

113

Tramp

"some - thing you'll trea - sure hav - ing." So I took it.

Pno.

mf *f*

115

Sibby

Van - ished?

Tramp

And the min - ute I did, he simp - ly van - ished.

Pno.

mf *f* *mp*

117

Tramp

Down in - to the earth, or in - to thin air.

Pno.

117

119

Tramp

Which is why I'm so sure he was - n't just an old man.

Pno.

mf

121

Sibby

You ex-pect me to be-lieve that yarn?

Tramp

You may, good mad - am,

Pno.

f *mp*

123

Tramp

when you learn what pow - ers there are in this lit - tle stone.

Pno.

mf *f*

125

Sibby

What kind of pow-ers?

Tramp

I have-n't dis-cov-ered all of them.

Pno.

mf

127

Tramp

But as a small ex - am - ple of what I have dis - cov - ered,

Pno.

129

Tramp

I'll show you how it can make a broth

Pno.

130

Tramp

as rich as ev - er you've tas - ted,

Pno.

132

Tramp

fla - vored with all kinds of del - i - cate herbs,

Pno.

133

Tramp

pro - vi - ded there's a pot a - vail - ab - le, with boil - ing wat - er in - side it.

Pno.

(Pointing at the pot on the stove) *(Holding up the chicken)*

Sibby

Well *there's* such a pot, all read - y for cook - ing *this*.

Pno.

Tramp

Hold off on *that* a-while, till you see what this stone can do

Pno.

(With his back to her, he lifts the lid off the pot, drops the stone into it, then quickly takes the pouch out of his pocket, drops some of the bouillon into the pot, and puts the pouch back in his pocket.)

Tramp

all by it - self.

Pno.

(Putting the lid
back on the pot)

140 *Meno mosso* ♩ = 32 *Piu mosso* ♩ = 40

Tramp

There! The pro - cess has be - gun.

Pno.

mp *mf*

142

Tramp

The broth has start - ed sim - mer - ing.

Pno.

mf

143

Sibby

Let me see!

Tramp

Ah no,

Pno.

144

Tramp

not yet! — It could bring bad luck to look at it too soon.

Pno.

mp

146

Tramp

But while we're wait-ing, I'll tell you of an-oth-er of the pow-ers —

Pno.

148

Tramp

— with-in that stone. If this were Fri-day,

Pno.

mf

150

Tramp

or an - y day du - ring Lent, and some kind of meat, be it

Pno.

mp

152

Tramp

chick - en, beef, pork, or mut - ton, got laid in that pot be - side it,

Pno.

mf

154

Tramp

in an in - stant

Pno.

155

Tramp

that meat would turn black as coal and ut-ter-ly in-ed-ib-le.

Pno.

f

157

Sibby

It would?

Tramp

Most cert-ain-ly. For as an-y good Cath-o-lic knows,

Pno.

mp

159

Sibby

Of course.

Tramp

meat is for-bid-den then.

Pno.

mf

160

Tramp

I my-self, in a mo-ment's fol - ly, laid pork be-side it one Fri-day,

Pno.

162

Tramp

with that ver - y re-sult. So you see, good mad - am,

Pno.

164

Tramp

not on - ly is that stone en - chant - ed; it is al - so blessed!

Pno.

tr

f

166

Sibby

Well this is nei-ther Fri-day nor Lent. So how can you prove that claim?

Pno.

mf

168

Tramp

You're right, I can't. At least not to-day.

Pno.

170

Tramp

But I can prove, right here and now, how the op-po-site is true,

Pno.

173

Tramp

if you'll hand me that chick - en you're hold - ing.

Pno.

174

Sibby

This chick - en's for to - night's din - ner!

Tramp

So it *will* be when it's cooked.

Pno.

176

Tramp

But first, you must see _____ how it does - n't turn black,

Pno.

178

Tramp

but white as your li - ly - white skin, as the broth thick - ens a - round it.

Pno.

(He takes the chicken from her, lifts the lid off the pot, drops the chicken into it, and quickly puts the lid back on.)

180

Pno.

f

182

Tramp

Yes, there! It's hap - pen - ing!

Pno.

183

Tramp

The stone is do - ing its work, turn - ing that chick - en white.

Pno.

mp *mf*

185 *(Both listen as to a simmering inside the pot.)*

Sibby

185 Show it to me!

Pno.

f *mp*

187 *(He lifts the lid off. She looks inside.)*

Tramp

All right, you may have a peek now.

Pno.

mf *f*

$\bullet = 44$

189

Sibby

Well yes, it is turn-ing white, as it al-ways does when it's boil-ing,

Pno.

189

Poco meno $\text{♩} = 40$

191

Sibby
stone or *no* stone.

Tramp
But does it pro-duce — a broth like that,

Pno.
mp *mf*

194

Tramp
or an a - ro - ma like that?

Pno.

196

Sibby
No, not by it - self.

Tramp
Of course not.

Pno.

197

Tramp

For it's the stone that's mak - ing that hap - pen, by vir - tue of the herbs in - side it.

Pno.

199

Sibby

It is a sweet a - ro - ma! Like none from those herbs

Pno.

201

Sibby

I've been us - ing!

Tramp

Which will grow sweet - er and strong - er,

Pno.

mp

Poco meno ♩ = 36

203

Tramp

as will the fla - vor of the broth, as the stone con - tin - ues its work.

Pno.

mf

205

Sibby

(She stands inhaling the aroma deeply.)

Well I still don't be - lieve that yarn.

Pno.

207

Sibby

day! a - bout the lit - tle old man. But how - ev - er you *did* get that stone,

Pno.

209

Sibby

I might give a lot to own one like it.

Pno.

211

Tramp

As far as I know, there is none, an - y - where.

Pno.

213

Sibby

Then what might you ask for *that* one?

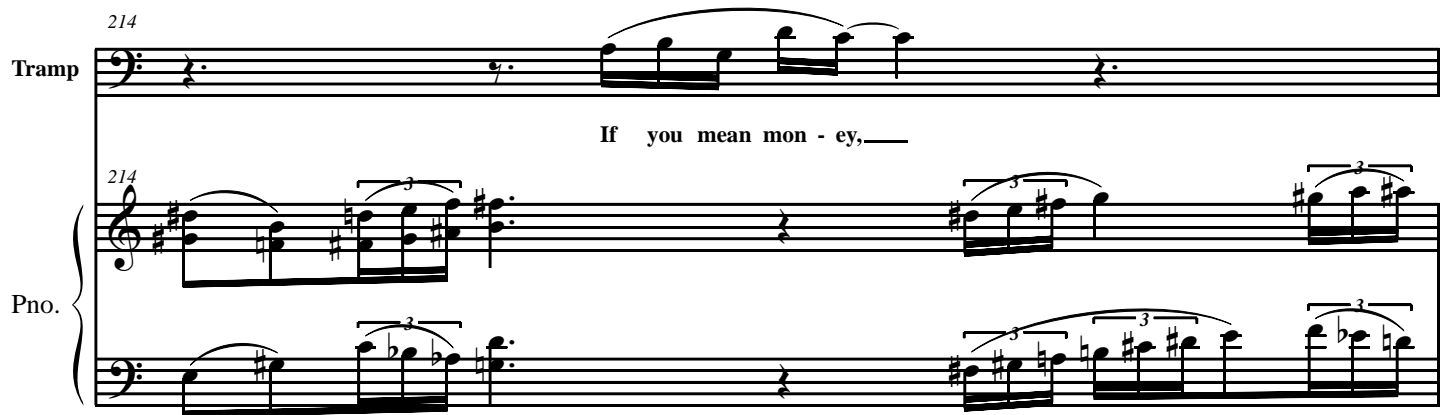
Pno.

214

Tramp

If you mean mon - ey, —

Pno.

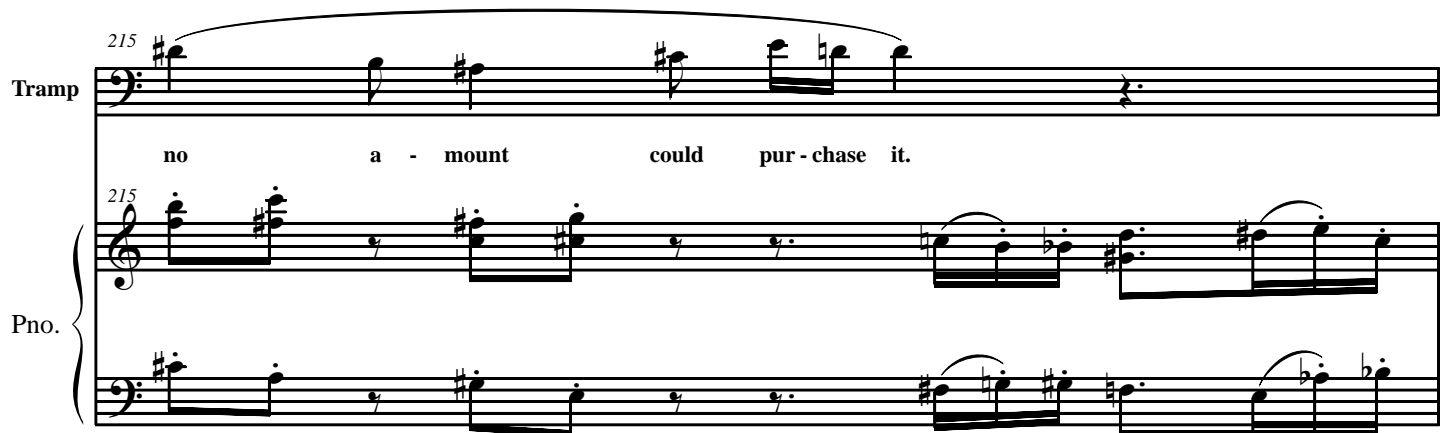


215

Tramp

no a - mount could pur - chase it.

Pno.

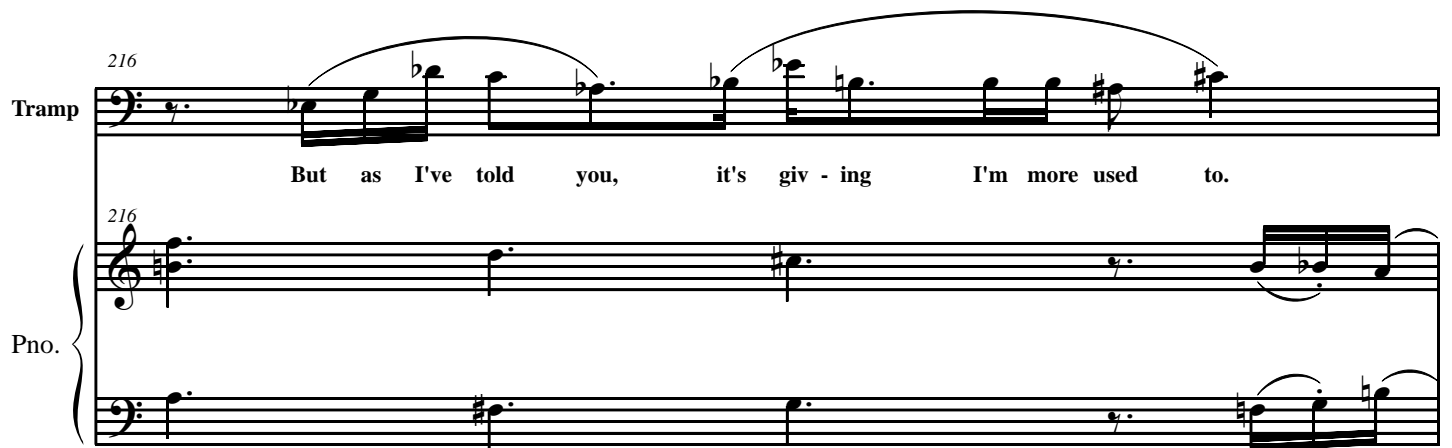


216

Tramp

But as I've told you, it's giv - ing I'm more used to.

Pno.



217

Tramp

And see - ing _____ how keen your want is,

Pno.

218

Sibby

A gift?

Tramp

I could make a gift of it.

Pno.

220 *Poco piu* ♩ = 40

Tramp

In re - turn for the smal - lest of fa - vors.

Pno.

f

221

Sibby

And what might that be?

Tramp

Once I've ta-ken out the stone,

221

Pno.

mp

223

Tramp

and made it yours,

the use of that pot,

223

Pno.

225

Tramp

and what's cook - ing in - side it,

by way of a meal

225

Pno.

Poco piu ♩ = 44

227

Sibby

Tramp

Pno.

But that's the meal _____

to sus-tain me on the road this night.

mf

Poco meno ♩ = 40

229

Sibby

Tramp

Pno.

— for my guests this eve - ning!

Oh sure - ly in a house like this _____

mp

231

Sibby

Of course there is!

Tramp

there's more than one pot.

Pno.

mf

233

Tramp

And out there, more chick-ens. And roos- ters and hens to make more.

Pno.

235

Sibby

There cer- tain - ly are!

Tramp

Then sure- ly you can spare this.

Pno.

237 **Poco meno** ♩ = 36

Sibby

Mm! That ar - o - ma is grow - ing strong - er.

Pno.

239

Tramp

As is the fla - vor in this broth.

Pno.

241

Sibby

So take out the stone, leave it with me,

Pno.

243

Sibby

and you're wel - come to that pot _____ and all that's in it.

Pno.

f

3

245

Tramp

Piu mosso ♩ = 48

Done! So as not to scald my hands,

Pno.

mp

3

(She quickly takes a large spoon out of the cupboard and hands it to him.)

247

Sibby

Here is one.

Tramp

I'll need a large spoon to do that. Thank you.

Pno.

mf

(He lays the lid down on the stove, reaches into the pot with the spoon, draws out the stone, and lays it carefully down on the cupboard.)

249 $\bullet = 40$

Pno.

f

251

Tramp

There it is! Yours to keep now!

(As she starts to touch the stone)

Pno.

252

Sibby

Of course.

(Pulling her hands away)

Tramp

Oh be care - ful! It's still hot!

Pno.

mf

254

Sibby

I must let it cool first.

Tramp

And when it does, it is yours for - ev - er.

Pno.

256

Sibby

Mine for - ev - er!

Tramp

But re - mem - ber:

Pno.

258

Tramp

nev - er — use it on Fri - day, or du - ring Lent,

Pno.

f

260

Sibby

I will re-mem-ber.

Tramp

since you know what would hap-pen then.

Pno.

mp

262

Sibby

For sure-ly, own-ing this stone will make a bet-ter Chris-tian of me

Pno.

mf

264

Sibby

from this day forth.

Tramp

Then it is, tru-ly,

Pno.

264

3

3

266

Sibby

If you'd like,

Tramp

blessed as well as en - chant - ed.

Pno.

f

mp

268

Sibby

you may take that spoon as well, to eat your sup - per with.

Pno.

mf

270

Tramp

A fur - ther fa - vor from one whom that stone has taught

Pno.

272

Tramp

true char - i - ty. And that's the most wond - rous thing of all.

Pno.

(He lays the spoon in the pot and puts the lid back on.)

274

Sibby

May what is in - side that pot

Pno.

mp

(He takes the bouillon pouch out of his pocket and hands it to her.)

276

Sibby

sus - tain you on the road this night.

Tramp

And may this,

Pno.

mf

278

Tramp

com - bined with the stone, bring fur - ther fla - vor

Pno.

280

Tramp

to the feast you'll be giv - ing this night.

Pno.

281 *Poco meno* ♩ = 36

Sibby

What is it?

Tramp

An - oth - er gift,

Pno.

(Pointing at the pot)

282 *(He picks up the pot, crosses quickly to the door, and exits.)*

Tramp

in grat-i-tude for this.

Pno.

ff

Poco meno ♩ = 32

284

Pno.

mp

(Sibby turns to the stone, touches it with the tip of her finger to make sure it has cooled, then picks it up and gazes at both it and the pouch.)

285

Sibby

Ah what good will be com - ing_ of this. How my guests this eve-ning,

Pno.

287

Sibby

and all my guests af - ter them,

Pno.

mf

Sibby

288

will mar - vel_____ at what I've gained this day!

Pno.

288

f

Pno.

289

(Blackout)

ff *fff*