

The Sculpture
 Chamber Opera in One Act
 by Martin Halpern
 Freely based on Henrik Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken*

Characters:
 Arnold Rubeck, a sculptor, in his middle forties; baritone
 Irene, his former model, in her early thirties; soprano

(In a pool of light surrounded by darkness, Arnold sits at a table working on a plaster model of the bust of a man. Beside it is a whiskey bottle and a glass filled with whiskey,)

1 Adagio ♩ = 66

Piano

1 *mp*

9

Meno mosso ♩ = 52

9 *mf* *mf* *f*

14

(Pushing the model away)

Arnold

f

E - nough! E - nough of this!

14 *ff* *mf* *f*

17

(He swigs down the whiskey in the glass, plunks the glass down, buries his face in his hands, then lays his head on the table.)

Arnold

E - nough of you!

17 *mp*

(Irene's voice comes out of the darkness.)

22 $\bullet = 40$

Irene *mf* Ar - nold Ru - bek!

mp

23 Ar - nold Ru - bek!

mf

(Irene emerges into the light behind him, wearing a long white dress suggestive of a classical statue.)

24

Irene (Lifting his head a short way, his eyes still closed) A name known fa - ar and wi - ide,

Arnold I an - swer to that name.

f mp

Irene

26 wher - ev - er art is val - ued, wher - ev - er that mon - u - men - tal sculp - ture

Irene

28 - called Res - ur - rec - tion Day is shown, seen, and ad - mi - red.

mf

Irene

30 *(Moving down to him and pointing at the bust)* Bu - ut now, I see,

Arnold

That voice. I know that voice.

30

Irene

32

your gifts are giv-en__ to les-ser things. Busts of im-por-tant-look-ing men

Detailed description: This block contains the first system of music for Irene, measures 32 and 33. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are "your gifts are giv-en__ to les-ser things. Busts of im-por-tant-look-ing men". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: the right hand in treble clef and the left hand in bass clef. Both hands feature a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A slur covers the vocal line across both measures.

Irene

34

who must pay hand-some-ly for them. But is mon-ey__ the rea-son? Or

Poco meno $\bullet = 36$

Detailed description: This block contains the second system of music for Irene, measures 34 and 35. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "who must pay hand-some-ly for them. But is mon-ey__ the rea-son? Or". A tempo marking "Poco meno" with a metronome marking of a quarter note equal to 36 is placed above the vocal line. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note pattern. A slur covers the vocal line across both measures.

Irene

36

just the need to stay oc-cu-pied? With-out some kind of pro-ject to

Detailed description: This block contains the third system of music for Irene, measures 36 and 37. The vocal line has the lyrics "just the need to stay oc-cu-pied? With-out some kind of pro-ject to". The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note accompaniment. A slur covers the vocal line across both measures.

Irene

38

fill your days and nights, you'd prob-ab-ly go mad.

Detailed description: This block contains the fourth system of music for Irene, measures 38 and 39. The vocal line has the lyrics "fill your days and nights, you'd prob-ab-ly go mad.". The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note accompaniment. A slur covers the vocal line across both measures.

Irene

40

And since there could be on - ly one Res - ur - rec - tion Day,

Irene

42

all your work, ev - er since, has been an end - less, end - less an - ti - cli - max.

f

Irene

44 *Piu mosso* ♩ = 52 *Meno mosso* ♩ = 36

(Opening his eyes and turning to her dazedly) *mp* I an - swered to that name, once.

Arnold

I - rene?

mp *mf*

46 *Poco piu* ♩ = 40

Irene

But do I de - tet in *this* bust a note of i - ron - y, sa - tire,

Irene

con - cealed con - tempt for the sub - ject?

Irene

Which he won't, of course, be a - ware of.

50 Poco meno ♩ = 36

Irene

(Rising slowly and staring at her with disbelief)

Not ex-act - ly the face,

Arnold

You're back?

50 mp

50

Detailed description: Piano accompaniment for measures 50-51. The right hand features a complex, rhythmic pattern with many beamed sixteenth notes and chords. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The dynamic is marked *mp*.

Irene

and sure - ly not the bod - y

that posed for Res - ur - rec - tion Day. —

52

52

Detailed description: Piano accompaniment for measures 52-53. The right hand continues with intricate sixteenth-note patterns. The left hand has a more active role with moving lines and chords. The dynamic is *mp*.

Irene

But that was a life - time a-go,

was - n't it, Ar-nold?

54

54

mf

Detailed description: Piano accompaniment for measures 54-55. The right hand features a driving sixteenth-note accompaniment. The left hand has a steady bass line with chords. The dynamic is marked *mf*.

56
Irene
Twelve long years. Changed. As are you.

Arnold
Twelve years. But now you're _____

(He starts toward her. She puts up her hands to stop him. He stops.)

58
Irene
Too late for that, I'm a-fraid.

58
f *mp* *mf*

60
Irene
Twelve years a-go— it might have been. If you had - n't

Arnold
It might have been, if you had - n't left. _____

60
f

62

Irene *willed me to leave.*

Arnold *Not so! Not so!*

63

Irene *But why, Ar-nold? Why?*

Arnold *You left of your own ac-cord!*

mf

65 $\bullet = 60$

Arnold *I don't know! I did-n't know then, and I don't know now!*

75 Irene *With-out me?*

Arnold *what it be-came.*

Poco meno ♩ = 40

77 Irene *Or with-out that pure-look-ing face and vir-gin-al bod-y I had then?*

77 Arnold *Those were the qual-i-ties need-ed to*

79 Arnold *Those were the qual-i-ties need-ed to*

80

Irene

Your vis - ion _____ of the i - deal

Arnold

re - a - lize my vi - sion.

mp

82

Irene

fe - male, ris - en out of the earth in - to the world of the liv - ing,

mf

84

Irene

to re - deem that world. Ex - act - ly how.

Arnold

That is how I put it to you.

86
Irene

And I had the hon - or and priv - i - lege of pos - ing for that vis - ion.

88
Arnold

You were the per - fect mod - el! — How you stayed so still,

88 $\bullet = 44$

90
Arnold

so si - lent, day af - ter day, week af - ter week, as - ton - ished me!

90

(Moving downstage and stroking her body)

94 $\bullet = 36$
Irene

So day af - ter day, week af - ter week, I stood

94 *mp*

Irene

96 na - ked be - fore you, si - lent and still, as you chipped and ham - mered that

96 *mf*

Irene

98 cold white mar - ble, lit - tle by lit - tle, in - to a like - ness of me.

98

Irene

100 But a like - ness so flat - ter - ing that af - ter a while I

100

102

Irene

no long - er rec - og - nized it as me. _____

Arnold

Of course. The ar - tist does - n't cop - y,

104

Irene

(Gesturing at the bust)

As you're trans - form - ing

Arnold

he trans - forms.

106

Irene

that self - sat - is - fied bur - gher in - to a fig - ure of fun.

108
Irene
With - out his know - ing it, of course.

109
Irene
Of course I did. Of course.

Arnold
But you knew I was trans - form - ing you! _____ And un - der - stood! _____

111
Irene
E - ven the face and bod - y I had then were hard - ly worth im - mor - tal - i - zing.

(Crossing away from him)

Irene

113

But oh, that space be-tween u - us! That un-crossed space be - tween us!

Arnold

115

f

That space was in - vi - o - late! An - y de - sire I felt,

Irene

117

Out of con-cern for my

Arnold

see - ing you stand here na - ked, had to be squelched!

119
Irene
in - no - cence. If in - no - cent I was.

Arnold
Yes!

119
119


120
Irene
But more im - por - tant, for you, was a


120
120


121
Irene
fear of pro - fan - ing that pure vis - ion you were bus - y bring - ing to life.

121
121


123 $\bullet = 66$ (Turning back to him) *mf*


Irene  But Ar-nold,

Arnold  Yes, that as well, I ad-mit.




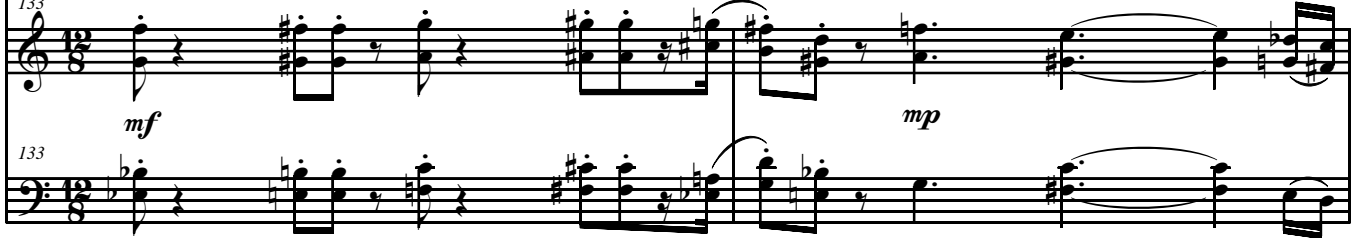
128 $\bullet = 52$ $\bullet = 66$

Irene  I mean a diff-erent kind of space be-tween us. I mean that



133 $\bullet = 40$

Irene  day af-ter day, week af-ter week, I knew I ex-ist-ed for you



135
Irene
as on - ly a face and bod - y in ser - vice to your art.

137 *Poco meno* ♩ = 36
Irene
Be - yond that, noth - ing more.

Arnold
f
Yes. is - n't true! Don't you re - mem - ber

137
mf

139
Arnold
how I would call that sculp - ture, lov - ing - ly as it pro - gressed,

139
mp

141

Irene

Yes. You called it our child, but knew ver - y well

Arnold

our child?

141

mf

141

144

Irene

it was your child on - ly, and I mere - ly a means to give it birth.

144

144

146

(Turning from him)

Irene

Then once it was born, and I was fin - ished po - sing,

146

mp

mf

146

148

Irene I put my clothes back on. Side by si - ide,

Arnold And we stood here, side by si - ide,

150

Irene ad - mir - ing that trans - for - ma - tion. To geth - er.

Arnold Ad mir - ing it to - geth - er.

(Turning back to him)

152

Irene And then, You turned to me,

Arnold And then, - I turned to - you,

154

Irene and said, "You've been a won - der - ful mod - el. Thank you."

Arnold and said, "You've been a won - der - ful mod - el. Thank you."

156

Irene Your ex - act, and on - ly words. Then you paid me, as al - ways,

Arnold and on - ly words.

156 *mp*

158

Irene af - ter a day's work, and turned back to her.

Arnold And turned back to her.

158

160

Irene

The "ep - i - sode" was o - ver, that space still un - crossed.

Arnold

If you

162

Irene

Why did - n't you?

Arnold

knew how much I'd want - ed to take you in my arms! I don't know!

Poco piu $\bullet = 40$

mf

165

Irene

Yes you do. Be - cause you want - ed some - thing else much more.

168
Irene
To be a-lone with *her*, your i-deal-ized fe-male.

168
f

171
Arnold
So with-out a word, you bol-ted out that door

171

173
Irene
And of course, you did-n't try to stop me.

Arnold
and dis-ap-peared.

173
mf

Poco meno ♩ = 36

175 Irene

Af - ter all, with that sculp - ture com - plete,

175 *mp*

176 Irene

and all that fame a-head of you, how much could it re - al - ly mat - ter

176 *mf*

178 Irene

that I had dis - ap - peared?

(Turning away from her)

Arnold

That.

178 *mp* *p*

180 Poco piu ♩ = 40

Irene

Of course it was!

Arnold

sculp - ture was - n't com - plete.

mp *mf*

Irene

Why else would you have told me I was done pos - ing?

184 Poco meno ♩ = 36

Arnold

You were done pos - ing. But I was not done sculp - ting.

186 $\bullet = 72$

Irene

What do you mean? —

186 *mp*

189 $\bullet = 48$ (Turning back to her)

Arnold

As the days passed, _____ and it came o - ver me how

189 *mf*

191

Arnold

much it mat-tered that you had dis - ap-peared, I tried to find you,

191

193 $\bullet = 72$

Arnold

but learned you had left the cit-y, and gone no one knew where.

193 *mp*

197 $\bullet = 48$

Irene

Arnold

A diff-'rent

It was then that I start-ed _____ to see that sculp - ture _____ in a diff-'rent light. _____

199 $\bullet = 36$

Irene

Arnold

light? Miss ing? - - - - -

I felt that some-thing was mis - sing. _____ And ag - o - nized - o - ver that,

mf


201


Arnold

day _____ af - ter day, night af - ter sleep - less night.

203

Irene  You

Arnold  Till fin - al - ly, I knew what had to be done.




205 $\bullet = 72$

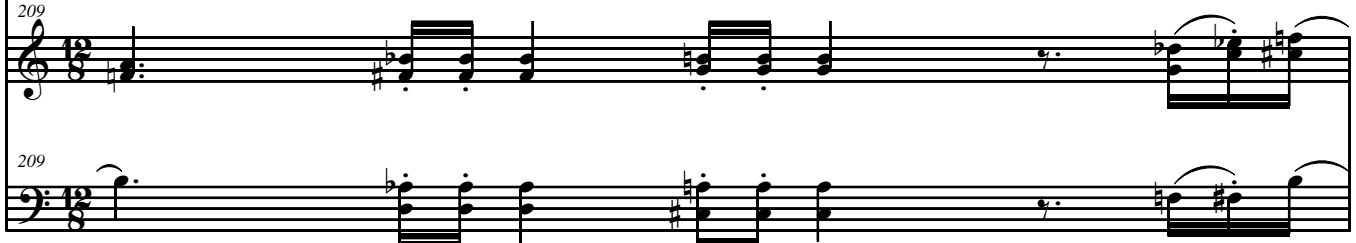
Irene  changed her! Then what?

Arnold  - No, not her.



209 $\bullet = 36$

Arnold  I en - larged the base on which she stood,




210


Irene  In con-trast?


Arnold  and there I sculp-ted oth-er— fig-ures— in con-trast to her.



212

Irene  I see. . .

Arnold  Fig-ures of-the un-res-ur-rect-ed, . . . and-un-re-deemed.



214

Irene  Your self?

Arnold  And a-mong them, my-self. A man - in the fore-ground, 



216

Arnold

weight - ed down by re-morse, con - demned, with all the oth - ers,—

216

mf

216

218

Irene

I see. I see.

Arnold

to a life of fu - til - i - ty.

218

f

mp

218

220

Irene

So those con - trast - ing fi - gures, your - self — in - clud - ed,

220

mf

220

Irene

222

be - came your *new* vi - sion of hu - man - i - ty.

222

222

Irene

223

The sta - tue I'd posed for

223

mp

223

Irene

225

now rep - re - sents, not a sa - cred i - deal,

225

f

225

227
Irene
but emp - ty il - lu - sion.

Arnold
That is what it came to mean for me.

227
mp *mf*

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 227 and 228. Irene's vocal line (treble clef) begins with a rest in measure 227 and then sings "but emp - ty il - lu - sion." Arnold's vocal line (bass clef) has a rest in measure 227 and then sings "That is what it came to mean for me." The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a complex harmonic texture with arpeggiated chords and moving lines in both hands. Dynamics are marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte).

229
Irene
And those who see it, and ad - mi - re it,

229

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 229 and 230. Irene's vocal line (treble clef) has a rest in measure 229 and then sings "And those who see it, and ad - mi - re it,". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) continues with a similar harmonic texture, featuring arpeggiated chords and moving lines. The time signature changes to 9/8 in measure 230.

231
Irene
do you think it means that for them? _____

231

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 231 and 232. Irene's vocal line (treble clef) has a rest in measure 231 and then sings "do you think it means that for them? _____". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) continues with the same harmonic texture. The time signature changes to 12/8 in measure 232.

232

Arnold

I don't think, or care,



233

Arnold

what it means to an - y - one now. Ex - cept you.

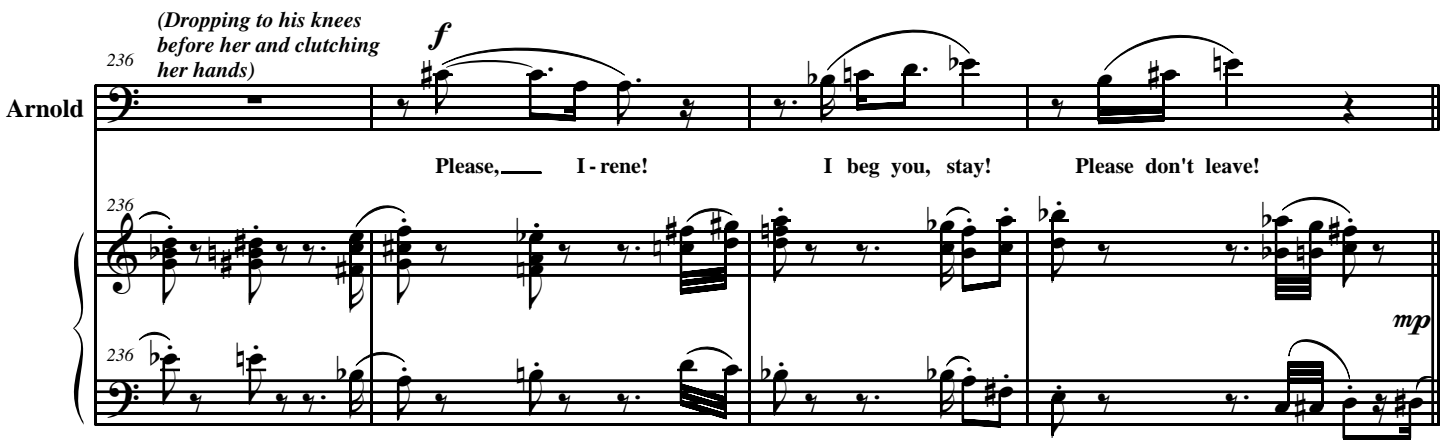


(Dropping to his knees before her and clutching her hands)

236

Arnold

Please, — I - rene! I beg you, stay! Please don't leave!



240 *(Looking down at him mournfully)* ♩ = 72 ♩ = 36

Irene I on - ly you'd done this, and said this, then. _____

Arnold If on - ly!

244

Irene If on - ly! Then may - be that sculp - ture would stand _____

Arnold If on - ly!

246

Irene - on its or - i - - gin - al base,

247
Irene
with - out those oth - er — fig - ures — be - neath her,
mf

248
Irene
your-self in - clud - ed.
Arnold
But we can build *new* sculptures,
248
f

250
Arnold
(She pulls her hands away and turns from him.)
hope - - - ful sculp - tures, to - geth - er!
250

Irene
251
Too late for that, Ar - nold.

Arnold
No it's not! Lis - ten to me, I - rene!

251
mp *mf*

Detailed description: This system contains the first two measures of the piece. Irene's vocal line (treble clef) begins with a melodic phrase starting on G4, moving up to A4, B4, and then down to G4 and F4. Arnold's vocal line (bass clef) has a few rests followed by a melodic phrase starting on G2, moving up to A2, B2, and then down to A2 and G2. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with dynamics *mp* and *mf* indicated.

Arnold
253
Some - where in - side me, long locked up, is a

253

Detailed description: This system contains measures 253 and 254. Arnold's vocal line (bass clef) continues with a melodic phrase starting on G2, moving up to A2, B2, and then down to A2 and G2. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) continues with a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with dynamics *mp* and *mf* indicated.

Arnold
255
man ab - le to love! Once, you had the key

255

Detailed description: This system contains measures 255 and 256. Arnold's vocal line (bass clef) continues with a melodic phrase starting on G2, moving up to A2, B2, and then down to A2 and G2. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) continues with a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with dynamics *mp* and *mf* indicated.

Arnold

257

that could have un-locked him. When you left, you took that key with you.

Detailed description: This system contains the first two systems of music for Arnold, measures 257-260. The vocal line is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/8 time signature. The lyrics are: "that could have un-locked him. When you left, you took that key with you." The piano accompaniment consists of a right-hand part with chords and eighth notes, and a left-hand part with a steady eighth-note bass line.

Arnold

259

But you have it still! It's not too late to re - a-lize,

Detailed description: This system contains the second two systems of music for Arnold, measures 259-262. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "But you have it still! It's not too late to re - a-lize,". The piano accompaniment features a more active right-hand part with chords and eighth notes, and a left-hand part with a steady eighth-note bass line.

Arnold

261

(She slowly turns back to him.)

now, what might have been, then!

Detailed description: This system contains the third two systems of music for Arnold, measures 261-264. The vocal line begins with the instruction *(She slowly turns back to him.)* and the lyrics "now, what might have been, then!". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings *mp* and *p* in the right-hand part. The right-hand part features chords and eighth notes, while the left-hand part has a steady eighth-note bass line.

263

Irene

I'm sor-ry, Ar-nold. If I *had* such a key, I don't an-y lon-ger.

mp *mf*

266

Irene

For you see, I don't *ex-ist* an-y long-er.

Arnold

Don't ex -

266

268

Irene

- Ex-cept as a phan-tom in your mind.

Arnold

ist? A

268

(She turns abruptly and exits into the darkness. He struggles to his feet and stares desperately after her.)

Irene

Arnold

phan - tom? — I-rene! I-rene!

269

269

269

(He stumbles back to his chair, buries his face in his hands, then lays his head on the table.)

271

$\text{♩} = 40$

271

mp

(He sits up, as if waking from a dream.)

Arnold

Oh my God. Oh my God.

274

274

274

ff

mp

(He looks dully at the bust.)

Arnold

Still there? Well bet - ter get on with you.

278

278

278

mf

(He moves the bust back in front of him, then pours whiskey from the bottle into the glass.)

283 $\bullet = 32$

Arnold

What else have I to do in this end - less,

283

283

(He swigs down the whiskey, drops the glass on the table, and resumes work on the bust as lights fade the black,)

284

Arnold

end - less an - ti - cli - max?

284

mp

286

f