

The Sacrificed
Chamber Opera in One Act
Freely based on Euripides' *Alcestis*
by Martin Halpern

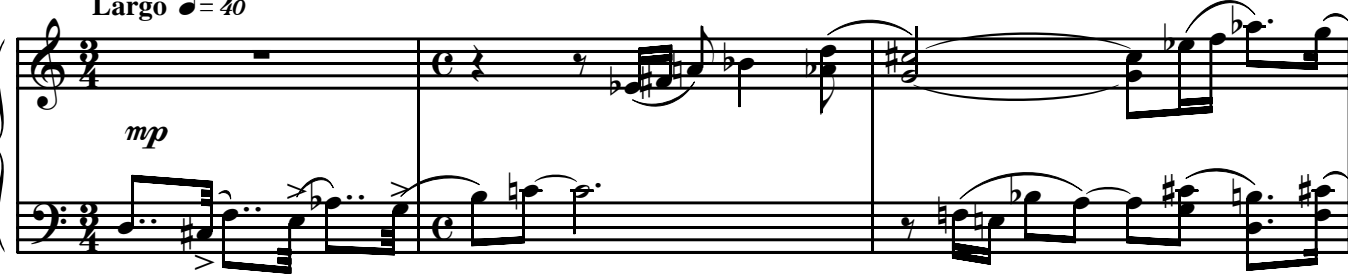
Cast: The Ferryman, baritone; Admetus, tenor; Alcestis, soprano

(Lights come up slowly on a stage that is bare except for a reclined bed, down center, on which Alcestis lies sleeping. Admetus stands beside the bed, gazing mournfully at her. Upstage center stands the Ferryman, holding an oar in one hand and gazing at both of them.)

Piano

Largo ♩ = 40

mp



The piano introduction is in 3/4 time with a tempo marking of Largo (♩ = 40). It features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both marked *mp*. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Ferryman

4 ♩ = 36

Here, in the house of the lord Ad - me - tus,

Pno.

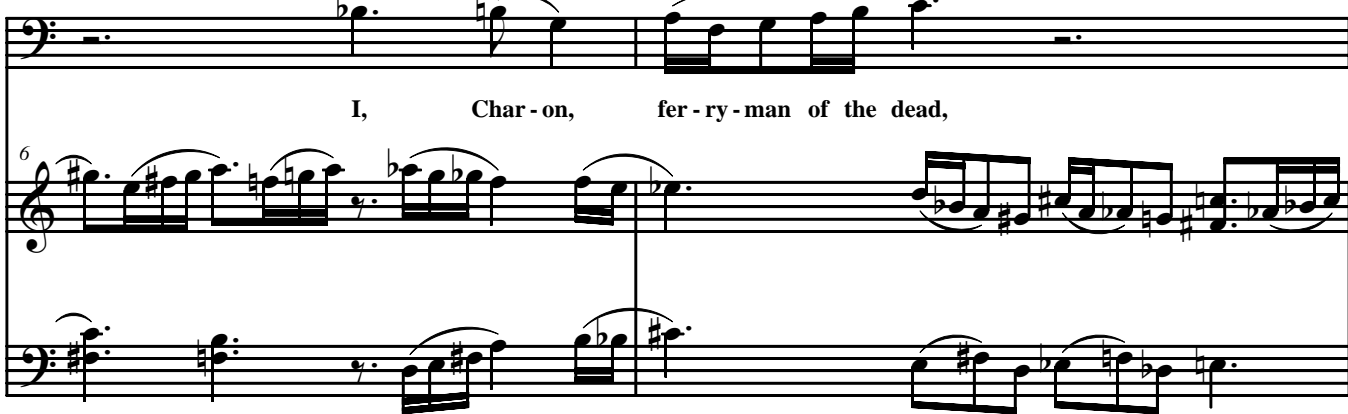


The first vocal line for the Ferryman begins at measure 4. The tempo is marked ♩ = 36. The lyrics are "Here, in the house of the lord Ad - me - tus,". The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and chords in the left hand.

Ferryman

6 I, Char - on, fer - ry - man of the dead,

Pno.



The second vocal line for the Ferryman begins at measure 6. The lyrics are "I, Char - on, fer - ry - man of the dead,". The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and chords in the left hand.

8

Ferryman

wait to take to that oth - er shore one who dwells in this house.

Pno.



10

Ferryman

I had thought Ad - me - tus him - self

Pno.



12

Ferryman

would go on that jour - ney with me, since *he* had been mor - tal - ly ill.

Pno.



14

Ferryman

But now it seems that in some mir - ac - u - lous way

Pno.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 14 and 15. The Ferryman's part is in bass clef. In measure 14, he sings "But now it seems" with a slur over the notes. In measure 15, he sings "that in some mir - ac - u - lous way" with a slur over the notes. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand has a treble clef and features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 14 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 15, with arpeggiated chords. The left hand has a bass clef and features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 14 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 15, with arpeggiated chords.

16

Ferryman

he has re - cov - ered, and his wife Al - ces - tis

Pno.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 16 and 17. The Ferryman's part is in bass clef. In measure 16, he sings "he has re - cov - ered," with a slur over the notes. In measure 17, he sings "and his wife Al - ces - tis" with a slur over the notes. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand has a treble clef and features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 16 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 17, with arpeggiated chords. The left hand has a bass clef and features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 16 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 17, with arpeggiated chords.

18

Ferryman

has fal - len ill in his place.

Pno.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 18 and 19. The Ferryman's part is in bass clef. In measure 18, he sings "has fal - len ill" with a slur over the notes. In measure 19, he sings "in his place." with a slur over the notes. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand has a treble clef and features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 18 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 19, with arpeggiated chords. The left hand has a bass clef and features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 18 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 19, with arpeggiated chords.

19

Ferryman

How all this oc - curred

Pno.

20

Ferryman

is a mys - ter - y to me. But then the gods I serve

Pno.

22

Ferryman

move in mys - ter - i - ous ways.

Pno.

23

Ferryman

And who am I to quest - ion them?

Pno.

mf

*(Alcestis opens her eyes
and sits up part way.)*

24

Ferryman

Ah! She a - wakes now,

Pno.

25

Ferryman

and stares with un - blink - ing eyes

Pno.

26

Ferryman

at her griev - ing hus - band.

Pno.

f

27

Admetus

poco piu mosso ♩ = 40

This is not hap - pen - ing!

Pno.

mf

28

Admetus

This can - not be hap - pen - ing! I am the one who has died!

Pno.

mp

Admetus

30

8

So this must be a dream I've hav - ing,

Pno.

Alcestis

32

No, Ad - me - tus.

Admetus

8

from some - where in a world be - yond!

Pno.

Alcestis

34

It is not a dream. I have prayed to die in your place,

Pno.

Alcestis 36 and my prayer has been answered. You must accept that, and live.

Admetus 8 But why?

Pno. 36 *mf* *mp*

Admetus 38 You love life more than I do,

Pno. 38

Admetus 39 so why should you be the one to die?

Pno. 39

Alcestis

41

Be - cause as ev - 'ry sol - dier is taught,

Pno.

Alcestis

42

sac - ri - fice made for the com - mon good is blessed by the gods who rule us.

Pno.

mf

Admetus

44

The com - mon good? What does *that* mean?

Pno.

p

Alcestis

45

It means, dear hus-band, that you have ob-li-ga-tions here.

Pno.

mp

Alcestis

47

A cit-y to be gov-erned. A pop-u-lace de-pend-ent on you

Pno.

Alcestis

49

for its well-be-ing. For their sake

Pno.

Alcestis *51*
you must live on.

Admetus *8*
But how? How live on with-out you at my side?

Pno. *51*
mf *mp* *3*

Alcestis *53*
Time will sof - ten this loss, as time sof - tens all.

Pno. *53*

Alcestis *55*
And when you're done mourn - ing,

Pno. *55*

Alcestis

56

you must seek a new wife to soft - en it fur - ther.

Admetus

8

No!

Pno.

56

Alcestis

58

And to bear the child - ren I could not bear.

Admetus

8

Nev - er! Nev - er!

Pno.

58

f

Admetus

60

I vow here and now not to mar - ry a - gain, ev - er!

Pno.

60

mf *f*

62
8

Admetus

How else can I prove my grat - i - tude,

Pno.

mp

63

Alcestis

poco meno ♩ = 36

Grat - i - tude you may feel,

Admetus

8

and as - suage my guilt?

Pno.

65

(Taking his hand in hers)

Alcestis

but guilt you should *not* feel. It is I who have willed this, not you.

Pno.

Alcestis

67

Per-haps you will keep that vow, and per-haps you will not.

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains the first two measures of music. The vocal line (Alcestis) is in treble clef and contains the lyrics "Per-haps you will keep that vow, and per-haps you will not." The piano accompaniment (Pno.) is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). It features a complex texture with triplets and slurs in both hands.

Alcestis

69

But ei-ther way,

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains the next two measures of music. The vocal line (Alcestis) is in treble clef and contains the lyrics "But ei-ther way,". The piano accompaniment (Pno.) is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). It features a complex texture with slurs in both hands.

Alcestis

70

I shall wait for you,

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains the final two measures of music. The vocal line (Alcestis) is in treble clef and contains the lyrics "I shall wait for you,". The piano accompaniment (Pno.) is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). It features a complex texture with slurs in both hands.

Alcestis

71

in that place be - yond time

Pno.

Alcestis

72

where we may meet a - gain.

Pno.

f

Admetus

73

(Pulling his hand away)

8

But where is that place?

Pno.

Admetus

74
8 What is that place?

Pno.

Admetus

75
8 And does it e - ven ex - ist?

Pno.

mf *mp* *p*

Alcestis

77
Now that I shall learn ver - y soon.

(Moving down closer to the bed)

Ferryman

Oh yes, Al - ces - tis,

Pno.

mp

(Turning quickly
to the Ferryman)

poco piu ♩ = 40

79

Admetus 8 Who are you?

Ferryman ver - y soon. One whom the gods have ap - point - ed

Pno. 79 *mf*

81

Admetus 8 Ah!

Ferryman to lead all mor - tals out of life in - to death.

Pno. 81 *p* *mf*

83
Admetus
Char - on, the fer - ry - man!

Ferryman
None o - ther.

Pno.
f

84
Admetus
If on - ly it were *me* you've come for!

Ferryman
She has told you why this must be.

Pno.
mp

86
Ferryman
And *I* und - er - stand now why those gods I serve

Pno.

88

Ferryman

have ac-cep-ted her choice. So come, Al-ces-tis.

Pno.

90

Alcestis

(Rising from the bed)

I come, fer-ry-man.

Ferryman

The boat is a-bout to de-part.

Pno.

92

Alcestis

(Crossing to him)

I come. Let us be off at once!

Pno.

mf

(Putting an arm around her shoulder)

94

Ferryman

At once. At once.

Pno.

f

(As Alcestis closes her eyes and lays her head on his shoulder, Admetus rushes up to them and reaches out toward Alcestis.)

95

Admetus

poco meno ♩ = 36

Al - ces - tis! Al - ces - tis!

Ferryman

She can - not hear you now.

Pno.

mp

97

Ferryman

She is no long - er a - mong the liv - ing. Good - bye for now, Ad - me - tus,

Pno.

97

99

Ferryman

till we meet a - gain, and you, too,

Pno.

(He turns away, clutching Alcestis tightly, and the two slowly exit.)

101

Ferryman

learn what ex - ists on that oth - er shore.

Pno.

♩ = 40

104

Admetus

And till then? Till then?

Pno.

piu mosso ♩ = 48

mf f mp

(He moves downstage and stands gazing at the bed.)

Admetus $\bullet = 40$

107 8 Yes, I have ob - li - gat - ions here.

Pno. *mf* *mp*

Admetus *poco meno* $\bullet = 36$

110 8 A cit - y to be gov - erned. A pop - u - lace de - pend - ent on me

Pno.

Admetus 8 for its well - be - ing.

Pno. 112

(He sits on the edge of the bed.)

Admetus

114

8

So what can I do but live on, a - lone,

Pno.

Admetus

116

8

in per - pet - u - al mourn - ing for her

Pno.

Admetus

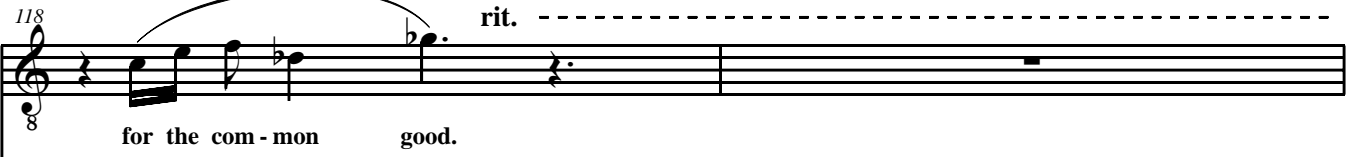
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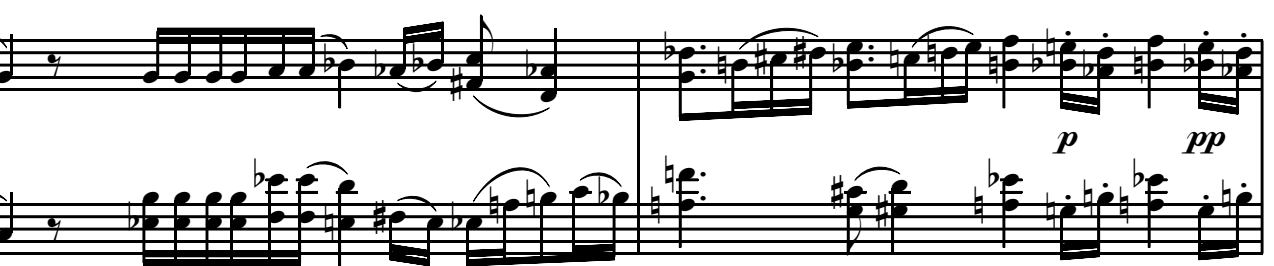
8

who has made this sac - ri - fice,

Pno.

(He buries his head in his hands as lights fade slowly to black.)

118 *rit.* -----
Admetus 
8 for the com - mon good.

118 *p pp*
Pno. 

120
Pno. 