

*The Death of Peer Gynt: Chamber Opera in One Act*

*(Lights come up slowly on a stage that is bare except for a small stump down center.)*

1  $\text{♩} = 36$

Piano *mp*

4 *(Peer enters from stage right, supported by a walking stick.)* *f*

Peer Ah, \_\_\_\_\_ an-oth-er cross-road.

Pno. *mf*

6

Peer There have been man - y in my life,

Pno.

8

Peer since I first sprang forth from my moth - er's womb

Pno.

Peer <sup>10</sup> *eight - y years a - go.*

Pno.

Peer <sup>12</sup> *At some I've gone one way, at some an-oth - er. And each way I went*

Pno.

Peer <sup>15</sup> *led to some new ad-ven-ture, for bet-ter or worse.*

Pno.

Peer <sup>18</sup> *Which way shall I go from this one?*

Pno.

(The Emissary enters from stage right,  
with a document in his hand.) *f*

Emmisary *f*  
Yes, that is the quest - ion, is - n't it?

Peer  
And what will a - wait me there?

Pno. *f*

Emmisary  
Peer Gynt, if I'm not mis - ta - ken.

Peer  
You're not mis - tak - en.

Pno. *mf*

Emmisary  
So it is.

Peer  
It's a name fam - il - iar to man - y.

Pno.

26  
Emmisary One with or-ders re-gard-ing you.

Peer But who are you? Re-gard-ing me?

Pno. *f*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 26-31. The Emmissary part (treble clef) has lyrics: "One with or-ders re-gard-ing you." The Peer part (bass clef) has lyrics: "But who are you? Re-gard-ing me?". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a complex texture with triplets and a forte (*f*) dynamic.

29  
Emmisary The kind that come from that place where lives are judged.

Peer What kind of or-ders?

Pno. *f*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 29-31. The Emmissary part (treble clef) has lyrics: "The kind that come from that place where lives are judged." The Peer part (bass clef) has lyrics: "What kind of or-ders?". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) continues with complex textures and a forte (*f*) dynamic.

32  
Peer I see. And what do they say,

Pno. *mf*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 32-34. The Peer part (bass clef) has lyrics: "I see. And what do they say,". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes a time signature change to 12/8.

34

Emmisary

Peer

Pno.

They say I'm to lead Peer Gynt

those or - ders?

36

Emmisary

Pno.

to where a melt - ing down a - waits him.

37

Peer

Pno.

A melt - ing down? What does *that* mean?

Emmisary

Peer

Pno.

38

8

You may take it as one.

Is this some kind of rid - dle?

Emmisary

Pno.

40

8

And the an - swer lies bur - ied some - where with - in you.

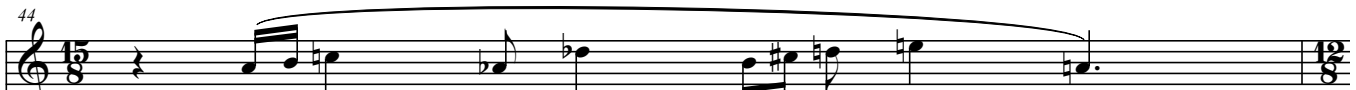
Emmisary

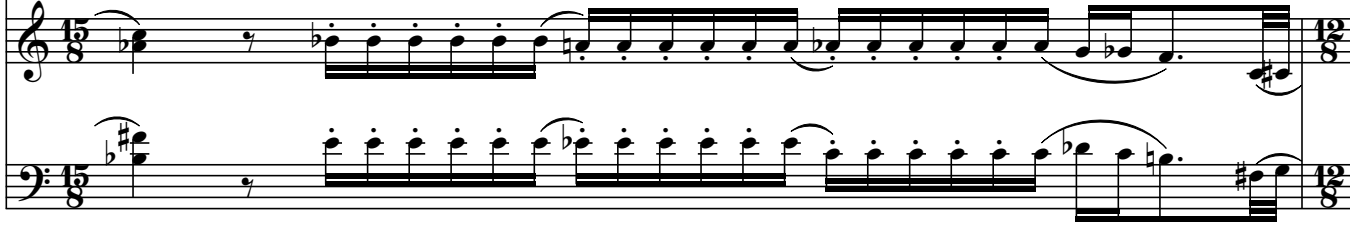
Pno.

42

8

So tell me, if you can: where has Peer Gynt been

44  
Emmisary  since he first sprang forth from his moth - er's womb?

Pno. 

45  
Emmisary  Yes, tell me.

Peer  Where has he be - en? \_\_\_\_\_

Pno. 

46  
Emmisary  Well that might take rath-er long.

Peer  You want my whole life's stor-y?

Pno. 

Emmisary

48

8

And my time is lim - it - ed. So let's just call those ear - ly

Pno.

Emmisary

50

8

prof - li - gate years a kind of pre - lude, and go straight to that first

Pno.

Emmisary

52

8

cruc - ial cross - road. The one where you chose to leave,

Peer

To which are you re - fer - ring?

Pno.

52

54  
Emmisary  8  
a-lone in that hut on the moun-tain-side, the wo-man who'd gi-ven up all

Pno. 

56  
Emmisary  8  
to be at your side for life.

Peer  8  
Sol - veig.

Pno.  *p* *mf*

58  
Emmisary  8  
Ah, her name at least \_\_\_\_\_ you re-mem - ber.

Pno. 

60

Peer

Chose to leave her, a - lone in that hut,

Pno.

62

Peer

while I sought my for - tune in the wi - der world.

Pno.

65

Emmisary

With a prom - ise to come back to her as soon as that was done.

Pno.

68

Emmisary

Peer

Pno.

If you ev - er — meant to keep it.

Which I nev - er — kept.

70

Emmisary

Pno.

So now I'll put the ques - tion this way:

$\bullet = 40$   $\bullet = 36$

72

Emmisary

Pno.

where has Peer Gynt been

74  
8

Emmisary

since he left that hut on the moun-tain-side?

Peer

All o-ver that wi - der world.

Pno.

76  
8

Emmisary

In - deed. All ov-er it. From one cross-road to an-oth-er,

Pno.

78  
8

Emmisary

some new ad-ven-ture af-ter an-oth-er. For

Pno.

80  
Emmisary *bet - ter or worse.*

Peer *For bet - ter or worse.*

Pno.

82  
Emmisary *But who has come to those cross-roads? Who has had those ad-ven-tures?*

Pno.

84  
Emmisary *Your what?*

Peer *What kind of ques-tion is that? Who else but my-self?*

Pno. *f*

86

Emmisary

Peer

Pno.

Ah yes.

My - self! I! Peer Gynt!

*mf*

88

Emmisary

Pno.

A name fam - il - iar to man - y. But who, ex - act - ly,

90

Emmisary

Peer

Pno.

is Peer Gynt?

He is who he is! And you're be-com-ning te-di-ous!

*f*

Emmisary *8* 92 All right then: I'll make that ques-tion clear-er. Does there ex-ist,

Pno. *mf*

Emmisary *8* 94 in-side that bod-y,— a sin-gle, de-fin-ab-le self

Pno.

Emmisary *8* 96 worth pre-serv-ing, in one place or an-oth-er,

Pno.

Emmisary *8* 98 af-ter that bod-y has gone to dust?

Pno. *f*

100

Peer

Of course there does! I am that self!

Pno.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 100 and 101. Peer's vocal line is in bass clef. In measure 100, he sings "Of course there does!" followed by a two-measure rest, then "I am that self!". The piano accompaniment is in grand staff. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and triplets. The left hand provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines.

102

Peer

I've been that self, and noth-ing but it,

Pno.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 102 and 103. Peer's vocal line is in bass clef. In measure 102, he sings "I've been that self," followed by a two-measure rest, then "and noth-ing but it,". The piano accompaniment continues with similar textures, including triplets and slurs.

104

Peer

at ev-'ry cross - road, through ev - 'ry ad - ven - ture!

Pno.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 104 and 105. Peer's vocal line is in bass clef. In measure 104, he sings "at ev-'ry cross - road," followed by a two-measure rest, then "through ev - 'ry ad - ven - ture!". The piano accompaniment features a key signature change to one flat (B-flat major) and includes slurs and rhythmic patterns.

106

Emmisary

Oh hard-ly. You have been one thing at one time,

Pno.

*mf*


Detailed description: This system covers measures 106 and 107. Emmisary's vocal line is in treble clef. In measure 106, he sings "Oh hard-ly." followed by a two-measure rest, then "You have been one thing at one time,". The piano accompaniment is in grand staff with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic, featuring a melodic line in the right hand and harmonic support in the left hand.

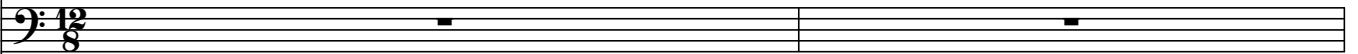
108  
Emmisary    
8 an-oth - er at an-oth - er, to suit oc - ca - sions as they a-rose,  
Pno. 

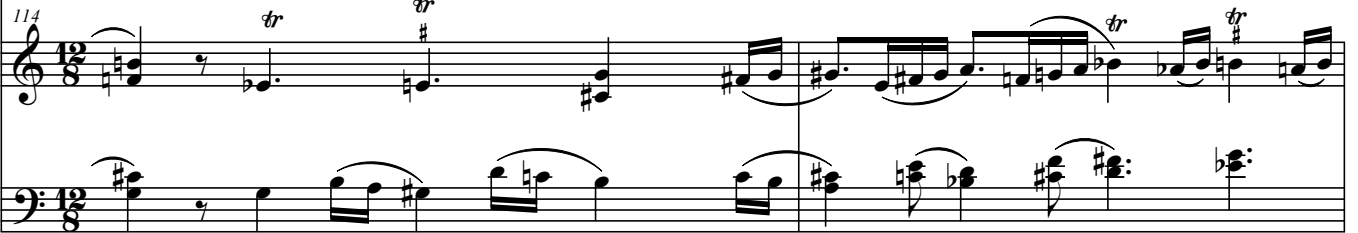
110  
Emmisary    
8 and none for ver - y long.  
Pno. 

112  
Emmisary    
8 That sing - le self you boast of may have once ex - ist - ed,  
Pno. 

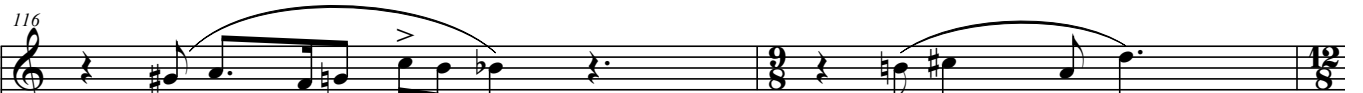
114

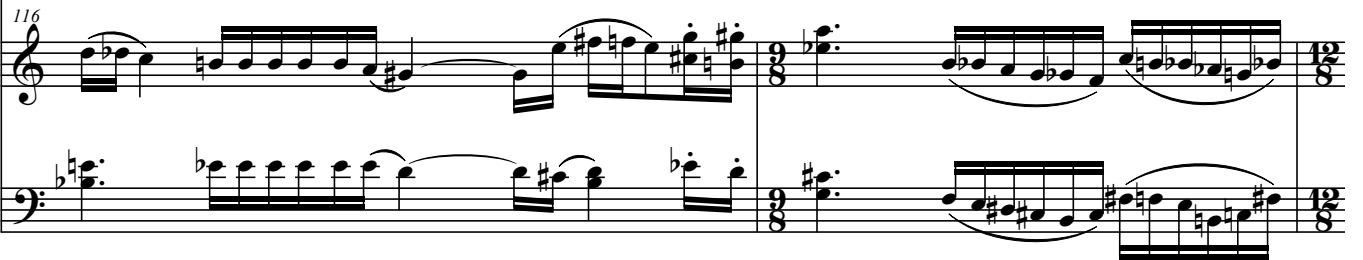
Emmisary    
 8 per - haps for a while on that moun-tain-side,

Peer 


Pno. 

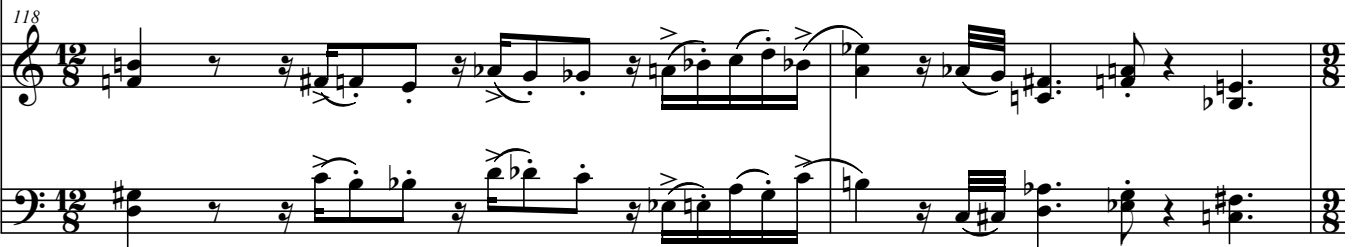
116

Emmisary    
 8 but out in the wi-der world it just dis - solved

Pno. 

118

Emmisary    
 8 in - to one large blur.

Pno. 

(Gesturing at the parchment)

Emmisary 120 8 So be re-signed to it. These or - ders are quite ex - plic - it.

Pno. 120 8

Emmisary 122 8 "The man called Peer Gynt has failed to ful - fill his des-tin-y.

Pno. 122 8

Emmisary 124 8 So he must be melt-ed down like all such dam-aged goods.

Pno. 124 8 *f* *ff*

126

Emmisary It means, be-lieve it or not,

Peer His des-tin-y? What does *that* mean?

Pno. *mf*

Detailed description: This system contains the first system of music, starting at measure 126. It features three staves: Emmisary (top), Peer (middle), and Piano (bottom). The Emmisary staff has a treble clef and a common time signature. The Peer staff has a bass clef. The Piano staff is a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The music includes lyrics and musical markings such as triplets and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.

128

Emmisary that some peop-le, at the time of their birth, have a life's pur-  
pose

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains the second system of music, starting at measure 128. It features three staves: Emmisary (top), Peer (middle), and Piano (bottom). The Emmisary staff has a treble clef and a common time signature. The Peer staff has a bass clef. The Piano staff is a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The music includes lyrics and musical markings such as triplets and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.

131


Emmisary im - plant - ed in them. So it seems.


Peer And I am *one* of those peo - ple? \_\_\_\_\_

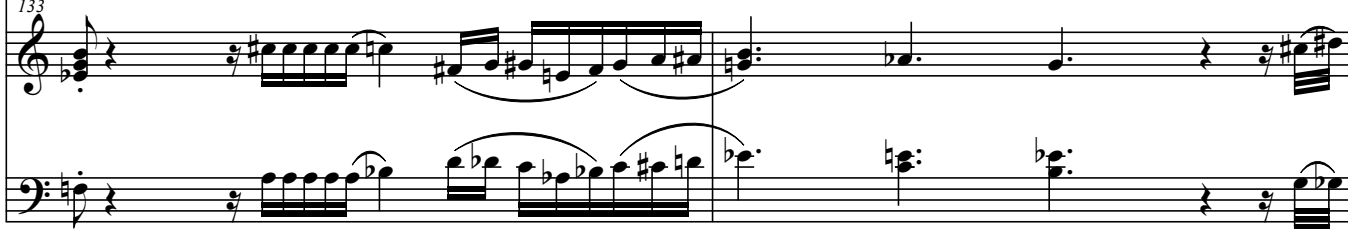
Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains the third system of music, starting at measure 131. It features three staves: Emmisary (top), Peer (middle), and Piano (bottom). The Emmisary staff has a treble clef and a common time signature. The Peer staff has a bass clef. The Piano staff is a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The music includes lyrics and musical markings such as triplets and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.

133

Emmisary  Ex-act-ly.

Peer  And that life's pur- pose: that is what's meant by one's des-tin-y?\_\_\_\_\_


Pno. 


135

Emmisary  Some\_ ful - fill it, some\_ re - sist it,

Pno. 

137

Emmisary  and some, like you, just nev - er re - a - lize it's there.

Pno. 

139

Peer

Well if it is in-side me, give me a chance to re-al-ize it now,

139

Pno.

*mf*

141

Emmisary

8

At your age?

Peer

and try to ful-fill it!

141

Pno.

143

Emmisary

8

Come now!

Peer

E - ven at my age an - y-thing's pos-sib-le!

143

Pno.

*f*

145

Peer

So please! Give me a lit - tle more time,

Pno.

147

Peer

to find out who I real - ly am, or was meant to be!

Pno.

149

Peer

Please? Just a lit - tle more time?

Pno.

151

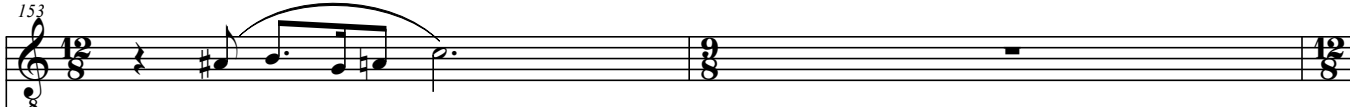
Emmisary

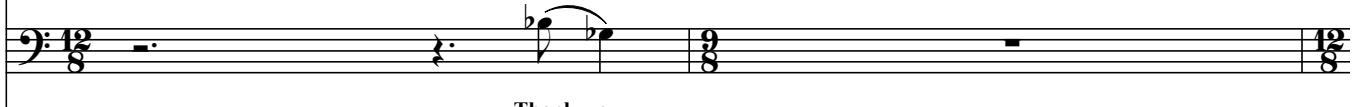
Ver-y well. If you think it can change things,

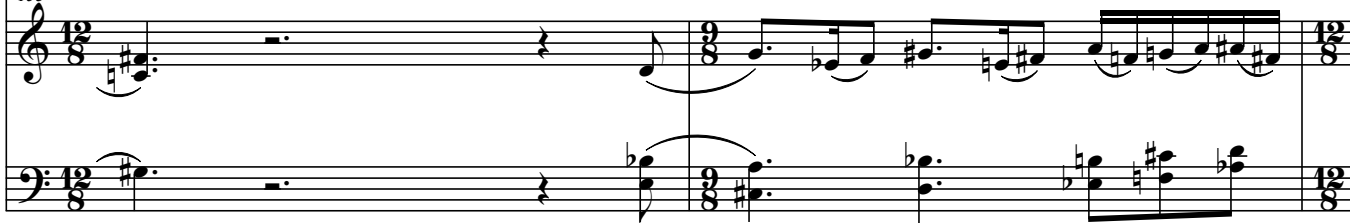
Pno.

*mf*

153

Emmisary  a lit - tle more time.

Peer  Thank you.

Pno. 

155

Emmisary  Till the next cross - road, Peer. The fi - nal cross - road.

Pno. 

*(He exits right. Peer watches him go, then sinks down on the stump and lays the walking stick on the ground.)*

157

Emmisary  And there we will see what we see.

Pno. 

159

Pno. 

162

Peer

The next and fin - al cross - road.

Pno.

163

Peer

How, be-fore then, can I find a way to keep from be-ing melt-ed down?

Pno.

*f*

165

Peer

It's true:

Pno.

166

Peer

I have been one thing at one time, an-oth - er at an-oth - er,

Pno.

*mf*

168

Peer

to suit oc - ca - sions as they a-rose, and none for ver - y long.

Pno.

170

Peer

And lit - tle I've done, I'm a-fraid, could

Pno.

172

Peer

mer - it what's called e - ter - nal sal - va - tion.

Pno.

174

Peer

But *much* I've done *could* mer - it the op - po - site.

Pno.

*f*

176

Peer

Af-ter all,

Pno.

*mf*

178

Peer

I have trad-ed in slaves; I have sold i-dols in the Or-i-ent;

Pno.

180

Peer

I've posed as a Mus-lim proph-et;

Pno.

182

Peer

I've e-ven had my-self crowned

Pno.

Peer

184

em - per-or, though that was in a mad-house,

Pno.

Peer

186

and I might have on-ly dreamed it. And then there was that ship-wreck

Pno.

Peer

188

when I let an-oth-er man drown to save my own skin.

Pno.

Peer

190

Sure - ly all that could add up to some kind of pun-ish-ment

Pno.

192

Peer

once this bod - y has gone to dust.

Pno.

194

Peer

What-ev-er form it might take

Pno.

196

Peer

would be bet-ter than just

ceas-ing to be

Pno.

198

Peer

Or an - y-way, I think it would.

Pno.

*mf* *mp*

*(A light comes on upstage left, where Solveig, nearly blind but otherwise in good health, stands singing. Behind her is a small bed.)*

200  $\bullet = 32$  *mf*

Solveig

The win - ter and spring

Pno.

*(At the sound of her voice, Peer jumps off the stump and turns toward her.)*

202

Solveig

may come and go, the sum - mer - time

Pno.

204

Solveig

and the long fall too. But one day, I pray, you'll come back to me,

Pno.

206

Solveig

and I will wait here, as I prom - ised you. —

Peer

*f*

Oh God!

Pno.

208

Peer

That voice! Sol - veig!

Pno.

209

Peer

Can she still be a-live? Or is this some kind of mir-age?

Pno.

*mp*

211

Pno.

213

Solveig

Wher - ev - er you are on this earth, my love goes with you.

Pno.

215

Solveig

And if you're no long - er on earth, it is with you still.

Pno.

217

Peer

One who re - mem - bered, and one who for - got!

Pno.

219

Peer

One — who had faith and one who had none!

Pno.

221

Peer *Dear God,*

Pno.

222

Peer *if there's an - y - one in all this world*

Pno.

223

Peer *who can-keep me from be-ing mel-ted down, sure-ly it is she!*

Pno.

225 *(After a moment's hesitation, he rushes up to her.) ff rit.*

Peer *Sol-veig! Sol-veig!*

Pno. *ff mp*

227  $\bullet = 36$  *mf* *(Reaching out toward him)*

Solveig *Is it you? Is it you? Oh God be thanked, — it is!*

Pno. *ff*

229 *(Sinking down on his knees)* *And you've come back to me, — at last!*

Peer *Pass judg-ment on the sin-ner be-fore you!*

Pno. *mf* *ff*

231  $\bullet = 32$

Solveig *Oh no, I will not do that.*

Peer *Cry out how wick-ed-ly I've sinned!*

Pno. *mf*

233

Solveig

I am too hap-py now.

Peer

Then you must,

Pno.

*f* *ff* *mf*

235

Peer

in what lit-tle\_\_\_ time re-mains to me, help me an-swer a ridd-le.\_\_\_

Pno.

237

Solveig

What kind of rid-dle?

Peer

Can you tell me

Pno.

*mp*

239

Solveig

Peer

Pno.

Since I last saw him?

where Peer Gynt has been since you last saw him? Yes!

*mf* *f*

241

Peer

Pno.

His real self, his whole self,

243

Peer

Pno.

his sin - gle self, with its des - tin - y de - fined:

245

Peer

where has *that* been all these man - y years?

Pno.

247 *(She drops to her knees before him and takes his hands in hers.)*

Solveig

Your rid - dle is ea - sy.

Pno.

*mp*

249

Solveig

And I think you *know* the an - swer.

Peer

Is it?

Pno.

*mf*

251

Solveig

Peer

Pno.

Where else has it been

Do I?

(Clutching her heart)

253

Solveig

Peer

Pno.

but in here.

In there?

255

Solveig

Peer

Pno.

In my hope,

in my faith,

257

Solveig *and in my love.*

Peer *ff* *What are you say-ing? What are you say-ing?*

Pno. *ff*

259

Solveig *That is true.*

Peer *You speak as a moth-er— speaks of her child.*

Pno. *mf* *mp*

261

Solveig *And who is his fath-er? He who for-gives*

Pno.

263

Solveig

in an - swer to a moth - er's prayers. *(Jumping to his feet)*

Peer

For - gi - ives?

Pno.

*f*

265

Peer

But I don't ask for that! I ask to be con - demned,

Pno.

267

Peer

so my sins may be pun - ished once this bod - y has gone to dust!

Pno.

269

Peer

Oth - er - wise,

Pno.

*mf*

270

Peer

I must simp - ly cease to ex - ist.

Pno.

*f*

272

Peer

And who bet - ter than you

Pno.

*ff*

273

Peer

can be my con - dem - ner?

Pno.

*(Rising and taking his hands again)**(She leads him to the bed, sits, and touches his cheek.)*

Solveig

274

Oh dear boy, for - get all that.

Pno.

*mp*

Solveig

276

Just lay your head in my lap, and rest, rest,

Pno.

Solveig

278

from your man - y ad - ven - tures.

Pno.

*(Peer turns away from her as the Emissary enters right and looks him in the eye.)*

Emmisary

280

Yes, lay your head in her lap. This is it, Peer Gynt.

Pno.

*f*

282  
Emmisary 8 The fin - al cross-road. From here you went out

Pno.

284  
Emmisary 8 in-to the wi-der world, and to here you've re-turned, as is ap-prop-ri-ate, —

Pno.

287  
Emmisary 8 for your melt - ing down. Be re-signed to it.

Pno.

289  
Emmisary 8 It's not as bad, be-lieve me,

Pno.

Emmisary

291  
8

as what you thought you want-ed. Not real-ly so bad at all,

Pno.

291

*mf*

Emmisary

293  
8

con-sid-er-ing.

Peer

Oh then take me, take me,

Pno.

293

*f* *mp*

(Peer turns back to Solveig.)

Peer

295

wife, moth-er, most blessed of wo-men!

Pno.

295

*tr* *tr*

Peer 298

Take me to your lap and let me rest there

Pno.

Peer 300

from all my man - y ad-ven-tures!

(He kneels before her and lays his head in her lap.)

Pno. 300

Emmisary 302

Good. It won't take long now.

Pno. 302

Pno. 304

*p*

*rit.*

$\bullet = 66$

*(Stroking his head)*

♩ = 40

308

Solveig

Sleep, my dear, my own dear child. I will hold you and stroke you to sleep.

Pno.

311

Solveig

The boy has played the whole day through.

Pno.

*mp*

313

Solveig

And he is wear - y now. So he lies on his moth-er's lap,

Pno.

*p*

315

Solveig

where he will sleep peace - ful - ly. Sleep, my dear, — my pre-cious one.

Pno.

317  $\bullet = 36$

Solveig — Sleep now. Sleep without dream-ing.

Pno.

319 *p*

Solveig Sleep. Sleep.

Pno.

*(She continues stroking his head as the Emissary turns away and exits right. Lights fade to black.)*

321 *pp*

Solveig Sleep.

Pno. *rit.* *pp*