

Hopkins Center for the Arts

at Dartmouth

presents

Dartmouth Opera Lab

The Medium

Written by Gian Carlo Menotti

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Mon, May 24, 8 pm

Dartmouth College • 2021

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The Medium

Written by Gian Carlo Menotti
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Libretto and music by **Gian Carlo Menotti**
Maestro Filippo Ciabatti, Musical Director, Conductor and Pianist
Erma Mellinger, Vocal and Character Preparation
Peter M. Webster, Director
David Haggerty, Master Technician

The Players

Ana Mora
New England Conservatory
Baba, “Madame Flora,” The Medium

Isabelle Brick ’20
Monica

Terry Guo ’23
Toby

Emma Ginsberg ’23
Mrs. Gobineau

Edward Lu ’21
Mr. Gobineau

Julia Battle ’23
Mrs. Nolan

The Ghost Voices

Brianna Aubrey ’22
Amber Cai ’21
Lila Hovey ’21
Katherine Orenstein ’22
Danielle Tamkin ’23

The Medium Running Time
Approximately 59 minutes | A one-minute intermission

Notes From The Maestro

When my colleagues and I decided to work on a production of Menotti's opera *The Medium*, even before the pandemic hit, it seemed like the perfect work for our students. After COVID hit, we made the decision to present this opera anyway, finding new, creative ways to make music. At that point, the choice of this opera seemed even more appropriate not only for its beautiful music and its compelling story, but also because of the story behind the birth of the work itself.

The Medium was written by the Italian American composer Giancarlo Menotti in 1946, commissioned by Columbia University. It had its first professional rendition a year later in New York City. In 1951, Menotti, a very influential artistic figure in the American operatic world at that time, made an intriguing film version of the work, acknowledging and understanding the opportunities that this new medium presented. The work became very successful after that and was broadcast in several countries. Similarly, during this current time of isolation and limitations on live arts, we have decided to look at new technology as an opportunity to create something meaningful, compelling, and creative in a different way. We recorded each individual part separately, being constantly in touch with rehearsals and coachings via Zoom. The technological expertise of David Haggerty and the creative vision of the director Peter Webster have magically "sewed" all the material together, creating the work you will experience.

Recording the score of this opera at the piano has been a fascinating journey. Menotti masterfully brings us from the deep horror of human corruption and fear to the sweet intimacy of hopes and dreams, creating a compelling rollercoaster of emotions that make this work electrifying. I am very proud of the work of all the artists involved and very thankful to all my colleagues for their profound commitment to this project.

Filippo Ciabatti

Music Director of Dartmouth Opera Lab

Director of Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra

Interim Director of Handel Society of Dartmouth College

Interim Director of Dartmouth College Glee Club

Notes From The Vocal Maestra

The Medium is an intense and thought-provoking work. It touches upon and exposes the flaws and weaknesses we humans try desperately to hide from the world around us. The characters express emotions of greed, control, deception, anger, despair and fear. But they also find moments of kindness and hope which give them the strength, not only to get by, but to move forward. These are characters who are merely doing their best to survive the life that was dealt to them, sometimes making their situations worse, but sometimes finding a glimmer of a better time just beyond their reach if only they could grasp it.

Erma C. Mellinger

Vocal and Character Preparation

Director of Vocal Studies

Senior Lecturer in Voice

Dartmouth Opera Lab & Department of Music

Notes From The Audio and Video Editor

What a wonderful opera. *The Medium* is a tragedy that explores grief, despair, solitude, deception, trickery and half-truths. We watch the exploitation of vulnerable people, grasping for a return to normalcy and to make contact with their loved ones. Presented digitally, the madness of inner thoughts and desperation is on full display and at times uncomfortably close. The pandemic has accelerated our relationship with technology and has dramatically shifted how we present art. Special thanks to our creative team, artists and colleagues who worked tirelessly to put this piece together.

This is the right piece for the moment.

Dave Haggerty

Master Technician

Audio and Video Editor

Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth

Notes From The Director

The Medium is horrible and beautiful.

It is horrible because it tells a horrible story.

It is beautiful because it tells a horrible story in a beautiful way, a way that permits us to witness the horrible story with the detached fascination of an onlooker watching a slow-motion technicolor accident in close up, not able to look away, ashamed to look, and noticing with wonder how beautiful the sunset is as the tragedy unfolds.

The Medium tells a classic story:

The need to believe, the need to deceive.

We all carry private narratives deep inside, things we are too shy, too ashamed, too exultant to tell, and yet, there they are: inside us the vibrant landscapes of ourselves, inhabited by the ghouls and angels of mythology and the drudgery of the every day.

No one in *The Medium* is a hero, no one is a villain, all are victims: folks just trying to make some sense of it, just trying to get through the day.

So we are, all of us, someone in this opera.

Gian Carlo Menotti wrote the spare, lyrical, disturbing score.

Gian Carlo Menotti wrote the spare, lyrical, disturbing libretto.

This coherent approach to *The Medium* ensures its spare, lyrical, disturbing effect.

Like an accident we all see coming, we know as spectators what is coming down the road, what is going to happen in *The Medium*, but we cannot look away.

Because we are looking at ourselves.

Peter M. Webster

Director of Text and Dramatic Studies, Dartmouth Opera Lab

Notes From The Cast

The Medium is an opera I had always dreamed of performing. The story and characters are relatable and current, and what seems like a short ghost story has transformed into a tale of addiction, trauma, and survival right before my eyes. Baba is a multidimensional role. She is a cruel but sometimes loving caretaker, a troubled human being trying to make it to the next bottle, and at the end of the day, afraid of what lies beyond, just like the rest of us. It has been a pleasure to inhabit her and bring her to life.

After many performance cancelations during the year 2020, it was exciting to start working on this project. Although it was definitely terrifying, recording an entire opera from my living room turned out to be an extremely gratifying experience, and was only possible through the support of the Hopkins Center for the Arts. I can't thank Filippo and Peter enough for their patience and understanding. They were graciously tolerant of all issues that arise as your entire cast is learning how to be their own sound engineer, makeup artist, set decorator, etc. while still balancing graduation recitals, online auditions, and final exams. *The Medium* has been an unparalleled experience, and I cannot wait to see the final result.

Ana Mora

Baba, "Madame Flora," The Medium
New England Conservatory

When we first began *The Medium* project, I never would have imagined I would be performing from my tiny apartment in Cambridge, MA, with my fellow actors in completely different states. To think I would be singing in harmony with a person I've never officially met is crazy! Here we are, more than a year later, and I'm incredibly grateful to have been a part of something so unique and creatively captured. Monica is a complicated character to portray; a mix of innocence, empathy, narcissism, manipulation, and more. She has stretched my acting in so many ways. Additionally, learning what movements and actions work best for a small iPhone camera lens as opposed to a live traditional setting has been such a new experience. It's been an amazing gift to still be able to make music together even when we are apart. Thank you so much to everyone who had a part in this opera, especially Filippo and Erma for their incredible musical expertise, David Haggerty for his exquisite technical wizardry, and finally Peter, for his wonderful vision, support and contagious passion.

Isabelle Brick '20

Monica

Working on *The Medium* has been an immensely rewarding—and strange—experience. To me, *The Medium* is a story about loss, obsession and love. When working on Toby, I suppose I was thinking a lot about the tension between desiring to become one with others and maintaining individuality; I was also thinking about the courage it takes for a survivor of trauma and brutality to reclaim part of what has been taken from them; in the case of Toby, he tried to reclaim his stolen voice. Tragically, Toby is the physical and uncanny manifestation of his profound trauma.

Terry Guo '23

Toby

Working on *The Medium* has been such a joyful experience amidst a difficult year. Even though live theatre has been on pause, creating this piece through a new, virtual medium (pun intended) reminded me time and time again of the tenacity of storytelling. It reminded me that art and music are so essential that they're immutable. It reminded me that no matter what the world looks like, there is always happiness to be found in making things. From singing through the score in my dorm room (to my Winter floormates: you're welcome for all of the free performances) to parading across campus transporting set pieces, making *The Medium* has made me so happy. I hope our audiences love watching it as much as I loved working on it!

Emma Ginsberg '23

Mrs. Gobineau

When we first started working on *The Medium*, we had been in quarantine for six months and there was no end in sight to the pandemic. The opportunity to do a virtual opera was both a welcome, but also daunting, one. As rehearsals went on, COVID-19 testing became more widely available, and vaccines started to be rolled out. We were even able to have a few masked in-person rehearsals at one point, and it was such an amazing experience to be able to finally meet some of my fellow cast members and mentors face-to-face. Now that we are at the end of the production, we have finally heard news of vaccinated people being able to gather unmasked again. One aspect of pre-pandemic life that I miss the most is meeting new people through various projects, and I am so grateful for all the people who I have met through *The Medium*. This has been such a unique experience, and I hope that everyone enjoys our final product!

Edward Lu '21

Mr. Gobineau

The availability of performance opportunities for undergraduates at Dartmouth was a driving force behind my decision to come here. The past year's pandemic has obviously gotten in the way for those of us who love the performing arts, so this opportunity to perform, even virtually, was very welcome. Collaborating with peers and faculty who were so passionate about this project made it an incredibly fun and interesting experience, and the fact that it was created while many of us were hundreds or even thousands of miles apart makes the end product that much more extraordinary. It took a lot of talent, ingenuity and hard work to make this performance possible under these circumstances, and I am eternally grateful to everyone involved.

Julia Battle '23

Mrs. Nolan

The Medium Libretto

Written by Gian Carlo Menotti

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ACT ONE:

Toby, an uncanny mute “gypsy” rescued from the streets of Budapest plays dress-up with the scarves and jewelry of Baba, the woman who rescued him and brought him to where they live now. He is hopelessly in love with Monica.

Monica, the supposed daughter of Baba sews and plays with dolls and sings to herself, lost in a fantasy world she imagines every day. She is aware of Toby’s desire for her, and both mocks it and invites the attention.

Baba enters. She is a battered survivor, a chameleon who takes advantage of whatever situation she is forced into by taking on the camouflage of whoever she needs to be. At present, she poses as “**Madame Baba**,” a medium who connects the dead with their grieving survivors. She does this for money and has no gift at all for communicating with spirits.

She comes in half-drunk, brandishing the money she has bullied out of *Mrs. Campi*, a destitute widow. Baba rails against Toby for “touching her things” and not being prepared for the séance planned for that evening. She promises vengeance if the séance does not come out flawlessly.

There is a knock at the door: the grieving people have arrived to communicate with their dead.

There is a bustle of preparation: Monica, who impersonates the ghost-bodies and voices of the dead, and Toby, who helps out by creating paranormal activities to enhance the séance. Baba is unkempt, lost in her perusal of the Tarot: what she sees in the cards is not reassuring.

Enter “The Trio” of grieving people seeking to communicate with their beloved dead.

Mr. and **Mrs. Gobineau** are frequent visitors to communicate with *Mickey*, their two-year old drowned in an accident. **Mrs. Nolan** is a reluctant first-time visitor, a young widow who seeks to communicate with *Doodly*, her 13-year-old daughter, a recent suicide.

The Trio tell their stories as Baba goes off to prepare for the séance. She returns, takes their money and goes into a fake trance to summon the spirits of the dead.

First up is the ghost of *Doodly*, impersonated by Monica. Working from a prepared all-purpose script, Monica engages the grieving mother, then vanishes hastily when Mrs. Nolan bristles at the mention of a gold locket supposedly owned by *Doodly*. Mrs. Nolan panics as her ghostly daughter leaves and disrupts the séance. Mr. and Mrs. Gobineau restore order, and an anguished Mr. Gobineau calls for Mickey his dead baby son to come near.

Toby manipulates lights to impersonate *Mickey*, and Monica voices the laughter of the child.

Suddenly, Baba feels hands around her throat. The hands throttle her. She is terrified. She has never believed in spirits, in ghosts, and this tangible proof of their presence terrifies her. She demands to know who touched her: nobody. Mr. and Mrs. Gobineau are not afraid, claim to have often felt the tangible presence of their son, and all three clients wonder at the fear exhibited by Baba. She throws them out. Baba confesses her fear to Monica. She tells Monica that they must return all the money and “*never do this again.*” Monica scoffs at her fears and attributes them to Baba’s continual drunkenness. Baba accuses Toby of “touching” her. She is distraught. To soothe her, Monica sings the story of “The Black

Swan,” an ancient melody taught to her by Baba. It tells of lost love, lost children, and Baba dreamily joins Monica in singing this sad story. Suddenly Baba hears ghosts voices: “*Mother? Mother are you there?*” the very phrase Monica uses to beguile the clients. But it is not Monica singing. Has Baba called up actual spirits? Again Baba accuses Toby of instigating all these troubles. The act ends with Baba descending into a drunken reverie, Monica sings a disjointed reprise of “The Black Swan” as Baba tells her rosary beads and prays for forgiveness. We hear the laughter of ghostly children as our virtual curtain falls.

The ghost world is becoming more present.

ACT TWO:

Toby creates a puppet show to amuse Monica: puppets of Monica and Toby, dancing, falling into one another’s arms, kissing. Monica is delighted. She loves the attention. She sings a lilting waltz where she is the “*Queen of Aroundel*” and Toby is her slave, a slave to love. Toby offers an engagement ring, cheap costume stuff, and it is rejected. Toby cannot speak, but Monica sings words into his damaged mouth and heartlessly tells the story of Toby’s hopeless love for her. Her singing excites her, and she falls in love with herself as Toby weeps with shame and despair.

Baba enters, disheveled, filthy, and very drunk. She and Toby are alone together. Baba begins her seduction of Toby: did he “touch” her at the séance? Is he the one? How did he do it? She offers silk shirts and golden scarves and, finally, a bolt of red silk cloth he covets, but he mutely denies any connection with the event and Baba grows furious with him. The scene is interrupted by the appearance of The Trio, back for their scheduled séance. They offer the usual money. Baba does not take it and tells them she is a fraud, that she has cheated them. The Trio refuses to believe her: she is their only conduit to the afterlife where their loved ones live. Baba tries to prove to them that she is a fraud. She has Monica show how she impersonated *Doodly*, how she

created the laughter of little *Mickey*. The Trio refuses to believe she is a fraud and plead for her “guidance:” they do not want to lose connection with their beloved dead. Baba throws them out. She also throws out Toby: he must return to the streets. She cannot bear to look into his haunted eyes any longer.

There is a violent confrontation between Monica and Baba. Baba insists that Toby will do well and throws him out for good.

Alone, Baba drinks and drinks and the worlds she has denied and yet conjured up come to haunt her. The voices and images of the dead appear, disappear and reappear as Baba tells us the story of how she came to be the person she is. An existence of disasters, cruelties, of dispossession and love denied, a story too common in the world. Baba wonders at her fear, then tries to laugh it away as the ghost-hordes surround her. She falls into a drunken sleep.

Toby creeps into the space, draped in the coveted red silk cloth. His fear and hatred of Baba, his hopeless love for Monica attack him in full force, and he conjures against Baba, amused that he is wielding what he only half-believes in: the world of the avenging spirits.

Baba wakes up suddenly. She senses the presence of someone, something. Terrified, she reaches for a revolver and fires blindly at what she perceives to be the malevolent ghost.

The ghost is Toby, and she has killed him.

Baba sings: “I killed the ghost. I killed the ghost.” But has she? She sees Toby and asks the silent form: “Was it you? Was it you?” a question left unanswered as our virtual curtain falls.

*Synopsis by Peter M. Webster
Dartmouth Opera Lab*

The Medium Libretto

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The Place: Next Door

The Time: Now

ACT I

MONICA

“Where, oh, where
Is my new golden spindle and thread?
If I don’t bring them home
The King will strike me dead!”
Thus spoke the weeping queen to the gnome.
“Where, oh, where is my spindle and thread?”

Oh! Toby, you foolish boy!
Baba will soon be home and nothing,
nothing is ready!
Besides, you know she’ll beat you
If you touch her things.

“Queen, fair queen,
If you give me the crown on your head,
I’ll tell you where I have seen
Your golden spindle and thread.”
Thus spoke the wicked gnome.

Oh! Toby, how handsome you are!

Behold the King of Babylon
On his purple throne!
I shall be your servant,
I shall be your princess,
I shall be your foreign bride
Come from distant northern seas.

How d’you do, my master,
How d’you do, my King,
How d’you do, my love?

Ah! Toby, if you only could speak’

Be careful, Baba’s coming!

BABA

How many times I’ve told you not to touch
my things!

Look at you!
Dressed with silk and bangles like a woman!
Fancying yourself a King or something?

Stop dreaming, you feeble-minded gypsy!
I told you not to touch my things!

Is anything ready? Of course not!
And the people will be here at any minute.

If anything goes wrong tonight,
I’ll make you pay for it!

What do you think I’m feeding you for?
You good-far-nothing, you dirty bastard!

MONICA

No! Baba, don’t!
Where have you been all night?

BABA

Where have I been?
Ah! ah! money, my dear, money.
Look, don’t worry, my sweet,
you have a very clever mother!

MONICA

Where did you get it?

BABA

Where?
I sat on Mrs. Campi’s steps all night;

She got so scared of seeing me there she paid
Ev'ry cent she still owed me.

MONICA

You shouldn't have done it.

BABA

Why?

MONICA

Mrs. Campi's so poor.

BABA

Pf! She owed me the money, didn't she?
Get ready' Hurry!

MRS. GOBINEAU

Good evening, Madame Flora.

MR. GOBINEAU

Good evening.

BABA

Come in, come in.

MRS. NOLAN

Good evening.

BABA

Good evening. Are you Mrs. Nolan?

MRS. NOLAN

Yes.

BABA

This is Mister and Mrs. Gobineau.

MR. AND MRS. GOBINEAU

How d'you do?

MRS. NOLAN

How d'you do?

BABA

Let us wait a few minutes for late comers.
Sit down.

MRS. GOBINEAU

Is this the first time that you come to Madame
Flora?

MRS. NOLAN

Yes.

MR. GOBINEAU

You'll see she's quite wonderful!

MRS. GOBINEAU

Is there some dear departed you want to speak to?

MRS. NOLAN

Yes, my daughter Doodly.

MRS. GOBINEAU

Oh, when did she die?

MRS. NOLAN

Last year, she was only sixteen.
Do you really think I shall hear her voice?

MRS. GOBINEAU

Oh, yes, you may even see her.

MRS. NOLAN

Oh, I couldn't bear that!

MR. GOBINEAU

Don't be so nervous. It is all very simple.

MRS. NOLAN

Have you known her a long time?

MR. GOBINEAU

Oh, yes! We have been coming here
Ev'ry week for almost two years.

MRS. GOBINEAU

We come to communicate with our little son.

MRS. NOLAN

And does he speak to you?

MRS. GOBINEAU

Oh, no, he couldn't speak!
He was only a baby when he died.

MR. GOBINEAU

But we hear him laugh. He sounds so happy.

MRS. NOLAN

When did he die?

MRS. GOBINEAU

It happened long ago.
We were still young, very young.
We had a house in France.
With a garden full of lilacs and mimosa.
The garden had a fountain,
A silly little fountain,
No more deep than that.
It was just his birthday two years old.
We had given him a little boat,
a lovely little sailboat.
I still don't know how it happened.
He was playing by the fountain.
I was not far away, cutting some lilacs
for the house.
I never heard a sound
And when I looked –
And when I looked –
And when I looked...

MR. GOBINEAU

There, there, don't cry.
You know that he is happier now than if
he had lived.

BABA

It's time to begin. Close the door.

MR. GOBINEAU

You must be very silent. The hands must touch.

MONICA

Mother, mother, are you there?
Mother, mother. are you there?

MR. GOBINEAU

Mrs. Nolan, it must be your daughter.

MRS. NOLAN

Oh! Oh!

MR. GOBINEAU

Speak to her! Speak to her!
Can't you see? She's looking for you!
Don't be afraid, don't be afraid!

MRS. NOLAN

I... I can't!

MRS. GOBINEAU

Come, come! You must not behave like that.

MR. GOBINEAU

Ask her something.

MRS. NOLAN

Doodly ... is it you?

MONICA

Yes.

MR. GOBINEAU

Good!

MRS. NOLAN

Doodly, is it evil what I'm doing?

MONICA

No.

MR. GOBINEAU

You must not be so afraid! Ask her something else.

MRS. NOLAN

Doodly, Doodly, are you happy?

MONICA

Yes, mother, I am happy.

MRS. NOLAN

Doodly, Doodly, are you near your father?

MONICA

Yes, mother, I can see him.

MRS. NOLAN

Doodly, Doodly, why did you leave me?

MONICA

Mother! Mother! Are you so unhappy?

MRS. NOLAN

I ... I'm very much alone.

MONICA

Mummy, Mummy dear, you must not cry for me.
I'm still with you.

What is death but a sweeter change,
There's no parting, there's no end.

Mummy, Mummy dear,
Your sorrow's like a wound that keeps me awake.
The earth is light, the roots are sweet;
But the tears of those we love are heavy and
bitter rain.

Mummy, my darling, when you go home,
Go to my room and bum my old gloves.
Burn all my schoolbooks,
Give away my dresses,
Give away my necklace.
Burn, burn, give away, give away,
And promise me never to cry again.
Mummy, Mummy dear, oh, let me sleep in peace,
My night is long.

Forget, forget my grave,
Let the silent grass clothe my bones.
Burn all my shoes,
Give away my bracelets.
Burn, burn, give away, give away.
Keep for yourself only the little gold locket.

MRS. NOLAN

The gold locket? Which locket?
I have no locket.

MONICA

Mother, mother, are you there?
Mother, mother, are you there?

MRS. NOLAN

I don't understand.
Doodly, Doodly, don't go away.
Oh, please stop her!
Doodly' Doodly!

MRS. GOBINEAU

No! No! You mustn't... Sit down!

MR. GOBINEAU

Silence, please!

MRS. GOBINEAU

Yes, dear, yes.
I know, I know.
But you must keep calm.
Come, come, sit down. there'

MRS. NOLAN

But I must speak to her...
I must ask her to explain. Please let me...

MR. GOBINEAU

Silence!
You will wake her. Hold on to yourself, Mrs. Nolan.
Silence, silence, please!
Will you please be silent!

Send my son to me.
Please send my son to me.

MR. GOBINEAU

Is that you, Mickey? Hello, Mickey'

MRS. GOBINEAU

Hello, darling! My darling!
You sound so near to-night!

MR. GOBINEAU

Yes, so near.

MRS. GOBINEAU

I can almost feel him.

MR. GOBINEAU

Oh, he is going away now.

MRS. GOBINEAU

Goodbye, my sweet, kiss me.

MR. GOBINEAU

We'll be back soon.

BABA

What is it? Who is it?

Who is there?

BABA

Who touched me?

MR. GOBINEAU)

What do you mean?

BABA

I said, who touched me?

THE CLIENTS

I don't know,

But why be afraid?

There is nothing strange about that.

It often happened before.

MRS. NOLAN

I just don't see what's strange about that!

BABA

No, no, you don't understand.

A hand touched me in the dark.

MR. GOBINEAU

Oh, yes, that has often happened to me.

MRS. GOBINEAU

Me too,

I always feel Mickey's hand on my hair.

BABA

It couldn't be. I can't understand.

MR. GOBINEAU

You're not afraid, are you?

BABA

Go home, leave me alone.

Can't you see? I'm not feeling well.

Go home, leave me alone.

Get out!

Get out!

THE CLIENTS

But why be afraid, afraid of our dead?

MONICA

Baba, what has happened?

BABA

Give me something to drink.

Monica.

MONICA

Yes...

BABA

We must never do this again.

MONICA

But what has happened?

BABA

Monica.

MONICA

Yes.

BABA

We must give them their money back.

MONICA

But why?

BABA

Why? Didn't you see?

While I was still pretending to be in a trance,

All of a sudden in the dark

I felt on my throat a hand

A cold, cold hand.

It wasn't the hand of a man.

Monica, I'm afraid!

MONICA

Baba, Baba, you're imagining things'
You've been drinking again.
What else could it be?

BABA

No, no... no, it was there.
I felt on my skin... ev'ry finger... see. like this!
Monica, Monica, I'm afraid!
Yes, I'm afraid!
Where is Toby?
He! He's the one!
I know now'
He did it!
Yes, yes... he did it!

MONICA

Ah, Baba, Baba, leave him alone!
You're drunk again!

BABA

I can read it in his eyes.
Look at him!
The way he grins at me. He knows, he knows.
He did it to frighten me.
Isn't it true?

MONICA

Nonsense!

BABA

It was you who touched me!

MONICA

Oh!

BABA

It was you' It was you!
He knows... he knows...
Ah! A helpless thing!

MONICA

O, Baba, stop tormenting him!
You know he is such a helpless thing.

BABA

Just because he cannot speak
We take him for a half-wit,
But he knows a great deal.
He knows much more than we think.
There is something uncanny about him.
He sees things we don't see.
Get up' Get up!

MONICA

Come, Baba'
Come, Baba!

BABA

I tell you, don't trust him!
I warn you - keep away from him!
Beware of him! Beware!

MONICA

Come, Baba. Come, Baba.
Come, Baba. Come, Baba...

The sun has fallen, and it lies in blood.
The moon is weaving bandages of gold.
O black swan, where, oh, where is my lover gone?
Torn and tattered is my bridal gown,
And my lamp is lost, and my lamp is lost.
With silver needles and with silver thread,
The stars stitch a shroud for the dying sun.
O black swan, where, oh, where has my lover gone?
I had given him a kiss of fire,
And a golden ring,
Don't you hear your lover moan?
Eyes of glass and feet of stone,
Shells for teeth and weeds for tongue,
Deep, deep, down in the river's bed
He's looking for the ring.
Eyes wide open, never asleep,
He's looking for the ring, looking for the ring.
The spools unravel and the needles break.

MONICA, BABA

The sun is buried and the stars weep.
O black wave, take me away with you.
I will share with you my golden hair,
And my bridal crown, and my bridal crown.

Oh, take me down with you.
Take me down to my wand'ring lover
With my child unborn,
With my child unborn.

GHOST VOICES

Mother, mother, are you there?
Mother, mother, are you there?

BABA

Sh!
Listen, listen.

MONICA

What?

BABA

Can't you hear?

MONICA

Again you're imagining things.

BABA

No, no, I'm sure I heard a voice like yours.
Someone must be hiding back there.
Toby, go back and see who it is.

MONICA

Baba don't be foolish, Nobody's there!

BABA

Go on, go on.

MONICA

What has come over you, Baba?
I've never seen you like this.

MONICA

Bravo!
And after the theatre, supper and dance.
Music!
Um-pa-pa, um-pa-pa,

BABA

We are not alone! We are not alone!
He's coming' He's running back.
Did you see anything?

MONICA

I told you, I told you there is nobody there.

BABA

You're lying! You don't want to tell me.
Liar! liar!

MONICA

Baba, stop it!

BABA

Oh, God, what is happening to me?
What is this darkness?
Kneel down, kneel down,
and pray God to save our souls.

BABA

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum etc.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei etc.

MONICA

Ah, the moon is weaving bandages of gold.
A black wave,
A black wave,
Take me down with you,
Take me down with you.

ACT II

Up in the sky
Some-one is playing a trombone and a guitar.
Red is your tie.
And in your velveteen coat you hide a star.
Monica, Monica, dance the waltz.

Monica, Monica, dance the waltz.
Follow me, moon and sun,
Keep time with me, one two three one.
If you're not shy,
Pin up my hair with your star and buckle my shoe.
And when you fly,
Please hold on tight to my waist,
I'm flying with you.
O, Monica, Monica, dance the waltz.
Monica, Monica, dance the waltz.
Follow me, moon and sun,
Follow me.
What is the matter, Toby?
What is it you want to tell me?
Kneel down before me,
And now, tell me...

Monica, Monica, can't you see,
That my heart is bleeding, bleeding for you?
I loved you, Monica, all my life,
With all my breath, with all my blood.
You haunt the mirror of my sleep; you are my night.
You are my light and the jailer of my day.

How dare you, scoundrel, talk to me like that!
Don't you know who I am?
I'm the Queen of Aroundel!
I shall have you put in chains!

You are my princess, you are my queen,
And I'm only Toby, one of your slaves,
And still I love you and always loved you
With all my breath, with all my blood.
I love your laughter, I love your hair,
I love your deep and nocturnal eyes.
I love your soft hands, so white and winged,
I love the slender branch of your throat.

Toby, don't speak to me like that'
You make my head swim.

Monica, Monica, fold me in your satin gown.
Monica, Monica, give me your mouth,
Monica, Monica, fall in my arms.

Why, Toby!

You're not crying, are you?

Toby, I want you to know that you have
the most beautiful voice in the world'

BABA

Where is Monica?

Toby, what are you doing?

Come here, Toby.

I want to talk to you.

Come, come near me.

What are you afraid of?

Come, come nearer, this way.

Toby, you know that I love you

As if you were my own son.

I'm often harsh with you, that's true.

Still, still, if it hadn't been for me,

Where would you be now?

I found you, a little starving gypsy,

Roaming the streets of Budapest

Without a tongue to speak your hunger.

If I hadn't taken you with me,

Who would have cared for you, poor little half-wit?

And now, listen, now we must be good friends.

I'll never punish you, never, never again,

And I will buy you a new shirt

Of bright red silk and a golden scarf.

But first you must tell me.

Were you the one who touched my throat?

You know, at the seance a few days ago...

Don't be afraid of telling me.

I won't punish you.

I just want to know, that is all.

Just tell me, yes, or no.

Come, don't be afraid, yes, or no...

I know it anyway but show me how you did it.

Come on, wake up, wake up, I say, damn you!

You see, you make me angry,

And I want to be your friend.

Now tell me, my sweet, my own little Toby,

Did you touch me that night?

You like that bolt of red silk, don't you?
Would you like to have it?
All you have to make is one little sign,
And it will be yours.

It was you who touched me, wasn't it?
Perhaps it was not you after all.
Perhaps it was something else.
Something I couldn't see!
But you know, you saw it!
I can read it in your eyes!
Come on, say yes, or no!
Stop staring at me!
Don't go away!
You see, you're making me angry again!

You love Monica, don't you?
How would you like to marry her?
Yes, you could, you could.
But first you must tell me, did you have
anything to do
with what happened that night?
Did you see anything?
A light? A shape?
Wake up!
Did you?
Stop staring at me!
Did you?

Ah, so!
You don't want to answer.
You're trying to frighten me.
I'll show you, damn little gypsy,

BABA

I'll make you talk!
I'll make you talk!
You cannot get away from me!

I'll make you spit out blood, I will.

I'll make you spit out blood!
So you won't answer, eh!

So you won't answer, eh!

MONICA

Ah, Baba, what did you do to him?

MRS. GOBINEAU, MRS. NOLAN

Good evening, Madame Flora.

MR. GOBINEAU

Good evening.

BABA

What do you want?

MR. AND MRS. GOBINEAU

Isn't this the night of the seance?

BABA

The seance?

Yes, yes, I'm glad you came.

I've something to tell you, come in.

There will be no more seances.

There is your money.

MRS. NOLAN

No more seances?

MR. GOBINEAU

What do you mean?

BABA

Listen to me!

There never was a seance!

I cheated you!

Do you understand?

Cheated you, cheated you!

THE CLIENTS

How could it be?

It isn't true, you must not say so!

MRS. NOLAN

I clearly saw my daughter,

I saw her, with my own eyes!

MR. AND MRS. GOBINEAU

And little Mickey, laughing, touching my hair!

BABA

Nothing but a fraud,
I can prove it to you.

Look here, the lights, the wires to make the
table move.
The hidden microphone.

MRS. NOLAN

Oh, no! I saw my daughter, I saw her!

BABA

Your daughter, here she is!
Cheap white gauze, nothing else.

MRS. NOLAN

But I spoke to her.

BABA

Monica, Monica, let her hear your voice, show her.

MONICA

“Mother, mother, are you there?
Mother, mother, are you there?”

MRS. NOLAN

Oh, no, no, no, that isn't the same voice!

BABA

And do the little boy laughing.

MRS. GOBINEAU

Oh, no! You know that isn't the same!

BABA

You fools!
What more proofs do you want?

MRS. NOLAN

Not to know my own daughter's voice!
Could that be? Could that be?

MR. AND MRS. GOBINEAU

Not to know little Mickey's touch?
Could that be? Could that be?

THE CLIENTS

Oh, no, no, it wasn't a fraud!
What you said is not the truth!

BABA

What? You don't believe me?

MRS. NOLAN

I even found the little locket she talked about.

MR. AND MRS. GOBINEAU

Did you?

BABA

The locket?
Ev'rybody has some old locket.
It's an old trick; we use it on ev'ry mother!

MR. GOBINEAU

It might well be you thought
You were cheating all the while,
But you were not, you were not.

THE CLIENTS

Surely now, you won't let us down?
What would we do without your guidance?

Please let us have our seance,
Madame Flora!
Just let us hear it once more,
Madame Flora!
This is the only joy we have in our lives,
Madame Flora!
Our little dead are waiting for us,
Madame Flora!
You wouldn't keep us away from them would you,
Madame Flora?
Please let us have our seance,
Madame Flora!
Just let us have it once more, just once more,
Madame Flora!

BABA

You must believe me!
You must believe me!

It is foolish of youi
You must believe me!
You must!

Here is your money.
Take it! Pleasei
Take it!
Go to someone else!
Please! Please!

Get out of here, get out, get out! Get out of here.
You fools! You fools!

Fools!
Fools'

And you, you too get out and never come back!

MONICA

Don't say that! Toby, so helpless!

BABA

Yes, he must go!

MONICA

No, Baba, you cannot send him away.
You know he can't take care of himself.

BABA

I don't care.

MONICA

He is hardly more than a child.

BABA

That may be, but still he must go away.
I cannot bear to see those hunted eyes.

MONICA

Then let me go and take care of him!

BABA

You'll do nothing of the sort'

MONICA

Yes, Baba, if he must go, I will too.

BABA

You'll do nothing of the sort!

MONICA

Baba!

BABA

He must go!

MONICA

Baba!

BABA

He must go, go away!

MONICA

How can you be so cruel?
Poor boy!

BABA

Don't worry, he will take care of himself,
He'll surely find a place where he can stay.

MONICA

Oh, please don't let him go!

BABA

I cannot bear to look at him!
I tell you he must go!

MONICA

Oh, please don't let him go!
Don't go!

BABA

Yes, he must go before it is too late!
Get out, get out!

MONICA

Toby!

BABA

Don't stand there like a fool!
 Go into your room!
 Leave him alone.
 He'll take care of himself.

GHOST VOICES

Mother, mother, are you there?

BABA

Who's there? Is it you, Monica?

GHOST VOICES

Mother, mother, are you there?

BABA

Stop it!

BABA

Afraid, am I afraid?
 Madame Flora afraid!
 Can it be that I'm afraid?
 In my young days I have seen many terrible things!
 Women screaming as they were murdered,
 And men's hands dripping with blood,
 And men haunted by knives.
 And little grotesque children drained
 White by the voraciousness of filth,
 And loathsome old men insane with vice,
 And young men with cankers crawling
 On their flesh like hungry lizards.
 This I've seen, and more, and never been afraid.

O God!
 Forgive my sins, I'm sick and old.
 Forgive my sins and give me peace!
 What ill wind shakes my hand?
 What unseen ghost stands by my side?
 No, no, it cannot be the dead!
 The dead... the dead.
 The dead never come back.
 They sink down in the dust

With no eyes to dream and no silence to keep,
 No secrets to hide!
 Gone, empty, nothing, nothing.

"O black swan, where,
 Oh, where is my lover gone?"

Who is there?

"O black swan, O black swan. "

What?

Nothing, but then if there is nothing
 To be afraid of why am I afraid of this nothingness?
 I must forget about it, laugh at it,
 Yes, laugh at it!

O God, forgive my sins,
 I'm sick and old.

Who's there? Who's there?
 Answer me!
 Monica, Monica, is it you?

Who is it then?
 If you are human, answer me!
 Who is it? Who is it?

Speak out or I'll shoot!
 I'll shoot! I'll shoot!
 Answer me! Answer me!
 I'll shoot! I'll shoot!

I've killed the ghost!
 I've killed the ghost!

Was it you? Was it you?

The Medium
 Written by Gian Carlo Menotti
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