

high voice

daphne, unheard

words by
rachel rose

music & movement by
jeffrey ryan

Perusal Copy

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Performance notes




Total performance time: ca. 5'30"

Vocal range: B3 to G5

Quarter tones:

-  1/4 tone flat
-  1/4 tone sharp
-  3/4 tone sharp

Eye movement: (Notation is as though performer is looking in a mirror.)

-  look straight ahead
-  look to the right
-  look to the left

Mouth position:

- mouth scarcely open
- mouth partially open
- mouth wide open, free

Hand and arm movement: At the beginning of the piece, the hands are at the performer's sides. In the course of the piece, as Daphne transforms into the tree, the hands gradually turn out and move upward, pausing at specific arrival points along the way, until the end when the arms have become branches and the hands have become leaves. Hand positions are carefully notated in the score in both pictures and words, as are the periods when the hands are in motion. The motion is always extremely slow; the performer will need to pace the speed of motion so that the hands reach the notated arrival points at the proper time. Note that aside from movement at the waist at specifically notated points, the head, torso and legs do not move. The piece should have an overall sense of an alert mind trapped in an exorable transformation to immobility, reliving that experience in painfully slow motion.

The notated movement is an important part of the theatre of the piece and may not be omitted. However, in all cases, while observing the notated movement and staying within the character of the piece, the individual performer is invited to make the movement organically her own.

Programme note

Unheard is a suite of four Song Theatre works for unaccompanied female voice with notated movement. They may be performed as a set, individually, or in any combination. Poet Rachel Rose has been writing an on-going series of poems in which she gives voice to female characters from literature and mythology who are largely unheard in traditional tellings, usually in favour of the male characters. We hear from these women after they have left their stories, expressing their experience in hindsight and illuminating for us a different perspective while connecting with women's experience in contemporary times.

The Greek myth of Daphne and Apollo has been the inspiration for many works of art. As Apollo attempts to rape her, Daphne calls out to her father Peneus for rescue. Her father's response is to turn her into a laurel tree. The myth ends with a description of the devoted Apollo tending the tree forever, a wreath of her leaves worn as a victor's crown. But how must Daphne have felt, victim to Apollo and then to her father, who "saved" her by taking away her freedom? In *Daphne, Unheard*, set years after her transformation, we hear the story from Daphne's perspective, her voice emerging from within the eternal prison of her wooden body.

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Daphne to Peneus

by Rachel Rose

When Apollo taunted Eros, I was handy
for revenge. I was lovely then—
reason enough to draw wrath. Apollo stalked me
in the market, his fantasy
blinding the indifferent crowd. They thought
he was my boyfriend. Or a god. I believed
you'd save me, Father, but not like that.
I called for you as he caught me and cleaved
his way in. Under him I turned to wood.
He peeled back my indifferent bark,
buried himself in dry mosses. Could
you hear my bones snap, feel my bloodsap
in your river? I grew where you said I should.
Years drift, friends become legends, I'm still wood.

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stand in "mountain pose",
eyes and mouth closed,
arms/hands straight down,
palms towards body,
fingers together

eyes open
suddenly,
looking ahead,
unblinking as
much as possible

suddenly look
right (only the
eyes move)

eyes snap
back to
centre

suddenly
look left



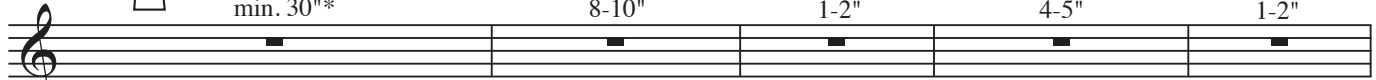
min. 30"*

8-10"

1-2"

4-5"

1-2"



*hold as long as necessary to create the grounding
and silence out of which the action emerges

slowly arc eyes up
and over to right

eyes snap
back to
centre

circle eyes somewhat frantically,
trapped, looking for a way out—
left, right, up, down, ad lib.

Senza misura ♩ = ca. 60
eyes snap
to centre,
stay forward

struggling to
speak, the mouth
scarcely opens

close mouth
suddenly, the
sound cuts off

2-3"

1"

2-3"

6-7"

p

mp



Oo*

*as though starting the "w" of "when"

partially
open mouth

close
mouth

p < *mp*

p < *mf*

gasp
inhale

p < *mf*

gasp

p < *mf*

gasp

p < *mf*

gasp

p < *mf* close
mouth



mouth stays
partially open

p < *mf*

gasp

mf

gasp

mf

gasp

mf

gasp

mf

"goat trill"

gt.

gt.



gathering strength,
the mouth freeing

p < *f*

p < *f*

p < *f*



slowly turn hands so palms face back
(from here the mouth is free to sing)

mf

f

gasp *mf*

f

gasp *mf*

f

gasp *p*

f

gasp *p*

f

mf

mf



slowly move hands to cover genitals

mp

mp



I was love - ly then - rea - son e - nough to draw

Daphne (high)

quick, sharp jerk inwards at the waist, with a slight collapse of the body, like a blow to the abdomen
slowly return to fully upright
slowly move hands up to cover breasts

wra - th. A - po-llo stalked me in the mar-ket.

(hands continue moving)

quick eye movements
 left right centre
 left centre right

A - po-llo stalked me, his fan - ta-sy

(hands continue moving)

centre left centre

blind - ing the in - dif - fer-ent

slowly move hands to cover heart

a small voice, childlike and frightened
 left right centre

crowd. They thought he was my boy-friend. Or a god.

slowly move hands to throat (choking position)
lean right from waist upright

p sub. non-vib.
 mp mf gasp mp mf gasp mp mf

I be-lieved you'd save me, Fa-ther, but not like that.

lean right upright
slowly move hands in front of mouth

f

I called for you, I called for you as he

(hands continue moving) (a bit in front, do not completely block sound)
slowly move hands to cover eyes
 lean back from waist upright lean back upright

mf

caught me and cleaved his way in. Un-der him I turned to wood.

(hands continue moving)

mf *lean back* *upright* *mf* *gasp*

Un-der him I turned to wood. He peeled back my in-dif-fer-ent bark,



slowly move hands to cover ears

mf *gasp* *gasp* *f* *gasp*

bur-ied him-self in dry moss-es. Could you hear my bones snap,

(hands continue moving)

f *gasp* *f* *gasp* *f* *gasp*

feel my blood sap in your ri-ver? In your ri-ver?



inhale exhale inhale exhale

f *gasp*

In your ri-ver? In your ri-ver?

slowly raise hands straight up

inhale *mf* (unaccented) *inhale exhale inhale exhale inhale* *mp*

I grew where you said I should. Years drift, friends

(hands rising)

mp *p* *pp* the voice receding *losing the words*

be-come le-gends, I'm still wood. I'm still wood. I'm still wood.



slowly turn hands so palms face out, fingers still together



close mouth, blink eyes rapidly several times as though holding back tears, while bending elbows and spreading fingers like leaves and branches



slowly close eyes and hold position

*gasp** *gasp* *gasp* *gasp* *gasp* 5-6" min. 10"

*the mouth barely open