

high voice

unheard

song theatre suite
for unaccompanied female voice
with notated movement

words by
rachel rose

music & movement by
jeffrey ryan

unheard

words by music & movement by
rachel rose jeffrey ryan

yasodhara, unheard
persephone, unheard
daphne, unheard
shamhat, unheard

Performance notes

Total performance time: ca. 25'

Vocal range: A3 (ossia B3) to Bb5

Note: *Shamhat, Unheard* requires the performer to play finger cymbals.

Detailed performance notes are provided with each song.

The four songs in *Unheard* can be performed separately or in any order.

Programme note

Unheard is a suite of Song Theatre works for unaccompanied female voice with notated movement. 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.

Character-specific programme notes are provided with each song.

Thanks to Heather Pawsey, James Fagan Tait, and
Heidi Taylor/Playwrights Theatre Centre.

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yasodhara, unheard

words by music & movement by
rachel rose jeffrey ryan

Performance notes

Total performance time: ca. 5'30"

Vocal range: C4 to A5

Sung consonants: In many cases, consonants which can be sung and sustained (such as "m" and "n") are given their own syllables with their own rhythmic values. This occurs in the middle or at the end of certain words. For example, "from" may be written "fro-m", in which case the final "m" is sung as a separate syllable. Other examples include "born" (= "bor-n"), "inside" (= "i-n-side") and "mangoes" (= "ma-ng-oes"). In each instance, the sung consonant creates an extra syllable which has one or more notes attached to it. This effect is integral to the style of text-setting used in this piece.

Nasal tone: At various points in the piece, for colour, a nasal quality is requested, similar to the traditional vocal style of Nepal and India.

Movement: The notated movements in this piece are all mimed. The character is beginning her day by doing her makeup while simultaneously tending to her infant son.

Frequently the tone of the words and the music is at odds with the external action; this is deliberate, and reflects how the character tries to mask her inner thoughts with the collected and controlled appearance she wants to project to the outside world. Though there are times when the mask briefly drops, it is important that the performer convey this inner vs. outer duality when required.

This piece may be performed standing, or, if preferred and practical, with a single chair facing the audience. If a chair is used, the character stands as indicated in m. 134.

If desired, the performer may use props, even actually applying her makeup in real time.

The notated movement is an important part of the theatre of the piece and may not be omitted. Occasionally, the movement is metrically notated, which should be strictly observed for the intended effect. Otherwise, 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.

Yasodhara, the wife of Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, was abandoned by her husband on the night of their son's birth. In *Yasodhara, Unheard*, we hear from her some weeks after she awoke to find herself a single parent, her anger and pain still fresh, her devotion to her son intensified. As she tries to make sense of her fate and her feelings, she puts on the face—the mask—that she presents to the world, while at the same time going through a familiar routine that starts her day but now also provides a semblance of normalcy to which she clings in her new reality, one experienced by single mothers through the ages.

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Aubade: Buddha's Wife

by Rachel Rose

Others worship you, but I loved you, husband.
I still think we could have worked it out.
You named our newborn son Rahula, *Fetter*,
and fell in post-partum despair at his birth. Did your father
bind you to such grief when he kept old people a secret
all your boyhood, forced the broken-bodied outside city walls,
grandparents banished? Or was it your queen mother, who died
and left you? Life is a nut meat in our mouths, and life
is a bowl of cobwebs too. Once
Queen Maya sat under the ashoka trees
and held their red flowers to her face, heavy with joy,
tracing the *linea nigra*, as inside her you dreamed
of great loneliness, and beat your heels against it. Seven days
after your birth she died, her right side still clotted with blood.
You drank the milk of a woman your father paid,
who felt the death of her own child in every pull.
You grew fat from her sorrow; it formed your dimples.
I can't forgive you. For how many lifetimes will my heart
be shackled to yours?

We suffer, we die. Are you to be honoured
for discovering this, as if you'd found a new country?
You left us with a kiss while we were sleeping.
The rosy dawn was terrible to me. O my vagabond,
should I have followed your example, left our son to drift
unfettered, without even my milk to nourish him?
Did you feel lighter as you wandered,
eating fallen mangoes, sitting with stray dogs
who pushed their noses in your palm
for salt? Whole philosophies of attachment
unbind the breasts of ordinary mothers
who will never do what you've done.
Idiot. He never knew your hands.
Yes, we will die, yes, there is pain.
You could have stayed home, Siddhartha.
You could have raised our son.

words by
rachel rose

yasodhara, unheard

music & movement by
jeffrey ryan

enter with "baby" against shoulder. Stand (or sit) at "mirror", centre stage, facing audience. Reposition baby to be cradled by one arm, freeing the other hand to apply makeup. Stare at "reflection" with a sense of being emotionally drained. After a moment, look at baby for a beat, then turn back to mirror. Expression turns to resolve and determination, fuelled by hurt and anger, and masking a pain which occasionally breaks through the surface.

$\bullet = 72$ ($\bullet = 144$) prepare to apply tika (bindi)

nasal -----

mf with a hint of sarcasm



O - thers - wor-ship you.

dip middle finger into paste

slowly raise hand to forehead

press finger to third eye, making a small circular motion, then lower hand

ord. *f*



O - thers - wor-ship you. O - thers - wor-ship you. But

$\bullet = 48$ sub. pulling away from reflection
impassioned, emotional

poco rit. ----- back to mirror



I loved - you, hus - band.

change of expression, back to resolve in the face of adversity; wipe finger clean, then pick up foundation sponge

dip sponge into foundation

apply foundation to face, avoiding tika area (to m. 20)



I still think we could have worked it out.



I still think we could have worked it out. You na-m'd our

check foundation in mirror; when satisfied, put down sponge



new - bor - n son Ra-hu-la, Fet-ter, and fell i - n

distracted by baby, look at him and smile, perhaps rub his nose

poco rit. -----

turn back to mirror, still smiling - seeing reflection, smile fades



post - par - tum de - spair at his birth.

27 $\bullet = 72$ take concealer, put some on finger
mf bitterly, spitting out the words
 one daub under eye
 Did ___ your fa - ther bind you to such grief when ___ he kept old ___ peo - ple a se - cret

29 two daubs, same eye three daubs, other eye lightly smooth concealer
 all your boy - hood, forced ___ the ___ bro - ke - n - bo - died out - side ___ ci - ty

32 notice a blemish on side of neck
 walls, ___ grand - pa - rents, grand - pa - rents ban - ished, ban - ished?

36 apply concealer to blemish *p* notice the baby, briefly engage
 Or was it ___ your quee - n ___ mo - ther, who died ___ and ___

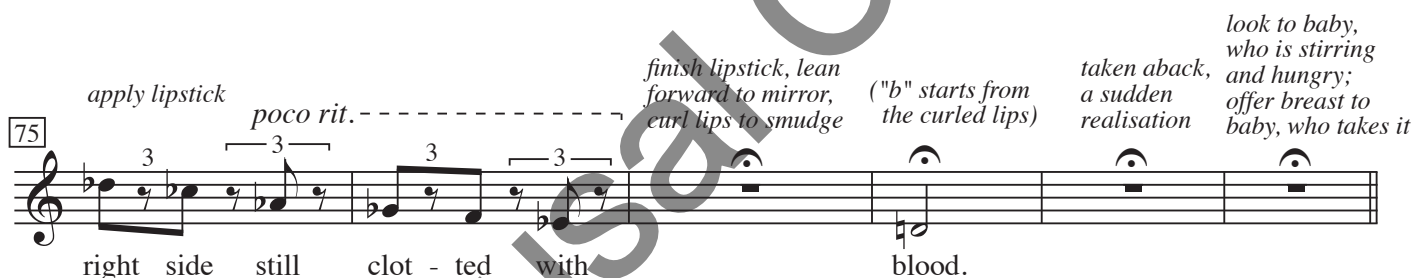
39 return to mirror *mf* $\bullet = 48$ sub. open eyeshadow, apply eyeshadow to one eye *f* impassioned again nasal - - - - - ord.
 left ___ you? ___ Life ___ is a

44 nasal - - - - - ord. *mf* nasal - - - - - ord.
 nut meat i - n ___ our ___ mouths, and life ___ is a

47 action pauses, the emotional shock briefly resurfacing *poco rit.* - - - - - controlling emotions again $\bullet = 72$ forcing to continue, apply eyeshadow to the other eye *mf* somewhat nasal to m. 68
 bowl of cob - webs too. ___ Once Quee - n Ma - y - a ___ sat un - der the a -

52
 sho - ka ___ trees and held their ___ red ___ flow - ers to her face, heav - y with

57 *finish shadow, take up pencil and begin eyeliner, closing eyes as needed*



97 *f f* *• = 48 sub.* *out to world, though no one is listening* *finish feeding, lift baby with both hands to look at him* *poco rit. - - -*
 can't for - give__ you. For how__ ma - ny life - times will my heart be shack - led to

102 *p* *rest baby on shoulder to burp; one hand mimes patting baby's back; the other makes patting sound against shoulder* *pat* *• = 72* *p matter-of-factly* *pat* *pat* *pat* *sarcastically*
 yours? We suf - fer, we die.__ Are you to be

108 *pat* *pat* *lower baby back to cradling in one arm*
 hon - oured for dis - co - ver - ing this, as__ if__ you'd__ found a new__

112 *mf* *bitterly again* *check makeup in mirror, apply blush through m. 119*
 cou - n - try? You left us with a kiss__ while we were sleep - ing.

115 *f*
 The ros - y dawn__ was ter - ri - ble to me. O my va - ga - bond,__ should I have

119 *put down blush, pick up powder puff*
 fol - lowed your ex - a - m - ple, left our so - n to drift__ u - n - fet - tered,

122 *one puff of powder on nose* *put down powder puff, pick up hair brush, brush hair to m. 131* *mf*
 with - out e - ven my milk to__ nour - ish him? Did you feel light - er as you

125

wa - n - dered, eat - ing fal - len ma - ng - oes, sit - ting with

129

put down brush, check look in mirror

stray _ dogs who pushed _ their _ no - ses i - n your _ palm for salt?

134

*♩ = 48 sub.
if sitting, stand now*

*look down to makeup table,
pick up and put on an earring*

pause action

Whole _____ phil - o-so-phies of at - tach - ment un - bi - nd the breasts of

138

mf *put on other earring* *ord.* *mp* *lower hands, stare at reflection* *p*

or-di-na-ry mo-thers who will ne - ver do what you've _ do-ne. _

142

into mirror *p* *a low growl* *to the universe, loud enough for him to hear* *ff* *a furious shout* *♩ = 72* *bitter, angry, disappointed* *mf*

I - di - ot. I - di - ot! He ne - ver knew your hands.

145

pick up cell phone, check time, texts, etc.

He ne - ver knew your hands. Yes, we will die, yes, there is pain.

148

put cell phone into purse, put purse in one hand *grab diaper bag, swing onto shoulder*

Yes, we will die, yes, there is pain. You could have stayed home, Sid-dhar-tha. You

151

into mirror *on the way out*

could have stayed home, Sid-dhar-tha. You could have raised our _ son.

persephone, unheard

words by music & movement by
rachel rose jeffrey ryan

Performance notes

Total performance time: ca. 4'45"

Vocal range: A3 (ossia D4) to Bb5

Spoken voice:



single-line staff with x-shaped noteheads indicates spoken voice. General pitch level is relative to the staff line. The shift between spoken voice and sung voice is always immediate.

Movement: The notated head movements create a visual effect similar to blunt cuts in film editing. The performer has three primary positions of the head: CENTRE facing front (as though a camera were directly in front of the performer); approximately 45° to the LEFT (as though a camera were filming a three-quarter view to the performer's right); and approximately 45° to RIGHT (as though a camera were filming a three-quarter view to the performer's left). These movements must be executed quickly, and metrically as indicated. Along with the head movements, there are frequent jump cuts between text fragments, which plays with perceptions of time, memory and repetition. From the vantage point of a particular audience member, the "camera angle" constantly shifts during the performance. (Except where specified, the hands, etc., are free.)

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The Greek story of Persephone is usually told from her mother's perspective. Persephone is abducted by Hades and taken to the Underworld. Grieving mother Demeter neglects her duties as Harvest Goddess. Hades is convinced to release Persephone, but having eaten some pomegranate, she must return to Hades several months each year, the winter of Demeter's grief. But what if Persephone ate the pomegranate on purpose? In *Persephone, Unheard*, we hear from a teenager determined to make her own choices. To Persephone, hell is leaving her boyfriend every year to be with a mother who doesn't understand her, and in a torrent of repetition and shifting camera angles, she unleashes the revelatory tirade she had played and replayed in her head.

Thanks to Heather Pawsey, James Fagan Tait, and
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Persephone

by Rachel Rose

It was my sex that made you crazy, mother:
when I started doing in the dark what you did
to create crops, to blossom. I was supposed to stay
your small fruit, green and unplucked on the branch
until I was picked to bear. But I didn't want the fruit,
only the pollen, only the flowering, the nectar.
I wanted it always to be spring, never autumn, never harvest.
I stopped the throat of my womb with rocks
so I could bloom all over him.
It was hell only to you, who owned the language
of the fields, when I followed him down to the wet
bedrooms of the body. To me heaven was in the dripping
sweat of our smashed bodies, colliding, spent. I no longer
wanted the light. Or rather, just the first kisses of dawn, not full day,
not duty, not babies. When you came for me,
I followed, dragging my filial debt like a stone.
It was only at the door of light, his sweet seed
dried in my fist, that I hesitated, that I licked my own
salt-stained palm and returned to him, undead
which means alive, O alive to the body's hungers.
I cannot weed the garden for you, I cannot put up tomatoes
gather apples, fill your lap with grandchildren,
all I want is to die and die with him.

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words by
rachel rose

persephone, unheard

music & movement by
jeffrey ryan

Senza misura

enter from offstage (or back of house). The "door of light" is upstage centre. Approach the door, as every year's duty. This time, the hand raises in a gesture of "no"—this year you cannot go through. Turn away from the "door" and proceed downstage centre.

anguish,
frustration,
an impossible
situation

angrily fold
arms over
chest

♩ = 150 A tempo

CENTRE RIGHT
mf in a flood

Arrgh! It, it was,

6 CENTRE LEFT CENTRE RIGHT
it was my, it was my sex, it was my sex that, it was my sex that made,

11 CENTRE RIGHT LEFT CENTRE roll eyes
it was my sex that made you, it was my sex that made you cra - zy,

16 RIGHT CENTRE roll eyes LEFT roll eyes
it was my sex that made you cra - zy, mo-ther, made you cra - zy, mo-ther,

21 RIGHT CENTRE scowl fling arms in frustration mf with a slight sneer guttural
cra - zy, mo-ther. Cra - zy mo-ther! When I start - ed do-ing in the dark what

25 RIGHT LEFT CENTRE point drop stamp finger hand foot LEFT
you did, what you did, what you did, what you did to cre - ate crops, to

31 RIGHT stamp foot CENTRE p
blos-som, to blos-som. I was sup - posed to stay your small fruit,

36
green and un - plucked on the branch un - til I was picked to bear.

40 RIGHT *mf* CENTRE LEFT CENTRE RIGHT

But, but I, but I did-n't, but I did-n't want the fruit,

45 CENTRE LEFT RIGHT CENTRE *f sub.* RIGHT *mf sub.*

want the fruit, I did-n't want the fruit, I did-n't, on - ly the

50 CENTRE *f sub.* RIGHT *mf sub.* CENTRE *f sub.* RIGHT *mf sub.* smoky, with a sting

pol - len, on - ly the flo - wer - ing, on - ly the nec - tar.

55 wait for reaction CENTRE raise eyebrow in a dare *mf* quietly defiant free physical movement through m. 82

I — want-ed it, I — want-ed it al - ways,

60 *p*

I — want-ed it al - ways, al - ways to be spring, to be

64

spring, ne-ver au-tumn, spring, al - ways spring, ne-ver har - vest, al - ways spring,

69 *mf p sub. mf sub. p sub. mf sub. p sub.*

al - ways, al- (ne-ver au-tumn) ways (ne-ver au-tumn) spring (ne-ver har - vest,

74 fold arms across chest - - - - *pp* (elided)

ne-ver har - vest). I, I, I, I, I, I stopped the throat — of my

79 step forward, open arms, blooming, - - - - taunting

womb with rocks — so I, I could bloom, — I could bloom all

Persephone (high)
*lean back, smug,
 fold arms across
 chest again
 lunga*

(bloom) -----,
 molto rit. -----,

85 *mf* LEFT CENTRE RIGHT
 o - ver him. It, it was, it was hell!

93 CENTRE *mf* *release arms, point* LEFT *(hand down) mp sub.* CENTRE
 It was hell on-ly to you, on-ly to you, who owned the lan-guage of the fields,

98 *mf* *point* LEFT *drop hand mp sub.* CENTRE *mf* *point* *drop hand* RIGHT *drop hand mp sub.*
 on-ly to you, when I fol-lowed him down, on-ly to you, on-ly to you, down

102 CENTRE RIGHT *point drop hand mf sub. mp sub.* CENTRE *mf sub.* RIGHT *drop hand mp sub.*
 to the wet, you, wet bed-rooms, to you, bed-rooms of the bo-dy.

107 CENTRE *f* *unbridled, free* *free physical movement through m. 121*
 To me, hea-ven, to me hea-ven was in the drip-ping sweat

115 *5* *3* *3* *5* *5*
 of our smashed bo-dies, col-lid-ing, col-lid-ing,

122 *stop* *p* *close eyes, in reverie blissfully* *slowly open eyes, back to present, refocus on Mother*
 spent.

132 *mp* RIGHT CENTRE
 I no long-er want-ed the light. I no long-er want-ed the light.

140 LEFT *p dolce* CENTRE RIGHT
 Or ra-ther, just the first kis-ses of dawn, not full day, not du-ty,

150 CENTRE *look back over right shoulder* *mf* RIGHT CENTRE

not ba - bies. When, when you came, when you came for me,

158 LEFT *a burdensome annual ritual* CENTRE

when you came for me, I fol - lowed, I fol - lowed, I fol - lowed,

166 RIGHT CENTRE *eyes roll upward, long-suffering*

I fol - lowed, I fol - lowed, drag ging my fi -

174 *eyes slowly look forward molto rit.* *a withering look* *the face set, the upper lip curling*

li - al debt like a stone. *lunga*

182 *A tempo expression ord.* *mp* *reach to front, as if the door is ahead* *mf* *slowly turn hand to look at palm*

It was on - ly, on - ly at the door, the door of light, his sweet

189 *look front, to the door mp sub.* *look at palm again mf* *make fist look front, to the door mp sub.* *look at fist mf*

seed (at the door of light) dried in my fist (at the door of light), that I

196 *look front, open hand to "stop" gesture mp* *look front, to the door mp* *very slowly turn hand to look at palm mf sub.* *mp*

hes - i - ta - ted (at the door), that I licked my own, (at the door),

203 *mf sub.* *look slightly away, pull back from the "door" in front f* *f* *free physical movement through m. 234*

my own salt-stained palm (at the door of light) and re - turned to

211

him, un - dead, which means a - live,

$\bullet = 132 \text{ sub.}, \text{ broader}$

218 **ff** *mf* LEFT *mp* RIGHT *mp*
 O a - live to the bo-dy's, to the bo-dy's

227 *mf* LEFT *mf* CENTRE *mf* (ossia: sing upper notes) the energy to fight dissipates
 hun - gers, hun - gers, hun - gers.

237 LEFT *mp* dull tone CENTRE RIGHT CENTRE
 I, I, I, I,

246 *mf* point at self (hand down) *mp* LEFT *mf*
 I, I can-not weed the gar-den for you, I can-not,

254 CENTRE *mp* LEFT *mf* CENTRE *mp*
 I can-not put up to - ma - toes, I can-not, ga - ther ap - ples,

261 LEFT *mf* CENTRE *mp* drawing up
 I can-not, fill your lap with grand - chil-dren,

$\bullet = 96 \text{ sub.}$
 267 RIGHT *p* quiet but firm CENTRE RIGHT CENTRE
 all, all I, all I want — all I want — is,

274 RIGHT CENTRE LEFT *molto rit.* pitched airy sound CENTRE *p* low and husky lunga
 all I want — is to die and die with him.

daphne, unheard

words by
rachel rose

music & movement by
jeffrey ryan

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.

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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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quick, sharp jerk inwards at the waist, with a slight collapse of the body, like a blow to the abdomen

sfp

slowly return to fully upright

mf

slowly move hands up to cover breasts

mp

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

(hands continue moving)

quick eye movements

left right centre *mp*

left centre *mp*

right

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

(hands continue moving)

centre *mp*

left centre *mp*

blind - ing the in - dif - fer-ent

slowly move hands to cover heart

p a small voice, childlike and frightened

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

slowly move hands to throat (choking position)

mp *mf* gasp *mp* *mf* gasp *mp* *mf*

p sub. non-vib. - - - -

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)

lean back from waist upright *mf*

lean back upright

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,_

mf *gasp* *gasp* *f* *gasp* *slowly move hands to cover ears*



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?


f *gasp* *inhale* *exhale* *inhale* *exhale*



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.

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



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*

*the mouth barely open

shamhat, unheard

words by
rachel rose

music & movement by
jeffrey ryan

Performance notes

Total performance time: ca. 5'15" (not including optional opening, described below)

Vocal range: C4 to Ab5

Finger cymbals (“zills”): The performer is required to play two pairs of fingers cymbals (one pair for each hand). As is traditional, the cymbals are worn on the thumb and middle finger, with the strap positioned on the knuckle just below the nail.

There are four different playing techniques employed in this work, all drawn from traditional finger cymbal technique, and notated as follows:



“Pure”: Damp the middle cymbals with the fingers. Strike the two thumb cymbals together on the edge to create a pure metallic tone.



As above, but allow the tone to ring and fade naturally.



“Ring”: Strike the thumb and middle cymbals of one hand fully together and immediately release (separate) them by quickly opening the hand. The resulting sound begins with a “clack” followed by a ringing tone. Do not damp the middle cymbal with the fingers—keep the other fingers slightly away from the cymbal so that it may ring freely. In this technique, the tone is always allowed to ring. It may be used by one hand, by both simultaneously, or alternating to create rhythms.



“Click”: Bend thumb so the edge of the thumb cymbal is pressed against the hand on the pad below the thumb. Damp the middle cymbal with the fingers. Click the middle cymbal on the edge of the thumb cymbal (the cymbals are roughly perpendicular). Do not release. The result is a short, light percussive click.



“Clack”: Damp the middle cymbal with the fingers. Strike thumb and middle cymbals of one hand fully together as in “Ring” but do not release. The result is a somewhat harsh percussive clacking sound. This technique may be used by one hand, by both simultaneously, or alternating to create rhythms.

Wherever specific hands are indicated, the performer may reverse them as desired, depending on hand dominance.

Optional opening: In Sumerian culture, music was revered and considered sacred. Performers would wash their hands before playing, as an act of purification. If the performance circumstances permit, *Shamhat, Unheard* may begin in silence with the performer, in full view of the audience, ritualistically washing her hands and putting on her finger cymbals, before moving to centre stage to perform. More complete suggested details are given at the top of the first page of the score.

Movement: Hand position and arm movements are notated in the score in both pictures and words. The piece should have an overall sense of ceremony, ritual and magic. From m. 80, Shamhat looks into her near future, in a kind of trance. From m. 116, she looks into her far future—the audience’s present; in this passage the performer is free to improvise slow-motion and stylised exotic dancer movements.

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.

Shamhat, the temple prostitute in the ancient Sumerian/Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, plays an active role in the story only in the first two tablets. It is she who, through sacred sexuality, tames the wild man Enkidu, taking him from his life with the animals and introducing him to the civilised world and King Gilgamesh, with whom he would go on to slay various monsters. In *Shamhat, Unheard*, we hear from Shamhat long after she has left the story, as she takes us back to her past and gives us a vision of her future—our present—realising with regret how her gift to Enkidu did not have the result she had hoped for.

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**BRITISH COLUMBIA
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Shamhat to Enkidu

by Rachel Rose

Enkidu, come in from the desert.
Leave your scavenging
and crawl to my knees,
part my civilized rose. Cup
wet musk. Bring me your face.
You smell like a ram. I taste like cedar in the rain.

Look: I have fire, I have sex.

Wrestle me by the deep wells
for seven days and nights. I will tame you,
wild man, I'll drop fermented honey
into your mouth. Look: I have vocabulary.
My hair is hung with bells.
I have a silver knife and bowl.

I'll lead you to the man
who will be your best friend,
who will teach you the love of battle,
a power greater than my own.
You will forsake me for him
and then the word for what I am will be lost:
Harlot-Priestess, the one who knows the source.

Centuries later my only followers
will be forced to the profession:
Stolen girls, who grease their breasts
and dance around poles to tame men for money.
Bodies of my priestesses will be dumped
in alleys, stuffed in the trunks of cars,
left to bloat in rain. Men will thumb bills, cock
needles. There will be no worship in the act.

Enkidu, I should have left you with the beasts.
I was your touchstone, your red dust whore.
I gave you words so Gilgamesh could give you war.

OPTIONAL: Begin with a purification ritual. On a small table upstage right: a basin of water, a hand towel, the finger cymbals on an ornamental pillow. In no hurry, wash and dry hands reverently, then don finger cymbals. Proceed to centre stage.

• = 48 Ceremonial, weaving magic

arc arms quickly outward to sides, palms up. Leave arms outstretched in a welcoming pose, like a celebrant

arms return to centre, completing the circle

similar motion, but do not open arms as wide (describe a smaller circle)

FINGER CYMB.

f with some freedom

I, _____

again, same as previous measure

again, but as arms come in to chest level (on decresc.), lower head to look at hands

again, but do not arc arms — separate hands only slightly

f *p* *mp* reflectively

I _____

slowly raise head to look forward, while turning hands so palms are facing body, with fingers pointing up

• = 144 A tempo

R.H. stays close to (and facing) body. L.H. rings close to body, then arm arcs slowly forward in an offering gesture, palm facing up

L.H. *mf*

R.H. *mp* sempre *mp* inviting, enticing

said: _____ En - ki - du, En - ki - du,

(L.H. extended) slowly withdraw L.H. straight back again, extend L.H.

mf (*mp*)

come in from the de - sert. En - ki - du, En - ki - du,

16 (L.H. extended) withdraw L.H. extend... withdraw...

mf

come in. Leave your sca - ven-ging. Crawl

20 extend... withdraw... extend... withdraw...

mf *mf*

to my knees, part my ci - vi - lised rose. Cup

24 extend... withdraw... extend... withdraw...

mf *mf* *mf* *mf*

wet musk. Bring me, En - ki - du, bring me,

28  L.H. matches R.H. both hands

mp *sempre*

bring me your face, bring me your face, your face,

32 keep hands close to body, L.H. fingers pointing up

L.H. *mf* R.H. *mp* *mp* *f*

bring me your face, your... You smell like ram, I

36

molto rit. -----

$\bullet = 48$ *A tempo, ceremonial again*

as in opening, arms arc outward

f *f* with freedom again

taste like ce - dar in the rain. Look:

39

complete circle... again... again... *poco rit. to --*

look at hands

f *f*

mf reflectively

I have fire, I have sex. I

43

$\bullet = 40$ again, but separate hands only slightly

slowly raise head, look forward

$\bullet = 120$ ($\circ = 40$) *A lullaby*

play with hands close to body, but allow some freedom in arm movement

L.H. L.H. sim.

R.H. R.H. R.H.

p *p* *mp* *mp*

said: Wre - stle me by the deep wells for

48

se - ven days and nights. I will tame you,

54

wild man, wild man.

rit. to

♩ = 108

palms still facing back, extend arms
straight up, raise hands past head

molto rit.

arc arms forward
as if offering a gift

60

mp I'll drop fer - ment - ed ho - ney in - to your mouth. *p*

♩ = 48 *A tempo*

from "gift"
position, open
arms outward

67

f Look: I have vo-

(arms still outstretched to side)

70

f ca - bu - la-ry. My hair is hung

73

with bells. I have a sil - ver knife and bowl.

♩ = 30 sub. (♩ = 60)

contract arms inward,
palms facing down
(to m. 1 starting position)

bow head

76

f >

reflectively *mp*

I said: _____

♩ = 120

lift head slightly, staring into the
middle distance, in a quasi trance

both

p

p

f sub. *p* sub.

< *mf* *p* (aside)

I'll lead you, I'll lead you to the man (I'll lead you)

84

mf

f sub. *p* sub.

p (aside) *mf*

who will be your best friend, (I'll lead) who will teach you the

88

look forward...

f sub. *p* sub.

p (aside) *mf* >

< *f* *f* sub.

love of bat-tle, (I'll lead you) a po - wer great - er than my own.

♩ = 126 *sub. Intensifying*
L.H. *sim. alt. hands*

92

R.H. *f* *f*

You will for - sake me for him, you will for - sake me for him,

96

poco accel. to -----

and then the word for what I am _____ will be lost.

100

♩ = 138 *slowly raise arms* -----

Har - lot - Priest - ess, Har - lot - Priest - ess,

104

accel. to -----
L.H. *sim. alt.*

R.H. *p* *(f)*

Har - lot - Priest - ess, the one who knows the source. _____

(*accel.*) -----

109

step forward... -----

I see: _____

$\bullet = 168$ ($\circ = 84$) *Having a vision*
eyes wide, improvise stylised exotic dancer
 L.H. *movements in slow motion through m. 139* *sim., always let ring*

116 *ff* R.H. *mf* *sempre* *chant-like* *ff*

Cen - tu - ries la - ter my on - ly fol - low - ers will be forced — to the pro -

121 *ff* *ff*

fes - sion: Sto - len girls, who grease their breasts and dance a - round poles

125 *ff*

to tame men — for mo - ney. Bo - dies of my priest - es - ses will be dumped in

130 *ff* *ff* *ff*

al - leys, stuffed in the trunks of cars, left to bloat in rain.

134 *ff* *ff*

Men will thumb bills, cock nee - dles. There will be no —

molto rit. to ----- $\text{♩} = 60$
 extend arms out to sides, palms down

slowly drop arms to sides;
 trance ends, return to present

139

L.H.
 R.H. R.H.
mf

f *mf* *p*

wor-ship in the act. I say:

143 $\text{♩} = 96$ sub. Defeated, with regret
 both hands rit. to -----

p *p* emptily, dead tone

En - ki - du, En - ki - du, I ____ should have left you with the

147 $\text{♩} = 72$

p *p*

beasts. I was your touch-stone, your red dust whore.

152 rit. to ----- $\text{♩} = 60$

lift hands and look at cymbals, as though there is blood on hands
 flick hands with spread fingers, scattering dust

p *p*

I gave you words so Gil-ga - mesh could give you war.