

SYNOPSIS

The setting can be any (probably contemporary) room where people gather in a casual way: a bar for instance, or a boat, or just a room, or a party, or even somewhere out of doors, so long as it's a place where at least one person can be drinking alcohol.

Four of the characters are just people: Girl (soprano – a bit flaky), Woman (mezzo), Man 1 (tenor), and Man 2 (counter-tenor – drinking schnapps and a bit drunk). The fifth, the bass-baritone, appears as the long-dead legendary figure known as the Hunter Gracchus. He also makes a brief final appearance as a policeman.

The action consists of the thoughts and interactions of the first four characters, plus the supernatural appearance of the Hunter Gracchus.

- I) After a hectic and disturbed overture, where the Girl starts to sing, Man 1 cries out "Stop"! and the Girl tells him she wants to get "out of here". But she doesn't go.
- II) The Woman thinks about "an excursion to the mountains".
- III) The Girl sings about what Paris might be like, with women "twisting their waists ironically".
- IV) Man 2 says people always want to get "out of here", but that no-one really goes anywhere, and cites the legend of the Hunter Gracchus, whose ancient death ship sails from port to port and has never succeeded in breaking through to the other world.
- V) Man 1 approaches the Woman, explaining that he doesn't want to remain a bachelor.
- VI) The Woman rejects Man 1 and they exchange a few insults before she moves away.
- VII) The Girl and Man 2 scold/tease/criticise Man 1 – particularly when he tries to explain why he behaves as he does – then they move away from him.
- VIII) Man 1, alone, sings about the night and about how people sleeping in the city are really sleeping under the empty sky. He is joined by the Woman, who has changed her mind about him. They talk and kiss.
- IX) The Woman and Man 1 have moved away from each other. Now Man 1 tells Man 2 how he has kissed this woman and how happy he is, though he soon moves to a state of anxiety about his choice. Man 2 denigrates women's beauty and this offends Man 1, despite his own misgivings. He abandons Man 2.

377 40 ♩ = ca.72 *mp* very indignantly ♩ = ca.108 (2+2+1)

Man 1
You seem to for - get

Cbsn *p* Cl. *p* Pizz. *p* *mf*

383 (1+2+2) *mf* (2+2+1) (1+2+2)

Man 1
No cha - riot sweeps you through the streets I see no

ff *p* *pp* *loco mp* *p* *ff* *mf*

388 (2+2+1) (1+2+2) (2+2+1) (1+2+2) 41

Man 1
male ad - mi - rers crowd - ing a - round you Your breasts are well

p *ff* *p* *mf* *ff* *p* *pp*

393 (2+2+1) (1+2+2) *ff* violent

Man 1
sup - por - ted But not your hips or thighs You're wea - ring a dress that

ff *mp* *ff* *f* Cbsn *ff*

1047 *p* *mp*

Grac. *p* *mp*

Sail-ing from place to place Ne-ver break-ing through I can trans -

pppp *mf*

1052 *mf*

Grac. *mf*

- late Bet-ween this ge-ne-ra-tion and their an - ces - tors

pppp *ppp* *pppp* *p*

pppp *pp*

1056 **101** *p* *f* *pp*

mf *p* *f* *pp*

p *ppp* *mp* *p* *f* *pp*

1062 *p* (whispered) *nat.* *molto espr.*

Grac. *p* *nat.* *molto espr.*

I was born in the Black Fo-rest There I hun-ted I'd have lived a long -

Pf. *ppp*