

DINOS CONSTANTINIDES

INTIMATIONS

One Act Opera

LRC83

MAGNI PUBLICATIONS

DINOS CONSTANTINIDES

INTIMATIONS

Winner of the 1981 Brooklyn Chamber Opera Composition Contest and recipient of a matching grant from MEET THE COMPOSER

Also winner of the 1985 Outstanding Achievement Award in the First Midwest Chamber Opera Festival at Ohio State University. Adjudicators: Boris Goldovsky, Henry Butler and Richard Owens.

One Act Opera

On a text by
DAVID MADDEN

MAGNI PUBLICATIONS
BATON ROUGE
1980 rev. 2000

INTIMATIONS – One act Opera by Dinos Constantinides

Libretto by David Madden

Miss Ellen

Celeste

Synopsis

Ellen, a forty-five year old blind woman, and Celeste, a fourteen year old guest, are waiting for Linda to come home. Ellen persuades Celeste to leave the window seat where she is watching for Linda and hold her hand and sit beside her. Ellen and Celeste are profoundly disturbed. When Linda's lover came in from riding in wind and snow, Ellen put poison in his coffee; she says she thought it was sugar. He lies dead in an adjoining bedroom to which Ellen and Celeste dragged him from the kitchen. Celeste feels guilty because had she not been looking in the cellar for old photographs of her brother, she would have gotten the sugar for the young man's coffee. Dreading Linda's return from town, Ellen asks Celeste to look out the window again. Celeste obeys, but stays on the window seat when Ellen asks her to sit beside her again. A growing, unconscious fear prompts her to question what Ellen tells her. Celeste sees Linda's red coat and her cigarette glowing in the distance. Celeste promises that she will be the one to tell Linda what has happened. Ellen asks Celeste to push her chair back into the shadows. Celeste does not move. She now suspects Ellen did not put poison in the man's coffee by accident. They hear Linda at the door.

Ellen tells her to open the door to let Linda in. Celeste moves toward the door.

Text for Intimations

FUGUE FOR TWO VOICES

by David Madden

Do you hear her coming?

No, ma'am.

Is there enough light on the road?

The moon's bright.

Has the snow stopped?

Yes, ma'am.

Watch carefully. I want you to tell me when you see her coming.

Yes, ma'am.

Where are you Celeste? I hear you breathing but I don't feel the warmth of you near.

I'm near you. On the window seat, watching the road.

Give me your hand, Celeste.

But I can't reach you, and be near the window, too.

I feel so alone. Please give me your hand, Celeste. Celeste?

Yes, ma'am.

Call me, Miss Ellen.

Yes, Miss Ellen.

My dear, your hands are so cold. And it's so warm in this room.

Do you feel . . . sick?

I feel all right.

It was too much for you, poor girl. How old are you?

Fourteen.

I'm very sorry it happened, Celeste, while you were visiting.

Why, Celeste, your hands aren't getting warm. You aren't afraid, are you?

No, Miss Ellen.

Try not to think of him in there. Why, my child, it was an act of fate.

I thought it was sugar.

If I hadn't been down in the cellar, looking for old
photographs of my brother, it wouldn't have happened.

Don't think of it, Celeste. Just sit here beside me.

Only an hour ago I saw him riding through the snow.

He looked so small on that huge horse.

He was too fair a man. Too small and slender.

Why, Miss Ellen, how could you know what he looked like?

Haven't I had to sit with her in the evening, listening to her go on about him, how fair
and lovely he was? And he out riding that white stallion through the hills and meadows.

Let's not talk about him. It's too awful to think of him
lying in there. And she will be coming home soon from town.

Go to the window and see if she's coming. Do you see anything
on the road?

Shadows of the sycamores on the snow.

Come back and hold my hand, little Celeste.

Hadn't I better watch the road?

I'm used to be alone.

I think I see a light in the trees.

What kind of light?

A tiny one. Now it's gone.

She stopped to light a cigarette.

I'm frightened, Miss Ellen.

It couldn't be helped. You know that. He came cold from riding in the wind and snow, and you were in the cellar. So I poured him some coffee and I thought it was sugar I took from the sideboard. He should have gotten his own coffee, instead of asking a blind woman. Celeste, are you crying?

No ma'am, Miss Ellen.

That's a dear, brave girl.

Miss Ellen, how are you going to tell her?

Oh, aren't you going to, little Celeste?

Oh, I couldn't, Miss Ellen.

Please. I'm old and sick. Will you?

Yes, ma'am.

Just explain that I didn't know it wasn't the sugar box.

All right.

Is she almost there?

Yes. I see her red coat in the moonlight. And the cigarette glowing. I think I hear her singing.

How odd. She lights a cigarette and she sings, walking home in snow and moonlight. Isn't it odd, Celeste?

I don't know if I can tell her.

But when she goes into the bedroom she'll see him anyway.

I'll tell her. I don't want to hear her scream.

Celeste?

Yes.

Am I in the lamplight?

No.

Am I in the moon?

Yes.

Would you please push my chair back into the shadows.

Why?

I can't bear to think of her looking at me.

You can't see her face. Anyway, why would she look at you?

Because of him.

It was an accident wasn't it? You thought it was sugar, didn't you?

Listen, Celeste. The lock striking in the gate.

Yes. I hear her shoes in the snow now.

Did you comb his hair, Celeste?

Yes, I did what you told me to do.

How old are you now, Celeste?

Fourteen.

Did it frighten you?

No.

But the other did. Dragging him in there after it was over?

Yes.

Was he heavy?

You know he was.

Was he cold when you combed his hair?

Don't ask me those things, Miss Ellen.

I'm sorry, dear. Tell me now, do you see her?

She's coming up to the door.

Stomping the snow from her shoes. Are you afraid to tell her?

No. I'm going to tell her.

Then open the door and let Linda in.

GENERAL NOTES

Persons represented:

Ellen – soprano, a blind woman about 45

Celeste – soprano, a girl, about 14




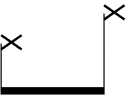

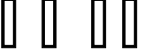







The Scene:

In a sitting room with a window overlooking a road

Instrumentation:

Clarinet in Bb (transposed), timpani, percussion, harp
(option: piano), and strings

Explanation of Symbols:

	Accelerando
	Highest note possible
	whisper
	Speaking voice at the approximate pitch
	Clarinet: key sounds (clicks)
	Change bows at will
	Scream, shout
	Tremolo (for clarinet as fast as possible)
	Repeat the entire unit inside the box
	Length of line indicates duration of sound
	Play as fast as possible
	(with text) duration of the syllables
	Clusters, mass of sound
<i>c. v.</i>	Colla voce (follow the voice in free rhythm)