

Fringe 2012: Psychopomp

The audience is escorted to the bottom of the ramp. They line up (maybe sit on cushions). There is music built upon the rhythm of a heartbeat. a girl, EVA, comes running from the Dock entrance by the Backstage lounge. She is bumped into by a robed girl, CHRISTINE.

There is a movement score where CHRISTINE confronts EVA (without words)

EVA is shocked at this, and before she has time to speak, CHRISTINE quickly pulls out a knife, and thrusts it into Eva's chest. Eva falls into a pool of her own blood, as CHRISTINE fills a bucket with water, washes off her knife, then sprints away. There is a long high note that lingers in the air for a long time. Slowly, it fades away.

Slowly, so slowly it is not noticed until too late, notes begin to be played. It is like the wind itself is playing an instrument. The notes are long, eerie, without a source.

*Meanwhile, CHARON is slowly rowing a boat ashore, **singing a song** as he gets closer. CHARON arrives, looks around, ties up his boat. He takes off his hat and performs a little show, a magic show or some sort of comedic show makes balloon animals for the audience)*

Audiolog #1 plays:

1. SHOCK & DENIAL-

You will probably react to the loss of your life with numbed disbelief. You will deny the reality of your situation to some extent in order to avoid the pain. Shock is your defense from being emotionally overwhelmed. This numbness may last for weeks.

CHARON: All our knowledge merely helps us to die a more painful death than animals who know nothing.

EVA stands up, holding her chest in confusion. She tries to talk, but only melody comes out. She looks at the audience and tries to tell her story through movements and gestures and melody, but she is not satisfied with the results. She turns to CHARON inquisitively.

CHARON: The road to eternity is a demanding one. It asks many things and requires you leave many things behind. Here, your language from before means nothing. If you want to speak, you're going to have to find inspiration in a new rhyme.

EVA turns back from CHARON to look at the audience. She really takes them in, and

allows them to take her in. She closes her eyes, the music flows and dances like a light breeze.

EVA: I... Can't feel my borders

CHARON: She speaks!

EVA: my blood?

CHARON: Just because everything is different doesn't mean anything has changed. My dear, you are just the same, to move on you must change and this means letting go of all that holds you here.

EVA: It all happened so fast. One minute I was walking to meet Jason, the next I was ambushed by some psychopath... and now I feel...I feel like I'm floating above time.

CHARON: time is a defining human characteristic; you, I'm afraid, are now outside of its reach.

EVA: No, no, no, no...I must be dreaming.

CHARON: It is my job to take you to your destination.

CHARON looks down False Creek.

CHARON: This is just your first stop, your new beginning.

EVA: This is just a dream, I'm asleep...(continuing as CHARON speaks)

CHARON: Across these waters lies a land where all will be forgotten and you can finally rest at peace.

EVA: No, I...I can't. I'm not...

EVA goes and splashes herself or does some sort of gesture to try to wake herself up.

CHRISTINE monologue (not recorded, to audience)

EVA: This voice...

CHARON: The threads? They are the voices of people who have lost something they have loved.

EVA: this voice... so sad. And familiar. Like that of a lost friend...

CHARON: Or found enemy.

audiolog #2 plays:

2. PAIN & GUILT-

As the shock wears off, it is replaced with unbelievable pain. Although excruciating and almost unbearable, it is important that you experience this suffering fully, and not hide it, avoid it or escape from it. You may have guilty feelings or remorse over things you did or didn't do. Your existence feels chaotic during this phase.

CHARON: come, it is time to disembark

EVA: what?

CHARON: It's time to sever these last ties to your previous life.

EVA: How is an individual supposed to leave everything they've worked their whole lives to achieve?

CHARON: We all dream of a death where we are old, and have experienced all the world has to offer.

EVA: I spent the majority of what little time I had studying, or working, only to have been robbed.

CHARON: You must understand that your life no longer exists.

EVA: It can't be that simple! I'm dreaming, I'm dreaming, I'm in a dream.

CHARON: You stand in front of me as a ghost, as an apparition.

EVA: no no no

CHARON: Those who don't sail into their afterlives are destined to remain in limbo, haunting the grounds they last lived on.

EVA: Shut up! you're nothing but my dream. Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! You're wrong.

EVA breaks down and tries to run away from the dock, but invisible walls stop her.

***MOVEMENT sequence with EVA on dock and CHRISTINE on steps

CHARON: *Charon looks at the audience, then begins to make a balloon animal while speaking.* Every particle of life is mandated by time. We enter this world ignorant to time, and leave all too familiar with time, unless our time has been cut short. But it is

when we dock on the shores of our afterlives, after our husks grow stiff and we melt back into the earth like water obeying gravity's seduction, we no longer listen to the clocks, alarms and appointments, no longer smell the sun setting or taste the cold morning's dew. Nay, we let go of time and hug onto its younger shadow, eternity. For as our physical connection to the mortal world is severed, our destination is left to the imagination, and mysteries are infinite.

Audiolog #3

3. ANGER & BARGAINING-

Frustration gives way to anger, and you may lash out and lay unwarranted blame for the death on someone else. Please try to control this, as permanent damage to your psyche may result. This is a time for the release of bottled up emotion. You may rail against fate, questioning "Why me?" You may also try to bargain in vain with the powers that be for a way out of your despair.

EVA turns back to CHARON/audience, looking lost, confused and beaten down.

EVA: I just want to leave this place, go find Jason, and wake up from this nightmare. But my feet wouldn't obey. I can't feel my borders, my edges getting blurry. The more I try to move forward, the more my feet pull me back.

CHARON: We are only confined to what we choose to believe. Accept your fate and you will be released.

EVA: I don't believe in fate.

CHARON: You must accept or be destined to roam undefined for eternity. This boat is your vessel to begin again, to begin a new.

EVA: I don't want to begin again. I wasn't finished with the life I had.

CHARON: We are pulled and pushed by the flow of fate until our final breath is drawn.

EVA: Why did this happen to me? I didn't do anything wrong. I lived my life as well as anyone could. I didn't steal, except for that chocolate bar when I was kid, but I brought it back.

CHARON: Sometimes our actions affect the world in unknown ways.

EVA: I don't think a six year old stealing a chocolate bar equals being stabbed by a psychopath.

CHARON: We are not single strands, floating through life. We get entangled together with other strands, to make a knot of experiences.

EVA: But I didn't do anything!

CHARON: No? Your atoms never passed by another being, distorting their paths?

EVA: What are you talking about?

CHRISTINE appears at the top of the dock

CHRISTINE: You ruined everything.

CHARON: Perhaps your life did not exist in a vacuum. Perhaps it bumped and broke into other lives.

CHRISTINE: My life was perfect before you showed up.

CHARON: Perfection is perception.

CHRISTINE: I had a life

CHARON: Life is only the period before death.

CHRISTINE: The things I gave up for Jason, I gave up willingly, because he said he loved me.

EVA: Jason?

CHRISTINE: I guess it is easy to forget about your past life when the shiny future is in your eyes.

EVA: Christine?

CHRISTINE: He took everything from me, so I'm taking everything from him.

EVA: You killed me because Jason divorced you and proposed to me?

CHRISTINE: Divorced me? If only it was that simple. He took everything away from me.

EVA: That really has nothing to do with me.

CHRISTINE: I murdered you so Jason would feel the pain I felt when you robbed him from me! Since he left me, I've melted away the hours of life with tears. I've torn at my hair, my flesh. I find no pleasure in my present. My thoughts are filled with his

face, his voice, and your death.

EVA: Then why didn't you take that up with Jason? He's the one that left you

CHRISTINE: Our love was still in full bloom when you came around. Jason left me in the dust, like a fallen woman.

EVA: Jason isn't the only thing in your life.

CHRISTINE: I have no friends, no family to come to my aid, to lift me up. I am alone.

EVA: You have a daughter, that must count for something.

CHRISTINE: A daughter that I cannot raise. She has a fallen, pitiable mother who cannot even take care of herself. And you want to know what the worst part is, she looks like him.

EVA: I always thought she looked more like you.

CHRISTINE: No, when she looks at me, I see Jason's eyes looking back, staring, judging. It's his nose, his ears that are on her face. She'll grow up to look just like him, to be just like him, and she'll leave me just like he did.

EVA: I'm sure your daughter will love you. Will love both you and Jason.

CHRISTINE: And she asks for him, constantly, with that whinny voice of hers, grating my ears, making them bleed.

EVA: She should be allowed to love her father.

CHRISTINE: If only she knew what kind of monster he really is.

EVA: Jason is nothing but loving. You have to get off your high horse and realize that things change. You have to stop holding on to things that are gone.

CHRISTINE: He's condemned me to darkness. There is a heaviness in my heart that can never be fixed.

EVA: You seemed to be functioning pretty well when you killed me.

CHRISTINE: I find no satisfaction in the taste of food, in the soft touch of my baby's skin. My chest is full of concrete. Nothing will ever be the same.

EVA: So what, things change, life changes, you can't expect everything and everyone to do what you want them to do.

CHRISTINE: My hands do not look like my hands. I can't feel them. They must be someone else's. The skin is dried, and cracked. That's what happens when you slave away at two jobs to feed a family that does not care. I'm unrecognizable.

EVA: And I'm dead, so I guess we're both in pretty shitty places in our lives, past-lives.

CHRISTINE: You must think me a monster. But I only did what had to be done.

EVA: Of course, because killing me has made you so much happier obviously.

CHRISTINE: His pain is the only thing that will set my heart free. It's not done yet. There is still one thing to do.

EVA: Wait, what do you mean?

CHRISTINE: He used to call her his little angel. How right he was. But she won't haunt me. No, no, no ,no. I will be avenged to my full degree. I will not stand by merely with tears. No. She won't haunt me.

EVA: Where are you going?

CHRISTINE: There is still so much to be done. So much. But soon my ears will have peace.

EVA: No! Stop.

EVA tries to grab CHRISTINE but grabs nothing, since she's a ghost, remember?

CHARON: The ungentle hands of fortune.-In death you hold no physical connection to this realm.

EVA: *As CHRISTINE walks away.* I feel sorry for you. For the rest of your life, you're going to have to live with my blood on your hands. I've earned the right to scream; nothing, not even losing a lover, compares to losing your own life.

CHRISTINE gives EVA one last stare, then leaves.

CHARON: We can never know for certain if we are being deceived until it is too late. Trust is no more than gambling with the heart.

EVA: I'm not perfect, but I did nothing to deserve this.

CHARON: Death does not play favorites. **Fate's cold hands clutch upon every soul**

EVA: To think that a few wrong choices have lead to this...

CHARON: there is no such thing as a wrong choice. Life is not a game, and you are not its player. Whether you believe that your choices have been made for you as each of us follow our preconscious' set calendars, or that you happened to pull the wrong cards, the end result is permanent, unlike a game which you can reset.

*Audiolog #4***4. "DEPRESSION", REFLECTION, LONELINESS-**

A long period of sad reflection will likely overtake you. This is a normal stage of grief, so do not be "talked out of it" by well-meaning outsiders. Encouragement from others is not helpful to you during this stage of grieving.

During this time, you finally realize the true magnitude of your loss, and it depresses you. You may isolate yourself on purpose, reflect on things you did and focus on memories of the past.

You may sense feelings of emptiness or despair.

EVA: I wasted my life.

CHARON: hmm?

EVA: I used to paint. It was the only thing I really enjoyed doing. *begin paint dance/detailed blocking* I used to come home from school and rush to the easel in my room and paint for hours. When I was twelve, no I had just turned thirteen, my mom entered me into a young artist's competition. I entered my latest work, "Sunset at Lake Louise."

CHARON: Art is a primary vessel for which the soul can speak.

EVA: I came in second place I think, but the judges took the time to find my family after the show to ask them about my artistic background. Mom told them I was mostly self taught from painting books and videos they had given to me a few birthdays ago. The judges were shocked at this, and implored that I go to art school and hone my skills because of my natural talent.

CHARON: did you?

EVA: No. I went to business school, studied calculus and macro-economics when I could have studied perspective and color levels, ended up as a young entrepreneur with her company taking up all of her time. I guess I left that little girl with the paintbrush behind as I transitioned to adulthood.

CHARON: Did you ever regret it?

EVA: When I graduated from high school, I took down all of my artwork and put it deep in my parent's basement before I moved out to begin University. I felt it made me seem weak and young, and a business woman needs to be strong and experienced. I guess I figured I would start painting again when I retired, but obviously, I never got that far. All I think now is how the real me is locked in the basement where she will be forgotten, while the business me is parading around my parents house, in graduation photos and business cards.

Audiolog #5

5. THE UPWARD TURN-

As you start to adjust to your new life, your present becomes a little calmer and more organized. Your physical symptoms lessen, and your "depression" begins to lift slightly.

EVA: I'm never going back, am I?

CHARON: No. <beat> Either choose to get in the boat, or remain on these docks, as an apparition. Either way, you're fated to leave this place when you are willing to.

EVA: I already told you, I don't believe in fate.

CHARON: then we'll wait.

2 minutes pass of silence pass. Christine appears on the far steps and begins to sign her song.

EVA: Its funny - I spent every breath working towards my future, always rushing from task to task, enticed by the security of retirement, a family by my side, and children of my own. But look at me now. My senses are lost, only informed by the memory of what they should do; I don't know if I am actually here, on the docks where I died, or if the last things my eyes saw have burned into my memory. I'm trying to smell the ocean, but I fail time after time. I never paid attention to its scent in my life. I feel the breeze brush against my skin, but it is that of a desk fan, and not of the wind. It's only now that I realize the gifts I was given with my senses, and how much I miss them now that they're gone.

CHARON: We only realize what we need when it's gone.

EVA: I wonder what will happen to my body.

CHARON: The mind will always lust after what it cannot have.

EVA: *EVA slowly undressing, pulling away each piece of fabric like it is a ribbon of skin being pulled off by birds.* I was reading about different burial practices around the world. If I had a choice, I'd give my body a "Sky Burial". It's something that happens in Tibet. I'd want them to leave my body out in the open, out in nature, and allow the birds to pull off my flesh, my meat. They take the body of the deceased and leave it out in the open. The practice is known as *jhator*, literally "given alms to the birds". It may seem a little, disgusting, but when you think of it, it's really beautiful. It's generous, to provide food to sustain another living creature even when you are gone.

CHARON: The cycle of life continues on, whether you are part of it or not.

Audiolog #6

6. RECONSTRUCTION-

As you become more functional, your mind starts working again, and you will find yourself seeking realistic solutions to problems posed by existence. You will start to work on practical problems and reconstruct yourself.

EVA: I can't feel my borders anymore. Where do I end and the air begin? Where do you begin? Are we separate beings or really just the same in different spaces? In different times? My atoms and yours jump and mix and dance together, like they are friends, like they are meant to be together. When I leave, do I disappear completely? Or will an atom or two remain behind, intermingling with your heart, or brain, or tongue. You think because I am dead that I no longer exist. But because you have shared this moment with me, this space, our lungs have drunk from the same air, you have taken a part of me, as I have taken a part of you. This may be my death, but this isn't my end.

EVA stands up slowly, takes in her surroundings. One last low note is played as she picks up the bucket CHRISTINE washed the knife in/Washes hand in the water off the dock before getting in the boat. Charon rows them away, singing.

Audioclip #7

7. ACCEPTANCE & HOPE-

During this, the last of the stages, you learn to accept and deal with the reality of your situation. Acceptance does not necessarily mean instant happiness. Given the pain and turmoil you have experienced, you can never return to the carefree, untroubled YOU that existed before this tragedy. But you will find a way forward.

Music begins to play, long solemn chords of a wind-like timbre.

end.