

NARcissus

A performer- specific, music theatre work for juice ensemble,
narrator/guitarist and tape [ca. 23'].

(2011-13)

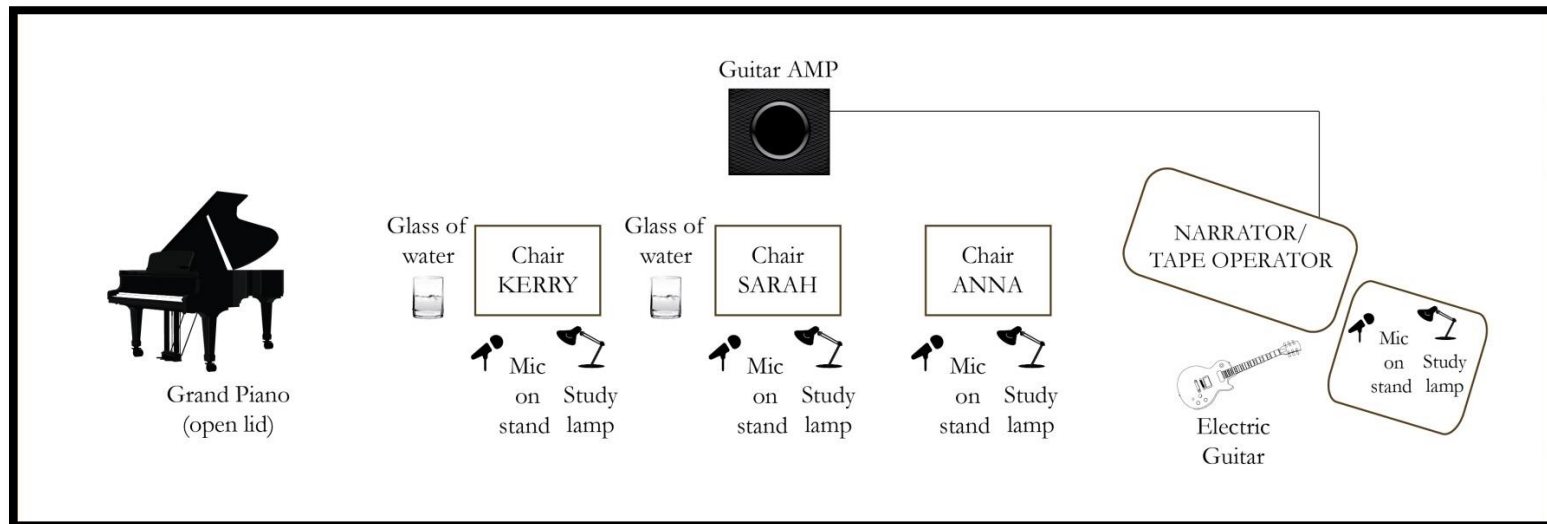
Transcribed score and stage directions.

Nektarios Rodosthenous

Instruments/ props

- **juice ensemble:** Kerry Andrew (alto), Anna Snow (soprano), Sarah Dacey (soprano)
- **Narrator:** Nektarios Rodosthenous
- **Electric guitar** with amplifier
- **Grand piano:** open lid for the performers to sing in the body of the piano for resonance
- 4 vocal dynamic microphones on 4 stands
- 4 study lamps: one for each performer
- 2 glasses of water for the two singers
- 1 desk for the narrator/tape operator

Stage Layout



NARcissus

Dedicated to Andreas Rodosthenous

Nektarios Rodosthenous (b.1986)

I. INTRO (2'10'')

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: When the sound of the sirens starts, walk down the [Rymer Auditorium] steps slowly (Anna and Kerry walk down the steps, Sarah is already positioned in the centre of the stage). Create a vocal ambulance effect by choosing a note harmonically close to the one from the tape's sirens, and have a slight rhythmic delay based on melodic tri-tonality which is less than semitones apart. By the time the three singers meet at the centre of the stage, they are in tonal and rhythmic unison. Continue singing the ambulance motif in unison for 10 seconds after the tape stops (a cappella).

Narrator/ NR: On stage, sat on his station with the laptop and the guitar on. Play the first sample [Anna's voice-over] 'OK?', to start the performance. Say 'Intro' straight after the end of Anna's 'OK' voice-over and start the war sirens sample.

Tape sounds: Cypriot war sirens.



II. ECHO (1'00'')

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: Start walking towards the piano after the sample 'Maybe a bit more about me'. Produce random chords in a crescendo/incalzando manner by singing in the body of the piano: The pedal is held down by one of the singers for reverberation.

Narrator/ NR: 10 seconds after the war sirens sample ends, play the cue 'Maybe a bit more about me, ah, end...' and say 'echo' straight after it stops.

III. LOUDNESS (55'')

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: Start walking to your chairs/ stations, just after the narrator says 'Loudness' straight after the sample 'probably not much louder than this, really. Maybe a bit louder, I don't know? Here?' Kerry sits first and sings a 'La La La La' semiquaver pulse in F4 (349 HZ), then Sarah sings a similar motif but in C#5 (554 HZ) and then Anna in B4 (493 HZ), all in pp. 25 seconds in, this sequence builds up and gets louder and out of control; it starts having irregular rhythmic accents and dynamic yodelling similar to Kerry Andrew's Lunacy.

Narrator/ NR: After the end of the sample 'probably not much louder than this, really. Maybe a bit louder, I don't know? Here?' say 'Loudness'.



IV. SOUND POEM (1'50'')

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: Perform and improvise with the following poem in this rhythm. It starts in a sparse pulse and gradually gets busier:

- **Anna:** 'in this hiss, mixing feast, co-exist, this is it, growing beast don't you miss – Narcissus'
- **Kerry:** 'disappeared, violence, silence, powerless, vanished, dangerous – Narcissus'
- **Sarah:** 'In his fist, growing beast optimist, agonies, protagonist - Narcissus'

Narrator/ NR: Play the sample 'Unless I laugh' and say 'Everything is a version of something else' straight after the sample.

V. INTERVIEWS (6'30")

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: Start with the study lamps turned off. Comment with the performance notes *adagio*, *agitato*, *affettuoso*, *amoroso*, *calmato*, *da capo*, *mysterioso*, *delicate*, *dolce*, *espressivo*, *forte*, *decrecendo*, *furioso*, *lacrimoso*, *molto -* , *quasi -* , *spiccato*, *tacet*, *tremolando*, *tranquilo* when it is NOT your voice-over in the tape. When each performer's voice-over plays in the background, turn on the study lamp of the acousmatic performer, and conduct with closed eyes the background sequence in silence at your own pace and time signature what is said in the background. Turn off the light when your turn ends, and turn on and conduct the sequence again when your voice-over comes back.

Stop conducting after Kerry's fast forward in the 3rd question and look straight into the audience. Carry on performing the light cues, and re-start conducting during Sarah's 3rd and final question.

Narrator/ NR: Play the '[Laughter] Yeah? OK' sample and say 'I listened to all this in silence... Question number one'. Play Kerry's interview straight after the previous cue. Improvise a lyrical on D minor on the guitar, as background music. Carry on improvising until the end. After the end of Kerry sample, say 'Question number 1' and play Sarah's sample. When it ends, say 'Question number 1' and play Anna's sample. After the end of Anna's sample, say 'Question number 2' and play Anna's 2nd sample.

'Question number 1', 'Question number 2', 'Question number 3', while also cueing the question samples. Say 'Question number 2' after Anna's 2nd sample, and cue Kerry's 2nd sample. Say 'Question number 2' after Kerry's sample, and play Sarah's 2nd sample. Say 'Question number 3' after Sarah's sample, and play Kerry's 3rd sample. Say 'Question number 3' after Kerry's sample and cue Anna's 3rd sample after the fast-forward section in Kerry's 3rd sample. Play Sarah's 3rd sample after Anna has a long gap in her voice-over (do not stop this sample; it goes on as an overdub with Sarah's voice-over). Stop improvising on the guitar. Start performing the intro of *Aman Doktor* in D minor, when Anna's voice-over says 'I remember the realisation'. This is the link to the next section.

Tape Samples: Three questions from the interviews with 'juice' talking about their first or strongest love.

VI. AMAN DOCTOR (3'15'')

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: Improvise with and around the song Aman Doktor in D minor. Create a lyrical, haunting siren-like accompanying sequence that unfolds according to the development of the track. Long-held notes and hints of extended techniques are preferable.

Narrator/ NR: Fade in and start performing the song Aman Doktor that you have already introduced in D minor, after Anna's 'and...and...and...' looped voice-over.



VII. ENCORE 1 (0'25'')

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: 5 seconds after the end of the previous song, start clapping in an irregular pulse, the same way as we clap at the end of a performance (n.b.: if the audience starts clapping with you, thinking that this might be the end, DO NOT STOP. Carry on until they stop clapping and continue with the sequence). 15 seconds after you start, turn the clap beat gradually into a 170bpm; this is the link to the next section.

Narrator/ NR: Start strumming (fade in) the guitar on a regular beat 170bpm beat with left hand muting the strings. There is no tune or chord produced during this strumming sequence. Play until 'juice' synchronise to your beat. DO NOT STOP; this is the link to the next sequence.



VIII. ENCORE II – 'Papa' (0'20'')

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: continue clapping with the previous bpm. Turn the clap into a 150bpm crotchet clap and say 'pa pa pa pa' in a steady quaver pulse with irregular, louder and higher in pitch 'pah' accents.

Narrator/ NR: Simile. Carry on strumming the guitar at the same pace with no pitch, and synchronise with 'juice' (150bpm). This guitar sequence becomes the vocal ensemble's backing track.

IX. PERCUSSIVE SENSUALITY (1'00")

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: Free improvisation with these percussive sounds: 'pppah, kkah, tsss, sstt' and with in-breaths (which are not painful to your voice). Maintain a sensual feminine character in your head, while producing these sounds.

Narrator/ NR: Play Kerry's voice-over sample 'Yeah, I felt a lot better after that' to interrupt the previous sequence and Say 'it doesn't make any sense' after it stops.



Xi. HAREM – The wife (0'23")

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: Imitate, in an almost sarcastic way, the voice-over's music by repeating a non-verbal speech with the tongue out. Follow the pitch and the pace of the tape voice-over (calmato).

Narrator/ NR: Play the 1st wife sample and say 'His wife'. Start the 2nd sample of the wife.

Tape samples: Interview with his wife.



Xii. HAREM – The mother (1'53")

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: Imitate, in an almost sarcastic way, the voice-over's music by repeating the speech (NOT with the tongue out), and articulate the words in a clearer way than the previous section. DO NOT imitate Nektarios' voice, but echo the sounds from crying/ sniffs. There is a greater range in the pitch of this voice-over, so try to follow the pitch and the pace closely (*espressivo*).

Narrator/ NR: Straight after the 2nd sample of the wife ends, say 'His mother' and start the mother sample.

Tape samples: Interview with his mother.

Xiii. HAREM – The granddaughter (10'')

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: Imitate, in a playful and childish way, the voice-over's music by repeating the speech and by articulating the words clearly DO NOT imitate Nektarios' voice. Follow the pitch and the pace of the tape voice-over (animato).

Narrator/ NR: Straight after the sample of the mother ends, say 'The granddaughter he never had the chance to meet' and start the granddaughter sample.

Tape samples: Interview with his granddaughter.



XI – THE DECEASED (06'')

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: **TACET**

Narrator/ NR: Straight after the granddaughter sample ends, say 'The deceased' and start the sample of the deceased.

Tape samples: Sound from an old video-recording of the deceased talking about work. This is the link to the next section.

XII – ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING (40’’)

Anna: Read the following British Gas letter - ‘Dear customer, our prices are going up let us explain why. We are sorry to say that our gas and electricity prices will be going up and I am writing to let you know how you will be individually affected. We know that this isn’t good news, so we want to be open with you about why this is happening. The decision to put our prices up is never easy and we’ve resisted passing these changes on to you until now. The increase has come as a result of a number of factors which are affecting all energy suppliers. It’s costing us more in taxes and obligations to carry out government, environmental, and social schemes. We have to pay more to the companies to look after the distribution networks that deliver energy to your home. The energy we’ve bought to supply your home and others this winter is more expensive than last year. Full details of how your electricity prices will increase are on the back of this letter.’

Kerry and Sarah: Straight after the narrator introduces the act by saying ‘Electrical Engineering’, pick up the glasses with water and drink without swallowing, in order to produce gargle sounds with an almost closed-shaped mouth. Try to follow the dynamic of the microphone scratch by the narrator, and to create a homogenous sequence between these two seemingly unrelated elements.

Narrator/ NR: Straight after the deceased sample ends, say ‘electrical engineering’ and start scratching slowly the surface of the dynamic microphone with the nails, to match to Kerry’s and Sarah’s extended singing techniques (gargle sounds).



XIII – AN UNCOMFORTABLE MEMORY (0’59’’)

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: **TACET** when the mother’s sample is playing. Put the glasses with water back to their place. When they put the palms together like covering the mouth, and start breathing in a mechanical way (almost like inhaling from an asthma spray/pump), and produce similar sounds to the one in the tape part. This breathing sounds like a big respirator and the three breaths are not synchronised.

Narrator/ NR: Play the 2nd mother’s sample and say the medical ventilator/respirator story from the last day of the deceased straight after the 2nd mother sample ends. Try to remember as many details as possible, and focus on the notion of [technical/unnatural] breathing.

Tape samples: Sounds taken from video-recording of the composer’s scuba diving sessions.

XIV- END: FAREWELL LIGHT CUE (13”)

Anna, Kerry and Sarah: TACET. Place LH on the study lamp switch and prepare to turn off the lights, straight after the in unison with the final mother sample. Synchronise the turning off of the lamps with the Narrator's attacca levare in-breath. Blackout. TACET. The end.

Narrator/NR: Say 'The end' and then play the farewell sample by the mother, which lasts 10 seconds. Straight after the 'Etelioses' sound, perform one accented in-breath (attacca levare) to cue a simultaneous blackout, by turning off the study lamps with 'juice'. Blackout. TACET. The end.

Tape: Interview with the mother. SILENCE. The end.