

A Girl and Her Crocodile: Taming the Untamed Thing

A Thesis submitted by

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Abstract

A Girl and Her Crocodile is a chamber opera for soprano, mezzo-soprano, and instrumental ensemble. This thesis outlines my compositional process and how it relates to the complex relationship between the conscious and subconscious mind, and how as a composer I utilized this to create a chamber opera. An essay pointing out important dramatic elements is included along with the libretto and piano-vocal score of the work.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures.....	v
Essay: Taming the Untamed Thing.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Conscious Versus Subconscious.....	1
Components of the Process.....	5
Libretto.....	7
A Girl and Her Crocodile, Number by Number.....	9
Conclusion: What I've learned.....	12
Bibliography.....	14
Libretto and Score: <i>A Girl and Her Crocodile</i>	15
Libretto Full Text.....	16
Piano-Vocal Score.....	25
1. Mother Goose Aria.....	25
2. Play Song.....	29
3. Tea Time.....	38
4. Mirror Aria.....	48
5. Crocodile Play Song.....	56
6. Duet.....	66

List of Figures

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Tea Time, Original sketch | 4 |
| 2. Tea Time, Newer sketch | 5 |

Essay: Taming the Untamed Thing

Introduction

Two years ago, I found an illustration of a crocodile and a little girl by manga artist Tono and was instantly drawn to it. This became the inspiration for a piano suite and ultimately an opera. To create a libretto for an opera, I had to draw on my own sense of what these characters meant to me and how they related to my own personal story.

As a composer, I want to tell stories that other people can relate to using metaphor. The goal of this project was to use it to create a metaphorical story from an illustration of a crocodile and little girl that I was instinctively drawn to and discovering my own personal experiences with that metaphor. For me, this all involves communication between my subconscious and conscious minds.

Everything throughout the process is subject to review by questioning. Does this work? Why or why not? How do I know that? How do I check that? These questions are paramount for creating a cohesive work. Without these questions it would simply be a string of musical impulses instead of a dramatic work.

Conscious Versus Subconscious

As I define it, the conscious mind works with logic and the identification of problems and the strategizing of solving those problems; it is the part that dictates what to do and needs a sense of control. It believes it is the one in charge. The subconscious contains intuition and habitual thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

Most of our lives are dictated by the subconscious mind; it is an invisible force to be reckoned with because it drives habitual thought and action. There is no escaping it during the creative process. What that means is the subconscious has the potential to help or hurt compositional progress. Through conscious directives, the conscious mind balances and guides the subconscious while composing.

Sketching is an iterative process that for me combines the functions of the conscious and subconscious minds. I begin with musical ideas as they come out on the page in sketch format (i.e., little bits and pieces). After that, I give myself a conscious directive and then I continue to sketch. Finally, I evaluate and go back to sketching before moving onto other phases of the endeavor (outlined below).

The conscious directive could be something like “angry crocodile.” I feel around for “angry crocodile,” let go, and sketch. The act of letting go allows the subconscious to take over and digest the directive, which allows the subconscious to piece ideas and emotions together without conscious effort. This results in a certain kind of compositional authenticity that helps give it layers of meaning. Lastly, I sit with the new sketch for a while, then walk away, and come back to it later. Then my conscious mind can determine what is useful and what is not. The process is repeated until the conscious goals have been met and the subconscious has been satisfied.

During sketching I am likely to judge what I have written down too early and get overly emotional about the material. This knee-jerk reaction can lead to choosing the wrong direction consciously. However, if I sketch consciously (and forcibly), the subconscious can play the hero and try to get my attention by giving me fleeting thoughts or nudges of interest (e.g. being drawn to play a few measures I have written over and over again). Sometimes I consciously choose

what I really want and sometimes I don't, but it's the conscious mind's job to sift and sort what is useful and what is not throughout the process.

Fleeting thoughts can be of the utmost importance. These are the thoughts that you aren't looking at directly in your mind. They get dismissed for whatever reason, but are akin to flashes of insight. In the mind, there are thoughts I am consciously thinking, thoughts I am unconsciously thinking, and emotions of all kinds. Emotions in and of themselves are a genuine response to the art I am making. However, the *reaction* to those emotions can clog up the process and distract me from what I am seeking as an artist. (e.g., emotions in response could be as simple as, 'No that's not right, something feels off;' judging this can be derailing.) Vulnerability is a major part of the process, but judging that vulnerability can be counterproductive.

Below is an example of how this occurred with 3. *Tea Time*.

Figure 1: *Tea Time*, Original Sketch

In the Figure 1 sketch, I tried very hard (using conscious mind) to make a Southern gossip scene over tea between the girl and the crocodile. To me, the idea of gossiping in the South (where I was brought up) represented a pastime that involved meanness and talking behind other people's backs. Musically this represented a type of excitement, but with some kind of crunchiness to emphasize meanness. However, I couldn't make it work. In Figure 1, the tremolos were supposed to represent this excitement against a quarter-note pulse, as if they were coming out of a steady, calm texture. However, this resulted in a dissatisfying feel, which indicated that subconsciously that I was going in the wrong direction.

6/2/24

melody sketch

3 7

E-ve has skin that flakes so dry it crinkles as she walks and runs

3 7

like a desert snake slithering by I love hunting snakes. Jessie has a snake

Figure 2: *Tea Time*, Newer Sketch

In Figure 2, the newer sketch of *Tea Time* emerged from playing certain sketches over and over again and releasing the idea that the music required “southern gossip” as I had originally defined it. The flow felt much better to me even though it was antithetical to my original forced idea, which for me indicated that I was going in the right direction. Something about it struck me as simplified and more complex at the same time—a good indicator.

Ultimately, it becomes a matter of communicating and negotiating between the subconscious (whether it is working for me or against me at the moment) and what I am consciously trying to do. I use my conscious mind to always work towards finding the right direction.

Components of the Process

1) Sketching

As outlined above, sketching materializes for me in little bits and pieces. Usually, I come up with a measure or two of an idea. And I will do that for several pages.

2) Putting things together, building gestures

There are several questions I ask myself to begin building gestures. Where is it going? What is it doing? Why? What other part of the opera is it connected to? Why?

3) Creating a beginning, middle, and end

By this time, I have determined what gestures work and express the drama of each section appropriately. So, I put my Lego blocks together and build a whole song.

4) Editing

This phase helps me see how each section connects to other sections. The timing of sections is also evaluated, so I begin to question and understand how materials proportionately fit into the opera as a whole.

Each of the four components or stages contains three sub-stages: reviewing, assessing, and manipulating. This happens for each section of each song in the opera. Reviewing is simply asking myself, what do I have, what did I write down, and where is it going? Assessing is asking, does this work for what I am trying to do, and can I keep any of this? Manipulating is, what parts of this can I keep or use differently to achieve what I am seeking?

This process is not linear. Each stage circles around to find the right thing. The right thing always leads to other things, much like Ball's definition of action: "If I say 'How are you?' it is only half the action. The second half of the action is you saying, 'Fine, thank you.' The first leads to the second; the two compose an action." (Ball 1983, 9)

When the right thing happens, it is like a door flies open and I suddenly notice multiple connections at once. Each phase is really an emotional search for what feels right. I trust that immediate emotional reactions effectively gauge what I have written down.

Though my provisionally completed music has a beginning, middle, and end, the process itself is not as simple as A → B → C or Concept → Libretto → Music → Edit → Score editing → Performance. When writing a song, I may not start at the beginning or may skip to the end to understand the middle. Skipping around (looking ahead or behind) clarifies the dramatic arc.

Libretto

(see page 16 for full text)

The primary question for the libretto was, how do I create words that are neither poetry nor a play and create a metaphor for a wide variety of people to step into? The first phase involved a lot of poetry-like sketching in my journals. The words I wrote came from investigating my emotions about what the girl and the crocodile represented to me personally.

The sketching for the libretto took longer than any other part of the process. Until I attended the Directing 1 course in the Tufts Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies department, I could not understand the significance of metaphor. How does writing a metaphorical story translate to our emotional understanding and response to drama?

Learning dramatic analysis helped me understand what I was really looking to do and how to create it. “A play is a series of *actions*. A play is not *about* action, nor does it *describe* action. Is a fire about flames? Does it describe flames? No, a fire *is* flames. A play *is* action.” (Ball 1983, 9)

Opera, however, is not based solely on physical action, but it is a drama. It must have some action to propel the drama, but its focus is emotional action that leads to emotional songs. I realized that each thing that was said character to character had to lead somewhere.

This helped me stop writing poetic stuff about personal feelings and get out of sketching mode (phase one of the process). It pointed me in the direction of creating action, defined as one thing leading to another thing, which made creating metaphor clearer. Creating the story and libretto while focusing on metaphor (with a new understanding of action) propelled it forward in ways that revealed more story, more metaphor, and more meaning than I was previously capable of expressing.

The libretto was both about writing words and creating an original story framework for words that were to be used for songs. There were times my teacher and I would discuss basic visual ideas like having the crocodile walk in with a severed leg in his mouth, and other times when questions of basic plot would be discussed. These ideas determined song structure (e.g., I used one verse for each of the three girls playing outside during the *Play Song*). The libretto was refined through collaboration with my teacher, where we went back and forth to clarify drama.

Below are the four phases of the process viewed through the writing of the libretto, as outlined above.

Phase 1: sketching included journaling basic feelings about the concept and finding things that would stick, like the crocodile coming in on stage with a leg in his mouth or the girl playing dress up in front of a mirror. Also, part of sketching is finding the voice of the characters.

Phase 2: creating verses and choruses and building these into songs.

Phase 3: was occurring in parallel with phase 2 since building gestures while creating verses helps me understand the entire song (beginning, middle end).

Phase 4 is editing. This took longer than expected and continued even during the compositional phase. For instance, as songs were composed, certain wording seemed less appropriate and was changed. Editing the libretto clarified the drama further before the compositional phase developed the emotional drama.

A Girl and Her Crocodile, Number by Number

Song 1. *Mother Goose Aria*. After her mother scolds her for playing outside and getting muddy, the girl is sent to her room, leaving her isolated. This first song is in three verses. The words stay the same, but the music changes. This is a traditional nursery rhyme that the girl repeats to herself as a sad comfort. This song lays the foundation for where the girl starts her emotional journey throughout the opera. At Still, m. 1, she is reading the poem from a book, but she already knows it, so at More Declamatory, m. 26, she starts to recall the poem from memory and finally at Intimate, m.42, begins to really ponder the meaning of the poem. The repetition of the text allows the audience to understand and sink into the isolation of the girl, but also allows the girl to emotionally process what has just happened. This is an example dramatizing an emotional response in opera.

Song 2. *Play Song*. Here we see the girl pretending to play with her real, physical friends that are just outside her window. The challenge of the play song was that it needs to be playful music. Playful music has always been more difficult for me to write. For dramatic effect I had to bring her up in mood to contrast her initial isolation and then bring her down into rejection. The first

section, *Ethereal*, m. 1, is coming out of the isolation and is representative of the light in the window catching the girl's attention. She gets excited which instigates the next section, *Rambunctious*, m.14. There are three girls playing outside; so there are three verses, though the melodies are not the same for each. After each verse is a *Hopeful* section (first heard at m.39) that represents her general excitement framed as almost spiritual experience. She gets so involved with her pretend playing, she goes to get tea to share, but when she comes back the girls have left and the reality is that she is stuck in her room. It ends with *Uncertain*, m.142, shifting the mood back to dejected.

Song 3. *Tea Time*. Still, m.1, starts with the girl setting up tea for herself and the crocodile puppet which she puts on during set-up. The mezzo-soprano/crocodile is singing his part dressed in all black as a shadow standing behind the girl. The next section, *More Animated* m.25, is what I had originally thought of as the Southern gossip section (see the sketch figures above, pages 4 and 5). This is when the girl starts to really interact with the crocodile puppet and uses him as a sounding board, but he is completely oblivious. There is a verse for each of the girl's friends, Jessie, Miriam, and Evie. Each friend has a feature that the girl does not like, and she criticizes it; the music changes for each criticism while the crocodile interjects. The girl ends up in a duet with the crocodile puppet at *Playful*, m. 70, each character inhabiting their own world. In the final part of the duet at *Excited*, m.93, the crocodile shadow is showcasing his predatory urges center stage, and the girl sings over him, whining about her life. She eventually gets fed up and throws the puppet off stage and the lights go out. (Note: this song is still a work in progress.)

Song 4. *Mirror Aria*. The light comes up and we see the girl in front of a full-length mirror. The first section *Somber*, m.1, is in two parts. In the first part the girl is pleading with her imagined mother to understand her, and the second part is a reflexive hymn response as a to the girl's

plea. This leads into *More Animated*, m. 18, which shows her playing dress up with her mother's clothes: her shoes, cross, and stockings. For dramatic effect, I used the music at the end of the *Mother Goose Aria*, the *Distant* section, m. 35, to connect her current more severe isolation with the isolation from the beginning. At the end of each repetition she says, "wouldn't you like that," "was I a mistake," and "am I your biggest shame?" It has all been leading up to this moment. This sequence of *Somber*, *More Animated*, *Distant*, happens three times (once for each item of clothing) ending with "am I your biggest shame?" She starts to feel constricted and takes off her mother's clothing. The *Reverent* section, m.124, is the emotional reaction to this repeated sequence, a darkened hymn to bring her to the edge of self-destruction. A spotlight shines on the girl and gets increasingly constricted as she picks up the mirror and is about to throw it, when suddenly the mezzo-soprano, dressed as a life-sized crocodile, walks in with a leg in his mouth.

Song 5. Crocodile Play Song. This recitative between the two characters is the first time where she is not by herself onstage. It starts with the crocodile misunderstanding the girl's attempt at throwing the mirror as rearranging the room. The girl asks the crocodile where he has been, and at *Deliberate*, m.96, he begins to tell his story over the rejected music from *Tea Time*, representing his own dejected feelings because he now has no one to play with either. The girl asks questions as the crocodile tells his story. At *Playful*, m.24, he really gets into the story he is excited to tell her, and she pointedly asks questions each time. This happens a total of three times. The final question the girl asks is, "Croc, is that Miriam's shoe?" This question cuts him off from finishing his story and he realizes what he has done; he has harmed a friend. He sobs over the music from the final section of the *Mother Goose Aria* (*Intimate* m.42) demonstrating their feelings of isolation as equivalent.

Song 6. Duet. In *Delicate*, m. 1, the girl brings the crocodile to the mirror and starts to play dress up with him to make him feel better. This scene is in contrast to the *Mirror Aria* where she puts

on her mother's clothing and ends up feeling worse. In this scene she is using the clothing to make her imaginary friend feel better. At Rapturous, m.58, we get the duet between them dramatically expanding on their togetherness. It ends with her appreciation for the crocodile and that he can eat her friends! This ending represents and turns around the concept of communion.

Conclusion: What I've learned

I have learned to be aware of my conscious and subconscious minds and how to use them more effectively for creating music. In addition to that, I have learned that a more relaxed approach overall is best compared to forcing myself to get the music completed. I use Yin and Yang as a model for how to balance life and work: receiving and doing, relaxation and activity. Yang gets it done regardless of circumstances. It is the sheer will of brute force. These polarities represent a balance that I have realized is important for continuing to live as an artist. Given that my goal for this opera project was to communicate an emotional reality through *allowing* a process to occur, yang energy was unsuited to such a task. I cannot by will alone force others into my experience even if it is only a metaphor of that experience and it is detrimental to my daily life and health to force the work into being.

From December 2023 to February 2024, I was in the throes of Yang, trying to get all the songs completed. I only finished 5 of the 6 and did not finish the mother's sections. At the beginning of March 2024, I was totally burnt out and fled to Burlington, VT for four days to recover from exhaustion. Force of will had created a myopia that made composing not worthwhile. The emotional return on investment was basically zero.

Yin energy receives and helps me sink into the unnamed thing, the work itself, before it becomes tangible. This allows for breathing room. It is still hard to conceptualize the nature of the

opposite of Yang given that our society believes in the value of hard work and insane amounts of productivity. I am still learning how to not get caught up in it and to balance it, not just with Yin activities like yoga, but a perspective of allowing and receiving life as a whole. Now, as I work, I avoid working past my tolerance level. Sometimes that is a 30-minute session, sometimes it is a 90-minute session, but not usually more.

During the rehearsals leading up to the workshop performance on March 30, 2024, the music got better and better every time. The performers were more connected to the work each rehearsal and during the performance they really brought it to life through the personal connection they had developed with the opera. After hearing *Tea Time* (the unfinished song) acted out with no music, dramatic implications that need to be present in the music became apparent. Also, during the workshop performance and rehearsals, the *Crocodile Play Song* was problematic for the mezzo-soprano. The piano part was conflicting with the vocal part with both pitch and rhythm. It became clear after the performance that the dramatic implications of this particular song had not yet been clarified and I am working on solving these dramatic problems. As the songs get completed and the mother's sections are added, the orchestration for flute, clarinet, percussion, and string trio will commence and *A Girl and Her Crocodile* will be performed as a full production in March 2025.

Bibliography

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A GIRL AND HER CROCODILE

A Chamber Opera in One Act

Duration: ca. 30 minutes
Workshop Preview: March 30, 2024

Music by
Molly Wong

Libretto by
Molly Wong and Howard Frazin
(2023)

A GIRL AND HER CROCODILE

A Chamber Opera in One Act

Libretto by Molly Wong and Howard Frazin
(2023)

CHARACTERS

Girl, SOPRANO

Woman dressed as a young girl, about 8 years old, disheveled. She is wearing a muddy pastel frilly dress. Hair is a short bob.

Crocodile, MEZZO-SOPRANO

Girl's imaginary friend and alter ego of sorts.

(In Scene 2, the mezzo-soprano is dressed in all black like a shadow acting as the voice of the puppet that the Girl has on her hand. In Scene 4, the mezzo-soprano is dressed in a crocodile costume.)

Mother, MEZZO-SOPRANO (same singer)

Girl's mother, single, divorced, late-30s. Very religious, isolated, angry.

SETTING

Lonely isolation hovers over a stale oppressiveness in the bedroom of an 8-year-old girl. A plain door and door frame are on stage left with a messy bed upstage. Upstage and to the right is a window with two floor-to-ceiling heavy drapes on either side. There is a jump rope and a book of nursery rhymes haphazardly strewn about in front of the window. Stage right and opposite downstage from the door is a full-length mirror. At the foot of the mirror is a basket of dress-up clothes. In the middle of the room there's a table with two chairs. On top of the table there's a tray with a tea set.

INTRODUCTION

Unaccompanied Recitative

MOTHER [*Offstage*]

You get in your room and get dressed right now young lady!

[Girl runs into the room from offstage holding a large crocodile puppet in one hand. She looks back at the door.]

Take off that dirty dress and put on clean clothes.

I told you not to play in the mud!

Don't you talk back to me!

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry."

Clean your room and don't forget to put on Grandma's cross.

And put on your church shoes and fancy dress too!

[Girl slams door.]

We're leaving in 15 minutes!

And put that filthy crocodile puppet back in the closet!

MUSICAL INTERLUDE 1

[Girl tosses the crocodile puppet onto the bed. She begins to take off her dress. Underneath it, she is wearing overalls. She walks to the window and sits down cross-legged with her back to the window. She looks up and notices a book near her foot.]

SCENE 1

1. Mother Goose Aria

Solo Aria Girl

GIRL

[Soft spotlight envelops Girl. She picks up the book and begins to read.]

One for sorrow,
Two for joy,
Three for a girl,
Four for a boy,
Five for silver,
Six for gold,
Seven for a secret
Never to be told.

[Girl puts the book down. Now she is reciting the book from memory. Then she repeats the poem slowly one last time with a deeper understanding.]

2. Solo Play Song

[Light starts to come through the window. Girl turns around and looks out the window.]

Introductory Recitative

Oh look, it's Jessie, Evie, and Miriam!
Jumping jumping jumping,
they're jumping—
they're jumping the fence!

Play Song

Oh look!

[Girl gets the jump rope from next to the window.]

Jump jump jump so high,
don't trip or slip
or do a flip,
while reaching for the sky!

Look at the bird soaring away—
is it a robin or is it a jay?

Oh look what they're doing now!

[Hides behind the bed.]

Counting one two three!
Don't make a sound
or you'll get found,
just hide behind the tree!

Look at the bird soaring away—
is it a robin or is it a jay?

Now you're it, so run!

Don't get tagged

Just zig or zag.

Now we're having fun!

Look at the bird soaring away—
is it a robin or is it a jay?

[Girl runs to the table to get the tea set on the tray.]

You girls need a break
and so do I.

Come rest with me
for some tea and cake!

[Girl brings tea to the window and looking out, she sees the girls leaving.]

Hey where are you going?
 What about me?
 It's not time for church yet.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE 2

[Girl slowly walks to the table to put the tea set back.]

SCENE 2

3. Tea Time

Duet Recitative

[Girl picks up the crocodile puppet from the bed. As she does this, the mezzo-soprano dressed like a shadow stands behind her.]

GIRL

[Girl brings the puppet with her over to the table. The shadow follows.]

I think I'll have some tea.

[While organizing tea, she puts the crocodile puppet on her hand and speaks to Crocodile.]

I suppose *you'll* want some too?

CROCODILE *[Voiced by the shadow.]*

You look sweaty.

GIRL

I was playing.

CROCODILE

With who?

GIRL

Evie, Jessie...

CROCODILE

And Miriam?

I like Miriam.

GIRL

Here's my saucer with gold leaf on the edge.

Here's my cup with a tiny chip on the side.

CROCODILE

What were they wearing today?

GIRL

Here's your saucer with the silver flower.

Here's your cup with the missing handle.

CROCODILE

Is there anything to eat?

GIRL

Evie has skin that flakes—so dry!

It crinkles while she walks and runs
like a desert snake slithering by.

CROCODILE

I love hunting snakes!

GIRL

Jessie has a belly like a pig—so fat!
It jiggles as she jumps and slips
like an incompetent acrobat.

CROCODILE

I love pigs; they're so delicious!

GIRL

Miriam has a bulbous behind—so grand!
It wobbles as she runs and chases
like only a hippo can.

CROCODILE

Hooray for hippos!

GIRL

I would be good at jumping rope.

CROCODILE

I would be good at chasing Evie.

GIRL

I would hide where Miriam could never find me.

CROCODILE

I'd be good at hunting Jessie too.

GIRL

I can jump up and touch the sky. Can Jessie do that?

CROCODILE

You think I could eat Evie all in one bite?

GIRL

Why don't I get to play?

CROCODILE

I'm getting hungry!

CROCODILE

I'd love to season Evie with sugar and spice.

GIRL

I never get to play.

I'm stuck inside, why don't I get to play?

And Jessie roasted would be ever so nice.

I could marinate Miriam in garlic—
that would be delicious to me!

I'd eat the girls. I'd eat all three.

[*Girl throws the crocodile puppet offstage.*]
[*Lights out*]

I'm faster than Miriam.

I'd win. I'd win everything.

You're not listening.

SCENE 3

4. Mirror Aria

Solo Aria Girl

[*Girl stands in front of the mirror. She begins to play dress up with clothes in the basket that are next to the mirror. Single spotlight, gets tighter and tighter throughout scene.*]

Can't you see me?
Won't you see me?
Don't you see my thoughts
flowing into the sparkling sky?

Yes I know, all of life is by God's grace—
I'm going dancing with shoes that gleam,
my fingernails painted like a doll,
my face is powdered white, powdered...
...powdered white like a rat
Wouldn't you like that?

Can't you see me?
Won't you see me?
Don't you see my thoughts
flowing into the sparkling sky?

You always tell me, "Find solace in our Savior"—
I'm going to a party with this cross glittering 'round my neck,
my brows darkened like a shadow,
my hair is smooth, so smooth...
...smooth like a snake
Was I a mistake?

Don't you see me?
Can't you see me?
Can't you see my thoughts
flowing into the sparkling sky?

Jesus comforts us in our trials, you say—
I'm going to a wedding in these stockings that cling,
my eyelids stained like glass,
my hair wild, so wild...
...wild like a lion's mane.
Am I your biggest shame?
[*As she sings, Girl takes off each item and throws it back in the basket.*]

These shoes are too tight.
This cross is too heavy.
These stockings don't look right!
[*Spotlight gets smaller and smaller until tight around her head and hands.*
Girl picks up the mirror and is about to throw it.]

SCENE 4

5. Crocodile Play Song

Recitative

[Lights up.]

[Crocodile standing casually upstage center with a leg in his mouth, holding it like a chicken drumstick. On the foot of the leg is a glittery shoe and a frilly sock on the foot. There is a bone sticking out where the knee would be.]

CROCODILE

Oh I think the mirror would look fabulous near the bed!

[Girl puts the mirror down.]

Or perhaps by the door?

GIRL

Where have you been?

Duet Recitative

CROCODILE

I went outside like you asked.

I played like I wanted.

It was a lovely day.

I decided to play...

...until everyone ran away.

GIRL

Who?

CROCODILE

Jessie, Evie, and Miriam.

GIRL

Oh Croc, did you show them your teeth?

CROCODILE

It's only polite to smile
when you haven't seen friends in a while.

Jessie pulled out a jump rope
and I jumped right in!

But Jessie shouted and Evie screamed...

GIRL

Well Croc, did you growl?

CROCODILE

I had to roar!

It's what I do,
especially when I see someone I adore!

Everyone ran.

So I hid behind the giant oak tree.
When Evie ran past me she stepped on my tail...

GIRL

Oh no... Did you... chase her?

CROCODILE

Of course I had to pursue,
but then I saw Miriam,
waving a big stick in the air,
starting to chase ME out of the blue!

So I ran. And ran and ran
and ran 'round the big oak tree,
all the while Miriam running after me.
She hunted me down
and we fell to the ground.

Then I felt a thud on my snout,
I jumped up and was about to shout
when something flew off my nose.
It was Miriam!
She had landed in a most
unfortunate pose.

I ran to the rescue
to stand her upright.
I got hold of her leg and...

GIRL

Croc...is that... Miriam's shoe?

CROCODILE

Oh no what have I done?!

Croc Solo Aria:

CROCODILE

One for sorrow,
Two for joy,
Three...Three... Three...
for a...for a...
a girl.
[Crocodile bursts into tears.]

6. Duet Recitative—Aria

GIRL

[Girl brings Crocodile over to the mirror to play dress up. Girl sifts through the basket of clothes next to the mirror to look for something to put on Croc. The Crocodile is too big for Mother's clothes, so the Girl improvises. She uses the dress as a scarf, the stockings as gloves, and the cross necklace as a nose ring. Croc fiddles with the leg while Girl starts sifting through the basket.]

Here's a white scarf,
shimmering and soft.
[*Girl wraps dress/scarf around Croc's neck.*]

CROCODILE
[*Crocodile looks at himself in the mirror.*]
Does it make my teeth look pointy?
[*Girl wraps stockings/gloves around Crocodile's claws.*]

GIRL
Here are some gloves,
elegant and charming.

CROCODILE
Won't they make my arms look too short?

GIRL
Here's a sparkly cross.
We'll hang it on your ear.

CROCODILE
I don't have ears!

GIRL
Then I'll put it on your snout!

CROCODILE
Will it make my snout look big?

GIRL
Oh Croc you look so graceful.

We seek solace in each other.

When I'm sad, you comfort me.

[*Sound of bells*]

CROCODILE

All my grace comes from you.

I seek solace in you.

When I'm sad, you comfort me.

ENDING

Unaccompanied Recitative
[*There's a heavy knocking at the door.*]

GIRL
Hide hide hide!
[*Girl motions for Crocodile to hide. Crocodile hides behind the curtain.*]
[*There is a loud banging on door. Bang bang. Bang bang.*]

MOTHER [*Offstage.*]

Are you ready? It's time to go!

Are you wearing that pretty dress I got you for Jessie's birthday party last year?

Are your church shoes clean?

Have you put on Grandma's favorite cross?

Maybe you can play with Evie and Miriam after service.

[*Girl puts crocodile puppet on the table next to the tea set.*]

[*Lights out*]

1. Mother Goose Aria

Still $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 48$
 [Soft spotlight envelops Girl.

She picks up the book and begins to read.]

GIRL

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-6. It features a vocal line for the Girl and a piano accompaniment. The piano part has a *p sempre* marking and consists of a steady eighth-note bass line and a treble line with chords and some melodic movement.

7 *p*

One for sor-row _____ Two for joy Three for a girl

Musical score for the second system, measures 7-12. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "One for sor-row" and continues with "Two for joy" and "Three for a girl". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

13

Four for a boy _____ Five for silver Six for gold _____ Sev - en for a

Musical score for the third system, measures 13-18. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "Four for a boy", "Five for silver", "Six for gold", and "Sev - en for a". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

[*Girl puts the book down.*

Now she is reciting the book from memory.

Then she repeats the poem slowly one last time with a deeper understanding.]

19

se - cret _____ Nev - er _____ to be told. _____

25

More declamatory $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 63$ *mp*

One for sor - row _____ Two for

31

joy _____ Three for a girl Four for a boy Five for sil - ver _____ Six for

37 *Rall.* *Intimate* $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$

gold Seven for a se - cret_ a se-cret_ a se - cret_

43 *pp*

One for sor-row_ Two for joy_ Three for a

50

girl_ Four for a boy_ Five for sil-ver_

57

_ Six for gold_ Sev-en_ for a se - cret_ Nev - er

64

to be told

poco f

70

In the distance

pp

p

17
GIRL

ing jump - ing— They're jump - - ing the fence! ——— jump -

22
GIRL

- - - - - ing

with pedal

A little more animated
[Girl gets the jump rope from next to the window.]

25
GIRL

Oh look!

pp R.H.
mf

Rod. L.H.

30
GIRL

Jump jump jump so high don't trip or slip or

mf

35
GIRL

do a flip _____ while reach - ing for the sky! _____

39
GIRL

Hopeful ♩ = ca. 120 *p ecstatic*

- Look at the bird _____ soar - ing _____ a -

45
GIRL

way _____ Is it a rob - - in _____ or is it a

51
GIRL

jay? _____ Oh

[Girl hides under bed.]

55 GIRL

look what they're do - ing_ now!_____

61 GIRL

Rambunctious $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 72$ *mf*

Count - ing_____

66 GIRL

one two three!_____ Don't make a sound or

71 GIRL

you'll get found just hide be - hind that tree!_____

Hopeful ♩ = ca. 120

GIRL

76

p *ecstatic* 3

Look at the bird _____ soar - ing_

p dolce

15

GIRL

81

3

a - way _____ Is it a rob - - in_

15

15

GIRL

86

3

or is it a jay? _____

15

8

GIRL

90

8

pp

tr

94 **Rambunctious** $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 72$ *mf* *f*

GIRL *mf* *f*

Now you're it so run! Don't get

99

GIRL

tagged just zig or zag. Now

103 **Hopeful** $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 120$ *p* *ecstatic*

GIRL *p* *ecstatic*

we're hav - ing fun! Look at the

p dolce

107

GIRL

bird soar - ing a - way

15 15

112 GIRL

Is it a rob - - in or is it a

3 15

[Girl runs to the table to get the tea set on the tray.]

117 GIRL

jay?

8

pp
trm trm trm

And.

121 GIRL

Rambunctious $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 72$

You girls need a break and

mf

126 GIRL

so do I. Come rest with me for some tea and

131 GIRL *cake.*

[Girl brings tea to the window.]

135 GIRL

rit. ----- **Uncertain** ♩ = ca. 68
 [Looking out the window,
 she sees the girls leaving.]

140 GIRL *Where are you*

p esp. 3

subito p
with pedal

144 GIRL *go - ing? What a - bout me?*

149
GIRL

It's not time for church yet.

Languid ♩ = ca. 92
[Girl slowly walks to the table
to put the tea set back.]

154
GIRL

to put the tea set back.]

mp espressivo

pp

160
GIRL

mp espressivo

pp

3. Tea Time

Still ♩ = ca. 72

[Girl picks up the crocodile puppet from the bed.

As she does this, the mezzo-soprano dressed

like a shadow stands behind her.]

GIRL

p

Here's my sau - cer_ with gold leaf on the edge. Here's my cup_

CROC

p placid

7

with a ti - ny chip_ on the side.

mp

What were they wear - ing_ to - day?_

13

Here's your sau - cer_ with the sil - ver flow - er. Here's your

19

cup with the miss - ing han - dle.

Is there an - y - thing to eat?

25 **More animated** ♩ = ca. 84 *p* *p a little mean*

Ev - ie_ has skin that flakes— so dry so dry It

p sempre

31

crink - les_ as she walks and runs like a des - ert snake_ slith - er - ing_ by.

37

poco f

Jes - sie_ has a bel - ly_ like a

p dolce

I love hunt - ing_ snakes.

p

43

p a little mean

pig - so fat.

It jig - gles_ as she

3

3

3

48

3

jumps and slips_ like an in - com - pe - tent ac - ro - bat.

p dolce

I love pigs;

3

3

3

3

3

3

55 *poco f*

Mi - ri - am_ has a bul - bous be - hind—

— they're so de - li - cious!

p

61

so grand!

66 *p a little mean*

It wob - bles_ as she runs_ and chas - es_ like on - ly a hip - po_ can_

f excited

Hoo -

Playful ♩ = ca. 96

72 *f* *petulant*

I ___ would be good at jump - ing rope._

ray for hip - pos!_ I would be

p

77

I would hide where Mi - ri - am could nev - er.

good at chas - ing_ Ev - ie. ___

82

find me I can jump

I'd be good at hunt - ing Jes - sie too.

87

up and touch the sky can Jes - sie do that?

You think I could eat Ev -

92

Why don't I get to play?

ie all in one bite. I'm get - ting hun -

poco f

97 **Excited** ♩ = ca. 108 *poco f*

poco f

gry! I'd love to sea - son_ E - vie_____ with su - gar_ and spice.

I

102

nev - er___ get to play_____ I nev - er___

And Jes - sie roast - ed_ would be

106

nev - er___ get to play_____ I'm

ev - er so nice. I could mar - i - nate_ Mir - i - am_ in

8.

110

stuck in - side all day stuck in - side all day

gar - lic! I'd love to sea - son

8

115

I'm fast - er than Mir - i - am

E - vie with su - gar and spice.

fast - er fast - er than Mir - i - am

And Jes - sie roast - ed would be ev - er so nice.

119

fast - er fast - er than Mir - i - am

And Jes - sie roast - ed would be ev - er so nice.

fast - er fast - er than Mir - i - am

And Jes - sie roast - ed would be ev - er so nice.

122

I'm fast - er fast - er fast - er than
I could mar - i - nate Mir - i - am in

125

Mir - i - am I'd win I'd win
gar - lic that would be de - li - cious to me!

129

eve - ry - thing! You're
I'd eat the girls. I'd eat all

[Girl looks at Croc.]

[Girl throws crocodile puppet offstage.

Lights out.]

133

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains the lyrics "not list - ening!____" and "three.____". The middle staff is another vocal line in treble clef, which is mostly empty with a few notes. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). It features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and chords. A dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) is present. The score ends with a double bar line.

4. Mirror Aria

Solo Aria, Girl

Somber ♩ = ca. 72

[Girl stands in front of the mirror. She begins to play dress up with clothes in the basket that are next to the basket that are next to the mirror.

Single spotlight, gets tighter and tighter throughout the scene.] **pp**

GIRL

Can't you see me? _____

pp

6

Won't you see me? _____ Don't you see my thoughts flow - ing in - to the

poco f

11

spark - ling sky? _____ All of life is by God's grace.

mp subdued

mp

17 *More animated* $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 120$
poco f

GIRL
 I'm go - ing danc - ing

21
 GIRL
 danc - ing with shoes that gleam my fin - ger - nails paint - ed

25
 GIRL
 like a doll my face is pow - dered white pow - dered

28
 GIRL
 white pow - dered white like a rat! Would - n't

pp

33 **Distant** ♩ = ca. 88

GIRL

you like that?

39 **Somber** ♩ = ca. 72 *pp*

GIRL

Can't you see me?

44

GIRL

Won't you see me? Don't you see my thoughts

48 *poco f* *mp subdued*

GIRL

flow - ing in - to the spark - ling sky? Find sol - ace

53 *poco f* **More animated** ♩ = ca. 120

GIRL in our Sav - ior I'm go - ing to a par - ty—

58

GIRL a par - ty— with this cross glit - ter - ing—

62

GIRL round my neck my brows dark - ened— like a

66

GIRL shad - - ow my hair— smooth so smooth—

71 *pp*

GIRL

smooth like a snake! Was I a mis - take?

76 Distant ♩ = ca. 88 Somber ♩ = ca. 72

GIRL

82 *pp*

GIRL

Can't you see me? _____ Won't you see me? _____ Don't you

88 *poco f* *mp subdued*

GIRL

see my thoughts flow - ing in - to the spark - ling sky? _____ Je - sus com - forts

94

GIRL

poco f **More animated** ♩ = ca. 120

us in our tri - als. I'm go - ing to a wed - ding_

15

99

GIRL

[She sits down and puts on stockings one leg at a time.]

a wed - ding_ in these stock - ings_ that cling_

15

103

GIRL

and cling my eye - lids_ stained_ like glass_ my

[She runs her fingers through her hair.]

108

GIRL

hair wild so wild like a li - on's

113

GIRL

mane. Am I your big - gest_ shame? These shoes are too

120

GIRL

[She takes off and throws the shoes one at a time.] [She takes off and throws the stockings one at a time.]

tight. These stock - ings don't look right.

[She picks up the mirror
intending to throw it.]

124 Reverent ♩ = ca. 72

GIRL

This cross is too hea - vy hea - vy hea - vy

mp

130

GIRL

fff

5. Crocodile Play Song

Out of tempo

[Lights up.]

[Croc standing casually upstage center with a leg in his mouth, holding it like a turkey leg. On the foot of the leg is a glittery shoe and a frilly sock on the foot. There is a knee sticking out where the knee would be.]

GIRL

CROC

Piano

Oh I think the mir - ror would look fab - u - lous fab -

[Croc points the leg at the door.]

3 [Croc points the leg at the bed.]

mp irritated

Where have you been?

- u - lous near the bed or per - haps by the door?

7 **Deliberate** ♩ = ca. 96

p

I went out - side_ like_ you asked I played like I

12

want - ed It was a love - ly day I de - ci - ded to

17

play un - til eve - ry - one ran a - way

21

mp

Oh Croc you did - n't show them your teeth did you?

25 **Playful** ♩ = ca. 120

It's on - ly po - lite to

smile when you have - n't seen friends in a while.

Jes - sie pulled out a jump rope and I jumped right

Out of tempo

mf

34

Well croc,

in! But Jes - sie shout - ed_ and E - vie screamed...

8.....

A tempo, playful

38

did you growl?

I had to roar! It's what I do es - pe - cial-

poco f

8.....

41

ly when I see some - one I a - dore.

44

Eve - ry - one ran.

47

So I hid be - hind the gi - ant oak tree

51

Out of tempo
p

Oh Croc... did you chase her?

mf

Of course I had to pur -

fp
fp

8

65

'round the big oak tree, all the while

67

Mi - ri - am run - ning af - ter me. She

70

hunt - ed me down and we fell to the ground. And then, I felt a thud on my

75

snout; I jumped up and was a - bout___ to shout when some - thing flew_ off my

77

nose._____ It was

79

Mir - i - am! Mir - i - am it was Mir - - i - am!_

82

She had land - ed in a most un - for - tu - nate

86

pose. I ran to the res - cue to stand her up - right.

90

(spoken)

Croc... is that Mi - ri - am's shoe?

I got hold of the leg Oh no no oh no_

94

- what have I done? One for sor - row

mp *p*

99

Two for joy Three, three, three for a

mp *p*

104

[*Croc bursts into tears.*]

a a girl.

mp *p*

8

6. Duet

Delicate ♩ = ca. 72

[Girl brings Crocodile over to the mirror to play dress up.

Girl sifts through the basket of clothes next to the mirror to look for something to put on Croc.

The Crocodile is too big for Mother's clothes, so the Girl improvises. She uses

the dress as a scarf, the stockings as gloves, and the cross necklace as a nose ring.

Croc fiddles with the leg while Girl starts sifting through the basket.]

GIRL

CROC

p dolce

5 [Croc puts down leg.]

10 [Girl wraps dress/scarf around Croc's neck.]

mp

Here's a white scarf shimmer - ing_ and

15 [*Croc looks at himself in the mirror.*]

soft.

mp annoyed 3

Does it make my teeth look

20

poin - ty? _____

25 [*Girl wraps stockings / gloves on Croc's claws.*]

p

Here _____ are some

30

[Croc looks at himself in the mirror.]

gloves el - e - gant and charm - ing.

Do they make my arms look

35

[Girl gets cross necklace from the basket.]

short?

40

Here's a spark - ly cross, we'll hang it on your

45

ear. Then we'll hang it on your

poco più f annoyed

I don't have ears!

51

snout!

pp

Rapturous ♩ = ca. 130

[Girl and Croc move to center stage to sing a love duet.]

57

mp

Oh

mp

60

Croc... you look so grace - ful

63

so... grace -

66

ful

mp

All my grace All my

69

We
grace comes from you

73

seek so - lace in each oth - er

76

We seek so - lace in each

80

oth - er

83

Reverent $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 86$

f
When I'm sad you com - fort me.

f
When I'm sad you com - fort me.

[Both looking away from each other.]

89

mp
I'm sad

mp
I'm sad

[Both look towards each other.]

95

com - fort me. When I'm

com - fort me. When I'm

101

sad you com - fort me.

sad you com - fort me.

107

When I'm a - lone, you are my friend.

When I'm a - lone, you are my friend.

113 [Both look away from each other.]

mp
I'm a - lone, play with me.

mp
I'm a - lone, play with me.

mp

119 [Both look towards each other.]

f
When I'm mad you eat my friends.

f
When you're mad I eat your

f

125 *p religiously*

You eat _____ my _____ eat_

p religiously

friends. _____ I _____ eat _____ your _____

131 _____ my_ friends_ You eat my friends_

friends_ Eat _____ your_ friends_

8

ppp

[Loud banging on door.
 Bang bang. Bang bang.
 Girl motions for Croc to hide.
 Croc hides behind the curtain.]

138 [Knock knock knock.]

145

Musical score for measures 145-146. The score consists of three staves. The top two staves are empty, with a whole rest on each line. The bottom staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) containing a piano accompaniment. The music is marked *pp* *scurrying*. It features a melodic line in the treble clef with a slur over measures 145 and 146, and a rhythmic accompaniment in the bass clef consisting of eighth notes and chords. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).

147

Musical score for measures 147-148. The score consists of three staves. The top two staves are empty, with a whole rest on each line. The bottom staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) containing a piano accompaniment. The music continues from the previous system, with a slur over measures 147 and 148. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).