1-27-2011

Mom Sings an Aria

Alan Stringer
James Yaffe

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nm_composer_archive

Recommended Citation

This Musical Score is brought to you for free and open access by the Research Collections and Data at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in New Mexico Composers' Archive by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.
Mom Sings an Aria

Characters:

Mom (Mrs. Lowenstein) ................ Mezzo-soprano
Lennie, her son ........................ Baritone
Shirley, his wife ....................... Soprano
Cohen, a regular standee at the MET ..... Bass
D’Angelo, a regular standee at the MET . Tenor

Non-singing, non-speaking roles:

Two old ladies, friends of Cohen and D’Angelo
And Cohen’s nephew

Synopsis:

Lennie, a homicide detective, and his wife Shirley come for regular Friday night dinner at his Jewish mom’s house. Mom had musical ambitions for herself and her son, but these didn’t work out.

Lennie’s latest case, in which a murder took place in the standing room section of the Met opera is discussed (and acted out in flashbacks) during the meal. Mom’s colorful stories, her opera singing, and the standee’s fights about the comparative virtues and defects of Renata Tebaldi and Maria Callas divert us while Mom solves the case for her son. At the last moment she also helps Lennie with his marriage.
Lennie [entering with Shirley]:

Mom, We're here.
She never wants any help.

Mom [entering from kitchen]:

Oh, Lennie.
right on time. Let me give you a great big hug!
Shirley:

LEN-NIE

keeps anyone waiting.
Punctuality is a virtue. But a little less punctuality...
and a little more imagination would help a homicide de-

Shirley:

Mom:

tective.

Oh, be serious!

You think I'm not serious?
Sit down.

You never give up wishing

I would be a creative type with lots of imagination.
No, I gave up wishing.

... action, a musician, for instance.

[Mom exits.] Let me get the appetizers.
I took two years of violin before Mom had to admit I wasn't Heifetz.
I remember your saying.

I played "Rustling Leaves" the first year. I played "Rustling Leaves" the second year. I would have
[Mom re-enters with appetizers.]

played "Rust-ling Leaves" forever because I couldn't get it right.

Mom:

Such a disappointment. Oh well,
I got over it.

What is playing this Saturday on the
Met broadcast?

Such a sad, beautiful opera!
were going to be an opera singer before you gave it up to raise a

Mom, you were going to be an opera singer before you gave it up to raise a

homocide detective. Maybe you could understand how someone could love music so much
that he'd commit murder for it.

That isn't hard to understand. Why else would I
stop your violin lessons. Once while you were playing "Rustling Leaves,"

Parlando:  

1 happened to look at your teacher, Mrs. Steinberg.
And on her face was murder, if I ever saw it.

Shirley:

You don't mean that literally? Would a woman kill a boy?
just because he couldn't play the violin?

People can have plenty feelings that were never in your psychology.
books, believe me. My

Aunt Go-die thought the pigeon outside her window actually was her husband
Jake. The pigeon appeared on the day Jake died.
It had a walk like Jake's. It liked the same food that Jake liked.

The pigeon hated the
rabbi and went away, just like Jake, whenever

er the rabbi came to visit.
Goldie talked to the pigeon like she talked to Jake until the day she died. Of course, there might have been
more than one pigeon. Goldie had really bad eyesight.

Shirley: Slower
Mom: What a colorful story! Yes,
[To Lennie:]

164

co - lor - ful. I'm co - lor - ful. We're all co - lor - ful!

164

So you are in - ves - ti - ga - ting some - one who com - mit - ted mur - der for

166

- 29 -
Slower

Looks like it. There are certain people who show up in the Met's standing room line.
night after night after night. They come earlier than anyone else

and wait longer. know one another's names, gossip a
The last place on earth

bout the opera singers.

Ev'en an opera lover has a

you'd expect to find a murderer.
He loves music, but he also could have plenty of real trouble.

That's just it, Mom, if one of these standing room regulars had gone
home and killed his mother-in-law, this would be a routine case.

But in this case, one of the regulars killed another standing room regular.
Shirley: Don't bother your mother with this.

Mom: It's no bother. I'm interested!

Tell it. Being a widow, life can get dull.
The two regulars were Sam Cohen, a retired pharmacist, whose nephew took over his business and Giuseppe Angelo,
some-one who used to own an exterminating business in Queens.

Opera was the biggest thing in both their lives. D'Angelo was
The most operatic city in Italy. If a born in Parma.

Shirley: tenor hits a bad note, they run him out of town. How horrible! How
Mom:

positively uncivilized!

A little less civilization here in New York

then maybe we wouldn't have so many bad notes.
[Lights up on the men.]

So for maybe fifteen years

They have argued constantly.