

Act one scene two of
"yerma" essay
sample



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Nature appears to be a prevailing force during these encounters a stark and powerful setting possibly representing the barren nature of Yerma herself.

Therefore, I consider it to be very important that when staging this scene it is kept very true to Lorca’s intentions i. e. stage directions are followed as accurately as possible. At the beginning of act 1 scene two we are introduced in to a situation where Yerma is “ in the fields” and is carrying a basket. Lorca explains to us that The Pagan Old Woman enters the scene after Yerma, yet gives no indication to the length of time that should exist between the characters entrances.

As this scene initially occurs in the morning I think it important to mimic the atmosphere of such a morning, from Lorca’s stage directions I get the impression that the morning is well matured and possibly closing in on the afternoon. To begin with I would have the set fade up from a complete darkness to a melancholic, faint warm glow, mirroring the romance in Lorca’s language. This lighting could be shone onto a cyclorama that completely inhabits the top of the stage and also part of stage left and right.

The cyclorama would curve above the stage mimicking the effect of the sky. Faint clouds could be projected on to this cyclorama, perhaps through a gobo, or the clouds could just be faintly painted on to the cyclorama so that they would only show up in this certain light. For the entrance of Yerma I would have her enter the stage from upstage left, she could hold the basket lovingly across her stomach with both hands. This would help to emphasise Yerma’s desperate craving for a baby.

I think the presence of a tree would help to secure the fact that the play is currently occurring outside and also show that there is some link with nature. To further enhance this idea, a few vines could be placed upstage with more images of vines and plants faintly projected on to the stage. I also think that throughout the duration of the scene the light could very subtly and very steadily change from the red glow, which is reminiscent of a romantic dusk to a more crisp pure white light. The reason for this is because Lorca is conscious of the, " world spinning round".

I also feel it would be important to include some sort of stream or flowing river somewhere in the distance. Or perhaps even just the characteristic sound of running water this would help emphasis Lorca's idea that water is the life-force of the world. As Yerma slowly enters the scene she could sit down by the tree and place her basket down. I then think that it would be interesting to have the set slowly dim down not so that nothing was visible, but so the actors actions currently on-stage were somehow " muted", they would still be visible beneath the light but only slightly.

Then to hear a pre-recorded sound of scuffling footsteps and a gradually increasing passage of light, which creates a pathway, would be an effective opening for the Pagan Old Woman. She could be dressed in all black symbolising a lack of energy, visually contrasting to Yerma. As the Pagan Old Woman enters from upstage right the pre-recorded sound could fade out so that it coincided with the sound of her actual footsteps. She could hobble, rather than walk to the foot of the stage with a deformed posture, which is accentuated by a hunch in her back when she climbs the steps to reach where Yerma is.

The actors could then pause and wait as the lights faded back to how they were previously. This would reveal in detail to the audience the woman's weathered, haggard face and notice that she is dependant on a walking stick. She could then approach Yerma and Yerma could begin the exchange with the dialogue, " Good Morning! " as if it had been the first time she had acknowledged the woman's presence. The Pagan Old Woman could then sit down in stark contrast without causing offence in the exact same place that Yerma had occupied.

This act of sitting down in Yerma's place conveys a lot of symbolism to the audience. It shows the Pagan Old Woman's age and wisdom – she has been Yerma's age before and experienced the problems Yerma is facing (maybe not to the same extent) reinforcing the experience that the Old Woman has in this exchange. The reason for this dramatic entrance is to highlight the significance of Lorca's character. The Pagan Old Woman is meant to symbolise many things namely the contrast between the way Yerma wants to live and the way she has to live.

The Pagan Old Woman representing the former. The entrance is also meant to be ironic – she is such an old, frail person entering the stage that she is also meant to represent the futility of life that Lorca talks about, " Good people, get out of bed, work hard, eat some bread then die. No games, no nothing! " Conversation can continue with simple exchanges of words until The Pagan Old Woman makes Yerma speak about when she was in awe of Victor, " One time... Victor... took me by the waist" I think this speech should be performed almost as if it were a soliloquy.

But instead of talking to the audience alone Yerma should recall the events of her youth in an almost dream-like, melancholy state seemingly unconscious and detached from the world around her. I also think that when she has finished the short speech she could inhale deeply and smile as she exhales creating a powerful pause. This is meant to symbolise how fresh that experience was compared to her now mundane relationship with Juan and also how alive the experience made her feel. Another important line in the exchange between Yerma and the Pagan Old Woman is when she talks of God, " Not God.

I never cared for God. " I think this should be spoken in an upbeat manner with a sense of realism. Lorca is not trying to attack religion here he is simply stating that God doesn't appear as loving as people make out. As the Pagan Old Woman leaves she could leave through the opening, which Yerma entered in. As the level of light is slowly becoming brighter the two young women who appear could respond to this gradual increase by having a more upbeat tempo to their performance reacting to the way in which people become active during the day.

I think that when the First Girl speaks of how she left her child alone in her house, Yerma should appear genuinely concerned for the child's well being but also slightly frustrated that " God" has granted a child to somebody who looks after it so improperly. When the First Girl exits and the Second Girl starts to interact with Yerma I think her costume and actions should be more akin to Yerma's than the First Girl this would highlight the sense of camaraderie that the pair share. When the Second Girl says, " Because they married me off.

Everybody gets married! If we go on like this no one will be left single except the children! " this I think is Lorca's way of empathising for women's position in society and highlighting the absence for their freedom of choice. A unique way to act out those three lines would be for the lines to be said slowly and with an increasing volume. There could be an underlying sense of malevolence that is conjured through the emotion with which the actor expresses. This would reinforce Lorca's frustration for societies neglect of women's needs.

I think the exchange between Yerma and the Second Girl is meant to be ironic as Yerma tries to distance herself from the Second Girl, " You're a child. " " Hush! Don't say such things! " as if Yerma knows that the girl is speaking the truth but is afraid to admit it. As the girl exits she could skip happily through the stage right entrance through which Yerma entered, laughing as she went. Yerma could turn her back to the audience watching her leave and then be strongly backlit casting a silhouette the light could be a combination of blue and red symbolising both the warm and cold imagery of Victor's song.

There would be no other light present on stage. As the silhouette is being cast a pause of about two to three seconds should occur then the sound of Victor's song should be heard. It should be sung in such a way that it appears as though he is singing rhetorically but in a way that somehow provokes an emotion from Yerma. Yerma could approach the entrance/exit with an attenuated movement in rhythm with the song. Then just as she reaches the exit the song could finish and the lights could again revert back

to how they were revealing Victor standing in front of Yerma at the entrance/exit.

The exchange between Victor and Yerma could be presented under the arch or the tree with Yerma approaching Victor to note about the mark on his face. There should be an energy between them and Yerma's desire of him should be obvious. This could be accentuated by the pauses that Lorca requests. They could be touching as Victor turns around to see Juan standing at the stage right entrance/exit where he then proceeds to leave via the stage left entrance/exit.

When Juan comes on to stage the set should be the same as it has been previously, however Yerma should be visibly affected by his presence she should look disheartened by his aura, he doesn't make her quaver like Victor should, and he should too, and more. Juan's lines should be said in a dull manner but in a way that still exudes power over Yerma like a father has on a daughter. To end the scene Yerma could stride past her husband through to the exit as if having thrown a tantrum. Juan could turn to face her leaving and with his back to the audience the lights could dim to end the scene.