

# SUSIE & MARK

An operetta to be performed in a small, dark, loud room

## CAST

SUSIE – singer/actor

MARK – singer/actor

SEAN – actor

FINN – dancer

## MUSIC ENSEMBLE

PIANO

CELLO

FLUTE

### How to sing as Susie or Mark (Singing Procedure)

When Susie or Mark sing a word, they sing that word for however long it takes to make a visual with the word at hand.

For example: if you sing the word “hand,” maybe you would visualize a human hand. For the word “way,” maybe you think of one instance for how you could utilize that word. I think of “The Way” and have a blurry image of man standing in front a long stretch of monochrome highway. Another thing could be to think of the song “Way to San Jose” and then imagine San Jose instead of a “Way.” The idea is that you take a mental trip for each word. Anything that you think of is fine.

For each word you have a strong image with, hold the note. Repeat words and phrases if you have trouble imagining something. Rest when you want to rest.

### Piano Notes

Feel free to improvise if you can find ways that suit you. Recommend listening: Debussy: “String Quartet No. 1” and “Two Arabesques.”

### Notes on Musical Procedures

Due to the distracting nature of some of the musical procedures, you may lose track of time or be unable to following the action onstage. This is to be expected and is perfectly alright.

## Piano Procedure #1 ("Piano 1", for short)

This is the underlying theme of the operetta scenes. **The score for this piece is on the next page.** The directions for different ways of looking at the score are as follows:

In my mind, there are two ways of performing this.

1<sup>st</sup> way:

This piece should be impossible to play. Mistakes will make the piece sound good. It is a guideline or a distraction to help a person get into a state of mind.

- 1) The top line is played by the right hand. The bottom line is played by the left hand.
- 2) Each hand plays one note at a time.
- 3) Play any note you want. Notes can be repeated.
- 4) Hold the pedal for the duration of the performance.
- 5) Try to play as quiet as possible.
- 6) Slow.
- 7) At the end of each line, repeat the line until the performance is done.
- 8) The exact timing of the phrases against each other should not be worked out. If you manage to work out the timing of the phrases, then don't perform the piece.
- 9) Don't count much if at all.
- 10) Hold whole notes as long as you want (that is helpful for giving a hand a solo).
- 11) The duration of the notes is open to inspiration, but a rough timing should try to stay in effect.
- 12) The performer should try to always be reading the music.
- 13) The score is on the following page.
- 14) I'm not sure how to begin the piece. It will take a while to get into it, so don't worry if the beginning sounds bad.

2<sup>nd</sup> Way:

This is a slow and difficult task requiring conscious effort. Read each line and play a note that corresponds to the length of that note. The top line is the right hand; the bottom line is the left. Repeat each line over and over. Again, it's difficult and slow. It takes a fair amount of practice before the score itself is recognized as such. After learning what happens when you try to do this task, stop struggling and continue playing. Try to get to the point where you don't actually see the individual words but instead recognize a relationship between the notes and your mind. There is obviously no easy way for me to write this down. It's like, a little improvisation here and there.

Eight, eight, quarter, whole, eight, dotted quarter, eight, eight, whole, half, quarter, half

Whole, eight, quarter, dotted half, quarter, half, eight, eight, half, quarter

*Scene I: Susie and Mark wake up in a bed.*

Piano: Play "Piano 1" for a while. Cello joins you in a moment.

Cello: The score consists of a few numbers. Each number is the number of notes in an ascending line. Thus: 7 means you play 7 notes before a jump to a lower note and begin another ascent. The duration is between 6 and 20 and seconds. Count to the number in your head while you hold the note

**Cello Score**: 7, 4, 6, 5, 2, 3 repeat

**Susie**: Why are you so stupid and sleeping? Why not notice my neck or sing me fancy ditties? Will you wake up?

**Mark**: What?

**Susie**: Are you going to get up?

**Mark**: Shhh... sleep little bit longer.

**Susie**: [*Sound of long mmm from back of throat... not "mmm" like tasty*]  
Mmmm. Don't be so lazy.

**Mark**: I'm a roly-poly. I sleep.

**Susie**: Lazy old boy. Come on.

**Mark**: I'm so tired.

**Susie**: Fine.

**Mark**: Mm-hmm. Why don't you just stay in bed?

**Susie**: [*singing*] Sleep when the day is long  
The afternoon is dark and the sky is quiet  
Sunshine tomorrow but today  
Your head on the sheet  
No scene for color gray  
No need for skies today  
We lay down

Piano: Continue playing into the next scene. Stop when singing starts.

Cello: Stop playing a little after Susie finishes singing.

*Scene II: A lamp lit barroom.*

*Sean is sitting down and leaning over a table. He is spinning an empty bottle. As he spins the bottle, Finn twirls. Sean sings "SEAN'S SONG."*

**Sean:** [singing] Oh night is black,  
The night is black, [pause]  
The night is black [pause]

Soldiers sleeping,  
Men sleeping, [pause]  
Everyone. [pause]

The girl is mine,  
She's mine, she's fine. [pause]

She looks alright,  
But not my type. [pause]  
She's fine, she's fine. [pause]

Morning coming,  
morning coming, [pause]

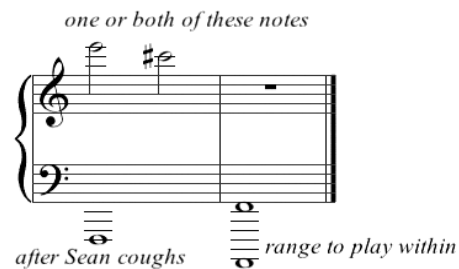
Sunlight, sunlight,  
Sunlight, all night.

Cello: Slowly. Repeat a low "G". Here are three different ways of playing the repeated figure. This procedure is "Cello 2" for short.



*Finn goes into a twirling dance.  
Sean coughs to and piano begins playing.*

Piano: After Sean coughs, play the low F. Then choose a number between 2 and 9. Count to your number and then play any note between A0 and F2 very quietly with your left hand. In your right hand, play a number of of these two notes sometime within your counting.



How many notes to play with right hand within the counting:

two notes, zero notes, one note, four notes, one note,  
zero notes, two notes, four notes, zero notes, one note,  
three notes, repeat

**Sean:**            [talking] Have you ever [pause] been to a place [pause] called [pause]  
Myrtle Commons?

**Finn:**            No.

**Sean:**            At Myrtle Commons, [pause] there was a guy named Mark. [pause] Mark  
is a fucking motherfucker. [pause] Mark is six-feet tall. Mark goes to  
school for math. [pause] Mark loves number. [pause] And so Mark was,  
working on, his degree, [pause] at school [pause] thinking about the world  
[pause] and [pause] then, he didn't want to do it anymore. Mark says,  
[pause] "Ain't for me. I'm not learning anything." [pause] Was he right?

**Finn:**            Yeah.

**Sean:**            Ewwfh! Mark was [pause] on target. And he went on [pause] to do  
[pause] everything he wanted to do. Everything he wanted to do. He woke  
up at nine. He had a job. He'd come home and stare at his math. [pause]  
And yet, Mark wasn't happy.  
Mark was sad. So he went to trying again. New job, new girl, new things.  
And well, I'll just tell you, [pause] Mark's doing alright.

Cello: Stop playing a little after Sean finishes his lines.

## Sean's Song

### Witching hour music

Sean

Oh night is black the night is black The night is black Sold-  
 iers sleep-ing men-sleep-ing ev-ery-one The girl is fine,she's fine,she's mine She  
 looks al - right but not my type She's fine She's fine Morn -  
 ing Com-ing Morn-ing Com-ing Sun-light sun-light sun-light all night