

Melody of the Mountain Man

Book, lyrics and music by Barbara Lewandowski

Characters

Mountain Man - He/Him, Bass or Baritone (C2 to D4 with alternatives provided below A2), plays adult

Helene - She/Her, Alto/Contralto (F#3 to C5), plays adult

Girl - She/Her, Soprano (E4 to B5), plays tween

NBC Reporter - She/Her, Mezzo-Soprano (G3 to C5), plays adult

2 Fox News Reporters - He/Him, Baritones (A2 to E4), playing adult

Ensemble - Mixed Genders, Various Voice Types

Sopranos - D4/E4 to G5

Altos - G3 to C5

Male Chorus - A2/Bb2 to E4 (tenor solo to A4)

Scene 1 - The House

We are met with the sounds of a storm brewing. Lights up - HELENE sits in her living room with her GIRL at her side.

GIRL

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO DAD?
IS IT TRUE HE CAUGHT COVID AND DIED?

HELENE

NO GIRL, HE WATCHES OVER US
HE SPIES FROM THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINSIDE

We transition to the mountain as the MOUNTAIN MAN emerges.

HONEST MEN DON'T DIE
HIGH ABOVE THIS GEORGIA GROUND, YOUR FATHER'S...

MOUNTAIN MAN & HELENE

SAFE AND SOUND

Scene 2 - The Mountain

The MOUNTAIN MAN looks down at Georgia.

MOUNTAIN MAN

AND EVERY SOUND OF GEORGIA DOWN BELOW
RECALLS A LIFE BEFORE I LIVED AMONGST THE SNOW
BUT HERE IN THE SKIES
I AM SAFE FROM ALL THE LIES

AND FROM MY PERCH ABOVE THE STATE BELOW
IT FEELS AS THOUGH IT'S I WHO TELLS THE SUN TO RISE
BUT HERE IN THE SKIES
WIND WILL FREEZE, AND SUN WILL BURN
NO MATTER WHERE I TURN

ENSEMBLE

ENOUGH!

MOUNTAIN MAN

I'VE HAD ENOUGH! GEORGIA, YOU WILL PAY
FOR ALL THE YEARS OF CASTING ME AWAY
I WILL SEND A STORM, YOU CAN DO OR DIE
YOU DESERVE IT FOR THE PETTYNESS AND PAIN!
YOU DESERVE IT! IT'S YOUR FAULT THAT I'M INSANE!
IF SHE COULD SEE ME NOW, MY WIFE WOULD CRY!

MY WIFE... *(he ponders morbidly)*

MY WIFE IS ALL ALONE AND LIVING THERE
IF I'M AWAY FROM HER, I'LL WAKE TO FIND HER GONE
BUT I KNOW THAT SHE
WOULD BE PROUD TO SEE GEORGIA BURN

I SUMMON WIND AND RAIN
FOR ME AND MY HELENE! *(pronounce to rhyme with "rain")*
A ROARING HURRICANE!
WIND AND RAIN WILL RUN YOU DOWN
NO MATTER WHERE YOU TURN!

Blackout. An uncanny melody begins, and grows faster and faster until it has reached peak force.

Scene 3 - Split Between NCB Broadcast & The House

A flash of light hits the audience. We find the NBC REPORTER live as HELENE and the GIRL watch from the house.

NBC REPORTER

BREAKING NEWS!
CITY OF TREES BECOMES THE CITY OF LAKES!
GEORGIA WAKES TO THE SIGHT OF A FLOOD
AND THE WIRES IN THE WATER ARE OUT FOR BLOOD!
WE TAKE YOU NOW TO STONE MOUNTAIN!
THE ROAD IS SLICK, EVEN TREES ARE DOWN
AND WE BELIEVE THERE WILL BE MORE TREES DOWN
NEARER TO THE MOUNTAIN

HELENE

(to Girl)
YOUR FATHER LIVES UP THERE!
THE NEWS LADY KNOWS!
HE BRINGS THE VENGEANCE OF MOUNTAIN SNOWS
TO GEORGIA IN THE FORM OF A RAINSTORM!

NBC REPORTER

This looks just like COVID traffic.

HELENE

DAMN FAKE NEWS!
YOUR FATHER LEFT BECAUSE HE COULDN'T BEAR THE NEWS REPORTERS
LYING TO HIS FACE
AND WHEN HE WENT, THEY LIED AGAIN AND SAID HE CAUGHT IT
AND "HE'S IN A BETTER PLACE"
THEY SAID HE DIED, DIED, DIED
AND I CRIED UNTIL THEY SAID IT WAS THE VIRUS

THEN, I KNEW THEY LIED, LIED, LIED
DON'T BELIEVE THE WORDS A LIAR SPEWS!
DAMN FAKE NEWS JEWS!

HELENE changes the channel.

Scene 4 - Split Between Two FOX Broadcasts

We see two Fox News broadcasts at separate times in the night. These are delivered by two FOX NEWS REPORTERS.

SOPRANO & ALTO ENSEMBLE

LIVE!

FOX NEWS REPORTER 1

WE ARE HERE AT WOORDOW WILSON PARK
WHERE THE CREEK HAS BECOME A RIVER
WHEN THE HURRICANE HITS
THERE'LL BE WORSE TO COME
WORSE TO COME
LADIES AND GENTS
THE HURRICANE IS NEAR

FOX NEWS REPORTER 2

WE ARE LIVE FROM VALDOSTA
PEOPLE LOSING POWER BY THE HOUR
HOWLING WINDS
BEYOND WHAT THE PEOPLE
THOUGHT THEY'D BE GETTING INTO
LADIES AND GENTS

MOUNTAIN MAN & FOX NEWS REPORTER 2

(vocally buried by first reporter) THE HURRICANE IS HERE!

HELENE

THIS I CAN GET BEHIND!
HONESTY, FINALLY!
ONLY FOUR YEARS LATE
THIS I CAN GET BEHIND!
HONEST, UNBIASED REPORTING

FOX NEWS REPORTERS

TUNE INTO TUCKER CARLSON AT 8:00

Scene 5 - The House

HELENE sits in her living room with her GIRL at her side. The GIRL is fixed on the television.

GIRL

TAKE A LOOK AT WOORDOW WILSON PARK
IT JUST LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER RIVER
HAS THE HURRICANE HIT?
IS THERE WORSE TO COME?
WORSE TO COME

HELENE

THANK GOD FOR GOOD REPORTING
WE'LL BE BACK TO TUCKER BY TOMORROW
8:00 PM
THE BOY FROM AUSTELLE BEFORE
FOUND THE SMALLEST PUDDLE...

GIRL

I DON'T LIKE THIS!
I FEEL LIED TO!
WHY ARE THEY SO CALM?
MOM!

HELENE attempts to ignore the GIRL, becoming aggravated as she does, struggling to keep up her positive comments.

GIRL

TAKE A LOOK AT WOORDOW WILSON PARK
IT JUST LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER RIVER
HAS THE HURRICANE HIT?
IS THERE WORSE TO COME?
WORSE TO COME
WILL THERE BE BLOOD?

HELENE

THANK GOD FOR GOOD REPORTING
WE'LL BE BACK TO TUCKER BY TOMORROW
8:00 PM
THE BOY FROM AUSTELLE BEFORE
FOUND THE SMALLEST PUDDLE
CALLED IT A FLOOD

The MOUNTAIN MAN appears as a voice in HELENE's head in the other room. As he sings, she enters the other room to take his advice, leaving the GIRL alone.

MOUNTAIN MAN

THERE WILL BE BLOOD! RAINING FROM THE SKY
MY HELENE, HIDE IN THE HURRICANE'S EYE
YOU'LL BE SAFE FROM THE WIND, YOU'LL BE SAFE FROM THE WHIRL
AND THAT NAGGING LITTLE GIRL WILL BE SAFE FROM THAT DAMN TV
JUST LIKE YOU AND ME

GIRL & ENSEMBLE

THERE WILL BE BLOOD!

MOUNTAIN MAN

YOU WILL FEEL NO PAIN

GIRL & ENSEMBLE

THERE WILL BE BLOOD!

MOUNTAIN MAN

YOU'LL FEEL NOTHING, NOT EVEN FALLING RAIN
AS THE WHOLE CITY DROWNS, YOU MAY DROWN IN THE GUILT
BUT YOUR BLOOD WILL NOT BE SPLIT
AS THE STORM THUNDERS BY, YOU'LL BE SAFE IN THE EYE!
YOU'LL BE SAFE!

HELENE

THIS IS TRUE!
I LEARNED THIS AS A CHILD!
THEY USED TO CALL YOU WRONG
WHILE CALLING ME THE WRONG DAMN NAME!
BUT I KNOW HOW TO BEAT THEM AT THEIR GAME!

I'LL TAKE HER TO THE EYE
THEN BID THIS DUMP GOODBYE!
AND NEVERMORE WILL I BE CALLED
"HELENE" (*mispronounce to rhyme with the American pronunciation of "again"*)
NEVER AGAIN!

MOUNTAIN MAN

THERE WILL BE BLOOD! RAINING FROM THE SKY
MY HELENE, HIDE IN THE HURRICANE'S EYE
YOU'LL BE SAFE FROM THE WIND, YOU'LL BE SAFE FROM THE WHIRL
AND THAT NAGGING LITTLE GIRL WILL BE SAFE FROM THAT DAMN TV

The GIRL leaves the television and enters the world of her phone.

Scene 6 - The World of the Phone

The GIRL is now in a liminal, dreamy space, staring into the phone as her thoughts float by in song.

GIRL

ALL ALONE
IN ANOTHER WORLD
IN THE WORLD OF THE PHONE
WHICH A MOTHER CAN'T INVADE

FIGHTS THE GLOOM
THE DOOMER IN ME FADES
MOM IS IN THE NEXT ROOM
SHE TOO BEGINS TO FADE

I DON'T FEEL
I DON'T FEEL
I STARE INTO THE SCREEN
IT WIPES MY MEMORY CLEAN
I DON'T REMEMBER IF SHE HAS LEFT
SHE'S IN THE OTHER ROOM
BUT TO ESCAPE THE GLOOM
I IGNORE WHAT'S HAPPENING OUTSIDE
AND INSIDE

I FORGET
WHAT DID WE DISCUSS?
WERE WE HAVING A FIGHT
OR WAS SHE ONLY GETTING MAD?
I'M THINKING IT WAS JUST ABOUT DAD

CAN A HURRICANE BE CAUSED BY A MAN?
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THIS BEFORE
A HUMAN DOING ALL GOD CAN

IS NEW TO ME, AND I NEED TO BE SURE

The GIRL searches the world of the phone to find an ENSEMBLE of agreeing voices.

ENSEMBLE

EVERY VOICE IS IN AGREEMENT
EVERY SCIENTIFIC SOURCE
THERE WERE PEOPLE TO BLAME
FOR SANDY GETTING SO OFF COURSE

GIRL

THAT WAS YEARS AGO
THAT'S WHAT GOT MOM AND DAD INTO A FUSS
THIS IS UNNERVING, THOUGH
IS EVERY HURRICANE CREATED BY US?

ENSEMBLE

EVERY VOICE IS IN AGREEMENT
EVERY SCIENTIFIC MIND
THE HURRICANES TODAY
ARE WORSE THAN WHAT WE USED TO FIND

GIRL

HOW MANY YEARS AGO?
HOW MANY YEARS SINCE THIS ALL BEGAN?
THIS IS UNNERVING, THOUGH
IS EVERY HURRICANE CREATED BY MAN?

ENSEMBLE

BECAUSE THE GLOBE IS BOILING OVER
THE GLACIERS ARE TURNING TO AN OCEAN
BECAUSE THE AIR WE ARE NOT TAKING CARE OF
IS WHAT KEEPS THE WORLD IN MOTION
SINCE 1950, WE'VE BEEN RISING
TO AN ALL-TIME HIGH
A HIGH OF ABNORMAL TEMPERATURE
AND THE CLEAREST REASON WHY...

EVERY VOICE IS IN AGREEMENT
EVERY SCIENTIFIC SIGN
IS POINTING TO OUR ACTIONS AS A REASON FOR THE UPTICK
AND THE PLANET'S UNDENIABLE DECLINE

GIRL

SEVENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO
I STILL DON'T KNOW IF I HAVE ALL THE PROOF
THIS IS UNNERVING, THOUGH
SHE NEEDS TO KNOW THE TRUTH

Scene 7 - The House

HELENE remains in the other room with the MOUNTAIN MAN.

MOUNTAIN MAN

I SENSE INDOCTRINATION
THAT WON'T DO!
BRING THE GIRL TO ME!
SHE NEEDS TO SEE THAT ALL WE SAID WAS TRUE!

THIS BABY IS LEARNING A LIE

HELENE

WE NEED HER SUSPICION TO DIE

HELENE goes back into the living room to find her GIRL glued to the TV. Unbeknownst to Helene, the channel has been changed by the girl to Kentucky news.

WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?
WHAT'S THE POINT OF STARING INTO THAT TV?
BACK AWAY, come here, come here

GIRL

MOM, I NEED YOU TO LISTEN TO ME

NOW I KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING AND WHY
THE PLANET IS SENDING US A SIGN
TO STOP PUTTING SMOKE IN THE SKY
AND SCRUB ALL THE FILTH FROM THE LAND
I FINALLY, FINALLY, FINALLY UNDERSTAND!

LISTEN TO ME!

HELENE

I REFUSE!

GIRL

THEN LOOK AT THE FUCKING NEWS!

We see the hurricane in detail for the first time, but it becomes clear to HELENE that what she is seeing is not Georgia.

SOLO TENOR

BLOOD RAINING FROM THE SKY!
OH, KENTUCKY, HIDE IN THE HURRICANE'S EYE
WIND AND RAIN WILL RUN YOU DOWN NO MATTER WHERE YOU TURN!

HELENE

KENTUCKY? PLEASE DON'T TELL ME THAT'S TODAY

GIRL

IT'S KENTUCKY-- DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY?
WHY WOULD DAD HAVE SENT A STORM THEIR WAY?

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO DAD?
IS IT TRUE THAT THE MEDIA LIED?
I SEE WHY HE WOULD RUN
BUT WHY WOULD HE HAVE TO HIDE?
HE'S A COWARD, OR YOU LIED TO ME INSTEAD
HE'S A COWARD, OR HE'S GENUINELY DEAD

HELENE

DON'T YOU DISRESPECT YOUR FATHER'S PRIDE!

GIRL

PRIDE! THAT'S ALL IT IS, PRIDE
THAT'S WHY HE CAUGHT COVID AND DIED!

HELENE

NO, GIRL, HE WATCHES OVER US
HE SPIES FROM THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINSIDE

MOUNTAIN MAN & HELENE

AND EVERY SOUND OF GEORGIA DOWN BELOW
RECALLS A LIFE BEFORE I/HE LIVED AMONGST THE SNOW

GIRL

THERE IS NO SNOW ON THE TOP OF THOSE MOUNTAINS
YOU BELIEVE EACH ASSUMPTION AND CLICHE
BUT I HAVE EYES
I SEE THROUGH EVERYTHING YOU SAY!
DAD IS DEAD!
YES IT'S TRUE
(*losing steam*) BUT HIS LIES LIVE ON
IN YOU!

The GIRL breaks down and cries.

HELENE

Shut up!

If the planet's overheating, then why aren't we warm?!
Go to your room!
I'LL FIND YOUR FATHER, AND WE WILL REDIRECT THE STORM!
GEORGIA DOESN'T GET TO CHEAT DOOM!

HELENE hurriedly prepares to leave.

MOUNTAIN MAN & REPORTERS

THIS WOMAN IS OUT OF HER MIND!
SHE'S LEAVING HER DAUGHTER BEHIND!

ENSEMBLE

NO, HELENE, DON'T DRIVE!
YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT OUT ALIVE!

THIS WOMAN IS OUT OF HER MIND!
SHE'S LEAVING HER LIFE BEHIND!
HELENE! HELENE! HELENE!
HELENE! HELENE!

ENSEMBLE
HELENE!

GIRL
WAIT!

The lights go dim.

Scene 8 - The Aftermath

As the final lines are sung, lights come up to reveal the aftermath of the hurricane in Georgia, including a flipped car overflowing with water, implied to be Helene's.

ENSEMBLE

THE SKY WAS GREY AND DIM
THE STATE WAS GRIM AND TRIED
THE ONLY REMNANT SHE HAD LEFT BEHIND

MOUNTAIN MAN

WHY?

MOUNTAIN MAN & ENSEMBLE

THIS SORRY STATE

MOUNTAIN MAN

HELENE... *(pronounce as usual)*

ENSEMBLE

WHEN HURRICANE HELENE...
(pronounce to rhyme with "scene")

ALL

AFFIRMATIVELY DIED

End of show.