THE KING'S
TWELVE
MOONS

A chamber opera in one act
by
Joelle Wallach
Notes

This work is for five singers: a King and four women’s singing parts representing his twelve daughters. The four women’s parts may be tripled if desired, or non-singing participants may be included to total an entire complement of twelve Princesses. Further, if more non-singers must be included (schoolchildren, for example), they may appear in appropriate scenes as the Princesses’ silent, dancing beaux.

The opening aria of the Queen, the King’s late wife, is meant to be sung by the same performer as Princess Two.

At several places in the score, optional repeats are indicated. It is possible to ignore the repeats completely or to use one or more of them once or more if activity on stage requires more time.

Throughout, a mime may be present. If used, he should be costumed as a harlequin, usually stationed at a front corner of the stage, providing a link between scenes, and guiding the Princesses and the audience from the bedroom to the magical dancing location. If a mime is not used, lighting and stage action can make adequate connections.

In the King’s part several ossias are provided. Those for individual notes and phrases are indicated by tiny noteheads in parentheses. Those involving octava and octava bassa indications are self-explanatory. In appendices at the back of the score, complete transpositions are provided for the King’s first and third arias.
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Scene 1:

Queen (dressed in mysterious, diaphonous but very concealing materials) off stage or barely visible in very eerie light.

Lontano \( \text{j=63 ma con rubato} \)

Queen

May be sung by same voice as Princess II

And now I'm leaving you. And now I'm leaving you, my love. I leave you un-

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will-ing-ly, un-will-ing-ly, not of my own will. Ta-ken a-way by

time, by fate, by ill-ness, by dy-ing, and I must com-ply.

I'm leav-ing you. I leave you with love, --

with pas-sion and beau-ty. Yet leav-ing, too, in pain, a-lone-ness, and sor-
row and re-mem- brance.

I'm leav-ing

you.

I leave you our daugh- ters, our twelve daugh- ters whom I know you

love.

Keep them well, keep them safe

(Lights fade on Queen.)

and hap- py.

(Spoken offstage or behind curtain.)

Wait!
Scene 2:

(Curtain rises on King.)

(Lights come up on King.)

(Desolate and with barely suppressed desperation.)

Wait!

\[ j=72 \] Desolate, but vigorous with the frustrated machismo of suppressed desolation

My wife, my queen, queen of my king-dos and queen of my heart,

* See alternative transposition at page 79
queen of the day-light hours of my grown up days, light of the nights she'd restore me to childhood. Gone, gone,
gone, gone now, and our daughters remain. Twelve beautiful, loving daughters.
Gone, my wife, my queen.

light of my kingdom and queen of my heart; and now only our daughters re-
KING

main.
For my wife, I'll keep them safely locked up in their room, near me, safe inside.

più mosso

KING

più mosso

Gone for life.

Gone, my wife, gone,
poco meno mosso

my wife, my queen, light of my kingdom and queen of my heart. Gone now,
poco meno mosso

gone; and only our daughters remain, only our daughters remain,

near me.

For my wife, I'll keep them safely locked up in their room,
safe from all of the things that make liv-ing so pain-ful... and

near me.

Gone, my wife, my queen, and our daugh-ters re-main.

For my wife, I'll keep them safe-ly locked in-to their room near me,
Scene 3

Lights have come up on the Princesses. We are in their bedroom with the King.

---

* Princess 2 tacet because of possible costume change from Queen's role.
Let us out of this room! Youth is no time to sit in a room. Let us

out! Let us out! Let us out of here!

March right out of here!
Sneak out! Any way we have to find out of here!

life. C' mon, c' mon, you guys, let's have fun!

life. C' mon, c' mon, Dad; C' mon, c' mon, you guys, let's have fun!
Let's have fun! Let's have fun!
Let's get out of here,
Tip-toe out of here.

Let's have fun! Let's have fun!
Let's get out of here!
March right out of here.

sneak out. Any way we have to,
we'll find life.

We'll find life.
meno mosso \( (d=108) \)

I loved my mother too, I miss my mother too.

I loved my mother too, I miss my mother too.

I loved my mother too, my mother too. Much as I

A Tempo

I miss life more. Let go. Let

I miss life more. Let go. Let

I miss life more. Let go. Let

miss her, I miss life more. Let go.
me find my own life,  

I'd welcome the pain.  

I can't find

Let me

release me

love or laughter of my own. Release me
148
P1
 mf
 go.

P3
 mf
 I'd wel-come my own pain.
 Now!

P4
 mf
 long for my own life,
 Now!

151
f
 poco ritard.

P1
 sfz
 Now!
 Open the pri- son that keeps me from my-

P3
 sfz
 Now!

P4
 sfz
 Now!
 poco ritard.
C'mon, c'mon, girls!

Let me out! Let me out! Let us out of this room! Our lives are wasted.

Let me out! Let me out! Let us out of this room! Our lives are wasted.

Let me out! Let me out! Let us out of this room! Our lives are wasted.
here in this room! Let us out! Let us out! Let us all have fun!

Here in this room! Let us out! Let us out! Let us all have fun!

here in this room! Let us out! Let us out! Let us all have fun!

Sneak out. Any way we have to, find

March right out of here.

Tip-toe out of here. Any way we have to, we'll go find
fun.  C'mon, c'mon, you guys!  Let's have fun!

fun.  C'mon, c'mon, Dad.  C'mon, c'mon, you guys!  Let's have fun!

Let us out!  Let us out!  Let us out of here.

Let us out!  Let us out!  Let us out of here.  Tip-toe out of here

Let us out!  Let us out!  Let us out of March right out of here.
Sneak out. Any way we have to, we'll have fun!

Any way we have to, we'll have fun!

Swa... loco

PP

ritenuto ($d=108$)

I just want my own life,

I'd welcome my own mistakes. Now!
Now! Open the prison that his grief has built.

Now! Open the prison that his grief has built.

Now! Oh what his grief built.

They begin to dance around.

piu mosso e molto piano

The King, a bossy father, interrupts.

Stop! Don't be so silly!
190

KING

"Stop! Don't be so silly!"

Stop! I'll tell you

194

KING

"stories, stories about your mother."

197

KING

"ritardando * see Appendix II for King's higher tessitura version"

1-88 nostalgic, cantabile

201

KING

"we met out of doors, the sky so full of stars, like magic dust thrown a-"
cross the sky. So much magic and so much light!

We could see nothing but the magic, so much magic and

so much light!

The stars and magic made the

years fly by... so little left of ma-
gic.

And you, my twelve moons,

keeping up the magic of nights and stars,

light from the stars so numerous, luminous, numinous... oh!

No more magic and such dim light!
KING

No more magic and such dim light! You, my moons,
dancing around me, remnant, remaining reminders of those numerous, luminous, numinous, nights.
I'll keep you

here, your light
close by my side,

within my sight,

all that's left of magic
numerous, luminous, numinous nights.

Princess' stamping dance

Tempo Vivo
\[ \text{\textit{d}} \text{=} 152-6 \text{ Very angry and agitated} \]

Let me see my own stars. Let me see them for myself. Let me have my own nights,
my own stars, my own nights.

There's no magic for me here. Let me have my own stars,

Mine, mine, the magic.

Let me have my own stars,

my own life.

There's no magic for me here,

my own life. Let me see my own stars.

my own life. Let me see my own stars.
locked up with my sisters dear. When is my time for magic?

Where are my own stars?

Let me be free for magic.

Let me be free for magic.
Where are my own mistakes?
Let me have what's mine!
It's time for my own stars now!
Let me have my own stars!
Let me have what's mine!

* The section indicated may be repeated once or more times if desired.

staccato e ruidoso  staccato e leggero

Sveglia

lucio
Let me see my own stars.  
Let me see them. 
Let me have my own nights.

Let me see my own stars.  
Let me see them. 
Let me have my own nights.

Let me see my own stars.  
Let me see them by myself. 
Let me have my own nights.

Let me see my own stars.  
Let me see them. 
Let me have my own nights.
There's no magic for me here.

No magic.

Let me see my own stars. There's no magic for me here,
locked up with my sisters dear.

Let me have what's mine.
Let me have own stars.

Let me have my own stars.

Let me have my own stars.

Let me have my own stars now.

Let me have what's mine.

Let me have what's mine by right!

Let me have what's mine by right!

* Indicates close of optional repeat section.
Dejected, the King leaves the bedroom (in view of the audience). The lights dim to a spotlight on the King, sitting morosely on a stool just outside the Princesses' bedroom door. The mime, if used, can lead us in following the King, pantomiming his sorrow.

Scene 4

cantabile espr.

I sit out here ev'ry night, all thru the night, rememberin' my wife, my queen, our little girls, their rustling, their voices and their songs, we loved those tiny princesses together.
I sit out here, ev'ry night, alone. I listen for their rustling, their voices, and their songs.
While I sit here, every night nothing can happen and nothing can change.

Nothing I ever wanted can happen now.
Ev'rything has changed, and any more changes can only make matters worse.

So I sit here, trying to push back the time. But time always rushes by me, rushing me, pushing me, dropping me into the past, past, my seat at the door, past my mem'ries, through my heart which sits
here at the door.

I sit out here every night, all through the night, remembering, and trying to push back the time. Nothing!

ever wanted can happen now. Everything has changed;
every thing I ever wanted is gone! So I sit
here each night, longing for my wife, and keeping our daughters
in their room, in their room and in their childhoods.

So I sit here every night, all through the night,
Lights dim on the King and come up on the Princesses beginning to dance. They dance through a secret doorway in the floor or in the wall opposite that which the King has been leaning against during his vigil. If a mime is used, he can lead either them or us (showing the joyous and clandestine nature of their escapade). They may be joined by other festive figures if more participants are desired, or they may dance alone.

Scene 5
Lontano e rubato
* The section indicated may be repeated once or more times if desired.
Giocoso

Rings on my toes, bells on my bot-tom, songs in my heart, harps in my head.

* Indicates end of optional repeat section.

This is fun: mu-sic and star-light, new fa-ces and dan-cing, ah....
Look, I'm dancing round! Life's full of pleasure right now.

Look, I'm dancing round and round! ah......

Look, I'm dancing round and round! ah......

To-nite I'm free and I'm hav-ing fun...

To-nite I'm free and I'm hav-ing fun...

fun, fun!
To-nite I'm free and I'm hav-ing fun, fun, fun!

To-nite I'm free and I'm hav-ing fun, fun, fun!

To-nite I'm free and I'm hav-ing fun, fun, fun!

Life's full of plea-sure right now.

bag-pipes in bel-lies, and tu-bas in tum-mies, rings on my bot-tom and bells on my toes.

bag-pipes in bel-lies, and tu-bas in tum-mies, rings on my bot-tom and bells on my toes.

bag-pipes in bel-lies, and tu-bas in tum-mies, rings on my bot-tom and bells on my toes.

bag-pipes in bel-lies, and tu-bas in tum-mies, rings on my bot-tom and bells on my toes.
A tempo

songs in my heart.

songs in my heart.

rings on my toes, bells on my bottom, songs in my heart.

rings on my toes, bells on my bottom, songs in my heart.

(rococo)

At the end of this ensemble song and dance, the King, awakened by the sound, bursts through the door, shocked.

Stop!

Stop!

(brightly)
Stop! What's happened here? What's happening here? My

beautiful, untouched daughters, my daughters, ladies of the night!

How could this happen to my daughters, my daughters, so messy, disheveled and in such disarray!

The end! And I've been disobeyed! How could this happen to my daughters my beautiful untouched
daughters, my daughters, ladies of the night! How could this happen to my daughters, my
ddaughters, my daughters... And I've been disobeyed!
I had not seen the stars floating in the sky.

I had not seen the stars

I had not seen the stars

I had not seen the stars

I had not seen the stars

do their own soft dance.

I had not seen the stars

I had not seen the stars

I had not seen the stars

I had not seen the stars

oo-own soft dance.
525

P1

P2

P3

hid-den by the walls, ob-scured by the pa-
lace lights

P4

hid-den by the walls, ob-scured by the pa-
lace lights

528

P1

I had not seen the stars float-ing in

P2

I had not seen the stars float-ing

P3

P4
the sky, too large for the ceiling of the room

so bright, so endless, so

bright

too large for the room

bright

Poco allargando — — — — — — $q=63$

clear. That strange, celestial mystery and diamond mine.

clear. That strange, celestial mystery and diamond mine.

That strange, celestial mystery and diamond mine.

That strange, celestial mystery and diamond mine.
I had not seen the stars floating in the sky

I had not seen the stars floating in the sky
I had not seen the stars

Hidden by the palace lights

I had not seen the stars

Hidden by the palace lights

I had not seen the stars

Hidden by the palace lights

I had not seen the stars

Hidden by the palace lights
I had not seen the stars

I had not seen the stars

I had not seen the stars

I had not seen the stars

the sky.

too large for the ceiling of my room
poco allargando

That strange, celestial mystery and diamond

That strange, celestial mystery and diamond

That strange, celestial mystery and diamond

That strange, celestial mystery and diamond

\[ j=66-69 \]

mine.

mine.

mine.

mine.

Look at their beloved faces now, shining from ad-
venture. Stars in their eyes, my moons surround me

for the last time. Look at their beloved faces

now, their joy at life's exultant light. Just to spare

kne, stars must burn, igniting to give rise to light.
KING

Look at their beloved faces.

I had not seen the stars.

now, shining from adventure. Stars in their eyes, my moons.
I had not seen the stars.

the sky.

I had not seen the stars.

the sky.

surround me for the last time

So bright, so endless, so clear

So bright, so endless, so clear

Just to sparkle stars must burn,
I had not seen the stars.

ni-ting to give rise to light. Look at their be-loved fa-ces now, shin-

ing

pooco cres-cen-do-

the stars.

I had not seen the sky.

from ad-ven-ture. Stars in their eyes, my moons sur-round me for the
I had not seen the stars.

last time.

Look at their beloved faces now, shining
the stars.
I had not seen the stars.
from adventure, stars in their eyes, my moons surround me for the

I had not seen the stars.
I have seen the stars to-
last time.
Look at their beloved faces
Subito molto animato  (Dancing resumes.)
\( \text{d} = 120 \)

They shine.

night.

They shine.

now.

They shine.

night.

They shine.
The King tries to interrupt, indignant at first—— then with a sense of imminent loss.

Stop! What's happening here; What's happening here?

Stop! What's happening here? Don't go. Don't go. Don't leave me here.
Don’t leave me here; don’t leave me here like this alone.

Don’t go. Don’t leave me too. Don’t leave me here like this alone again.

Or take me, too, dancing on star-lit nights. Don’t leave me here.

Don’t leave me here alone. The sky is dark, and I can’t
see the stars. Don't leave me here; don't leave me.

Yet my memories are so hard to leave, my precious
link to my past life. Dead joy alone breeds

current pain; yet new joy seems fraught with danger. Don't

leave me now; don't ever leave me.

Don't go. Don't leave me here. Don't leave me here like this, a-
lone. Don't go; don't leave me, too. Don't

leave me here like this alone again, or take me, too.

Don't leave me all alone, a-

poco ritard

lone.
The dancing resumes, begins to cover the bedroom and castle areas and then becomes quite frenzied.
(Princesses singing along with their dancing.)

Rings on my toes, bells on my bottom, songs in my heart, harps

Rings on my toes, bells on my bottom, songs in my heart, harps

Rings on my toes, bells on my bottom, songs in my heart, harps

Rings on my toes, bells on my bottom, songs in my heart, harps
in my head. Come along: music and starlight, new

* indicates close of optional repeat section.

aces and dancing. Ah Ah

caces and dancing. Ah Life is a pleasure right now.

caces and dancing. Ah Life is a pleasure right now.

caces and dancing. Ah

756
Tonight we're free and we're
Tonight we're free and we're
tonight we're free and
tonight we're free and
Subito ritenuto
A Tempo
poco meno mosso

having fun.
To-night we’re free

having fun.
To-night we’re free and we’re having fun.

having fun.
To-night we’re free and we’re having fun.

Don’t leave me here.
Don’t leave me here, don’t leave me.

L’istesso tempo (\(d=132\))

Let’s go.

Let’s go.

Let’s go.

Let’s go.

Don’t go.

Don’t go.
Please don't go and leave me here.

Don't go.
(Spoken as the dancing continues and the Princesses dance through the doorway or opening to the magic dancing area, possibly guided by the mime.)

Subito vivo ($d=132$)
(The Princesses ignore the King and continue to leave.)
As the music continues and then becomes quieter, (with echoes of the Queen's aria, etc.) the King may look through the doorway after the Princesses as the lights dim gradually.

809 poco a poco ritardando — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — (d=100)

814 poco più mosso

820 d=80

824 A tempo d=100

molto ritenuto

leggerissimo
APPENDIX I

Alternate tessitura for King's first aria

\( d = 72 \) Desolate, but vigorous with the frustrated machismo of suppressed desolation

My wife, my queen, queen of my kingdom and queen of my heart,

queen of the day-light hours of my grown-up days, light of the nights she'd re-

store me to childhood. Gone, gone, gone, gone now,

and our daughters remain. Twelve beautiful, loving daughters.
Gone, my wife, my queen, light of my kingdom and
queen of my heart; and now only our daughters remain. For my
wife, I'll keep them safely locked up in their room, near
me, safe inside.
Più mosso

Gone for life.

Gone, my wife, gone...

poco meno mosso

my wife, my queen, light of my kingdom and queen of my heart.

Gone now,

gone; and only our daughters remain, only our daughters remain,
KING

near me.

For my wife, I'll keep them safely locked up in their room,

safe from all of the things that make living so painful...

and

KING

near me.
Gone, my wife, my queen, and our daughters remain.

For my wife, I'll keep them safely locked into their room,

near me, safe from all of the things that make

living so painful. Gone, my wife,
poco ritardando

lighting the skies of my days and nights

queen of my kingdom, queen of my kingdom, lighting the skies of my days and nights

Subito $J=126$

(Princesses)

End of King's alternate tessitura.
This measure is duplicated m.113
APPENDIX II

Alternate tessitura for King’s second aria.

\[ J=84-88 \] nostalgic, cantabile

201

We met out of doors, the sky so full of stars, like magic dust thrown a-

204

cross the sky.

So much magic and so much light!

207

We could see nothing but the ma-

gic, so much magic and
so much light!
The stars and magic made the

years fly by...
so little left of magic.

And you, my twelve moons,

keeping up the magic of nights and stars,
light from the stars so numerous, luminous, numinous... oh!

No more magic and such dim light!

No more magic and such dim light! You, my moons,
dancing around me, remnant, remaining reminders of those numerous, luminous, luminous, nights.

I'll keep you here, your light close by my side,
within my sight,

all that's left of magic

numerous, luminous, numinous nights.

Return to Princess' Stamping Dance on page 26, measure 262
Scene 4

KING

I sit out here ev'ry night, all thru the night, re-mem-b'ring

My wife, my queen, our lit-tle girls, their rust-ling,

their voi-ces and their songs, we loved those ti-ny prin-ces-ses to-geth-er
KING

I sit out here, ev'ry night,

alone. I listen for their rustling, their voices, and their songs.
While I sit here, ev'ry night no-thing can hap-pen and no-thing can change.

Nothing I e- ver want- ed can hap-pen now.

poco accel.

Nothing I e- ver want- ed can hap-pen now.
Ev'rything has changed, and a-ny more chan-ges can on-ly make mat-ters worse.

So I sit here, try-ing to push back the time.

rush-es by me, rush-ing me, push-ing me, drop-ping me in-to the past, past, my

seat at the door, past my mem'-ries, through my heart which sits
here at the door.
I sit out here ev'ry

night, all through the night, re- mem- b'ring, and try- ing

no- thing!

e- ver want- ed can hap- pen now. Ev'ry- thing has changed;
everything I ever wanted is gone! So I sit here each night, longing for my wife, and keeping our daughters in their room, in their room and in their child- hoods.

So I sit here ev'ry night, all through the night,
Lights dim on the King and come up on the Princesses beginning to dance. They dance through a secret doorway in the floor or in the wall opposite that which the King has been leaning against during his vigil. If a mime is used, he can lead either them or us (showing the joyous and clandestine nature of their escapade). They may be joined by other festive figures if more participants are desired, or they may dance alone.

Scene 5
Lontano e rubato