Lágrimas y Locuras
Mapping the Mind of a Madwoman

Joelle Wallach
Lágrimas y Locuras

Program Note

Lágrimas y Locuras, *Mapping the Mind of a Madwoman*, is a Lisztian piano work commissioned by pianist Ana Cervantes for her Monarca Project. In it Joelle Wallach returns to her ongoing musical exploration of psychological landscapes.

The folksong, *La Llorona*, on which *Lágrimas y Locuras* is based, tells the story of a Mexican Indian woman who, while still young and beautiful, meets a Spanish conquistador as he rides past the river outside her tiny town. They fall in love, marry, have two children and live in a palace in Mexico City. When he is called back to Spain, she waits in her small town by the river for his return. And it is by the river she sees him again, riding in a grand carriage with his new blond Spanish bride. He doesn’t recognize her, changed and aged as she has been by years of yearning under the searing Mexican sun. Furious, she rushes to the riverbank and, crazed by rage, betrayal and humiliation, drowns their two children.

Forever after, she is doomed to pace the banks of Mexican rivers, weeping. For La Llorona, no memory, no reflection or recollection - no matter how sweet - can remain untouched by guilt, anger and the bitterest regret.

*Lágrimas y Locuras, Mapping the Mind of a Madwoman*, does not recount the verbatim story of La Llorona, but instead imagines La Llorona’s tempestuous inner monologue as she walks, eternally distraught, along the banks of innumerable Mexican waterways. The virtuosic piano work reveals her infuriated interior monologue, railing against her fate, against the betrayal of her lover and against the result of her own impetuous rage. It deconstructs the simple melody of the folksong to explore the state of mind of that woman walking endlessly, alone and weeping, at war with her own past, her thoughts, her memories and her conscience in a relentless avalanche of sorrow, remorse and wrath. Each time her thoughts return to simple scenes of past happiness, love or family, the melody within her twists, writhes and rages through strange, unexpected, distorted textures and tonalities.

Performance Notes

- Per notational convention, accidentals remain in force throughout the measure in which they appear. Any chromatically altered pitches revert to those in the key signature after each barline unless otherwise indicated.
- Hard to reach chords may be quickly broken so long as the momentum of the line is not interrupted.
- Please sustain long notes and chords with pedal when a hand is required in moving voices elsewhere. Holding the pedal across harmonic changes or through shifts of mood or color is part of the blurry aesthetic narrative of the work.
- When notes or chords are difficult to reach in time, allow for the dramatic forgiveness of narrative *rubati*.
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para Ana Cervantes y La Monarca
dainty.

noisy yet intrusive, bell-like, like tinnitus

\begin{align*}
\text{ff} \\
\text{Poco maestoso} \\
\text{\textit{A tempo}} \\
\text{mp} \text{ dainty.}
\end{align*}
36

38

41

A tempo

45

48
momentary lapse

wierdly sweet
Più mosso

(8)
sempre (forceful but exhausted)