

The Tell Tale Cellphone

An operatic farce inspired by Edgar Allan Poe

Music by Patrick Soluri

Libretto by Patrick Soluri & Natalia Boesch

*A Chamber Opera
for String Quartet & Piano*

Piano Vocal Score

The Tell Tale Cellphone

An operatic farce inspired by Edgar Allan Poe

Music by Patrick Soluri

Libretto by Patrick Soluri & Natalia Boesch

*A Chamber Opera
for String Quartet & Piano*

Piano Vocal Score

PS083010

**music ©2010 by Patrick Soluri & Soluri Music (ASCAP)
libretto ©2010 by Patrick Soluri & Soluri Music and Natalia Boesch.**

Soluri Music
WWW.PATRICKSOLURI.COM

*1 West 100th St #4C New York, New York 10025
telfax 212 – 864-4747 cell 917-586-6758
e-mail: patrick@soluri.com*

www.patricksoluri.com

LIBRETTO

PRELUDE & SCENE 1:

Usher: (sprechstimme) It is impossible to say how first this idea entered my brain; but once conceived it haunted me night and day. For I loved her; she had never wronged me. I think it was... her cell phone. (*cellphone on table, starts to ring. She comes in at some point and starts to look for it*) Whenever I heard it, my blood ran cold. It was like chalk screeching upon a blackboard. It was not she that vexed me, but her evil cell phone. I made up my mind, as any rational man would, to take her life and thus ride myself of *the cell-phone* forever.

SCENE 2: Duet

Lenore: (*she's been looking for phone and finds it and answers*)
Hello? (*it all seems pretty normal*)

Usher: Now at this point, you fancy me mad. (*sung*) I am not mad;

Lenore: (*suddenly from normal quiet etc comes ridiculous, over the top, high swooping Sprechstimme-esque, annoying talking, constantly interrupting him.*) OMIGOD, I have SUCH a STORY to tell you.

Usher: madness knows nothing.

Lenore: No, no, no, nothing like THAT...

Usher: I was never kinder...

Lenore: He's been sweet...

Usher: the whole week before I killed her.

Lenore: but, COMPLETELY crazy.

Usher: Would a mad man have been as patient and cunning?

Lenore: TOTALLY. Cuckoo! (*set to Queen of the Night*)

Usher: She was on the phone for hours and hours...

Lenore: Yeah, I know, always on my cellphone!

Usher: and I smiled in her face, more than usual;

Lenore: Oh my God... Right?! His creepy smile?

Usher: she could not know my smile was at the thought of her immolation

Lenore: Ok, ok, I'll go. Talk soon! (*her call ends, she mimes going to sleep*)

SCENE 3

Usher: I waited for that rare and quiet moment.

No phone call, no witness; and yet in the silence, I had no spur to act.

At the dead hour of every night for one whole week I spied on her as she slept.

The evil cell phone, closed, by her head.

For seven nights, amid the dreadful silence of her bed I watched and waited.

(*spoken in dramatic whisper*) Upon the eighth night, I was more than usually vigilant.

I kept perfectly, inhumanly still – a mad man could not keep so still –

Watching her, watching *it*, in the darkness.

On this eighth night I felt the full extent of my powers as never before.

I could scarcely contain my premature sense of triumph...(he chuckles).

She starts, and shifts position in "bed." Cell phone rings. They pause for a moment, looking at one another.

Usher: This is my kiss! Die! Die Die!

He mimes killing her with repeated blows, as the cellphone continues to ring.

Lenore: Help, Help! I'm Dying! *She shrieks, very melodramatically, once. Grasping for the cellphone, she utters her last gasp just as it ceases to ring, and dies with it clutched to her breast.*

Usher: She's dead! (*Triumphant, until she moves...*)

Lenore: I'm not!

Usher: You are!

Lenore: Am not!

Usher: Are to!

Lenore: Am not!

Usher: Are to!

Lenore: Amore!

Usher: Are to!! I mean, ARE NOT!

Final blow - kills her and dies again with cell phone clutched to her breast. sighs with relief

Usher: She was dead, this did not vex me.

Her phone would trouble me no more. If you still think me mad,
you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for concealment of the corpse

SCENE IV: Aria

The night waned

I worked hastily

Under the blood-red Moon

I dismembered the corpse *(he mimes cutting her into pieces)*

I cut off the head

I cutoff the arms,

I cut off the legs.

I chopped them up!

The night waned

I worked hastily

Under the blood-red Moon

I took up 3 planks from the floor. *(he mimes burying her)*

Dumping the pieces below.

I replaced the boards, so cleverly, so cunningly.

No stain of blood. No sign of harm.

The blood-red Moon had set.

SCENE V

Usher: *(Whispered)* With the coming of the morning, cops!

(Jumps, scrambling to clean up during repeated hard knocks on the door)

Just a minute... Hang on... Coming!

(Opens door, suddenly calm & cheery)

Hello?

Dupin: Good morning, I am Inspector Dupin

Prefect: And I'm the bumbling, not quite competent Prefect of Police

Usher: How can I help you gentleman?

Dupin: A shriek was heard by a neighbor in the night.

Prefect: Suspicion of foul play has been aroused.

Dupin: We've been deputized, to search the premises.

Usher: *(smiling)* By all means come in, I have nothing to fear. Look anywhere, the shriek was mine in a dream.

Usher leads them around, they search everything and at last Usher stops over the spot in the floor where Lenore is "buried." They find nothing and are satisfied. But as they've gone around the room Usher starts to hear things, but they are clearly in his head as the police don't hear them and are about to leave. Suddenly her cell phone rings; they all look down. Dupin and Prefect look at Usher. Usher grabs at his empty pockets, makes a funny expression.

Usher: *(optional)* No – the evil cell phone!

The police grab him to arrest him. Blackout.

End

Cast of Characters

MR. L. USHER – Bass or Bass Baritone

LENORE HEART – Soprano

INSPECTOR DUPIN – Tenor

NOT-QUITE-COMPETANT PREFECT OF POLICE - Baritone

Instrumentation

Piano

Percussion: Tubular Bells and Cellphone

(phone ring could be from sampler or CD playback)

2 Violins

Viola

Cello

Performance time: 10:30 min.

The Tell Tale Cellphone

An operatic farce inspired by Edgar Allan Poe

Music by Patrick Soluri
Libretto by Patrick Soluri & Natalia Boesch

PRELUDE

1 ♩ = 120
Melodramatic

Piano

ff

3

3

3

f

rit.

mp

SCENE I

♩ = 130

10

USHER
Sprechstimme (freely)
mp

Ush.

It is im - poss - i - ble to say how first this i - de - a ent-ered my brain; but once con - ceived it

Pno.

19

Ush.

haunt - ed me night and day. For I loved her; she had ne - ver wronged me. I

starting to yell

shouting / manic

Pno.

p

Geo.

27 *f* $\text{♩} = 70$ (*Freely*) $\text{♩} = 126$

Ush. think it was... her cell phone. **Phone Ring**

misc.

Pno. $\text{♩} = 70$ (*Freely*) *f* $\text{♩} = 126$

30 As the phone rings, Usher grows increasingly hysterical. Lenore enters, searching for her phone. $\text{♩} = 90$ *mp* *accel. poco a poco to new tempo*

Ush. When-e-ver I heard it, my blood ran cold. It was like chalk scree-ching

misc.

Pno. *ff* $\text{♩} = 90$ *accel. poco a poco to new tempo*

34 *pp* *accel. poco a poco to new tempo*

Ush. up-on a black-board. It was not she that vexed me, but her e-vil cell phone. I made up my

misc.

Pno. *pp* *accel. poco a poco to new tempo*

39

Ush. $\text{♩} = 126$

mind, as a - ny ra - tio - nal man would, to take her life and thus rid my - self of the cell phone for -

misc.

Pno. $\text{♩} = 126$

SCENE II

Lenore finds her phon eand answers it.

43

LENORE
Sprechstimme (freely)

Len. $\text{♩} = 70$ (Freely) *mf*

Ush. *ff* Hel-lo? *mp* calmly/freely (transition to normal singing) getting frantic *f*

e - ver. Now at this point, you fan-cy me mad. mad, mad, mad, mad, mad, mad, mad, mad, mad!

Pno. $\text{♩} = 70$ (Freely) *ff*

48

Len. $\text{♩} = 78$ $\text{♩} = 112$ *mf* $\text{♩} = 78$

O-MI - GOD, I have SUCH a STO-RY to tell you.

Ush. *mp*

I am not mad; Mad - ness knows no - thing.

Pno. $\text{♩} = 78$ *espress.* $\text{♩} = 112$ $\text{♩} = 78$ *mp*

53 ♩ = 112 ♩ = 78

Len. No, no, no, no-thing like THAT... He's been sweet... *mf*

Ush. I was ne-ver kin - der... the whole week be-fore I killed her.

Pno. *mf*

58 ♩ = 112 ♩ = 78

Len. but, COMPLETE - LY cra - zy.

Ush. — Would a mad man have been as pa-tient and cun - ning? —

Pno.

63 ♩ = 112 ♩ = 140 light and classical

Len. TO-TAL-LY. Cu - Cu - Cu-Cu-Cu-Cu-Cu-Cu-Cu - ckoo! Cu - Cu - Cu-Cu-Cu-Cu-Cu-Cu-Cu - ckoo!

Ush.

Pno. *mf*

68 $\text{♩} = 70$ *accel. poco a poco to new tempo* $\text{♩} = 140$ $\text{♩} = 76$

Len. *mp* *getting frantic* *f* Yeah, I know, al - ways on my cell phone! *mf*

Ush. She was on the phone for hours and hours... and

Pno. $\text{♩} = 70$ *accel. poco a poco to new tempo* $\text{♩} = 140$ $\text{♩} = 76$

p *ff* *mp*

* *Ad.*

73 $\text{♩} = 126$

Len. Oh my God... Right?!

Ush. I smiled in her face, more than u - su - al;

Pno. *mf* *p* *f*

76 $\text{♩} = 66$ $\text{♩} = 126$

Len. His cree - py smile? O -

Ush. she could not know my smile was at the thought of her im - mol - at - ion

Pno. $\text{♩} = 66$ $\text{♩} = 126$

* $\text{♩} = 126$

Lenore hangs up
and goes to sleep.

SCENE III

80 $\text{♩} = 80$ $\text{♩} = 77$

Len. *kay, o-kay, I'll go. Talk soon!*

Ush. *mp* I wai - ted for

Pno. *mp* *delicate* *p* *molto espress.* *mp*

88

Ush. — that rare and qui - et mo - ment. —

Pno.

94

Ush. No phone call, no wit-ness; and yet — in the si-lence, I had — no spur — to act. —

Pno.

99

Ush. *whispered* *sfz* *manic / crazy*
At the dead hour of ev-'ry night for one — whole week I spied on her as she slept. The e - vil cell

Pno. *sfz*

105

*mf**dramatic whisper / freely*

Ush.

phone, closed, by her head.

Pno.

110

*mf**dramatic whisper / freely*

Ush.

For se - ven nights, a - mid the dread - ful si - lence of her bed I

Pno.

114

♩ = 66

accel. poco a poco to new tempo

♩ = 100

manic, dramatic, spoken whisper / freely

Ush.

watched and wait-ed.

Upon the eighth night, I was more than usually vigilant. I kept perfectly, inhumanly still - a mad man could not keep so still - Watching her, watching it, in the darkness. On this eighth night I felt the full extent of my powers as never before. I could scarcely contain my premature sense of

Pno.

mp

p

Rea.

The phone wakes Lenore... they stare at each-other awkwardly; suddenly Usher pounces upon her.

122 ♩ = 76 ♩ = 190 *ff*

Len. *w/manic laugh* Help, Help, Help, Help! _____ I'm Dy -

Ush. Tri - umph...

misc. **Phone Ring**

Pno. *mf* *p* *ff*

126

Len. - - - ing!

Ush. *ff* This is ____ my kiss! _____ Die! Die Die!

misc.

Pno.

Lenore seems to utter her last gasp, clutching
her cell phone to her breast... and then revives.

130 $\text{♩} = 90$ *accel. poco a poco to new tempo* $\text{♩} = 190$ $\text{♩} = 100$ *sweetly melodramatic*

Len. f

Ush. f I'm not! Am not! Am not! Am not! A - more! *confused*

Die! She's dead! — You are?! Are too! Are too! Are too! Are

misc.

Pno. p f mp f

Usher finishes her off... again. Lenore utters her last
gasp, clutching her cell phone to her breast.

135 $\text{♩} = 130$ $\text{♩} = 77$

Ush. too!! I mean, ARE NOT!

Pno. mp

141 mp

Ush. She was — dead, this did not vex me. Her phone would

Pno. mp

145 $\text{♩} = 80$

Ush. trou-ble me no more. If you still think me mad, you will think so no lon-ger when I des-cribe the wise pre-

Pno. mp

Ad.

SCENE IV

During the aria, Usher mimes cutting Lenore into pieces and hiding them under the floor boards at center stage.

150 $\text{♩} = 120$ *p*

Ush. cau-tions I took for con-ceal-ment of the corpse

Pno. *mf*

156

Pno.

161 *mf*

Ush. The night waned

Pno.

165

Ush.  I worked worked hast - il - y

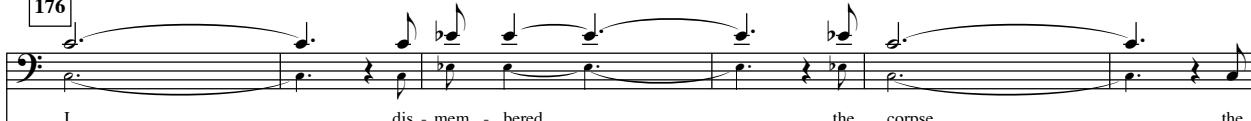
Pno. 

169

Ush.  Un - der the blood - red Moon Un - der the blood - red Moon

Pno. 

176

Ush.  I dis - mem - bered the corpse the

Pno. 

182

Ush.  corpse I cut off the head I cut off the arms, I cut off the

Pno. 

189

Ush. *mf*

legs. I chopped them up! The night waned

Pno. *mf*

195

Ush.

I worked worked has - ti - ly

Pno.

199

Ush.

Un - der the blood - red Moon Un - der the blood - red Moon I

Pno.

206

Ush.

took up three planks from the floor.

Pno.

212

Ush. *mp*
 Dum - ping the pie - ces be - low. I rep - laced the boards, so cle - ver - ly, so cun - ning - ly.

Pno. *mp*

218

Ush. *mf*
 No stain of blood. No sign of harm. Ah, Ah,

Pno. *mf*
arco

224

Ush. Ah, Ah!

Pno.

229

Ush. *decel. poco a poco*
 The blood - red Moon The blood - red Moon had set.

Pno. *decel. poco a poco*

SCENE V

Usher jumps at the knocking, checks the room quickly, pulls himself together and opens the door.

237 $\text{♩} = 110$
knock / freely

Plc. *f* 3

Ush. *dramatic whisper / freely* *f* 3

With the coming of morning, cops! Just a mi-nute... Hang on... Co - ming! _____

Pno. $\text{♩} = 110$ *f* 3

Rec.

Usher opens the door;
Dupin and Prefect enter.

242 $\text{♩} = 130$ (Freely)
INSPECTOR DUPIN

Dpn. *mf*

suddenly cheery
Sprechstimme
mf

Good mor-ning, I am In-spec - tor _____ Du - - -

Ush. Hel-lo? _____

Pno. $\text{♩} = 130$ (Freely) *ff* *mf*

*

248 $\text{♩} = 120$

Dpn. *tr* pin *mp*

PREFECT OF POLICE

Plc. And I'm the bum-ble-ing, not quite com-pe-tent Pre - fect of

Pno. $\text{♩} = 120$ *molto espress.* *mp*

254

♩ = 98

mf

Dpn.



clearly out of tune... cannot find pitch. *finds pitch*

A shriek was

Plc.



Po - Po - Po - Po - Po - Po - Po - lice

Ush.

*mp*

How ___ can I help you gent-le - men? ___

Pno.

*mp**p**mf*

260

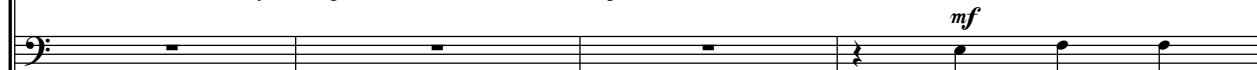
Dpn.



heard ___ by a neigh-bor ___ in the night.

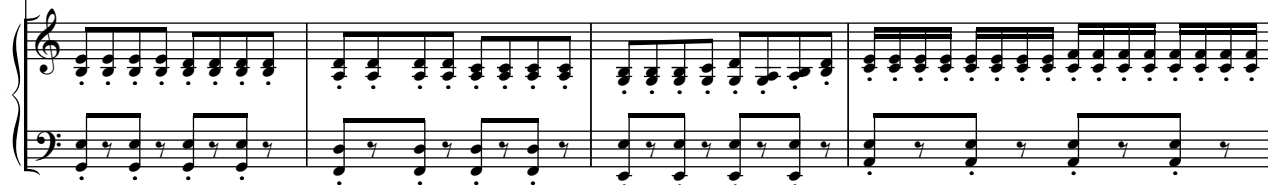
A shriek was heard

Plc.



Sus - pi - cion

Pno.



264

Dpn.



by a neigh - bor in the night. A shriek in the night.

Plc.



of foul play has been a - roused.

A -

Pno.



267

Dpn. In the night. In the night. We've been de-pu-tized to

Plc. roused A - roused We've been de-pu-tized to

Pno.

270

Dpn. search the pre-mi-ses. A shriek in the night. A shriek in the night.

Plc. search the pre-mi-ses. A - roused Sus-pi-cion a - roused. Sus-pi-cion a -

Pno.

273

Dpn. A shriek in the night. *decel. poco a poco* $\text{♩} = 74$

Plc. roused. A - roused

Ush. *fake friendly, but creepy* **mf** By all means come in, —

Pno. *decel. poco a poco* $\text{♩} = 74$ **mf**

277

♩ = 92

Ush.

— I have no-thing to fear. Look a-ny-where, the shriek was mine in a dream. —

misc.

Pno.

♩ = 92

Usher leads Dupin and Prefect on a search of the room. They find nothing suspicious or unusual. During the search Usher begins to hear things the others clearly don't; Usher starts to go a little crazy.

281

rit. ♩ = 80 *accel. poco a poco to new tempo*

Ush.

misc.

Cello

mp

Pno.

rit. ♩ = 80 *accel. poco a poco to new tempo*

288

accel. poco a poco to new tempo

misc.

accel. poco a poco to new tempo

Pno.

Though disturbed, Usher leads them directly above the spot (center stage) where the body is buried and stands there triumphantly -- untill the phone rings.

292

$\text{♩} = 130$

deccel. to new tempo

$\text{♩} = 100$ Phone Ring

misc.

ff

Pno.

$\text{♩} = 130$

deccel. to new tempo

$\text{♩} = 100$

ff

All look at the floor, Usher grabs his empty pockets, the Police look at Usher and grab him.

Usher looks up at the audience, aghast!

297

optional vocal part

Ush.

No _____ the e - vil cell phone!

misc.

Pno.

ff

Rea

** Rea*

** fine*
Aug. 25, 2010 in LA
composed in NYC, LA,
Berlin & San Francisco.