

# Ben Morris

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*Workshopped at the CU New Opera Workshop  
(NOW)*

## PERSPECTIVE



an opera in one act

libretto by Nnamdi Nwankwo  
music by Ben Morris

piano/vocal score (6/3/21)

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Ben Morris Music

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# Nnamdi Nwankwo and Ben Morris

## PERSPECTIVE

an opera in one act

**Duration:** ca. 15'00"

### Original Cast:

Natalie (soprano) .....Megan Pryor  
Jess (mezzo soprano) ..... Gabrielle Razafinjatovo  
Daniel (tenor) ..... Thomas Bocchi  
Thomas (tenor) .....Paul Wolf

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libretto by  
Nnamdi Nwankwo

# Perspective

an Opera in One Act

music by  
Ben Morris

Energetic ♩ = 100

Natalie

Piano

*f*     *sub p dolce*     *f*     *sub p dolce*

5     *poco rit.* . . . . .

N.

Pno.

*mp*     *pp*

9     Urgently ♩ = 124     **A**

Natalie: *mf*     *Lights up with Natalie on the phone, flipping through score of La Bohème and fidgeting.*

N.     Don't let me keep you.     I know you're

Pno.

*f*     *mp*

2

12

N. *bus-y* *Work...* *is go-ing*

Pno.

Measures 12-14: Vocal line with lyrics "bus-y", "Work...", "is go-ing". Piano accompaniment with chords and a triplet in the right hand.

15

N. *well* *You know... law-yer-ing\_ and such...*

Pno.

Measures 15-17: Vocal line with lyrics "well", "You know... law-yer-ing\_ and such...". Piano accompaniment with chords and a triplet in the right hand.

18

N. *Qui-et week-end a - head* *No* *plans at all.*

Pno. *sub p* *f*

Measures 18-20: Vocal line with lyrics "Qui-et week-end a - head", "No", "plans at all.". Piano accompaniment with chords and a triplet in the right hand. Dynamics include *sub p* and *f*.

22 *rushed* *Natalie's roommate, Jess, enters.*

N. Love you mom. Love you dad.

Pno. *p*

24 **C** ♩ = 104 *Natalie quickly hangs up, noticing Jess.* *Natalie: mf*

N. Bye. *mf Jess: 3* ...What?

J. Nat-a- lie...

Pno. *f* *p*

28 *Jess: frustrated*

J. Why do you keep ly - ing — to your pa-rents a-bout your shows?

Pno.

30

N. *Jess... They would-n't un-der - stand.*

J. *Don'tyou want them to come?*

Pno.



32

N. *When I'm rea- dy* *rit. . . . .*

J. *It's been three years You should tell them Al- right, I'll*

Pno. *mf*

**D** ♩ = 100

35

N. *...What?*

J. *leave it a-lone. One more ques- tion... What's for*

Pno.



40

N.

J. *Jess:*  
*din ner? Dan-iel! Do you on-ly come o-ver for food?*

D. *mf Daniel:*  
*Piz-za please!*

Pno.

*Poking head in from offstage*  
*Daniel enters.*

*p*

6 44

N.

J.

D. **Daniel:** *Looks and gestures at Natalie.*  
Some-times for\_\_\_ the com-pan - y\_\_\_\_\_ and the beau\_\_\_\_\_ ti - ful

Pno.

46 **Natalie:**

N. Aw, thanks! You have a tick-et\_\_\_ for my show, right?

J.

D. sing - ing!\_\_\_

Pno.



49 **E** *sub.* ♩ = 108

*rit.* . . . .

N.

J.

*Looks at Jess.*

**Daniel:** *p*

D.

Pno.



54 **F** ♩ = 84 *f sub.*

N.

J.

D.

Pno.

57

sub. ♩ = 108

N. *coun-ting on you both.*

J.

D. *p* I wish I could go but I prom-ised grand-pa

Pno. *p*

N. *p* I had no i - dea\_

J. *p lyrical* Don't wor-ry

D. *p* I'd vis-it\_ He's in the hos-pi - tal

Pno.



65

N.

J. Dan-iel He's in good hands

D. I'm glad you're his nurse Good

Pno.

71

N. Don't jinx it!

J.

D. luck on your show Na-ta-lie I'm sur-prised it's still on, gi- ven... Sor- ry!

Pno.

10

75 *f* **H** *poco rit.*

N. I just need ONE show! I need this con - tract

J. *mf*  
That's a sore sub-ject right now!

D.

Pno. *mp*  
Red.

79 *p* *f* *mp* *f* *p*

N. You're kid ding!

J.

D. What is it?

Pno. *f*  
Phone buzzes (or phone SFX?)

82 Reads, at a spoken pace

D.

N.

J.

D.

Pno.

♩ = 100 accel.

87 I Natalie angrily looks on, pacing.

N.

J. *mf* Jess:

D. *mf* Daniel:

Pno. *p*

# Natalie's Aria

Angry, marchlike ♩ = 120

90 **Natalie: *mf***

I was de - lu-sion - al to think I'd make it.

**Pno. *f***

93 **Jess:** **Natalie:** **Daniel:**

We know how you feel. You could-n't pos-sib-ly un-der-stand We

**Pno.**

96 **Natalie: *mf*** **J**

DO un-der stand It was more than just a

**Pno.** ***p***

99

N. show it was mine. With my par-ents ob-sessed with

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 99-102. The vocal line (N.) starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. It features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 99, followed by a half note in measure 100, and then a series of eighth and sixteenth notes in measures 101 and 102. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) consists of two staves. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment, while the right hand plays chords and some melodic fragments. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 in measure 100 and back to 4/4 in measure 101.

103

N. le-ga-cy\_ And a chi-ld-hood of cho-ices made for me I

Poco rit. . . . .

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 103-105. The vocal line (N.) begins with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 103, followed by a half note in measure 104, and then a quarter note in measure 105. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) continues with a similar eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand and chords in the right hand. A 'poco rit.' marking is placed above the vocal line in measure 105. The time signature remains 4/4.

106

**K** ♩=112

N. on - ly\_ had sing - ing\_ to call my own\_ If

rit. . . . . p dolce

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 106-110. The vocal line (N.) starts with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 106, followed by a half note in measure 107, and then a quarter note in measure 108. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) features a complex texture with triplets in both hands. A 'rit.' marking is placed above the vocal line in measure 108, and a 'p dolce' marking is placed above the vocal line in measure 109. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 in measure 108 and back to 4/4 in measure 109. A key signature change to one flat is indicated in measure 109.

14

111 **L** ♩ = 92

N. I can't sing \_\_\_\_\_ then I cease to be \_\_\_\_\_ If

Pno. *p dolce*

115

N. I go home \_\_\_\_\_ who'll lis - ten to me? \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

*accel. . . . .  
getting angrier  
fp*

119 **M** a tempo primo ♩ = 120

N. \_\_\_\_\_ *f* \_\_\_\_\_ To

Pno. *f*



N. 122

show them\_\_\_\_ I could do it I toiled\_\_\_\_ for

Pno.

N. 125

three years I'm ti - red, out of mo-ney at my

Pno.

N. 128

wit's end!\_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

16

130 **N** *rit.* . . . . .

N. *f* *ffp* *(p)* *f*

Lit - tle gigs and cre - dit cards can't

132 *p* *♩ = 88* **O**

N. *p* *pp*

pay the bills... It's time to face

136 *rit.* . . . . . *♩ = 66* *rit.* . . . . .

N. *rit.* *pp*

the mu - sic face my pa - rents It's time to go

140 **P**  $\text{♩} = 92$  *mf*

N. home. I should go home *port.* I don't want to go

Pno. *mp espress.*

144 *gliss.*

N. home but I have to go home

Pno.

**Meno mosso**  $\text{♩} = 72$

Daniel:

148 *p* *rit.* *Daniel exits.*

T. Na - ta - lie, Sor - ry... I have to go.

Pno. *pp*

# Jess and Natalie

3

151 ♩ = 112

N.

J. *mp*  
 You don't have to go home. There are

Pno. *mp*



Natalie:  
*mp*

154

N.   
 Af-ter three years I don't know if I want to

J.   
 ot-her ways\_ you can per - form.

Pno.



158

N. *a-ny-more* Is Dan-iel's grand-pa O - K? \_\_\_\_\_

J. \_\_\_\_\_ Not real-ly \_\_\_\_\_ he's in

Pno. *pp*



162

N. \_\_\_\_\_ I did-n't know \_\_\_\_\_ it was that ser-i-ous

J. \_\_\_\_\_ pret-ty bad shape \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

20

165

N.

J.

Pno.

May-be la ter

You should vis-it him he would a-ppre-ci-ate it.



*Natalie is lost in her own world as Jess prepares to leave.*

**molto rit.** . . . . .

169

N.

J.

Pno.

I should call my pa - rents back. It's time to come

♩ = 92 rit. mf p

172 **R**

N. *port.*  
clean

J. *mf* Jess grabs the remainder of her things and heads for the door before stopping for a second.  
I hope we see you la-ter Your

Pno. *mp espress.*

175 ♩ = 72 (♩ = 92)

N.

J. *p*  
life is what YOU want to make of it, Nat - a - lie

Pno.

# Jess's Aria (We Were There)

4

Light, optimistic ♩. = 88

177 Jess: *p* 3

J. From the mo-ment you dropped out of

Pno.

181

J. law school We were there *port.*

Pno.

184 **S** *p*

J. When you de - ci-ded to fol-low your

Pno.



188

J. *port.*

own path We were there

Pno.

192

J. **T** *mf*

— Ev-ry high ev' ry low ev' - ry try ev' ry

Pno. *mf*

196

J. *f* *port.*

show we were there!

Pno. *f*

24

*poco rit.*

199

*mf*

*p*

U

♩. = 80

J.

Don't care too much a-bout what your

Pno.



203

J.

pa-rents think You have your friends here. We want to see you

Pno.



207

J.

grow We know you feel like this show was your shot.

Pno.

211 *poco accel.*

J. We know that you need us here \_\_\_\_\_ to lean on \_\_\_\_\_ But

Pno.

215 **V** *mf* *poco accel.*

J. Dan-iel needs a place to lean \_\_\_\_\_ too \_\_\_\_\_

Pno. *mf*

218 *f* *f*

J. Let's be that foun-da tion \_\_\_\_\_ for

Pno. *f*

26

221 *sub p*

J. *port.*

him

Pno. *sub p* *8va*

224 *mf* *rit.*

J. *loco* Ev-'ry high ev'ry low no ma - tter

Pno. *mf*

228 *f* *p* *pp*

J. *port.*

what we'll be there!

Pno. *f* *p*

♩ = 88

♩ = 80 rit.

232

rit.

Jess leaves.

*n*

The musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is for the voice, labeled 'J.', and the lower staff is for the piano, labeled 'Pno.'. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The voice part begins with the lyrics 'Let's be there' and ends with 'Jess leaves.'. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *p*, *mf*, and *pp*. A *8va* marking is present above the piano's right hand. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

# Daniel and Thomas

236 ♩ = 100 *Jess is tending to Thomas while Daniel is standing distanced away.*

D.

T.

Pno.



239

D.

T.

Pno.

243

D.

T.

Pno.



248

D. **Daniel:**  
*p*

T. **Thomas:**  
*p*

Pno.

*pp* *f* *mp*

Brought you some-thing — Close!

Piz- za? \*cough\*

254

D. *3* *3* *3* *3*

It's the Se-ven-ty Three Bo - héme\_\_ with Pa-va-ro - tti\_\_ and Fre-ni\_\_

T.

Pno. *mp* *f*

257

D. *mf*

That must have been a - ma-zing.

T. *mf* *3*

I saw that one live

Pno. *mp* *3*



261 **Z**

**Più mosso** ♩ = 108 **accel.** . . . . .

D.

T. *mf* Ev - 'ry note was a sym-pho-ny on its own "Mi chia -

Pno. *mf* *pp*



267

**AA** ♩ = 108 Jess: *p*

J.

D. *f* Daniel: Just a lit-tle ex

T. *f* Is he al-right?

T. *f* Thomas breaks into a cough from the excitement.

T. *f* ma - no Mi Mi..."

Pno. *f* *f*

272 rit. BB ♩ = 112

J. cite-ment we should give him a mo-ment\_\_

D. Daniel and Jess step out of the room. *p* hushed  
Be hon-est

Pno. *p*

277

Jess: *p* hushed

J. Too ear-ly\_\_ to tell but he's re-pond-ing well to treat-ment

D. will he be\_\_ o-kay?

Pno.

rit.

accel.

282

*Natalie walks in, hiding.*

J.

Daniel:

D.

That's a par-tial re-lief. He's not gi-ving you a-ny trou-ble?

T.

Pno.



285

J.

He's a com - plete an - gel

D.

T.

Pno.

# Daniel's Aria

Daniel remembers and reflects.

288 Sweetly ♩ = 112 Daniel: **p**

J. He's al-ways been like that.

Pno. **p**

293 **poco rit.** Daniel: **p gently** ♩ = 116 **CC**

D. Ev' ry Sat-ur-day even-ning at

Pno. **p**

299

D. se-ven P - M Grand-pa would come to see me.

Pno. **p**

rit. . .

305 **DD**

D. We went to see Tos-ca and La Bohéme He showed me the

Pno.

311 **EE** Brighter ♩ = 120

D. world through art. We'd walk by the Hud-son and

Pno. *pp* *p crisply* senza ped.

317

D. stop\_ for some piz - za Tired I'd want to go home

Pno.

36

323 **FF** *rit.*

D. *But he'd chat with the wai-ter\_ And we'd learn a-bout some-bo-dy's*

Pno.

329 - **GG** *Freely* ♩ = 80

D. *life. At home he'd ask "What did you think?"*

Pno. *pp* *p*

333 *imitating Grandpa*

D. *"Just mus-ic, just peo - ple" I would say "It's*

Pno.

Più mosso ♩ = 108

336

D. more than just that There's beau - ty in ev' - ry mo - ment

Pno.

*pp*

341

D. I wish I had

Pno. *freely, daintly* R.H. *mp*

**HH** *mp* *accel.*

344

D. lis - tened to him, the way he lis - tened to

Pno.

♩ = 124

38

*poco rit.* . . . . . *p* . . . . . *mf*

348 *mf*

D. *mf* *p* *mf*

me \_\_\_\_\_ He's the

Pno. *f* *pp*

354 **II** ♩ = 112

D. *mf*

man I want to be \_\_\_\_\_ He's taught me so

Pno. *mf*

359 *poco rit.* . . . . . **JJ** ♩ = 104 *f*

D. *f*

much \_\_\_\_\_ He still \_\_\_\_\_ he

Pno. *f*



poco rit. . . . . **KK** ♩ = 92  
*p*

363

D. still has so much to show me

Pno. *p*



rit. . . . .

367

D. I can't i - mag - ine lo - sing

Pno.



**LL** Melancholic ♩ = 100

*molto rit.* . . . .

370

D. him

Pno. *p*

40

*Both exit. Natalie comes out of hiding and hesitantly enters Thomas's room.*

D. **375** *ppp* **Jess: p**

Come with me. I want to show you his charts.

Pno. *(loco)* *p*

8<sup>vb</sup>

# Final Scene

380  $\text{♩} = 104$  Natalie: *mp*

N. It's Na-ta-lie\_

T. Thomas: *mp*  
Dan-iel? \*cough\* I re - mem-ber you! the sing-er friend.

Pno. *p dolce*



385

N. Not sing-ing\_ so much these days\_ How are you?

T. I've been

Pno.

42

390 **MM** *rit.* . . . . .

N. \_\_\_\_\_

T. *Thomas picks up Boheme record.*  
bet-ter but I get three meals a warm bed and nice mu-sic\_\_

Pno. *mp*



395 ♩ = 80

N. \_\_\_\_\_ I hope you feel bet - ter

T. \_\_\_\_\_ Mat - ter of per - spec - tive \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

♩ = 72 **poco accel.** . . . . . ♩ = 84

397 **NN** Looks over at record.

N. *I was s'posed to play Mimi to-night.*

T. *You would have been won-derful I would have*

Pno. *p*



*sub* ♩ = 104  
**accel.** . . . . . ♩ = 128

400

N. *loved to hear you. I have't had the chance*

T. *sharp inhale sharp inhale*

Pno.

405 *rit.* OO ♩ = 96

N. Of La Boh-ème

T. could I have a sam - ple? of

Pno.

409 *rit.* ♩ = 72 *Natalie prepares to "sing."* *hesitantly rit.*

N. Yes... My

T. an - y - thing. I want to hear you

Pno. *mf*

(sharp inhale)

Jess and Daniel enter. Jess has the Natalie's parents on speaker phone and are holding the phone up.

414 **PP** ♩ = 64

N. name is Nat-a - lie. I sing. Why? I'm not sure.

T. Dig dee-per

Pno. **pp**

**accel.** . . . . .

420 *Natalie thinks.* **mp cresc.** *Natalie finds her stride.*

N. I sing... for the joy it brings me For the won-der I share with

T. **mp**  
Yes!

Pno. **mp cresc.**

46

♩ = 84

Jess and Daniel approach closer with the phone.

N. *f*  
o - thers\_\_ I'll e-ven sing for my pa - rents\_\_ be-cause art lives\_\_ in us

T. *mf*  
Yes!

Pno. *f*



*molto rit.* . . . ♩ = 66

QQ ♩ = 88

N. *mf*  
all\_\_ I'll al-ways have that\_\_

T. *f* *gliss.*  
Bra - va!

Pno. *mf* *espress.*



432

N. *port.*  
I'll al-ways have sing - ing We'll al

T.

Pno.



At thi point, Daniel, Jess, and Natalie are gathered around Thomas.

436

N. *rit.* *f* *port.*  
ways We'll al-ways have mu - - sic! Bra-va Na-ta-lie!

T. *mf*  
Bra-va Na-ta-lie!

J. *mf*  
Bra-va Na-ta-lie!

Pno.

48

*picks up phone*

**Natalie: *mf*** *On the phone.*

D. Hel-lo? You lis tened... Thank you... I'm sor-ry I did- n't...

T.

J. *Jess hands phone to Natalie:*  
It's your pa-rents

Pno. *p*

Detailed description: This system contains the musical score for Natalie's phone conversation. It features four staves: Soprano (D.), Tenor (T.), Alto (J.), and Piano (Pno.). Natalie's part (D.) begins at measure 440 with the lyrics "Hel-lo? You lis tened... Thank you... I'm sor-ry I did- n't...". Her melody includes a triplet of eighth notes. Jess's part (J.) starts at measure 441 with the lyrics "It's your pa-rents" and also features a triplet. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) is in the bass clef, with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) starting at measure 442. The Tenor part (T.) is mostly silent with some rests.



*Smiles, surprised*

*Natalie hangs up.*

N. Oh! I love you too, Mom. I love you too, Dad. Good-bye.

T.

Pno.

Detailed description: This system continues the musical score. It features three staves: Soprano (N.), Tenor (T.), and Piano (Pno.). Natalie's part (N.) begins at measure 444 with the lyrics "Oh! I love you too, Mom. I love you too, Dad. Good-bye." and ends with a double bar line. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) continues with complex chordal textures and some tremolos. The Tenor part (T.) is mostly silent with some rests.

RR

448 > *n* ♩ = 88

N.

T. *p* tender

Na-ta-lie... That meant more to me than an-y-thing I'll e - ver

Pno.

SS

452 Poco più mosso ♩ = 92

N.

T. hear

Pno. *mf* *f* 3

8va

456 *rit.* . . . . .

N.

T.

Pno.

(8)

*ff*

*pp*

B $\flat$

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 456-460. The vocal parts (N. and T.) have a 'rit.' marking above them. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics range from 'ff' to 'pp'. A key signature change to B-flat is indicated at the end of the system. A circled '8' is above the first measure of the piano part.