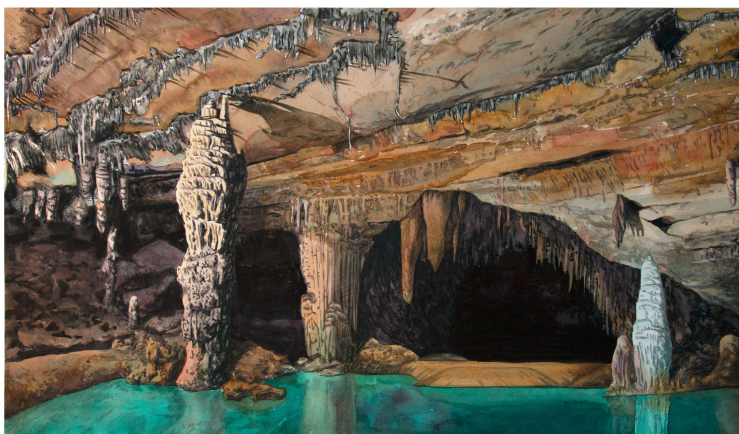


# THE NIGHT FALLS

*Music by Ellis Ludwig-Leone*

*Lyrics by Karen Russell & Ellis Ludwig-Leone*



**FULL SCORE IN C**

for premiere  
PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

Kasser Theater  
Feb. 9-12, 2023

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With choreography and direction by Troy Schumacher,  
who brought this piece to life.

*The Night Falls* was commissioned by BalletCollective.

Developed and co-produced by BalletCollective, Inc. and  
PEAK Performances at Montclair State University.

*The Night Falls* was developed during a Project  
Springboard: Developing Dance Musicals 2018  
residency, and further support was provided during a  
virtual creative residency in 2021.

Premiere: February 9, 2023 at PEAK Performances at  
Montclair State University, New Jersey.

Cover image by Harold Garcia V.

**Characters:**

FELISBERTO - a Queens, NY teenager whose boyfriend has recently died. Before this nightmare began, his only goal was to survive eleventh grade.

THE SIRENETTES/SIRENS - a musical act of three singing sisters who once performed at The Night Falls Grotto. Now they haunt the grotto where they drowned, manifesting as bird-like shadows and singing a dark version of their old summer concert to lure dreamers to the rocks.

SUFFERERS - desperate, grieving people from all over the country who have begun hearing the Sirens' song in their dreams. A diverse group in every sense. Contemporary Americans with archetypal resonances. We focus on:

ANGELA, THE ATHLETE - mid/late twenties; a former star tennis player.

GEORGE, THE MUSICIAN - a middle-aged piano teacher.

NADIA, THE MOTHER - a woman who has lost her daughter to an addiction.

ALLAN, THE HUNTER - a Floridian python hunter and animal trapper who becomes prey himself.

JARVIS, THE ACROBAT - an entertainer who has made a career out of his cartwheeling joy. This is a non-verbal role.

**A note on staging:**

The space is divided into two spheres: the lower world of the stage, where the action unfolds, and an upper plane that represents a kind of metaphysical limbo.

Each character, aside from the Sirens, is represented by a Dancer on the lower level, and a Singer on the upper plane. They are two halves of a whole person— someone who has been torn apart by the Sirens' song.

The upper plane is visible to the audience but invisible to the characters onstage.

**Instrumentation:**

Flute dbl. Piccolo

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Horn in F

Percussion 1,2\*

Harp

Piano dbl. Keyboard & Synth\*\*

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Electronic track\*\*\*

**Voice Ranges:**

Siren 1 - Lyric Soprano

Siren 2 - Soprano

Siren 3 - Mezzo-Soprano

Angela - Soprano

Nadia - Mezzo-Soprano

Felisberto - Tenor

George - Baritone

Allan - Bass

**\*Percussion Setup:**

Ratchet/cog rattle

Egg shaker

Castanets (two sets, mounted)

Woodblock (two)

Suspended triangle

Sandpaper blocks (two sets)

Snare drum

Large tom

Kick drum

Orchestral bass drum

Hi hat

Suspended cymbal (two)

Sizzle cymbal

Tam-tam

Anvil (or similar)

Glockenspiel (mounted, with bow)

Vibraphone (with bow)

Wine glasses (three, tuned to B, C, D#)

**\*\*Keyboard Setup:**

There are two additional keyboards played by the pianist: a Moog Sub Phatty analog bass synth (or similar); and an 88-key MIDI Keyboard triggering a Dulcitone sampler instrument.

**\*\*\*Electronic Track Setup:**

Electronic tracks are cued by the pianist, who has an Ableton file and a laptop near their keyboard area. Cue entrances are designated with the instruction "GO" in the piano part, and should be triggered with a MIDI foot pedal.

There should be headphones available for the conductor, pianist, and both percussionists, for cues with click.

**Plot Synopsis:**

**OVERTURE**

Three Floridian Sirens once sang to lure visitors to “The Night Falls,” a roadside attraction built around a mysterious grotto. They drowned during a nocturnal concert, each failing to rescue the other. Their spirits were transformed into monstrous birds, and their song became a spell of despair. Now they haunt the grotto where they once performed. All across America, suffering people begin to hear this song in their dreams, calling them to the water’s edge.

**ACT ONE**

The show opens in the Queens, NY bedroom of a teenager named Felisberto, in the middle of his recurring nightmare. Three winged women sing a dark lullaby to him. They promise to relieve him of every earthly care and drown out his pain. The Sirens sing at a shattering pitch, creating a fracture in Felis. A gulf opens between the part of him that wants to live, and the part that has been possessed by the song.

Felis wakes and reminisces about his boyfriend who has recently died. Without him, Felis feels unmoored and unable to move forward. Ignoring his mother’s calls from behind the door, Felis sinks back into sleep.

Felis has another nightmare: he sees dozens of people struggling to resist the Sirens’ song. Troubled, he wakes and scans the channels of his television, landing on a commercial for a place called “The Night Falls.” He recognizes the singing women from his dreams. He decides to go there and learn why this song is haunting him.

**ACT TWO**

Felis arrives at the abandoned, decaying Night Falls and discovers he is not alone: others have been drawn here by the Sirens’ song. A sign reads THE SIRENS WILL SING AT SUNSET. Fearing the song’s return, they band together and begin to tell each other stories. A mother relates the pain of losing her daughter to addiction; a python hunter shares his horror at becoming prey; an acrobat pantomimes a joyful day in his life; a professional athlete relives her public breakdown; and a composer whose wife has recently left him shares the simple melody from the beginning of their love story.

Right at sunset, Felis moves into the center of the group. He is surprised and overjoyed when the others merge into his story with him. But as the light disappears, the Sirens’ voices rise in volume, and Felis is spun away from the group and into the shadows.

**ACT THREE**

An old video from “The Night Falls” flickers to life. It informs the group that the concert is about to begin, synced to high tide and the solar eclipse. The athlete searches for Felis. The group firms up its bonds, preparing to enter the grotto together to save him.

Inside the grotto, the Sirens have become prisoners of their own echoing song, their wings fused to the rocks. They sing to Felis, urging him to drown and dissolve, solid to void. The group calls to him, waking him out of his trance. They pit everything they have against the song of the Sirens. Their voices tether Felis to the world outside the grotto.

Felis addresses the Sirens. He asks them who they were when they were fully human, before this song possessed them. They, too, begin to wake out of their long nightmare. They fall silent at last.

The humans are reunited with the parts of themselves from whom they have been exiled. The group exits together, no longer isolated sufferers but something closer to a family. The Sirens’ spirits are freed and released into the dawn.

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# THE NIGHT FALLS ACT ONE

## 01. Overture

As the audience enters, the instruments sneak in to create a naturalistic environment: the sounds of the swamp.

1-2'  $\text{♩} = 82$

**Siren 1**  
**Siren 2**  
**Siren 3**  
**Angela**  
**Nadia**  
**George**  
**Allan**  
**Flute**  
**Clarinet in Bb**  
**Horn in F**  
**Percussion 1**  
**Percussion 2**  
**Harp**  
**Piano**  
**Ableton**  
**Violin**  
**Viola**  
**Violoncello**

**Sandpaper Blocks**  
rubbed together in a circular motion

**Ratchet / Cog Rattle**  
offstage  
continuous, like the hum of cicadas

**Castanets (high and low, mounted)**  
(insect calls) (1st x only)

*p*  
*p-mp*  
*mp*

5

Hn. (Sandpaper Blocks)

Perc. 1 (Ratchet + Cog Rattle)

Perc. 2 (Castanets) (1st x only) (2nd x only) (2nd x only) (1st x only) (2nd x only) (2nd x only)

Egg Shaker (insect-like)

drag pick above strings (no pitch - insectlike)

Hp. *mp* 3

sim.

Vln. (1st x only) lightly bouncing bow (sounds like a cricket) *pp*

Vla.

11

Cl. (1st x only) very airy (a bird call) *pp*

Hn.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2 *mp* (Wood Block) 3 3 *p*

Hp. (1st x only)

Vln. (2nd x only)

Vla. (Sandpaper Blocks)



19 *offstage*  
*p* light and open, like birdsong

Siren 2  
Hn.  
Perc. 1  
Perc. 2  
Pno.  
Vla.

*mf*  
*with changes*

25 *offstage*  
*pp* light and open, like birdsong

Siren 1  
Siren 2  
Siren 3  
Hn.  
Perc. 1  
Perc. 2  
Pno.

