

# Peter Hammill, Act Two

THE VOICES House. Wet Vaults. Caissons. We breathe...  
OF THE Undercroft. Abutments. Stones. Wood. Breathe...  
HOUSE Buttresses. Bressumers. Spandrels. We Breathe...  
Columns and Pillars. Shafts. Arches. Capitals. Breathe....  
We breathe. We are waiting.

We rise. We are waiting.

We are Usher. House of Usher.

Pilasters. Quoins. Piers.

Spandrels and columns that shaft through the years.

House of Usher.

Wainscots. Stairs. Balusters. Cusps and Cornices.

Spandrels and Columns the capital years.

House of Usher.

We breathe. We are waiting

We rise. We are waiting.

We are Usher. House of Usher.

Beams. Corbels. Joists. Kingposts.

Copings and Chimney-shafts.

Ridge-ribs. Struts. Stanchions. Parapets.

Pediments. Mansards and Gargoyles.

The eaves. The dripping eaves...

Cupola. Finials. Gables. Tiles. Lead...

We breathe. We are waiting.

We rise. We are waiting.

We are Usher. House of Usher.

We are Keystone. We are Usher.

RODERICK USHER

("The Sleeper") The lady sleeps. oh, may her sleep  
which is enduring so be deep!

Heaven hold her in its sacred keep!

This chamber changed for one more holy,  
this bed for one of melancholy.

I pray to God that she may lie

forever with unopened eye

while the dim, sheeted ghosts go by.

My love, she sleeps. Oh, may her sleep

as it is lasting so be deep!

Soft may the worms around her creep!

Far in the forest, dim and old,

now may some tall vault enfold her;

some vault that oft hath flung its black

and winged panels fluttering back

triumphant o'er the crested palls

of her grand family funerals....

USHER        MONTRESOR

I didn't mean to interrupt...

Montresor, you came!

Did you think I'd ignore your letter?

Montresor, you're here!

Come let me help you with your coat.

Sit down and rest yourself.

Oh, it's so good to see you here!

Now tell me all your news...

I see you've changed a bit, my friend...

Now won't you have a drink...

Yes, yes

but one thing at a time!

First you must tell me what...

But I expect I too have changed.

How many years could it be now  
since last we said farewell?

It must be ten years

since our last meeting,

Yes, it must be ten years  
since our last meeting since our last meeting.  
Tell me what is wrong?  
Your letter spoke  
of a malady;  
some desperate trial  
you could not face alone...  
Oh, no, you tell me all your doings!  
Tell me.  
Tell me  
how you pass your days how you pass your days  
Tell me  
from the beginning. from the beginning  
Tell me  
everything everything  
that's happened  
since we went our since we went our  
separate ways. separate ways.  
Look at me...  
I have not left these walls  
these three years,  
I do not dare to do so!  
I am imprisoned and fear is my gaoler.  
Each word I speak  
seems too dangerous.  
My slightest act could bring about  
the very thing I fear  
But fear of what?  
Hush, and I shall tell you...  
tell you...  
USHER I shun the light,  
creep in the gloom like a toad, a white worm,  
tortured by the faintest gleam of sun.  
I hear...  
oh God, if you could only know the things I hear!  
I hear the lake sucking at the walls,  
I hear bats breathing  
I hear the sky moan to join with the slime!  
And this,  
all this like thunder to me,  
like thunder!  
My senses scream at me:  
Sight... Touch... Sight... Touch...  
Sound and Taste... Sound and Scent,  
All torment and claw at my sanity.  
There is no hiding place for me,  
for even in the quietest of my rooms,  
I hear the walls in conversation;  
I hear the palpitations of my heart;  
I feel all that lives and does not move  
and know it knows my feeling.  
My only peace lies in my music  
and then only because it drowns out  
all other sounds and souls...  
You may think that I am mad, but it is not so.  
My senses reel beneath the blow of feathers falling  
and more...  
But no, I see you do not understand.  
MONTRESOR Oh, my poor dear friend,  
you must see you are not well.  
I've read of this before,  
I think it's called Hyperaesthesia.  
I'm no doctor, but it's clear  
your nerves have gone to pieces.  
You need to get away,

you need a holiday,  
you need a change of air!  
You need an ocean cruise,  
you need to be amused!  
I tell you plain, this House  
to me seems most unhealthy.  
You're unattached, you're free to go, you're wealthy.  
USHER MONTRESOR THE CHORUS

Leave this House.  
Leave this House.  
Leave this House  
and come away.  
Leave this House  
I cannot!  
Leave this House!  
I cannot!  
Leave this House!  
Here I must stay.  
Here I must stay.  
You are wasting  
your time.  
He will never  
leave...  
I can never  
leave here  
therefore do  
not ask me  
say no more I've heard of this before  
and let me be I think it's called Hyperaesthesia  
I can never I'm no doctor but it's clear  
leave here your nerves have gone to pieces.  
therefore do your nerves have gone to pieces.  
not ask me.  
Say no more  
and let me be  
I cannot leave  
He cannot leave  
The House is I  
The House is he  
We are as one  
They are as one  
And I would die  
and so must die  
Now you must leave  
I He cannot leave  
cannot Now you must fly  
leave The House is he  
Now you must run  
The They are as one  
House is No-one will die  
I And so must die  
I cannot leave  
Now you must leave  
He cannot leave  
The House is I  
Now you must fly  
The House is he  
We are as one  
Now you must run  
and so must die  
and so must die  
No-one will die  
USHER MONTRESOR THE HOUSE

We shall  
not let  
him go!  
We shall not  
Leave let him go!  
Do not torture me! this We shall not  
Do not try to persuade! House let him go!  
We shall not  
Leave let him go!  
It only brings me grief this We shall not  
House let him go!  
Leave this House We shall not  
I cannot leave let him go!  
We shall not  
let him go!  
shall not let him go!  
USHER MONTRESOR THE CHORUS THE HOUSE  
Leave this House  
I cannot  
Leave this House  
I cannot  
Leave this House Leave this House  
and come with me We shall not  
let him go.  
Leave this House  
I cannot Never, never  
Leave this House never!  
I cannot  
Leave this House  
and come with me Never! Never, never,  
never!  
Never! Never, never,  
never!  
I can never We are bound  
leave here together  
therefore do for the last time so never  
not ask me I entreat you He shall he shall  
say no more never leave never leave  
and let me be. We are bound  
together  
for the last time so never  
I entreat you He shall he shall  
Leave! never leave never leave.  
Do not  
talk to me Never  
do not try never  
to persuade Leave! never  
He shall never  
never leave  
Leave this house  
Oh Montresor never never  
I beg of you never never  
I can never never  
never leave never never  
I can never never never  
leave this house Leave this house never never  
I can never You are wasting never never  
leave this house Leave this house you time never never  
I can never he will never never never  
leave this house Leave! leave never never  
never!  
The House  
is I.  
End of Act Two