

# Script: *Sixty-Forty*

Music theatre in four scenes

By Lars Skoglund

For trio Pinguins, for Ultima 2020

**Sigrun:** As herself; speaking, singing, Bass Drum, Vibraphone, Volca Keys synth, Guitar, Drum machine. Also playing the role of Miriam (a singing teacher)

**Ane Marthe:** As herself; speaking, singing, Two Drums, Glockenspiel, Table Gongs, Tubular Bells (or other bells), Temple Blocks, Gong, Arp Odyssey synth, KORG Monologue. Also playing the role of Hildegunn (a fairy who looks after musicians)

**Jennifer:** As herself; speaking, singing, Three Drums, Marimba, Volca Modular synth. Also playing the role of Håkon Hansen (a talent scout from a record company)

## Scene I: The Fairy

Interior: Rehearsal room. We have an off-stage and an on-stage area (resp. stage left and right, seen from the audience). The on-stage area is the biggest.

*When the piece starts Jennifer is alone, playing drums in the off-stage area, dressed in black. [Or she enters, and then starts.] After about 25 seconds (see score) Ane Marthe enters the off-stage area, dressed as Hildegunn, a fairy, with silvery shiny clothes. She joins Jennifer's drumming on her own instrument setup. Ane Marthe and Jennifer don't see each other, except for cueing when Ane Marthe starts to play. After another 45 seconds (the exact entrance in the score) Sigrun enters. She is dressed in white, giving vague associations to a nurse or a hospital patient. She enters the **on-stage area** and starts to bang loud on a bass drum.*

**Sigrun:** *(bangs a drum, loud and unpleasant) (stops playing, wipes her face with a large handkerchief, as if sweating) (Spoken:)* Oh oh oh, I have such a terrible headache, and I have to play this ugly *(sprechgesang)* music.

*(Shouts many times) Ææh! (bang bang on the drum)*

*(Stops playing, speaking)* Oh, what a life. This is not good for my health.

*(Bangs the drum for a long time, at one point turning a page of sheet music. Plays some more, turns many pages of sheet music to mark the passing of time.) (Spoken, to the audience:)* Twenty-five minutes later.

*(Ane Marthe walks from off-stage to on-stage) (The distance is not very long, and the two areas are very close by, but the performers should noticeably change their 'outward radiation' in the two places, from "not seen" to "seen".)*

**Ane Marthe a.k.a. the fairy Hildegunn:** *(spoken)* Sigrun, why are you doing this?

**Sigrun:** *(Matter-of-factly)* The piece is like that.

**Ane Marthe:** Yes, of course I understand that, but in the bigger picture, why do you play things that hurt your ears and give you a headache?

**Sigrun:** But I must, I am a musician. *(Suddenly wondering)* Who are you, by the way?

**Ane Marthe:** I am Hildegunn, I am the fairy that takes care of the health of the people who play music. I follow the scene very carefully, but I only take action when somebody is in danger.

**Sigrun:** And why have you come to me? *(Worried, scared)* And how did you get in? All the doors are supposed to be locked!

**Ane Marthe:** *(Breathes in through the nose and straightens her back)* Sigrun, you need to be careful. Your health is in danger. This loud drumming music is not good for you.

**Sigrun:** But it is just a little headache, it will go away later.

**Ane Marthe:** How can you be so sure?

**Sigrun:** Well, it's the same every day, I come here to the practise room, I play, I get a headache, and quite often muscle ache, *(puts her hand on the neck)* here in the neck, often I have nervous tensions and I can get sick and nauseous, *(tries to smile)* but then it goes away again. Nothing to worry about!

**Ane Marthe:** Sigrun! Did you hear what you just said? You have headaches every day!

**Sigrun:** Yes, yes, but they *do* go away, maybe after a bottle of wine or two...

**Ane Marthe:** *(interrupts)* Stop it! You are on the wrong track! You have to do something about your situation!

**Sigrun:** Are you finished preaching morals to me? I have to learn this until tomorrow. *(Looks to the music stand.)* Let's see.

*(Bangs on the bass drum, tightening and loosening the skin with the left hand, pretending to accidentally hit her finger.)* Ow! Oh no, I think I broke my finger! *(Quickly puts the finger in red "theatre blood", then holds it up, slightly bent.)* And the concert is in two days!

**Ane Marthe:** *(surprised, with empathy)* Oh no, look, your finger is bleeding, and it's all red and swollen.

**Sigrun:** Oh boy, this really hurts. *(Covers her eyes with her left arm.)* It hurts so much, boo-hoo-hoo. *(Wipes her eyes.)* Don't you have any painkillers? I thought you said you take care of musicians.

**Ane Marthe:** *(confused about how the situation has developed)* Look, I'm terribly sorry, but I don't go around with a first aid kit. I mean, we fairies tend to have a more holistic approach. Don't you have any school medicine here in the rehearsal room?

**Sigrun:** No, we mixed it all with vodka last weekend. *(Looks in a box, makes noises while searching.)* Thank goodness, here is something! *(Holds up a pill)*

**Ane Marthe:** What is that? Wait a minute! That stuff is illegal in Norway!! And it is very bad for you!

**Sigrun:** *(Standing unsteady, swinging around, rolling her eyes)* I don't care, I need something to take away this *(bursts into tears)* terrible pain I am feeling. *(Chews up the pill, loud cracking sound as if (or use) a candy like polkagris, or so.)*

**Ane Marthe:** *(Waves her arms in warning)* No, don't take the pill! Some of these medications can have terrible side effects! Be careful, Sigrun!!

*(Sigrun pretends to fall down behind some instruments, hides her face, puts on a false beard quickly)*

**Ane Marthe:** *(Terrified)* Oh no, Sigrun, what happened??

**Sigrun:** *(Rises up again, looking very confused)* What is it? My face feels all weird!

**Ane Marthe:** *(Almost crying)* Oh Sigrun, why did you do this! *(Hands her a mirror)* Look what you did!

**Sigrun:** *(looking in the mirror, shrieks in panic)* Aah! Oh no! I have a beard. *(Screams loud.)* Aah! *(Runs out in panic.)*

**Ane Marthe:** *(Sad and angry)* Why didn't you listen to me! I told you you were on the wrong track!!

*In the transition Sigrun, offstage, gets rid of the blood and the beard. Unless it hinders playing, she puts a bandage on the "wounded" finger. (Ane Marthe continues wearing the fairy costume without comment.) Jennifer moves over to the on-stage area and starts playing synth, deep vibrating tones, with tiny subtle variations. (See own chart.) Ane Marthe re-adjusts the synth from scene 1 (audibly). When she is ready, Sigrun enters and starts playing her synth line in part 2, the piece continues.*

## **Scene II: The Subsidy Proposal**

*In this scene all three turn knobs on analog synthesizers while singing very simple melodic lines, often only on one note.*

**Jennifer:** *(Singing)* So! What are we going to write in our subsidy proposal now then?

**Ane Marthe:** *(Singing)* We really need to get this money

**Jennifer and Sigrun:** *(together)* Why don't we try to apply for a...

**ALL THREE:** *(one idea each, voices overlap)* ...project with generative dialogue / authentic movement / non-violent communication

**Ane Marthe:** *(dreamy)* What is that?

**Jennifer:** Nah, that's so 1918.

**Jennifer and Sigrun:** *(together)* I vote for...

**ALL THREE:** *(one idea each, voices overlap)* ...Tribute to Gertrude Stein / Underwater concerts / Authentic movement

**Ane Marthe:** This is the yes-phase, every idea is a good idea

**Sigrun and Ane Marthe:** *(Sigrun speaks, AM sings)* Think think think

**Jennifer:** *(singing)* We need to finish this subsidy proposal now, to get money to survive

**Sigrun and Ane Marthe:** *(singing)* We have been freelancing for so many years now, and we still have to do this

**Jennifer:** A good idea is an idea that doesn't get in your way

**Sigrun:** What about the email from this French composer?

**Jennifer:** The dialogue between the fridge and the freezer

**Ane Marthe:** I don't like his pieces, they are so cold

**Jennifer:** So now we have twelve hours before the proposal has to be sent in

**Sigrun:** We have a lot of lengthy and layered research material

**Jennifer:** Yeah, from the Kristeva seminar

**Ane Marthe:** And don't forget Walter Benjamin

**Sigrun:** I liked something in the neo-Kantian supermarket hackers

**Ane Marthe:** There are some ethical issues

**Jennifer:** There is a notion of distance that I think can be very generative

**Sigrun:** Yeah, like fruitful space

**Ane Marthe:** Fruit in space?

**Jennifer:** I have an idea! If we try really hard to be mindful to site-specificity, to make feedback through the space *and* through the time, and maybe also create some anticipation? (*voice goes very high up on the last syllable*)

Pause, playing and listening to the vibrating synths for 26 seconds (see score for timeline)

**Ane Marthe:** (*still singing*) This sound does not have so much hierarchy in it

Short pause

**Sigrun:** So! What are we going to write then?

**Ane Marthe:** We really need to get this money

**Jennifer:** I have this rather unpleasant feeling that everybody else gets loads of cash thrown after them

**Sigrun:** We need to live

**Jennifer:** We must survive

**Ane Marthe:** (*to the others, slightly impatient*) Alright alright, but what can we write?

**Sigrun:** (*Looks at a piece of paper, reads from it, speaking voice*) "Feeling empty, feeling lost. All the mail got lost in the post."

**Ane Marthe:** (*Looks to her, curious, singing*) What was that?

**Sigrun:** *(Looking shyly away, singing)* Just... eh... just something...

**Jennifer:** *(continues, has not paid attention)* You know...

**Sigrun:** ...nothing...

**Jennifer:** ...I've been thinking, we put it on and do something else. We have twentyfive loudspeakers, but no filters

**Ane Marthe:** No filters!

**Sigrun:** No filters!

**Ane Marthe:** No fucking filters!

**Jennifer:** Right! And no samplers!

**Ane Marthe and Sigrun:** *(Simultaneously)* The samplers are too hierarchical / We know! No samplers!

**Ane Marthe:** I fucking hate them!

**Jennifer:** And no background!

**Ane Marthe:** Absolutely fucking not!

**Sigrun:** No fucking backgrounds!

**Jennifer:** *((still singing))* The backgrounds must be fucking destroyed!

**Ane Marthe:** And the ethical aspects of digital reverb

**Sigrun:** Liberation is a lie. But if we just follow our curiosities, and look for osmosis, and only go shopping on Fridays before seven in the morning, and create a tension between not being able to do what we do...

**Ane Marthe:** *(continues)* ...and if we manage to pull off the rather primitive and beautiful idea about not describing technologies, and the abject...

**Jennifer:** Yes! That must be in! The abject. That's beautiful. *(Writes on a paper)*  
Let's see: A-b-j-e-c-t.

**Ane Marthe:** Ah! Finally some positive thinking!

**Sigrun:** Are you sure that's not too 1989?

*(They look quietly at her without agreeing.)*

**ALL:** *(To the audience, spoken)* Twelve hours later.

**Ane Marthe:** *(to Sigrun)* So! Did you send it now?

**Sigrun:** All sent!

**Jennifer:** Good. I need to use the bathroom, if you'll excuse me.

*(Jennifer leaves and changes costume to Håkon, a talent scout from NYC. The others prepares for the next scene, fixing their note paper, trying small licks and melodies on their instruments.)*

### Scene III: Fame and Fortune

*Jennifer returns with a wig, dressed like a man.*

*All is spoken in this scene, they play melodic percussion while/in between speaking.*

**Jennifer a.k.a. Håkon Hansen:** Hello girls!

**Ane Marthe:** Who are you??

**Jennifer (Håkon):** My name is Hakon Hanson, I am managing bands, and I'm connected to the record label Struts Records. We saw you on the "Show Yourself NOW"-festival last week, and we want to make you an offer.

**Sigrun:** What kind of offer?

**Jennifer:** *(Enthusiastic)* We want to sign you!

**Sigrun:** What kind of company is this? Struts records? I have never heard about it.

**Jennifer:** We are a subsidiary label of a much larger multi-national company.

**Ane Marthe:** But what kind of deal do you offer?

**Sigrun:** Is this an indie thing where we have to pay for everything ourselves and not earn anything?

**Jennifer:** Well, that depends on you, and on the product you deliver.

**Ane Marthe:** Where are you from? You sound American?

**Jennifer:** I'm a talent scout from New York City. I lived in the north of Norway once, but that's already a long time ago. And now our company has become interested in the scene in Norway, and this is what *I'm* working on now.

**Sigrun:** Wow, that's exciting. Imagine us going to play on the Lower East Side, and all the legendary clubs around there.

**Jennifer:** Our offices are right next door to where CBGB used to be!

**Sigrun:** Wow, that's so cool!

**Ane Marthe:** But wait, wait wait wait a bit here now, let's take this slowly and easy and step by step. First of all: What kind of deal are you proposing?

**Sigrun:** And where is Jennifer, by the way? She should also hear this.

**Ane Marthe:** I will go and look for her. *(Walks out in the pulse of the music.)*

**Sigrun:** *(interested, dreamy)* Do you have people who take band pictures, and put on make up on the artists, and have big lights and mirrors and stuff, and then one person who is only holding that round thing that reflects the light on the artist when they take pictures for the record cover?

**Ane Marthe:** *(immediately returning)* How strange, I looked everywhere and I don't find Jennifer anywhere.

**Sigrun:** Did you check on the toilet?

**Ane Marthe:** No, but...

**Sigrun:** Wait a minute, *(lifts one index finger (with bandage?))* I will go and look in the cafeteria. *(Leaves and changes costume to MIRIAM, a vocal coach.)*

**Ane Marthe:** What were you two talking about when I was gone?

**Jennifer:** *(Puts on black sunglasses)* Listen. We do everything 60-40. 40 for us, 60 for you. Rock'n'roll has nothing to do with tennis, even if many people think so. There is no 15-0 in rock'n'roll. *(Looks mysterious.)*

**Ane Marthe:** *(Nodding thoughtfully)* Yeah, yeah, I understand. Hmmm. But our band name, Diamant, shouldn't it be Diamond if we are going abroad with our music?

**Jennifer:** *(Takes off the glasses again while speaking)* No no sweetie, it's much better with Diamant, that's exactly what people are into now, it's much more Berlin style. Think about David Bowie and Iggy Pop *(pronounced Pæp)*.

**Ane Marthe:** *(Slowly becoming convinced)* Yes, I see what you mean, yes.  
*(Sigrun enters as Miriam.)*

**Ane Marthe:** *(Very surprised)* What? Miriam? Is that really you?

**Sigrun (Miriam):** Hi Ane Marthe! *(Surprised)* And hi Håkon, what are you doing here?

**Ane Marthe:** Do you know each other??

**Sigrun:** *(smiling)* Yes, yes, we do!  
*Sigrun makes a knocking sound.*

**Ane Marthe:** *(In a hurry)* Oh! The door is knocking! It must be Sigrun and Jennifer who have locked themselves out. *(Runs out.)* I'm gonna run down and open the gate for them.

*Sigrun and Jennifer smile and hug each other and look greatly surprised.*

**Sigrun:** My goodness, Håkon, it must be at least 15 years ago!

**Jennifer:** The last time we met was when I was an exchange student at Musikklinja in Bodø.

**Sigrun:** I was an intern, I was on my way to become a singing teacher. And you were a young American.

**Jennifer:** Yes, we had some fantastic singing lessons!



**Sigrun:** Can you remember when we sang Neil Young at Hurtigruta?

**Jennifer:** On the cruise to Trollfjorden! I remember that like yesterday!

**Sigrun:** But the nicest song was the one that you had written. What happened?

**Jennifer:** Oh, don't talk about it. My dream was to sing in musicals and rock opera.

And now...

**Sigrun:** But you cannot give up! You must never give up!

**Jennifer:** But it's not so.... [about to say "easy"]

**Sigrun:** *(Interrupts)* You had such incredible voice material! I can still hear it, after all these years. You still have it, Håkon! I hear it when you speak. Remember, I am a singing teacher!

**Jennifer:** *(About to light up a big cigar with a match) (Biting on the cigar)* I'm sorry Miriam, I'm completely addicted to smoking these days.

**Sigrun:** *(Blows out the flame)* No more cigars for you, Håkon Hansen. I'm gonna make you a star!

*Ane Marthe returns from just a few meters away.*

**Ane Marthe:** *(re-enters)* How strange, I don't see them anywhere. What shall we do now then?

**Sigrun:** *(To Jennifer)* Let's go to my rehearsal space in Uranienborg, the sooner the better! *(Leaves with Jennifer under her arm, they gesticulate and move their mouths in silence)*

**Ane Marthe:** Wait, where are you going? *(Pause)* *(Shouts when they are out of sight)* But what about the record deal?

*(As soon as possible they re-enter as themselves.)*

**Ane Marthe:** Maybe I can practise a bit. I'll have a look at this etude by Josefine Tarantino. Let's see. *(Opens a score.)* 5 litres of water, 3 pounds of flour, one big bag of rice, 3 onions, seven eggs...

*(They come back as themselves.)* There you are! Where on earth have you been? I was looking all over for you!

#### **Scene IV: Stage Fright**

**Jennifer:** Listen girls, we talked about what kind of direction we should take and all that stuff, remember the subsidy proposal?

**Ane Marte:** Yes

**Sigrun:** Yes

**Ane Marte:** That was fun!

**Sigrun:** No, it was not!

*(A beat starts. Jennifer speaks in time with the beat.)*

**Jennifer:** Well, anyway, there's something I would like to tell you. I've been thinking about it for a long time now. Maybe you think it's silly, but if it's ever going to happen, it has to be NOW.

**Ane Marte:** "Show yourself now!"

**Sigrun:** Of course! *(Starts strumming a guitar)*

**Ane Marte:** What is it?

**Jennifer:** Well, you know me, we have known each other for a long time, and you both know, you know that *(Starts singing, musical style)*

I don't like to speak in public

I prefer to play the drums

When we play together I am fine

But when I am all alone

I have a silver microphone

And then I sing my heart out on my own

**Ane Marthe** *(comes in on synth bass)* **and Sigrun** **(harmonizing):**

Maybe we can think of something smart?

Maybe you can have another start and then move on from there and

See the world, sing your song again

**Jennifer:**

I remember, Sigrun, that you  
Told me bout your uncle Fred  
He was a ventriloquist, you said

**Ane Marthe:** (speaks, to Sigrun)

What's that?

**Sigrun:** (speaks, to Ane Marthe (and the children in the audience))

Buktaler!

**Sigrun:** (sings)

That's correct, and I have just  
inherited his fav'rite dummy  
Maybe you could give your voice to it?  
*(picks up the dummy from a box)*

**Ane Marthe:** (sceptical)

Are you sure that this is gonna work?  
Don't you think that everyone one will  
scratch their heads and roll their eyes?

**Jennifer:** (interrupts)

I have to try!  
In disguise on stage

*Music changes to espionage disco*

**Jennifer in dialogue with the dummy:** (spoken)

-Hi, who are you?  
-I'm a man of the world. I live a really wild and crazy life  
-Oh yeah? But how do you earn your living?  
-I am a secret agent  
-No kidding?!  
-I spy for the government. But don't tell anyone!

*Interlude of weird music, short dance of the dummy*

**Jennifer continues dialogue with the dummy:** (spoken)

-But tell me more about this spying stuff. Don't you ever get recognized?

-Well, funny you should mention it. You see, this crazy life has taught me one thing:  
The more you disguise yourself, the more you dress up; the more you end up looking  
like yourself!

*Jennifer has a small revelation when she hears this important information*

**Jennifer:** (singing)

Thank you very much my friend,  
you taught me lesson number one  
I see I have to go out on my own

**Sigrun + Ane Marthe:** (singing)

We will always stand behind you  
We can take this on the road  
The singer in the band will now be you

**ALL:**

**La la la la la la la la la**

***ferdig!***