

Creating the Play with Music *The WORLD* in Japan and Seeing Asian Theater with Media Studies Lens

Abstract: This essay explores the themes of identity, character development, and the unique aspects of theater as a medium for cultural exchange and understanding. It discusses the contrast between Western and Asian theater traditions, highlighting the emphasis on character in the latter. This essay also touches on the concept of total theater and the role of theater in shaping individual and collective identities. Overall, it presents a reflection on the transformative nature of the playwright's journey and the power of theater to break barriers and foster understanding.

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Introduction

In my academic journey of exploring performing arts as a student from Vassar College, I have come to appreciate that the success of theatrical productions hinges not solely on the brilliance of actors but also on the boundless creativity and dedicated efforts of the backstage crew. My choice to delve into Japanese musicals stems from a transformative encounter in 2020 with *Musical Moriarty the Patriot*. This production, adapted from a manga series inspired by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, offered a fresh perspective by exploring the enigmatic character of Professor Moriarty. The exceptional music, acting, and storytelling left me astounded upon my first online viewing. Ryo Hirano's portrayal of Sherlock Holmes, in particular, was a revelation, presenting a culturally nuanced interpretation that highlighted the character's humanity and inner struggles. In addition to the exceptional presentation on stage, it was also a thought-provoking work that left me pondering over how a classic can be adapted away from traditional depictions, challenging stereotypes and breathing new life into a beloved character. This artistic choice of redefining a character through the lens of Asian culture intrigued me profoundly, prompting my desire to explore the distinctiveness of Asian theater and inspiring my senior thesis: crafting a musical that delves into the intricacies of Asian identity.

Theater, by its very nature, is a collaborative art form. The vitality of live theater, where diverse individuals unite to create a shared experience among crews as well as hundreds of audiences through senses and emotions, further piqued my interest. As a foreign student, I found a strong sense of belonging and a shared passion that transcended cultural differences through theatre. This led to my decision to take my musical thesis project to Japan, fostering collaboration with Japanese drama students in a cross-cultural workshop. Producing a play in a foreign country with a language barrier offers a unique opportunity to explore the international

dimensions of theater. Furthermore, this characteristic of live theater dovetails perfectly with the central theme of my musical – identity. Identity, I believe, is a concept that is forged through interactions with others and shaped by engaging with diverse perspectives. Theater's precise capacity for cultivating connections and building identities fuels my passion for this art form, which offers both personal fulfillment and joy.

Why These Characters? Self-deconstruction

Shakespeare wrote in his play *As You Like It* this famous quote “All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages”. He summarizes the interactions and relationships of human beings as being the “players” or performers in people’s lives, while people are putting on different masks to play a lot of various roles. This base idea is used in my playwriting to create the 4 characters from the characters that I have been playing throughout my life. As the 4 characters of my play are exaggerations of my characteristic traits, writing these characters is to deconstruct and analyze myself.

Connecting this concept of self-deconstruction to Erving Goffman’s *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, it is clear that this concept has its social influence and structure that I could reference to build these characters. “As part of personal front we may include: insignia of office or rank; clothing; sex, age, and racial characteristics; size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like” (Goffman 24). This leads me to consider what “personal front” I mostly want to express and show. Then, rethinking the 8 years that I lived in the US, I still feel an invisible wall between me and the rest of the college society. This disoriented feeling brings me to explore the “racial characteristics” of me. Thus, I would like to

shape my idea of this musical to discuss Asian identity and Asian and Asian American struggles in American society.

I want to focus on conveying the idea that before we are people from different identity groups, we are all human beings. Many Asian people come to America for a better life, but they can live their lives without speaking a word of English. Some of us come to further our studies on some things that are never taught back in our countries. A part of our parents come here for their partners or a more idealistic future for their children. For example, I never knew there was something called drama before coming to America during a middle school exchange program where we went to see the Phantom of Opera. Because drama and theater are not being taught as necessary subjects in schools, I only had my first theatrical experience in high school when I came to America. Then I decided to pursue more in this subject that I never had a chance to touch on before my 14th birthday. Thus, I wrote the character “Lev” as an international student from China, who faces the problems of distancing from her family and finding out her identity in this gap between Asian and American cultures.

Even though I thought of myself as a person who adapts to environments quickly and I did not feel homesick or lonely when I came to America at first, I gradually understood that even though I was not physically shocked, I had always been shocked mentally. Every time my friends talk about a TV series that had only been aired in the 2000s in North America, I always feel helpless which is triggered by a natural difference in where we were brought up and pretend I knew what they were talking about while keeping silent. This experience creates the character “Suzuko” who pretends to be already adapted to the environment and wants to help Lev to make her choice.

Just like that “we often find that the individual may deeply involve his ego in his identification with a particular part, establishment, and group, and in his self-conception as someone who does not disrupt social interaction or let down the social units which depend upon that interaction” (Goffman 243). This “ego” that is built with the individual identity bring me to think through how one’s identity could be received illy by oneself, and this wrong ego then could strongly affect the people around. This ego will deviate from one’s self-recognition as a part of society, which leads to a dilemma of identity. With this concept in mind, “Ritsu” is created as the one who has been living in the American environment for a long time but still keeps some stereotypes about sexuality that are known in Asian cultures. Thus, he refuses to go to Japan with Eve to meet Eve’s mother while he craves the braveness in Eve and wants to be a person like Eve.

I created the character “Eve” as the counterpart of Lev or a masculine facade that I usually take on when I am facing troubles even though this persona may not be the perfect stereotypically masculine one. This character is based on his tenacity and his hope of looking forward. Although a lot of the story in this play is about his love with Ritsu, he still stands alone as a brave character without Ritsu. He brings the decisive personality that is hard to find in Lev.

In the story with Suzuko and Lev, we see the struggles of self-identification and adapting to the gap between Asian and American cultures. Suzuko’s intention to “save” Lev or herself back in the past reveals my confusion as an international student about what to keep and what to take from the two different cultures. This storyline discusses the ultimate question of whether should I follow the American way as I am living here or still protect my Chinese self in foreign surroundings. It is clear that Lev is the one who still keeps her root identity, while Suzuko smooths her way into American society.

In the story of Ritsu and Eve, we see the struggle for sexuality acceptance in the Asian environment while influenced by American values. How Ritsu believes Eve's mother will not accept their relationship presents the recent stereotypes of Asian parents and also, in some ways, the truth of them. However, using this reason as an excuse, Ritsu actually refuses to reveal his sexuality to others as he still believes being in the LGBTQ+ group is not something to say out loud. On the other hand, Eve looks through Ritsu as the real problem is that Ritsu refuses to face and resolve this question with Eve together. So Eve does not believe in the reasoning Ritsu gives to him and finally realizes the true face of Ritsu.

Goffman states: "In analyzing the self then we are drawn from its possessor, from the person who will profit or lose most by it, for he and his body merely provide the peg on which something of collaborative manufacture will be hung for a time. And the means for producing and maintaining selves do not reside inside the peg; in fact these means are often bolted down in social establishments. There will be a back region with its tools for shaping the body, and a front region with its fixed props. There will be a team of persons whose activity on stage in conjunction with available props will constitute the scene from which the performed character's self will emerge, and another team, the audience, whose interpretive activity will be necessary for this emergence. The self is a product of all of these arrangements, and in all of its parts bears the marks of this genesis" (253). Thus, all these characteristics make me the person I am, and I utilize these to make individual characters. By making the "back region" and "front region" the literal backstage and stage in a theater, I bring the daily personas I am acting as to the actual stage where actors portray the different aspects of me. All these various struggles in identity build my values, so the process of separating these qualities helps me to understand the self and the social influence I had. Then, these characters' interactions with each other depict the conflicts

I face every day in my mind. Even though these characters are created with my traits at first, their selves gradually emerge with these activities with the other characters.

Using the idea of self-deconstruction, 4 characters appear from the self and emerge their own selves as the story progresses. As the characters' growth is the most important part of this story rather than the story itself, it leads to a discussion of my reasoning for choosing this method of emphasizing the character rather than the plot to tell my story.

Why Asian Theater? Character vs. Plot

In the section *Performance Training and Transmission* of *The Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre*, it is stated that “A two-step process of performance preparation indicates the nature of most Asian traditional theatre. The process is centred in the actor, for the actor is the source and repository of most performance information... But in other genres the centrality of the actor extends to script composition: the actor may be a playwright, or improvise dialogue and, in some cases, song lyrics during performance. In order to function at high technical level, the first task of the actor (dancer or musician) is to become proficient in the artistic and performance ‘codes’, the artistic languages, of the theatre form. One does not begin by training to ‘act’; one begins by training to be a skilled ‘artist’... Second, and only after this firm artistic base has been laid, the actor learns to enact roles in plays” (Brandon and Banham 5). Then, they gave examples of Indian kathakali, Japanese Noh, Indonesian and Malaysian puppetry, Thai theatre musicians, and Beijing Opera, explaining the individual training throughout an actor's life before stepping onto the stage. In Asian theater cultures, the actors are the center of the stage and even the center of a theater company. New plays evolve from the actor. As actors are the most vital, then their embodiment, which is the characters, is equally important.

However, from the tradition of Greek theater with Aristotle's *Poetics*, the most important element of our Greek tragedy poetry has always been the plot. Aristotle wrote: "For tragedy is an imitation, not of men but of action and life, of happiness and misfortune", the plotline of a theater piece is the core of the medium (13). Without a convincing plot, the humanity of the characters in the show will not shine. It is the action the characters take that creates their emotions afterward, whereas a character's emotion cannot shift without a proper turning point in the story. Thus, he states that "character is a by-product of the action" as the characters cannot stand alone without the plot (Aristotle 14).

To give three specific examples countering the Western emphasis on the plot, Yuan Zaju's, Noh's, and Indian traditional theater's ideal of the actors will be explained. In Yuan Zaju, actors are trained throughout their lives to prepare them for the characters they are going to play. If we look into the famous Zaju play *Injustice to Dou E*, the audience will realize how Dou E has all the singing parts while also having long monologues. How can an actor without the proper training in this character type play this heroine? If the heroine cannot be acted out correctly, how can the story be tenable? The performance cannot even happen when the actors are not qualified enough. If Aristotle said that the plot is much more vital than the character, Guan would say that without a valid character on stage, no plots can exist.

Zeami wrote the first two chapters (Chapter 1 Items Concerning the Practice of the No in Relation to the Age of the Actor and Chapter 2 Various Items Concerning Role Playing) in *Fushikaden* to explain the importance of the actor and character (Zeami, *On the Art of the No Drama* 4-17). He explained how an actor should be trained from age 7 to 50+ and the process of learning a type of character. Without understanding these role types in their hearts, actors cannot play the characters in order to build the story. The story emerges from the characters if they are

acted out by the master actors who caught the essence of theater, *Hana* (the flower), from their training. Thus, it is clear that the character is more essential than the plot.

India's Kudiattam and Sanskrit drama also require the actors to be trained in precise movements, sign languages, and crafts in order to be able to get onto the stage. With Kudiattam, the sign languages tell the whole story again even though the audience may not be able to hear the conversations on stage. The performance of Kudiattam may last for 10 or 20 days, and the audience can join and leave anytime. There is never enough text to fill in the length of the performance, thus they repeat one story with different actors acting it out in different ways. This method of theater performance requires the actors to highly understand their crafts before even playing the smallest role on stage. Whereas, Sanskrit drama actors need to manage all the movements and emotions regarding each *rasa* to play the character.

Moreover, it could be argued that the audience comes to the theater for these characters and actors rather than the plot, as most Asian theater's stories come from the tales people already know. To take Yuan Zaju as an example: "tradition Chinese plays are mostly rewritings of old stories. Playwrights since the Yuan dynasty have borrowed heavily from the rich reservoir of existing literature to build their dramatic plots...Moreover, many of those old stories, whether they come from history, legends, oral tradition, or narrative fiction, have been rewritten, revised, or reproduced over and over again throughout the years and made into plays of various lengths, forms, and styles" (Ma 17-18). When the audience is all familiar with the texts, they come to the theater not to learn about a new story but to shift their attention to what changes each different actor could make to a well-known character. This stays the same even nowadays for Broadway shows. People go to the same show for the second or third time to see the differences one could make when the cast or even the whole company is changed. "When fans walk into a traditional

theater, they are very often completely familiar with the story, but they still enjoy every minute of the play” (Ma 18). Thus, the audience comes for the actors but not the plot.

This conversation about character and plot could also extend to the idea of whether theater could stand alone only with the text or not. “Unlike text-based Western drama, which can be transmitted by published books and stored for centuries, the art of traditional performance resides in the body of the living performer-teacher” (Brandon and Banham 6). When Western drama can be protected with the technology of printing, the essence of Asian theater is always kept by the living performers. In Asian theater cultures, “A performance, then, is one momentary arrangement of pre-known elements, one in a series of performances which are rather like the changing patterns of a kaleidoscope. Performances are examples of an existing artistic form much more than they are the ‘production of a play’. The ‘play is *not* the thing’; the genre, the art form is” (Brandon and Banham 6). Thus, Asian performances do not focus on the ‘play’ or the text, but on the elements that build them, while in Western theater, all actors serve the text.

Many Western playwrights from the 15th century already had the vision to publish their texts for the benefit of their audience who cannot see the performance live, while it is hard to find Asian theater groups publishing their texts. Asian theater’s treaties and theories tended to point to the interior members of the theater world rather than the audience. For example, Zeami’s treaties were his way to record his father’s sayings and ideas at first and aimed to leave them for the next generation’s practitioners of Noh. Bharata's *Natyasastra* was written for the company manager to instruct the Sanskrit theater in the correct method. No texts or records from the performances were published, which shows how text is never the main element of the show. This shows that no plot is more important than the characters in Asian theater.

With all the discussions above, Asian theater focuses on the shaping of the characters rather than putting all the attention on the plots. So I also focus on the growth of the characters in the story rather than making a dramatic fate that they have to follow throughout the play. Each character in the play has their own identity built from their growth, which leads to the question of why choosing theater as the medium to portray identity.

Why Theater? Identity & Interculturalism

Identity, I believe, is a concept that is forged through interactions with others and shaped by engagement with diverse perspectives. “It begins with the assumption that culture - the fluid, day-to-day, lived realities of specific peoples in specific places and at specific times - exists only insofar as it is enacted, performed into being by the daily and (extra-daily) ritual and performative activities of individuals and communities as they negotiate their place in the world” (Knowles 1). “Because it is a spectacle, and because of its concrete, material and oral nature, theatre, which is always intended for a gathering of people, is an inherently collective activity. To attend a performance is thus to be with others at a particular moment, meeting in a specific location with the intention of participating in an event” (Biet and Triau 1). ““Going to the theatre’ is the social and repeated experience of being together with others, the experience of participating in a community and in its story, and the personal experience of being on among others, and therefore alone, with one’s own narrative” (Biet and Triau 41). This shared experience of being present in the same physical space at the same moment in time creates a collective identity for the individuals involved in a production. This identity becomes the essence of theater, the intangible thread that binds actors, crew members, and the audience into a cohesive whole.

Theater, by its very nature, is a collaborative art form, which breaks the walls of identity while creating it. In many instances, the creation of art is clearly a collaborative process. While films are often associated with their directors, the production involves essential contributions from producers, camera crews, actors, scriptwriters, and various other professionals. This collaborative nature extends to other forms of art, such as performance arts, which rely on a team of individuals for their realization, including musicians, conductors, dancers, and actors. Additionally, the creation of art is influenced by factors beyond immediate production, including technological advancements, aesthetic codes, and cultural prerequisites, all of which play a role in shaping the final work (Wolff 32). As art is a collective production, every member of the process of creating the art influences the identity of this production. “On the one hand, the spectator participates in an event peculiar to the society and to the link that this event creates among all its partners - in a sort of ceremony, therefore; on the other hand, she has taken the decision to be alone for an encounter with an Other, to isolate herself, to be face to face with Other. As such, the performance she is witnessing (or in which she participates) is an expression of both the shared and the particular: it serves to reveal what she has in common with the world (humanity, inhumanity, passions, social behaviours, etc.) and to underscore her otherness (the fact that she is not the way she sees others represented, the fact that she thinks differently from others, both those on the stage and those around her to be a distance from them). This principle of simultaneity is essential, since it underscores what and who the spectator truly is: a social individual. And this principle engages her in several antithetical ways so that she must choose, or decide not to choose, one of them, based on what is being offered to her, where she is or the attitude that she decides to adopt” (Biet and Triaux 42). The audience member engages in a unique societal event that connects everyone involved, akin to a ceremony. Simultaneously, they choose

to isolate themselves for a personal encounter with the performance, highlighting both their shared humanity with others and their individuality. This dual experience reflects the audience member's social nature, presenting them with contrasting perspectives and choices based on the performance's offerings and their own disposition. Attending a theater event then makes the audience figure out an identity they might accept through understanding the messages that the company delivers. It reveals how a shared identity can be made through the social production of art. While finding a common identity with others, the theater also gives the audience to reflect on their similarities and differences to the social structure they are in.

Anybody can be in the theater and enjoy a journey or learn about something new by the performance of the company. “Whether it is being together or alone among others, going to the theatre always means seeing what one does not ordinarily see in the world by oneself... It is a performance exhibited in a specific place and that establishes itself as essentially different from habitual modes of social action and speech” (Biet and Triaux 42). Thus, the audience comes to the theater to witness something that they cannot usually see in daily life. This theatrical journey always includes the topic of understanding others, as you see events that are rare and somehow unknown to your life. These others might be a group of people different from the audience or similar to them, and they are always breaking their own bubble to accept a show new to them. “Seeing theatre is therefore, literally, seeing something else from what one sees outside the theatre... Seeing theatre is therefore seeing in another way what one sees outside the theatre, or what one sees about others and about oneself” (Biet and Triaux 42). This expresses that seeing theater is to see something outside of normal daily life.

Interculturalism is another main focus of my work, to mix and utilize different languages to create a collaborative artistic environment. Just like Knowles stated in *Theatre and*

Interculturalism, “The new interculturalism, as I see it, involves collaborations and solidarities across real and respected material differences within local, urban, national, and global intercultural performance ecologies” (59). With people from various identities and backgrounds, theater easily presents a method of connecting cultures and languages, which creates an ecosystem. As people need to be in the same place to produce a production, interculturalism can be established more easily than other media. “[F]irst, everything that happens within an ecosystem affects everything else within that system; second, the health of an ecosystem is best judged by the diversity of its species rather than by the competitive success of individual components or species... These do not function merely as sites of semiotic intersection, or as politicised sites for the constitution of new, hybrid, and diasporic identities in space.” (Knowles 59). This fact connects back to the idea of theater being a collaborative art form, where each multicultural background of this ecosystem influences each other to build a shared identity. I feel this strongly each time I work on a show when I see how many people are as passionate about theater as me and want to make the magic happen on stage. I felt the same when I went to Japan this summer to see the 5th work of the “Moriarty the Patriot” series. Audiences from all around the world gathered for this show and celebrated the journey that the company had offered us. So I also want to use theater to break this invisible wall and to let people who may know nothing about Asians in America learn something new.

Summarizing the identity and interculturalism in theater, it is proper to use Biet and Triauf’s statement that “the person who goes to the theatre is one who simultaneously wishes to be joined to others, to be alone, to see the world as it is, to see the world as it is not ordinarily seen, to see both the resemblance and the difference between themselves and others, to see themselves as never before, to encounter both the expected and the surprising, and also to escape

all of that, with (or without) the intention of entering a different world, which is substituted for the real world, for the self, for the session, and for reality” (43).

Why Theater? Liveness

Balme stated in *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*: “We find here [McLuhan’s] most famous phrase: ‘the medium is the message’, which means essentially that we should leave behind the traditional distinction between form and content, because from the perspective of media theory, the material (technological) form of a medium is its content; it is certainly what should be studied in terms of its effects on human life. This is a concept of ‘medium’ which can, of course, be applied to the theatre (and McLuhan makes many references to drama - from Shakespeare to Beckett - to illustrate points)” (198). Theater does have its place in the realm of media studies and its specificity to media theory, and it is worth exploring theater’s message as a medium. “Using McLuhan’s definition of medium, we can say that theatre is not distinct from, but an integral and historically important part of the study of media (if not of ‘media studies’)” (Balme 198).

The theater is a medium that requires liveness, which means each show even of the same production will not be exactly the same. This quality is the media specificity of theater. “The term ‘media specificity’ refers, in the words of the film theorist Noel Carroll, to a form of ‘medium-essentialism’: ‘It is the doctrine that each art form has its own distinctive medium, a medium that distinguishes it from other art forms... the medium qua essence dictates what is suitable to do with the medium’ (Carroll 196: 49)... Applied to the theatre, media specificity would imply a concentration on the basic theatrical situation that would necessarily highlight the live audience and/or a performance style not reliant on modern technology” (Balme 199). The

live aspect of theater also gives the requirements and limitations that people from all around the world need to gather in the same place at the same time to put on a production. “Firstly, the medial quality of theatre lies not in the sum of any essential characteristics (technological or otherwise), but rather in describing how it structures the flow of communication between production and reception. This ‘flow’ may indeed be organized by technological means, but most importantly it should be understood as a set of contingent relations structuring the interaction of space, performer and spectator” (Balme 197). This quality of the medium again breaks the barrier and wall. This is also one reason why I decided to bring this piece to Japan with a workshop this March and collaborate with Japanese drama students. Producing a production outside the country where the language is being spoken, will offer the international value and collaboration of theater.

With this media specificity, liveness offers this once-in-a-lifetime experience to the relationship between the performers and the audience. Even playing the same show, the performance every day is different. Thus, every performance is unique. “All of that rests on a single, ephemeral event, which can be repeated, but never repeated and executed in an identical fashion, since at each performance (or at each representation) the conditions of action and reception change insofar as neither the audience, nor the acting, nor the layout of the location, nor the circumstances, can be strictly identical” (Biet 43). With that idea in mind, the audience chooses the perspective they like from what is offered on stage as the two shows are never the same. This media specificity offers an immediacy that other media cannot provide as media like film and TV are edited and fixed with different techniques to fulfill their media specificity.

Why With Music? Total Theater

In the realm of Asian theater, “there are numerous theatre genres that fuse choreographed stage movement (steps, turns, stamps, jumps, hand and arm gestures, facial expression) with rhythmic music, and often with sung lyrics as well” (Brandon and Banham 6). “[I]t should not obscure the reality that most theatre forms in Asia are interwoven fabrics of music, dance and acting, and after that perhaps also of masks or puppetry... Most Asian theatre is ‘total theatre’ in which all performance aspects are fused into a single form” (Brandon and Banham 7). The quotes suggest that Asian theater often integrates choreographed stage movement, music, and sometimes sung lyrics, creating a fusion of performance elements. This approach aligns closely with the concept of total theater, where all aspects of performance are combined into a single form. In contrast, Western performing arts have historically shown a trend towards specialization, with a separation of performance mediums (Brandon and Banham 7).

Play with music, a genre that combines drama with musical elements, such as songs and choreographed movements, shares similarities with total theater as described in Asian traditions. The integration of music, dance, and acting in play with music can create a cohesive and immersive theatrical experience where all elements work together to convey the narrative. This fusion of performance aspects reflects the idea of total theater, where the boundaries between music, movement, and drama are blurred, and the performance is experienced as a unified whole. Therefore, it can be argued that play with music is the nearest genre to total theater in the Western tradition, as it shares the principle of integrating various performance elements into a cohesive theatrical form, similar to the practices seen in Asian theater.

The Workshop of “The WORLD”

Since September 2023, I have been writing, rewriting, and editing the script with the help of Professor Gil-Sheridan. We discussed the relationships of the characters and how to connect the two separate storylines into one whole story. When the twist in Suzuko and Lev's storyline is already too strong, how to use Eve and Ritsu's storyline to even that strength, or how to make their storyline as impactful as Suzuko and Lev's? Professor Gil-Sheridan's comment brings light to the answer to this question. When people gave up a traditional family structure, their friends' importance in their lives became indispensable. With this thought in mind, I strengthened the friendship between Suzuko and Ritsu, as they are the ones who were friends from youth and they are all facing a foreign situation: Suzuko living in a different country, and Ritsu facing his sexuality. Until November 2023, 2 updated versions of the script were finished for the upcoming audition process.

Then, I and my executive producer of this production, Yiyi Zhang, a graduate student of arts management at Tokyo University of the Arts started our audition process for both the cast and production team in December 2023. The production team and cast were decided in the middle of January. With the addition of our dramaturg John Cai, who graduated from Emory University to our team in December 2023, we polished, changed, and argued about the script with each other's logic and research. We first rethought the placement of the songs as the songs were highly concentrated in the first half of the script. Because the lyrics of the songs do not contain vital plots of the story, they can exist as songs without the thread of the story. Thus, it became much easier to move them around rather than fixing them to specific scenes. I reworked and balancelly placed the songs into the script at last. Before the rewrites with John, there were more layers of relationships between Eve and Ritsu except the love relationship. From an audience perspective, John suggested how the other layers of relationships may hugely distract

the audience from the main topic of this story – identity. So I focused on simplifying the relationship and cutting down the layers to guide the audience to the main themes. After two more versions of rewrites, the final draft for rehearsal was done at the start of January 2024.

During this process of revising the script, Yiyi brought up a method of making this production more collaborative and emphasizing the multicultural aspect of the story and discussed the possibility of the actors being a part of the script's creative process and changing lines in English to their native languages. As we have a cast of members from Japan, the Philippines, Ireland, and Singapore, we want to maximize the privilege of having this diverse cast. So we decided to include the cast members in the process of revising the script and let the actors change their lines into their perspective languages and phrasings with their understanding of the characters while not alternating the plots of the story. The final script we used for the workshop was a version with the majority of English including Japanese, Chinese, Tagalog, and Irish.

At the end of January 2024, our online rehearsals started. This was where suddenly the invisible walls I mentioned before appeared. With a production team and cast of various nationalities, the language barrier appeared to be one of the walls. As I am in the US, John is in China, and one cast member is in the Netherlands for their study, the time difference became another wall. We did not even have a full read-through until the middle of February because all the members could not find a common time long enough to read through. However, to break these barriers and walls, we decided to make English and Japanese our common language to communicate. When one person cannot understand one of the languages perfectly, we use the other language to explain and elaborate. We sacrifice some of our sleeping time to get up early or to sleep late in order to rehearse as much as possible. We divided the rehearsal process into two:

the music rehearsals, which I take responsibility for holding, and text rehearsals, which the director Shogo Tanigawa holds, so we can make sure the actors have enough time to practice both the songs and the texts while considering the time difference for all of the members. Thus, this process of producing this show has already fulfilled my goal of using theater to connect and break the invisible walls.

As our online rehearsals ended at the start of March, offline rehearsals for the upcoming workshop on March 15th, 2024 began, and I flew to Tokyo on March 6th. In the short 7-day offline rehearsal period, many problems that cannot be seen from Zoom meetings arose from the water, and one of them is that everyone's expectation of the workshop varies. We first designed the workshop as a staged reading of the play, but we found out that we could not block all the scenes as well as do character works in this short period of time. So, the creative cohort - me, Yiyi, and our director got together for a meeting to discuss the current situation and decided to cut down the scenes to block and focus on the blocking for the starting and ending scenes while making other scenes pure reading. This decision turned out to be the right one that released the pressure on both the actors and the director. Again, this process of communication and conversation is the action that I aimed to set the bridge between cultures.

On March 15th, we had our workshop. The workshop was split into two parts: the reading of the play, and the talkback and feedback section. After the successful reading of the play, we started with a talkback conversation of a small Q&A section with the audience, then group discussions of different topics. From the group discussions, I had the chance to get comments and feedback from a Japanese audience perspective. Listening to their thoughts helped me understand what in the setting worked for them and what did not. For example, one audience said that in Japan, the bar is where people can drink alone, whereas, in the play, the bar is where

everyone can express their deeper feelings and thoughts, and how the relationship of family friends is not common in Japan. There is one comment that I found the most important and interesting. Because this is a multilingual and multicultural play, there should be scenes where the language becomes the barrier and the characters may not understand each other rather than all the characters understand each other's language really well. This feedback touches on the basic understanding of the play's structure and how there are always miscommunications and misunderstandings when the language barrier is the elephant in the room. As I also had the same experience during the process, it gave me a direction for changing the script further for the actual performance planned for August 2024.

This trip is a unique opportunity for me to immerse myself in Japanese culture, learn from local artists, and collaborate with fellow theater enthusiasts. Producing a play in a foreign country with a language barrier offers a unique opportunity to explore the international dimensions of theater. This experience of working as a playwright with directors, actors, and producers from Japan, the Philippines, Ireland, Singapore, and China, sparks the chemistry of theater as a collaborative art. Listening to the comments and feedback from the workshop also helped me to grow as a theater artist and understand how multicultural theater impacts the audience. It is an experience that will not only enrich my ideas of theater but also foster cultural exchange and understanding.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Shakespeare's quote from "As You Like It" serves as a poignant reminder of the roles we play in life, a concept echoed in my playwriting journey. By deconstructing myself into four characters, I aim to explore the complexities of human identity and the masks

we wear in society. Drawing on Erving Goffman's notion of the "presentation of self," I delve into the social influences and structures that shape these characters, highlighting the interconnectedness of personal identity and societal norms. Through the struggles and interactions of these characters, I seek to convey the universal truth that, beneath our diverse identities, we are all human beings navigating the complexities of life.

While Western theater places a significant emphasis on plot and text, Asian theater, as exemplified by Yuan Zaju, Noh, and Indian traditional theater, prioritizes the training and embodiment of characters by actors. This focus on character development underscores the importance of the actor as the central figure in Asian theater, with the plot often serving as a framework for the exploration and expression of character. This contrast highlights the divergent approaches to storytelling and performance, with Asian theater placing greater emphasis on the individual characters and their development within a narrative framework.

Theater serves as a powerful medium for exploring and shaping identity, both on an individual and collective level. Through shared experiences in the theater, individuals are able to connect with others, reflect on their own identities, and engage with diverse perspectives. This collaborative art form not only allows for the expression of individual identities but also fosters a sense of interculturalism, bringing together people from different backgrounds to create a shared artistic ecosystem. As theatergoers immerse themselves in the world of the performance, they are given the opportunity to see the world in new ways, challenge their assumptions, and ultimately, gain a deeper understanding of themselves and others.

Theater's unique medium specificity lies in its live, ephemeral nature, offering audiences a once-in-a-lifetime experience with each performance. This liveness not only distinguishes theater from other forms of media but also underscores its importance in the realm of media

studies, emphasizing the dynamic relationship between performers and the audience that is continually shaped by the live interaction and unique conditions of each theatrical event.

The concept of total theater, where all performance elements are fused into a single form, is prominent in Asian theater traditions. Play with music in the Western tradition shares similarities with total theater, as both integrate various performance elements into a cohesive theatrical experience. This suggests that play with music is the Western genre closest to total theater, highlighting the universal nature of theater as a medium that transcends cultural boundaries.

In summary, the journey of producing *The WORLD* has been a rich and transformative experience, marked by collaboration, creativity, and the breaking of invisible barriers. From script development to rehearsals and the workshop, each stage has brought new challenges and insights, highlighting the power of theater as a medium for cultural exchange and understanding. Through this process, I have not only grown as a theater artist but also gained a deeper appreciation for the diverse perspectives and voices that contribute to the richness of the theatrical experience.

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The World

By Carina Jiang

Characters:

Suzuko: 30s, she/her, Japanese, bar owner of “The World”

Lev: 20s, she/her, Chinese, speaks fluent Japanese, a college student

Ritsu: 30s, he/him, second-generation Asian American, looks Asian, a college professor

Eve: 20s, he/him, half Japanese and half American, a college student

Set:

A 2010s bar.

Time:

Present.

10 years ago.

Prologue

Not a lot of the set is being shown, the set is gradually lighting up during M1.

Suzuko: Welcome to The World my friends and my name is Suzuko! This place might look like a bar to you, but this could be any corner of the world and around the world.

*M1 About the World
Welcome welcome welcome
To the World
Welcome welcome welcome
To our world
A world you might feel familiar
Or a world you know nothing about*

*But
Thank you for your coming
You are stepping into a world
You are breaking a wall

Welcome welcome welcome
To the World
Welcome welcome welcome
To our world
A world you might feel familiar
Or a world you might know nothing about*

*But
Thank you for your coming
We are trying to show the world
We are glad you are here
So
Thank you for your coming
So*

Enjoy what you're thinking

So

Let's see where this is going

So welcome to this nonsense World we created for you and you only.

Scene 1

We are in a flashback. In the World, the bar. Evening. Lev is lying on the bar table with her phone in her right hand. An empty glass on the table. A bell rings.

Lev: Hey, Suzuko.

Suzuko: No.

Lev: Please!

Suzuko: Definitely no.

Lev: I am already 21, I could drink.

Suzuko: No, both you and I know why you are drinking like this right now.

Lev: Please, and you also know why I need it!

Suzuko: Then stop holding on to that stupid phone!

Lev: I'm waiting on something...

Suzuko: I know.

Pause

Lev: I'm tired. I want to sleep.

Suzuko: Then let go of that phone and go sleep upstairs.

Lev: Stop that. Stop that. I am only talking to you to be sober and wait for that call.

Suzuko: You should let that go and rest.

Lev: No no no...

Suzuko: This is the third time this month you come to my bar like this.

Lev: Then what?

Suzuko: What is the meaning of this?

Lev: I don't know.

Suzuko: You stormed into my bar the third time this month and now being like an alcoholic as you just turned 21.

Lev: I should have been already drinking for years if I am back HOME!

Suzuko: What do you mean?

Lev: hmmm...

Suzuko: Okay, looks like you are not sober enough to listen to me then.

Lev: Oh! I am totally sober!

Suzuko: That is always something people say when you are drunk!

Lev: I am not drunk, please, Suzuko.

Suzuko: Stop, stop, you are drunk. Give me that phone and go upstairs now!

Lev: What's wrong with you Suzuko?

Suzuko: Nothing is wrong with me. Something is wrong with you. We both know that!

Lev: whatever...

Suzuko (*reaching for Lev's phone*): Give me that and stop being like this!

Lev (*stands up*): No! I'm waiting for a call!

Suzuko (*again reaching for Lev's phone, but fails*): Fuck that call!

Lev: Suzuko!

Suzuko (*again, succeeds*): There we go!

Lev: No! Give it back!

Suzuko (*locks the phone into a drawer*): Okay, now you go upstairs and forget about this whole stupid call thing.

Lev: Suzuko, why?

Suzuko: This fricking call has been bothering my friend for around a month, and I am helping my friend to get back to her normal self.

Lev: Suzuko...

Suzuko: Lev, go upstairs and sleep.

Lev: Good night.

A bell rings. Silence, Suzuko disappears from the stage, and Lev appears to be sleeping on her arms at the bar table.

Scene 2

Eve comes into the bar from the same door Lev exits to.

Suzuko: Good evening, Sir.

Eve: Oh! Good evening.

Suzuko: Welcome to the World.

Eve: Oh, thank you.

Pause, Eve sits at the bar.

Eve: So this is that World.

Eve looks around for a bit and suddenly realizes it is a little bit impolite.

Eve: Sorry, I'm too excited.

Suzuko (*smiles*): That's fine. What would you like to drink, Sir?

Eve: Oh! I am not old enough to drink, Miss.

Suzuko (*giggles*): Oh my god dear, I'm sorry!

Suzuko recovers from her laugh.

Suzuko: It's been some time since somebody called me "Miss", dear.

Eve: Oh, I'm happy to be the one!

Suzuko pours Ginger Ale into a glass and gives it to Eve.

Suzuko: Here you go, dear.

Eve (*pronounces Suzuko's name correctly in Japanese*): Thank you, Suzuko?

Suzuko (*stuns a bit*): Okay that's impressive, how do you know my name?

Eve (*smiles*): Well, you'll know the reason just in a bit.

Eve sips the Ginger Ale in the glass while Ritsu walks into the bar.

Eve: There he is!

Eve runs to Ritsu. Suzuko notices something that is not quite right.

Eve (*hugs Ritsu*): Ritsu...

Ritsu (*hugs back unwillingly*): Eve, people are watching...

Eve: There is only one person other than us. Only Suzuko is here!

Ritsu struggles out of the hug and turns to Suzuko.

Ritsu: Sorry Suzuko san. This is-

Eve: -Me and Suzuko just met! And she offers me ginger ale! And she is so ni-

Ritsu: -Okay okay okay, sorry Suzuko san. This is Eve.

Suzuko (*laughs*): Okay! Hi Eve.

Eve: Hi Suzuko!

Suzuko (*points at Ritsu*): So that is where you got my name from.

Eve: Yes! From Ritsu!

Suzuko: Hello, Ritsu.

Ritsu is embarrassed. He walks to the bar table and sits beside Eve. Eve also comes back to his seat.

Ritsu: Hello and sorry Suzuko san. Eve is... just like that.

Suzuko: It's fine, it's fine. It's a pleasure to meet him! And long time no see, Ritsu. (久しぶり)

Ritsu: Yes, long time no see. (はい、お久しぶりです)

Suzuko: Something to drink?

Ritsu: Yeah...

Suzuko: Aviation, right?

Ritsu: Yes.

Suzuko starts to make the drink for Ritsu. She speaks without stopping her work in her hands.

Suzuko: So, I noticed some changes in you. How's life recently?

Ritsu: It's good...it's great-

Eve: -Great because I'm with you!

Ritsu: Eve...

Suzuko (*laughs*): Great! That's great to hear. Did your contract with the college settle?

Ritsu:.../Eve (*to Suzuko*): What?

Suzuko: I asked Ritsu if his contract with where he is/ teaching is settled.

Eve: /Yeah, what contract?

Suzuko: I asked, your boyfriend, if his contract, with his college, is settled, or not. It's not a good habit to cut people off when they are speaking, dear.

Eve: Sorry. (*then to Ritsu*) What/ contract?

Suzuko (*to Ritsu*): /You did not tell him?

Pause, Ritsu does not answer either question.

Suzuko: Okay, forget that. Eve, when did you get together with Ritsu?

Pause, Eve does not answer the question.

Eve: How do you know that I'm Ritsu's boyfriend, Suzuko?

Suzuko: Isn't it obvious, dear?

Eve (*blushes and puts his face into his hands*): Oh god.

Ritsu: How is YOUR life, Suzuko?

Suzuko: Great, like always. I open the bar when I want to, and I close the bar when I want to. So, I'm great and happy.

Suzuko finishes working on the drink and notices Eve drinks all his ginger ale.

Suzuko : Here is your aviation Ritsu. Do you want more ginger ale Eve?

Eve: Could I have some alcohol?

Suzuko: Boy, you said you're not the age.

Eve: Well I lied-

Ritsu: -Eve.

Eve: Well I did not lie, but I'm 20.

Suzuko: And?

Eve: Because I am half Japanese and I'm 20!

Ritsu: Oh god./Suzuko: What?

Ritsu: Because you have your Seijishiki (coming of age ceremony) in Japan at the age of 20./

Didn't the law change that age to 18 recently?

Suzuko (*to Eve*): /I know that, I came from there, but does that matter here? Boy, you're still not the age to drink HERE.

Eve: Please, Suzuko san!!!

Suzuko: Don't start using polite form with me now Eve, /that feels so weird, gosh.

Eve: /PLEEEEEAAAASSSSSEEE, REIIIIKOOOO SANNNNNNN

Suzuko: OKAYYYYYY, Okayyyyyy.

Eve: Yes!!!

Suzuko leaves to bring something out of the storage.

Ritsu (*shakes his head*): Oh dear Eve. You shouldn't be doing this.

Eve: But you're here. You'll take care of me.

Ritsu: Yeah, definitely I will.

Suzuko comes back. Suzuko pours sparkling water and then umeshu (plum wine) in a glass.

Suzuko (*pushes the drink to Eve*): Okay, umeshu with sparkling water.

Eve (*speaks while looking at the drink*): Umeshu? My first time drinking it!

Ritsu: It's a drink made with plum.

Eve: Oh!

Eve drinks it.

Eve: Ahhhh, I LOVE IT!

Suzuko: Haha, umeshu is sweet, so I bet you like it, kid.

Eve: Thank you Suzuko~!

Eve hugs Suzuko over the bar table.

Suzuko: You are so welcome.

Pause. Suzuko is pouring herself a glass of umeshu with a rock.

Suzuko: Okay then Eve, because I brought you the alcohol you want, can you tell me about you and Ritsu?

Scene 3

We are in a flashback. Midnight in the bar. A bell rings.

Lev: Okay, the key for the drawer...

Suzuko (*switches the lights on*): What are you doing?

Lev (*surprised, her phone in her hands*): Oh! Suzuko.

Suzuko: Emhmm...

Lev: I thought you were asleep.

Suzuko: Apparently I am not.

Lev: Sorry...

Suzuko (*reaches for the phone*): Okay, give it to/

Lev (*holds tight*): /No no no

Suzuko: You are creating a whole scene for this nonsense!

Lev: What nonsense!?

Suzuko: Give it to me/ now!

Lev: /No!

Suzuko grabs Lev's right hand. Lev shoves Suzuko away.

Lev: You know this is important for me!

Suzuko (*grabs Lev to herself*): Then what? Just allow that to break your mental and mind?!

Lev: ...

Suzuko takes the phone away. Lev suddenly realizes and reaches for the phone. Suzuko tripped on something on the floor.

Suzuko (*balancing herself*): No no no...

Lev: No!

The phone smashes on the floor.

Suzuko: Happy now?

Lev: That was what I wanted to ask you!

Pause.

Suzuko: Well, now you do not have to think about it.

Lev: Oh no, I will think more about it.

Pause.

Lev: I was waiting for my father's call.

Suzuko: What? I thought...

Lev: You thought what? Like I was waiting for some random nonsense?

Suzuko: But you have been like this for a month, you cannot be dealing with your father for a month?!

Lev: That's just how complicated this whole thing is.

Suzuko: Okay, then what happened?

Lev:... I don't want to talk about it now. Can I borrow your phone?

Suzuko: Why? You have been waiting for that call the whole night but never dialed the number out by yourself.

Lev: Please Suzuko, I think I do have the courage to call this time.

Suzuko (gives the phone to Lev): Okay.

Lev (receives the phone): Thank you.

Pause.

Suzuko: Why are you not calling? Huh?

Lev:...

Suzuko: Then just give it back to me.

Lev: No, I'm sorry. I will call.

Suzuko: Okay.

Pause.

Suzuko (*takes the phone away and tries to dial*): Fine.

Lev: Please Suzuko, please no...

Suzuko (*stop dialing*): Okay, then tell me what is happening now.

Lev:...

Pause.

Suzuko: Wait.

Lev:?

Suzuko: Why you are borrowing my phone but not going home to figure all these out?

Lev: Great point... Please lend me your phone so I can call home.

Suzuko: No no no, this is weird.

Lev: No, this is not weird. I need to call my family so I can go home!

Suzuko: What are you hiding?

Lev: /Nothing!

Suzuko: /Or what are you hiding from?

A bell rings. Silence, Suzuko disappears from the stage, and Lev appears to be sleeping on her arms at the bar table.

Scene 4

(Connecting from Scene 2) Eve is focusing on drinking. He clearly doesn't want to answer the question.

Suzuko: What is he hiding from?

Ritsu: Suzuko, he doesn't want to answer, so please.

Suzuko: Okay Ritsu, if you are trying to do this to me then feel like you cannot stay in his college next-

Ritsu: -No no no no no.

Eve *(finishes his drink)*: Huh?

Suzuko: Eve, dear Eve, can you tell me how did you guys get together? It is so rare that Ritsu brings a boyfriend! Because Ritsu will never answer me, I need to ask you!

No answering. Apparently, Eve is a little drunk.

Suzuko: Oh dear Eve, you cannot be, this weak to alcohol. It makes me feel like I just did something illegal.

Ritsu: Uhhh, you did just do something illegal.

Eve: Huhhh?/ Suzuko: Well, I did not ask him to pay for it?!

Eve lays his head down on the bar table.

Ritsu: You're okay, Eve?

Eve: Hmmm.

Ritsu looks at Suzuko, blaming her without words.

Suzuko: Okay, sorry, but you did not stop me, I never thought he was this weak.

Ritsu: Yeah...

Suzuko: We better just leave him to rest for a bit.

Pause.

Suzuko: Tell me, how did you guys meet each other?

Ritsu: Emmmm...

Suzuko: Tell me please, I'm curious, or... no more free alcohol from me.

Ritsu: I have enough money to buy them myself-

Suzuko: -Okay, then pay me back for all the aviation for these years, let see, 10 years?

Ritsu: Shit...

Suzuko: Hahahaha... You lose.

Ritsu: Just like you and me.

Suzuko: Wait, so family friends? I never knew you have another family friend other than me.

Ritsu: Yeah, but we only met each other like 2 or 3 times in family gatherings because our parents were friends. Actually, his mom and my mom. So, just like you and me. We actually started to know each other when he said he also major in music in college.

Suzuko: Okay... so your mom knew my mom when she was back in Asia, and she met Eve's mom when in the US, like here.

Ritsu: Correct.

Suzuko: Phew, complicated Asian relationships...

Ritsu: Further if you travel the world around.

They laugh slightly. Then Eve's voice cuts in.

Eve: HMMM, MORE, MORE!

Ritsu: No, Eve you cannot drink more.

Eve: More...more... there are more...

Ritsu (*tries to hear Eve's words*): What?

Eve: More people...more...laughing...

Ritsu: I cannot hear you-

Suzuko: -Shhhhhhh, listen to him.

Eve: There are more...people...laughing at me...

Suzuko (*to Ritsu*): Laughing at him? What does that mean?

Eve (*suddenly gets up from the table in a weird way and speaks clearly*): There is a group of people in my head who are always laughing at me. Because of my appearance. (*Pause*) I was born with this appearance, something that cannot said to be masculine in the secular eyes.

(*Looking at Ritsu*) Mom really didn't/ like how I look back then.

Suzuko (*also looking at Ritsu, in a low voice*): /He meant his mom right?

Ritsu nods, and Eve continues. He snaps suddenly back as he is talking about something serious.

Eve: It was in elementary school back in Japan, and there was that one day. I remember it so clearly. I was not that good with Japanese at that time. It was a summer day. It was hot. You could feel the heat in the air. It was so unreal like if you were in a dream. I was getting into the school building from a door. Hah. (*he breathes deeply*) When I got to the door, there was another boy who walked behind me. He walked straight pass before me and open the door. He held the door for me. He smiled and said, "After you". It was the prettiest sentence I ever heard in my life! I said, "Thank you". He then saw his friend in the hallway. He rushed to his friends with that same smile. I went into the lounge waiting for dad to pick me up. Hah. (*he breathes deeply*) They talked.

Pause in a significant way. Nobody is trying to interrupt Eve's thoughts.

Eve: Yes. They talked. They talked about me. He said, "That was Eve, right?" He is smiling. "Why he is like that?" He is smiling. "Looking like a girl." He is smiling. "What is he wearing everyday?" He is smiling. "Isn't he just using his appearance to let others have pity on him?" He is smiling. "He is like so short!" He is smiling. "I feel bad for him!" He is smiling. "Isn't he gay?!" He stopped smiling. They started laughing. Like I was not in that same hallway. Hah. (*he breathes deeply*)

Suzuko: Eve...

Eve: Then, every night I dreamed of that laugh. One more person adds to that group. One night, one more, two nights, two more. It happened once, it happened forever.

Pause. Suzuko is thinking about something. Ritsu stands up and hugs Eve. Ritsu kisses Eve on the forehead. Eve does not cry.

Suzuko: Eve, may I hug you?

Eve: Ye-

Suzuko hugs Eve interrupting Eve's answer. Eve cries.

Scene 5

We are in a flashback. Lev is crying at the same place Eve was crying in the bar. Ritsu enters the bar:

Ritsu: Lev, may I hug you?

Lev nods. Ritsu hugs her. Ritsu sits her down in a chair.

Ritsu: Okay, can you tell me what happened?

No answer from Lev.

Ritsu: Okay then, I will be guessing it myself. Is this still about your/ father?

Lev: /How do you know?

Ritsu: Could there be another reason that can bother the coolest person I know in the world?

Pause.

Lev (*smiles*): Thank you, Ritsu.

Ritsu: Okay, then can you tell me what happened and what are you feeling?

Lev: Can we have a drink before I talk about it?

Ritsu: Definitely.

Lev pours herself a glass of umeshu on the rocks. Then, she makes Aviation for Ritsu.

Lev (*pushes the aviation to Ritsu*): Here you go.

M2 Free myself?

I can see the crowd in red running out

They are all asking me to give up now

Shouting running nowhere to hide

*Calling escaping from light
Shouting running nowhere to hide
Hopeless just like this world of wild*

*Struggling with my life
'Fraid of this passing time
Maybe I'll just leave this behind
Maybe just say goodbye*

*I can see the haze of black shouting out
You all are like those kids around
Crying lying nowhere to hide
Shouting howling loud
Crying lying nowhere to hide
Hopeless just like this world of wild*

*Struggle to stay alive
I'm not afraid of time
Maybe just stare at them this time
Maybe go home tonight*

*Spirit away
All gone away
If all things are full of grief
Set aside*

*Struggling with my life
'Fraid of this passing time
Maybe I'll just leave this behind
Maybe just say goodbye*

Scene 6

(Connecting from Scene 4) Eve stops crying. Suzuko is pouring another glass of umeshu for herself and another umeshu soda for Eve. Ritsu still has his aviation.

Eve: I really want to say goodbye to those people in my head, but I never could. There was a period of time when I tried so hard to forget them. I did not want them to come back to my dream, so I always thought to myself, there was never that boy smiling at first. But-

Suzuko *(pushes the umeshu soda to Eve)*: -Murphy's law, so the group of people becomes larger even though you do not want them to, and they come to you even more frequently right?

Eve: Yeah...So I gave up.

Pause. Eve tries to change the mood. He smiles.

Eve: I pretend nothing happened. This thing never happened and just accept that there will always be a group of people like them in the world.

Pause. All of them are trying to find words to say, and Suzuko finds them first.

Suzuko: That's the right attitude! *(holding her drink and gestures, a little bit awkward)* Cheers!

Eve: Cheers!

Only Suzuko and Eve touch each other's glass.

Suzuko: We totally forgot our dear Ritsu! Okay, Ritsu, take your drink!

Ritsu: I don't-

Eve: -Ritsuuuuuu, pleeeeeaaassee!

Ritsu *(holds his drink)*: Okay okay okay!

Suzuko: Cheers to us. Cheers to this world!

Ritsu/Eve: Cheers!

After they drink for a bit.

Eve: I think I need some fresh air just to...

Suzuko: Yeah, yeah, go ahead.

Eve exits the bar. The bar is left with Suzuko and Ritsu.

Suzuko: I just remember how you always sit in that place everytime you come.

Ritsu (*smiles and drinks his drink*): True.

Suzuko: And how long we have known each other, like, I never, for this long, see you bringing your boyfriend here.

Ritsu: True. (*drinks his drink*) I never had the chance to tell you, but this Aviation, is like, bad... What happened to your mixing skills?

Suzuko: Oh, really?! Are you sure it's not your tastebud being changed because of something?

They laugh. Eve comes back into the bar and sits. Suzuko's phone rings. It shows something on her screen, but we cannot see it.

Suzuko: Sorry, I need to take this one.

Eve: It's fine Suzuko! Don't worry about us!

Ritsu: Emhmm.

Suzuko: Thank you.

Suzuko picks the call up while walking outside the bar. She stands outside the bar.

Suzuko: Hi...

Scene 7

We are in a flashback. Lev is standing right where Suzuko is picking up her phone. Lev is also picking up her phone and getting back into the bar. (Lev should be speaking in Chinese.)

Lev: Hi, Dad... Yes, I'm good... Yeah, I found a job as a teaching assistant in school and as a bartender after school... I will be able to pay for some of my life expenses... Also, the credit card you gave me is a little bit weird... So I have been using my own money for these months... I'm proud- *(a long pause)*. No, Dad. I didn't mean that... I didn't mean that... Yes, I am where I am because of your economic support but- *(a long pause)*. I didn't mean to- *(a long pause)*. Yes, I am here because of your money. I totally understand that... *(a long pause)*. No! You are not just a money-making machine to me! *(a long pause)*. No...no...no... *(a long pause)*. I...I did not... You are not a money-making machine! You are my father! *(she is trying not to cry)* YOU ARE MY FATHER!!! *(a long silence)*.

The other end hangs up the phone. Lev holds her phone and stands there blanking up. Her head is not functioning. A lot of things are happening in her head at the same time. She stands there for a long while. She takes her phone and looks at the time. She checks her contact page. She is looking for a person to call for help. She does not want to call her college friends. She needs to call someone who knows about her family. She needs therapy. She wonders for a bit and she decides on a number. She calls.

Ritsu *(on the phone)*: Hey, Suzu- Oh sorry, Lev.

Lev starts crying after hearing Ritsu's voice.

Ritsu *(on the phone)*: Lev! Hey Lev, what's wrong?

Lev cries.

Ritsu *(on the phone)*: Okay, where are you?

Lev: At the bar.

Ritsu (*on the phone*): The bar where you work right?

Lev (*she nods*): En.

Ritsu (*on the phone*): Okay, I'm coming.

Scene 8

(Connecting from Scene 6) Ritsu and Eve are in the bar when Suzuko is outside answering the phone. Eve is kind of drunk, but not that drunk. They are sitting at the bar.

Eve *(slapping Ritsu's shoulder)*: Ne ne ne ne ne...

Ritsu: 何？

Eve: You know what?

Ritsu: Hah?

Eve: You... know... what?

Ritsu: Ah?

Eve: YOU KNOW WHAT?

Ritsu *(brings his glass and leaves his seat)*: Ah...I quit.

Eve *(follows Ritsu)*: Ritsu Ritsu Ritsu Ritsu Ritsu...

Ritsu goes further away from Eve.

Eve *(shouts)*: I WANT TO GO HOME!!!

Pause.

Ritsu *(realizing)*: Okay let's go home.

Eve: NO NO NO NO NO NO

Ritsu: Huh?

Eve *(goes back to his seat and mumbles)*: I am going home back to my mom's!

Ritsu *(did not hear it clear)*: What?

Eve *(loudly and clearly)*: I am going home back to my MOM's!

Ritsu: WHAT?

Eve: I am going home/ back to my mom's!

Ritsu: /Don't repeat it again, I heard it. Just surprised by what you said.

Eve: I mean it.

Ritsu *(does not believe it)*: Okay.

Eve: I MEAN IT. I want to go to Japan to see mom.

Ritsu: Okay.

Pause, Ritsu puts his glass down on the bar table and goes further away from Eve again.

Ritsu: But you know that is not possible right?

Eve: Why?

Ritsu: How would you get there? When are you going? And...where are you going to live?

Eve: By plane, tomorrow, at mom's.

Ritsu: Ah... I quit.

Eve: Ritsu, I really mean it.

Ritsu: Okay, will your mom allow you to live in her house?

Eve: Is there any reason that she will not/ let me live in her house?

Ritsu: /Good question.

Ritsu sits back to his seat at the bar table.

Eve: Give me a break, I know mom already has her new family and her new home... But, but...

Ritsu: But you still want to...

Eve: Yeah, I still want to.

Eve is more sober than before.

Eve: I can just live in a friend's house. I know several people who live in Japan.

Ritsu: Okay, do you know where they live in Japan?

Eve: Well maybe just some cities like Tokyo or Osaka?

Ritsu is stunned for a moment because Eve is talking like those are the only two cities he knows about in Japan.

Ritsu: Oh my god, dear.

Ritsu realizes something.

Ritsu: Oh my god, dear. Then did your mom tell you where she lives now?

Eve: ...

Ritsu: OH MY GOD, DEAR.

Pause.

Ritsu: Even if you know where she lives now, who will be paying for your trip?

Eve: I can use my own savings.

Ritsu: Okay, if you want to think about that. Do you know how much is the plane ticket?

Eve (*checking his phone*): Wait, what, nearly 1500 dollars?

Ritsu: Do you also know that Japan is the country with the most expensive public transportation fare?

Eve: Like how much?

Ritsu: An hour and a half ride from Tokyo to Kyoto on the Shinkansen will be 15000 yen, so that is... around 100 dollars.

Eve: Oh my god...

Ritsu: Then you also need to think about those subway and train fares.

Pause.

Eve: Do you think dad could pay some of that for me?

Ritsu: Great question.

Eve spends some time thinking by himself. Ritsu is staring at Eve the whole time he is thinking.

Eve: I don't think he will.

Ritsu: A both simple and complicated realization...

Eve: So basically I cannot go home.

Ritsu: I am happy that you finally understand the difficulties you are fac-

Eve: -But I want to go HOME.

Pause.

Ritsu: What HOME? You are a total foreigner there. You are only connection to that place is your mom and your some elementary school time. Your HOME is here. You were born here. You live here.

Eve: Even though I spent my whole life in this place, that does not mean my true home is here!

Ritsu: Then what does it mean? Just a place you randomly are?

Eve: I don't know, I don't know, I DO NOT KNOW.

Pause.

Eve: Sometimes I wonder where I am in this world. Where am I standing? Who am I speaking to? How did I get here? Why am I here?

Pause. Ritsu is quietly listening to him.

Eve: Sometimes I question all that I have now. Do I really know what I learned? Do I deserve the things I own? Am I the person that I know? Do I know who I am? It feels like everything is in a dream.

M3 I am...where?

Can you hear my heart pounding like a river in the air

Can you see my soul dripping like a breather like I care

I fly through the air in the sky of my heart

I run through the river of my dark

Words are all planned out like fates are decided

Future is resolved just like no way left to hide

Cards are fold on the floor I can't control

Even I'm not the one whose cards are told

Reveal my own mind

Like I don't mind

Remember myself in mind

Goodbye

聞いて この心は宙に浮いてる

見て この魂は呼吸してる

心の空に飛び舞う

暗い闇に走る

語を列ぶ 運命が咲く

未来は決め もう逃げられない

負けたゲームは制御がない

そして私は消える

記憶となり

見ないふり

自分の幻想となり

Goodnight

Pause. Ritsu tries to say something but gives up.

Eve: Then I go into this rabbit hole and start to doubt my being in this world.

Ritsu: Eve...

Eve: But! I met you, then I suddenly felt that I was myself again!

Pause, Ritsu does not know how to answer that.

Eve (*realizes*): Oh my god, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to put that much burden on you. I'm really sorry.

Ritsu (*after a while*): Apology accepted.

Eve is totally sober now. Ritsu is having another drink.

Eve: But... You can go with me!

Ritsu: Hah?

Eve: I mean... you can come with me...

Ritsu: Do you clearly understand what you are talking about now?

Eve: Yes...you can go with me...to Japan with me...so I don't have to go by myself...and all can be solved...and-

Ritsu: -Stop.

Eve feels Ritsu's anger, so he stops talking.

Ritsu: This is ridiculous.

Eve: No, it is not. I mean it.

Ritsu: This is ridiculous.

Eve: ...

Ritsu: I'm in the most important period of my career... you know that right?

Eve: I know-

Ritsu:-Then how can you say that...go with me?!

Eve: I-

Ritsu: -I want to go with you from all aspects, but...not now.

Eve:...

Ritsu: We can discuss it after this period of time, maybe after this year.

Eve: But-

Ritsu (*slams his glass on the table*): -This conversation is done now.

Ritsu lets off the glass, it shatters at once.

Eve: Ritsu please...

Ritsu: No no no, I cannot do this now.

Eve: Ritsu...

Ritsu: I have so much to deal with even before thinking about your situation.

Scene 9

We are in a flashback. Lev and Ritsu are in the bar, drinking their drinks.

Lev: I have so much to deal with in my mind.

Ritsu (*sipping his drink*): Emhmm. Lay them down one by one.

Lev (*blanking a bit*): Yes, lay them down one by one.

Pause. Lev takes a deep breath. She takes a sip of her drink. Finding some courage from that alcohol.

Lev: Okay, you know how my family works. (*Ritsu nods, but does not say anything.*) Since I was born, my father has been the one paying the bills because my mother left her job to take care of me. So, there was this balance between them that my dad took care of the money problems, and my mom took care of the me problems. This balance was there for 14 years. (*She sips her drink and finds the courage to deliver more.*) But, this balance suddenly broke when I was out of the equation. I came here to study. I came to this country of freedom to pursue my freedom. Then mom suddenly realized she had nothing to do when I was not around. Then she understood how wrong this balance was. How could she just let dad deal with all the money problems and quit her job? Now that she does not even have her savings if she wants to buy me something. So she went back to her teaching job. Well, my dad also understood how wrong this balance was. Because the two women he used to have control of suddenly are doing their own things. They don't even need his help financially because they started working! How fucking ridiculous! Haha...

Pause. Lev is trying to control herself not to cry. Ritsu is listening.

Lev: (*Lev's emotion builds*) But, he still pays my tuition for college. What is he complaining about? I don't understand. I was trying to lift some of his burden so I started working. Why is he like that? He is the person who feels lost when I am not spending his money and feels angry when I am spending his money at the same time. So what do you want me to do? Every time we talk about money problems, the first thing he will say is you would never be where you are

without me. Yes! Definitely, I would not be here without you, but I owe you nothing! I owe you nothing! Yeah, he said that to me too, I owe you nothing. *(She is crying now.)* If we both owe each other nothing, then why is this all so COMPLICATED?!!! Why is he like that? WHY IS HE LIKE THAT? *(She is crying out loud.)*

Pause. Ritsu hands Lev some tissue.

Lev: Thank you. I am sorry. I can only say these things to you. You are the only one who knows my family here.

Ritsu: Yeah, we're family friends, so I understand all that you are talking about.

Lev is controlling herself and gradually stops crying.

Lev: But, it is so funny. Every time after he said those things, he was way nicer to me like nothing of those words could be spoken by him. What a twisted person! My mom always said he is just like a child or it is too late to change his mind because he is old and he has lived like this for his whole life. But how can I deal with a person who is both a child and an elder? How ironic! Mom also said we have to try to understand him and let him be, but why do we have to be the ones to understand? Why is he not trying to understand us? Why are we the ones that always need to sacrifice and compromise?

Pause. Lev drinks the rest of the umeshu in her glass.

Lev: But, the sober side of my head is reminding me: He is paying your tuition. Do you remember every time you fight on the phone, he threatens you that he will not pay your tuition anymore? Then a sudden coldness runs through my veins and I stop crying. I feel I am calm at once. I need to think rationally and do something or he will actually stop paying for my tuition. I am angry, sad, calm, crying, thinking at the same time. I am also a twisted person. I am his daughter at first and at last. Haha...

Pause. Lev gathers herself.

Lev: Sorry, that's a lot-

Ritsu: -No, Lev. We are friends. Also, I came to you like this several times right?

Lev: Yes, I remember. *(Smiles)* You were crying like a baby-

Ritsu: -What? I never cried like a/ baby???

Lev: /Yes you did, you did!

Ritsu: No I did not!

Lev: You did, you did!

Ritsu: Ah, I quit.

Lev laughs. Cleaning her tears with the tissue.

Ritsu: You are laughing.

Lev *(realizing)*: Yes I am. Thank you, Ritsu. I love you.

Ritsu: I love you too.

Scene 10

(Connecting from Scene 8) Suzuko comes back into the bar from the call. She finds a glass shattered.

Eve: I need to... I need to go to the bathroom...

Before Eve goes,

Eve : I love you, Ritsu.

Ritsu : I love you too.

Eve quickly runs to the bathroom. Suzuko starts cleaning the shattered glass on the table and floor.

Suzuko: Oh my god, can you actually stop breaking my glasses?

Ritsu: What? The bar owner cannot even afford a couple of glasses?

Suzuko: I can in fact afford everything in this place, but! They are not for you to release your stress!

Ritsu: Gosh, may I have another drink?

Suzuko: Nope, not for today. You're pretty drunk.

Ritsu: How do you know?

Suzuko: From how you're behaving! From knowing you for so long! From knowing who you really are, haha...

No answer from Ritsu. Suzuko finishes cleaning up. Suzuko goes back to the bar table.

Suzuko: So, what did you guys just talk about while I was gone?

Ritsu: About home.

Suzuko *(drinks her drink)*: Hmm?

Ritsu: He wants to go home. He wants to go to Japan-

Suzuko: -And you don't want to go with him...

Eve comes out of the bathroom and hides as he is hearing something he should not be hearing.

Ritsu (*bitterly smiles*): Yes.

Suzuko: Why?

Ritsu: His mom is Japanese.

Pause. Eve listens.

Suzuko: Then?

Ritsu: How will he introduce me to his mom? We've been family friends so long and now.

Suzuko: What's wrong with that?

Ritsu: Even before the that, how can she accept our sexuality? And how will the Japanese people feel? If Eve is going to still introduce me as his friend only, I prefer not to suffer that. If Eve did introduce me as his boyfriend, plus I am a foreigner, she will think maybe this foreigner that let astray her son!

Ritsu smiles bitterly.

Suzuko: But how do you know if she will definitely not accept it? This is not how you treat your boyfriend, Ritsu!

Pause.

Suzuko: Did you seriously discuss this with Eve before?

No answer from Ritsu.

Suzuko (*realizing*): So that's why you are not telling Eve about this. Because you already made up your mind, right?

Ritsu: God, you are as smart as always.

Suzuko: Thank you. Okay, then let me keep guessing. You think Eve is still young and cannot understand your concerns. So, you did not know how to or did not plan to tell him. But, he is your boyfriend! He relies so much on you! Why are you not talking to him?

Ritsu: That's exactly the reason why I don't want to tell him.

Suzuko: What? Which?

Ritsu: Because he is my boyfriend, I don't want to tell him.

Suzuko: Why?

Pause. Ritsu does not know how to answer that question.

Suzuko: Why do you not want to tell him? He is a great boy, and I like him. I don't want you bullying him.

Pause. Ritsu is thinking about how to answer that question.

Ritsu: I don't know. I don't want to lose him! I don't want something that will be a risk to this relationship coming in between us. You know I was that kind of student back then when I planned all my assignments for a week so clearly on a sticky note. And I crossed them out whenever I finished one. I was the child that only played after doing all my homework. I like all the things being in line, being in control one by one. And now, there are so many things that I cannot control in my life, but...he is the only...something...that I have control in my life...he relies on me... yes...he relies on me...

Suzuko: Oh no...oh no Ritsu! You are not doing that to him!

Ritsu: What am I doing? I don't even know.

M4 Can you see me?

Through a mask on the stage

Through a show I see you/ Eve (speaks from the corner): I see you

Through this door to that side/ Eve: Huh?

Through this world I see lies

*Who am I wondering in this wonder
 Who should I find when there's nobody to find
 I want everything align so be aligned
 When only one is everything*

*Can you see me?/ Eve: I do see you.
 Can you see me?/ Eve: I do see you.*

*Through a mask on the stage/ Eve (gets out from the corner gradually): of our lives
 Through a show I know you/ Eve: Through our youth I know you
 Through this door to which side/ Eve: Through this door to my side
 Through this world I tell lies/ Eve: Through this world I survive*

*Who am I wondering in this wonder/ Eve: I find you wondering in this wonder
 Who should I find when there's nobody to find/ Eve: when there's always me to find
 I want things be in control so be controlled
 When only you are everything/ Eve: When only you are everything*

*Can you see me?/ Eve: I do see you
 Can you see me?/ Eve: I do see you*

Eve stops hiding and gets back.

Suzuko: Oh, dear. You are back.

Eve: Yes, I'm back...

Eve is looking at Ritsu. He does not know what to say.

Ritsu: Should we go, Eve? You have been drinking too much today.

Eve is still thinking about something. No answer.

Suzuko: Eve, dear. Go home. Go home and rest.

Maybe the word “Home” triggers something. Eve suddenly cries in silence.

Scene 11

We are in a flashback. Suzuko is staying where she was in the last scene. Lev is sitting where Eve was sitting. A bell rings.

Lev: I am not going home this summer.

Suzuko: What? You are not going home? But it is the only time you can go home and meet your parents!

Lev: I do not want to see them.

Suzuko: Why do you not want to see them? They are your parents!

Lev: I just want to stay here and have some peace. Every time I go back home, we fight.

Suzuko: But still, they are your parents and your family. You cannot just cut your connection with your family!

Lev: They only create chaos in my life! I am not going back this summer!

Pause.

Suzuko: Okay, then what are you doing here this summer?

Lev: I do not know, maybe some internship or job or something...

Suzuko: Okay, then who will pay for those things?

Lev: I do not know...

Suzuko: Then go home, Lev. Go home. Don't cut that string between you and your family that early or you may not know who you are in the end.

Lev: No, I cannot just go home. I just had a fight with my dad on the phone.

Suzuko: Okay, dad did call you. *(To herself)* Yes, he did call. *(To Lev)* What did he say?

Lev: Just that money-making machine thing. Again and again. Every time. EVERY TIME! Even we were just talking about life. He can also change the topic to the money thing!

Suzuko: Then what other things you guys talked about? You cannot just talk about money.

Lev: We talked about the date and time for the flight back home, which led to the money talk again! I wanted to take the plane that only transfers twice, but he insisted on buying the one that transfers three times but is much cheaper. But doesn't he know how tiring it is for all the

layovers and time wasted for that one more transfer? Oh god, I really do not know if he actually wants me back or not, because he does not want to see me earlier back home but later.

Suzuko: It's near Spring Festival, didn't you say happy new year to him?

Lev: No, I did not.

Suzuko: Did he?

Lev (*thinks*): Ye-No, no, he did not.

Suzuko: Stop lying to yourself, Lev. You want to go home, don't you?

Lev: But if I want to go home, I need to apologize to him and figure things out...

Suzuko: You are just running away, Lev.

Lev: I am not running away! I am staying here just to create some space for myself.

Suzuko: Running away might be the easiest thing to do, but you are just blinding yourself to the suffering and problems you have to face eventually. Running away is never the solution to anything.

Pause.

Suzuko: Go home, Lev. And talk to your parents. They cannot understand you if you don't even talk to them.

Lev: It's so hard to talk to them.

Suzuko: It's much better to regret after doing something than to regret that you did not do something. So try to talk to them.

Lev: No, no, I am afraid that they might just reject everything I say.

Suzuko: But mom will listen to you.

Lev: But dad will not!

Suzuko: How do you know? Maybe he will listen this time?

Lev: He just yelled at me the same speech he always does on that call! I cannot believe that he will just be like another person and talk to me this time!

Suzuko: You never know, I promise you he will listen to you this time.

Lev: How do you know?

Suzuko: I just know. Try to talk to them or you might not have another chance.

Lev: Wait, what? I don't understand.

Suzuko: Go home, Lev. And talk to them.

Lev *(to the audience)*: I don't want to go home. I want to run away.

A bell rings. Silence, Suzuko disappears from the stage, and Lev appears to be sleeping on her arms at the bar table.

Scene 12

(Connecting from Scene 10) Eve rushes into the bar. Ritsu is coming after him.

Eve *(rushed in from the door)*: Suzuko! Are you here?

No answer.

Eve: Suzuko! I need your help!

Ritsu rushes into the bar.

Eve: Suzuko! Suzuko san!

Ritsu *(tries to catch Eve)*: Eve! Stop! Come home with me!

Eve *(runs a little away from Ritsu)*: No! Suzuko san!

Ritsu: Eve! Stop-

Eve: -You stop! How do you even know I am here?

Ritsu: I followed you here after you ran out!

Eve: You FOLLOWED me?!?!

Ritsu: I am sorry, but I am worried about you!

Eve: That is not a reasonable excuse for you to follow me!

Ritsu silence for a bit.

Eve: Suzuko san!

Ritsu: Stop Eve! This is a problem between us! Stop bothering Suzuko!

Eve: Oh ho ho ho! Now you feel ashamed and want this only between us?

Ritsu: It's not about being ashamed or not. It's about us, right?

Eve: You are out of your mind!

Ritsu: YOU are out of YOUR mind!

Eve *(restraining from crying)*: Why are you doing this to me? Huh?

Pause.

Ritsu: Eve, we can talk about this at home...

Eve (*gathering himself*): We had just talked about it and it did not go well. That is exactly why I am finding help!

Ritsu: Can we just go home and not be here acting out our privacy in public?

Eve: Okay, so you do feel ashamed! Then why do you do this to me? Why do you lie to me?

Ritsu: Eve...

Eve: Why do you lie to me? Ritsu, why?

Pause. Ritsu answers nothing.

Eve: Why do you never tell me you are afraid of revealing your sexuality? Do you think I did not hear your conversation with Suzuko that day? Why do you lie to me? Do you think I am so weak that I cannot face this problem with you together? Or what, you think I will leave you if you tell me? What am I? Am I not your boyfriend? Just a doll that you can control? Like I will just accept what you tell me and be blind to what you do not tell me? I am not that naive!

Ritsu (*firm without shouting or screaming*): I am not afraid! CAN YOU STOP IT!?

Eve is scared by that. He stops. A long pause.

Eve: I am sorry, Ritsu, but... I just want to talk about this problem... I am hurt but... we can still talk to figure this out! I never knew this was a complex in your mind. Could you just tell me what's happening?

Ritsu: I just...I just don't want to hurt you. If your mom doesn't accept our relationship... She might hurt your feelings! You are still young and... You don't know that the majority of this world still doesn't accept homosexuality!

Pause. All sympathy that Eve has for Ritsu is gone.

Eve: I am fucking 20, Ritsu! I am an adult! I am fully aware of what I am facing! Stop, your hypocrite! You are not afraid? You don't want to hurt me? You only care about your own feelings! Never mine! You just don't want to be embarrassed!

Suzuko comes down from the upstairs of the bar.

Suzuko: What's happening? *(sees Eve)* Hey Eve, dear. What is happening? I heard you upstairs and... *(She sees Ritsu's expression, realizing something)* Oh god.

Scene 13

We are in a flashback. Suzuko is right at the staircase she was in the last scene. Lev is sitting at the bar. A bell rings.

Suzuko: Oh god, Lev. What's happening?

Lev: I don't know.

Suzuko: Okay, then why are you here? You are here every time when something is wrong.

Lev: Yeah...

Suzuko: So just tell me straight ahead. What is on your mind?

Pause. Lev takes a minute to gather her thoughts.

Lev: It's so weird to be here. Just being here makes my head numb. It feels wrong just being here.

Suzuko: What does that mean? Like how can being somewhere feel weird?

Lev: Like did you ever walk into a party and suddenly you know that this is not for you?

Suzuko: Like the vibe? The vibe of the environment?

Lev: Yes! But the feeling stays with you even if you leave the party right away.

Suzuko (*she does not really understand*): Okay?

Lev: And that feeling is always, always there, with you, with you in your life everywhere. Did you ever feel that?

Pause. Suzuko does not answer. She does know how it feels but she does not want to show it to Lev.

Lev: Okay, never mind. I don't want you to understand me. I just want you to listen to me.

Suzuko: I am here listening.

Lev: Thank you. Thank you so much.

Pause.

Lev: I said it feels weird to be here. I thought of myself as a person who adapts to environments quickly. I did not feel homesick or lonely when I came to America at first. I feel released. I am finally out of the control of my parents. But I gradually understood that even though I was not physically cultural-shocked, I had always been shocked mentally.

Pause. Suzuko sits beside Lev.

Lev: Every time during move-in and move-out, you see parents of other students helping them load their luggage. And you have to do all of them by yourself. Every time during family weekend, you see parents of other students visiting them. And you are all alone consoling yourself that your parents are far away, they will not be able to come right? Even time during weekends, you see other students going back home. And you are thinking, yes, I cannot go home because it's far away. It's always the distance. I hate the distance.

M5 Free myself reprise

过眼云烟

全部不见

如果一切如此悲哀

就不爱

我试着挣扎

我感到害怕

或者就这样离开吧

或者就再见吧

Pause.

Lev: But I am the one who decided to be here. How can I think about going home when I have not accomplished the goal that I want to achieve here? That distance creates this ironic gap.

Pause.

Lev: You feel that you are in the gap. One step right you can reach one end, or one step left you can reach the other end. But you are in this gap, wondering all the time which end to choose, and maybe never want to actually choose which end to go to.

Pause.

Lev: Every time my American friends talk about a TV series or a movie that had only been aired in the 2000s in North America, I feel helpless. There is a natural difference in where we were brought up and I would pretend I knew what they were talking about while keeping silent. It is sadly funny to see them talking about what they love as an outsider. Smiling, pretending to be listening at the same time.

Pause.

Lev: But when they started to discuss the one movie you might know, you felt saved. Saved? By what? Why do I feel saved?

Pause.

Suzuko: Because some part of you is being affirmed.

Lev: What?

Suzuko: Some part of your being in this country is proved by others. Or, you found that connection, that step to one of the ends.

Lev: But do I want that connection? Did I choose that step?

Suzuko: Even if that step is made unconsciously, you still choose an end.

Lev: No! I don't want to choose either end!

Suzuko: But you have to choose one. You cannot stay in the gap forever.

Lev: I understand that! But...I don't want to choose it now...This is too fast.

Suzuko: You have been in this country for 8 years. It may be a good time to actually decide.

Lev: 8 years. Even though I have been here for 8 years, I still feel an invisible wall between me and the rest.

Suzuko (*turns and grabs Lev's arms*): I understand. But, Lev. Make your choice. But whatever choice you make, I will affirm you and your choice. Even the whole world might deny you, 私はあなたを肯定する。誰に何を言わせようと、私はあなたを肯定する。わかったか？ (I will affirm you. No matter what others say, I affirm you. Do you understand?)

Lev: はい、ありがとうございます。 (Yes, thank you.)

Lev (*to the audience*): I need to make a choice, but I do not want to make that choice.

A bell rings. Silence, Suzuko disappears from the stage, and Lev appears to be sleeping on her arms at the bar table.

Scene 14

(Connecting from Scene 12) Suzuko just comes downstairs. Eve and Ritsu are in the position where we left off in Scene 12.

Eve: Suzuko, I made the choice. I am going to Japan. I'm leaving.

Suzuko: What? What's happening? Why are you going to Japan?

Eve: I am here to say goodbye. Also, I want to ask you something.

Suzuko: Wait, wait, wait a minute! Answer my questions first, Eve!

Eve: I've decided. I am going to Japan. I've been wanting to go for a while. So I am going-

Suzuko: -How about Ritsu?

Eve: I am going by myself.

Suzuko looks at Eve and she looks at Ritsu, checking if Eve is telling the truth. Then she knows that Eve is determined and something has been happening between them.

Suzuko: Well, I don't know what to say in this situation. But, best wishes for your travel, Eve.
(mouthing the words to Ritsu) /What happened?

Eve: /Thank you, Suzuko.

Ritsu shakes his head.

Eve: Okay, Suzuko. May I ask some questions in private now?

Ritsu: Eve, let's not. This is something we have to figure out. Let's not cause trouble for Suzuko, okay?

Eve: I am just going to ask her some questions in private. What trouble can that cause?

Ritsu: Eve, let's-

Eve: -Okay! I am trying to protect YOUR privacy by asking these questions in PRIVATE as I felt you might feel ashamed to talk about them in public. But, I don't care whatever now. You think you can control me just because you barely knew me from my youth? Not anymore! Suzuko san, did Ritsu tell you why he doesn't want to go to Japan with me? Did you know that?

Suzuko *(without hesitation)*: No.

Eve: Really? You do not know?

Suzuko: No, I don't know.

Eve: Stop lying, I heard what you guys said that day when I was going to the bathroom!

Suzuko: No, I don't know. Even if I know, (*looking at Ritsu*) I am not the person that should tell you about it.

Pause.

Eve (*his voice is shaking*): God, why everyone is not telling me? Why everyone is lying to me? I am not a child anymore! Why nobody is telling me anything?

Pause.

Suzuko (*mouths the words to Ritsu*): DO SOMETHING! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU!

Pause.

Ritsu: Okay, Eve. I am telling you, I don't want to show my sexuality to some strangers in Japan! Okay! I told you! Then WHAT?

Eve: What strangers! It's my mom! She knew you from your youth!

Pause.

Ritsu: You never think about what is going to happen after a decision is made or even after a sentence is said. You just say them and decide as you want, because there is always someone at your back covering up for you, right? If I told you about this before, how would you behave? Run around and panic, right? And comes to me, asking me not to leave, right? You never think about the future. You never think about the risk of what you are doing. Because you do not know how to handle them! So, what's the meaning of telling you?

Pause.

Eve: I will run around and I will panic, yes, I will. But I will solve it with you! Face it with you!

Ritsu: Stop lying to yourself, Eve. You are just taking me as a substitute for your parents! You are just relying on me because I am the person you knew from your childhood!

Eve: No! No! No! I never thought like that! I rely on you because I want to!

Pause.

Eve: You are a coward, but I thought you were destiny. The person destined to take me away.

Pause.

Eve: *(mumbles)* You are my destiny. Do you understand? *(raises his voice)* I know I am somehow immature, but I never thought of you like that.

Eve makes an expression of hoping or wanting for something on his face.

Ritsu: Stop showing that face. You get my sympathy every time with that face. So, stop...

Pause.

Ritsu: This world is a stage, your life is a stage, you are performing every day. I want everything in the daily performances to happen exactly the same as the score writes. But there have been so many improvisation parts in my life now. I feel like I'm a jester on the stage. But you are the only improvisation part I have control of now. So, I will not let that go. I will not let that go. You are the little boy I saw growing up. You are my boyfriend. I will not let that go.

Nobody is in the right mood, but Suzuko is somewhere better than the other two.

Suzuko: Okay... You guys need to-

Ritsu *(walks to Eve)*: You know what? The skill called double stop on violin performing.

Eve: /What? I know that...

Ritsu: /How many years of practice you need to master that skill. So you can perfect that balance of playing two notes across two strings at the same time. First, you have to make sure you place your fingers in the right place, so you play the right note on either string. The right intonation. Even though the placement might already hurt your fingers, you do not stop. Then you press those strings and make sounds with your bow. You might not get the correct strings to ring, because your bow will easily touch other strings. You practice until you don't touch the other strings even though your arms are aching for the hours you are holding your violin up. But you do not stop. Because you love it. Even it hurts. Okay, now you master these two notes. You open a score and suddenly find out, oh! There are much more of them! Because you love it, you do not hesitate to tackle the next one. One by one, even though it hurts every time. You love it. Then, a whole score is mastered! But you find out, oh! There are more scores! One by one, even though it hurts every time.

Pause.

Ritsu: But I love it! I spend my life learning how to perfect that double stop with you, that balance with you! Even though it hurts every time. Do you understand?

Eve:...

Ritsu: But I love you! So WHATEVER! I know you just take me as somebody that you can rely on. That's fine! I take it!

Pause.

Ritsu: But how about you? How does it feel to be that little child who never grows up?

A long pause.

Eve: I do know Ritsu. I do know, why you love me. But, is that really love anymore?

Pause. Eve gets the courage to talk more as Ritsu does not say anything.

Eve: What are you seeing in me? What do you actually want from me? I know all the answers, but I still stay with you.

Pause.

Eve: I admit that I am this child never wants to grow up, but you are also that person who blocks yourself inside your walls and wanting something that you could never reach and be. So you find me, because you will never be me, never be a person like me.

Pause. Ritsu wants to say something but cannot find the words.

Suzuko: Okay, you guys need to...

An alarm rings on Suzuko's phone.

Suzuko: It's time. I need to close the bar.

Scene 15

We are in a flashback. Are we? We don't know anymore. Suzuko is at the same place from the end of the last scene. A bell rings. Lev appears out of nowhere.

Lev: *(finishing cleaning up)* Okay, this is the last thing before closing. *(notices Suzuko)* Oh, you are here! I was waiting for you! I have something to tell you!

Suzuko is not understanding what is happening.

Lev: I figured things out! I think I can work in this bar during the summer so I can just not go home! The owner said that I could stay in the room upstairs and...

Suzuko is blanking out. Lev's voice dims from "The owner" and is totally silent at "upstairs and...". We can see Lev's mouth moving but do not know what she says after. This silence takes about 20 seconds. Suddenly, Suzuko is back.

Lev: Are you listening to me? Suzuko? Suzuko?

Suzuko: Oh! Yes, I heard you...

Lev: No, you did not! /I can live by myself...

Suzuko *(mumbles)*: /Why is this still happening? Why is this still the same? Why, why, why?

Lev: What /are you talking about?

Suzuko: /What is happening? Why everything is still the same? Why? Why? Why?

Lev: Huh? /Are you listening to me?

Suzuko: /I don't understand. I don't understand. Am I crazy? Why am I still not going home? I should go home that summer!

Lev: Suzuko?

Suzuko: Why everything is the same?

Pause.

Lev: Are you okay? What's happening?

Pause.

Suzuko: Am I okay? I don't know. I don't know.

Lev: You don't know? Haha... You don't know? You don't know what's happening?! Really?!

Pause. Suzuko does not understand what Lev is saying.

Suzuko: What-

Lev: -Oh god Suzuko, oh no, Lev, you do not know what is happening?

A bell rings.

Lev: Oh, it's time.

Suzuko: What-

A bell rings again. Lev disappears from the stage, and Suzuko appears to be sleeping on her arms at the bar table.

Scene 16

(Connecting from Scene 14) Suzuko is sleeping at the bar table as she was in the last scene. Eve is coming into the bar. The bar is half decorated for Eve's farewell party.

Eve *(tries to wake Suzuko up)*: Suzuko, Suzuko! What are you doing?! It's time to wake up!

Suzuko *(wakes up)*: Oh, oh, Eve, you are here! /Sorry, I was sleeping.

Eve: /It's my farewell party, right? You cannot just sleep through it!

Suzuko: Right, *(to herself)* that was a weird dream.

Pause.

Suzuko: I'm sorry about what happened between you two, but did you ask Ritsu to come?

Eve *(takes a deep breath)*: Yes, I did.

Suzuko: Did you guys...

Pause.

Suzuko: I'm sorry...

Eve: You don't have to feel sorry for us. It's always been there, the problem. We just both pretend it's not there and ignore it.

Pause.

Eve: That's enough for sad things. I am here for my farewell party. We should all be happy!

Suzuko: Yes, we should be happy.

They start to decorate more. The conversation happens with them decorating. They do not stop what they are doing until a specific stage direction.

Eve: Suzuko, let me tell you. I feel everytime I am here, I am truly who I am, being who I can really be. Like, this place has some magic within it, that makes me feel true and alive.

Suzuko: I don't really get it but, I'll take it as a compliment!

Eve: Even Ritsu gets to show his true self I never knew here...

Suzuko does not answer. They keep decorating. Then, Eve finds something in the corner of the bar table.

Eve: Oh, what is this? A music box?

Eve opens the box. A melody starts to play. Suzuko comes near to see.

Suzuko: Oh, this one! This one is old. It has been with me since I came here, to the US.

Eve: Oh, it's been that long! But it still works.

Eve winds the box's coil spring up, then releases. They listen to the melody for a bit. Suzuko continues to decorate.

Eve: This is calming. Suzuko, I see Ritsu in this.

Suzuko: Huh?

Eve: Like, I see Ritsu in this music box. Always playing the same melody it is made with, always being in the rules it made for itself. It's like him. Always being in the structure, in the walls, in the cage.

Suzuko: Wait, you guys were family friends before... before you were boyfriends, right?

Eve: Yes. So I knew at the first glance when he looked at me, what really he wanted from me. But I did also fall for him, I did know this might not be right, but I loved him, I did.

Suzuko: Hey, Eve. It's all in the past, there's no need to...

Eve: I said that I feel being the true self here. It's also this place which gives me the courage to say goodbye, to step away.

Suzuko: That's great, Eve. Figuring ourself out is hard, isn't it?

Eve: Yes, it's hard.

Ritsu enters the bar.

Eve: You know what, Suzuko. I think I'm gonna go.

Suzuko: What? It's your farewell party!

Eve starts to leave.

Suzuko: /Eve!

Ritsu: /I don't know whether you came or I went.

Pause.

Eve: Was that a dream or reality, sleeping or waking?

Ritsu: My mind was so disoriented that I couldn't tell what was going on, as if I was in total darkness. As for whether it was a dream or reality, we'll find out tonight.

Eve: It is a shallow cove that travelers on foot can cross and never get wet.

Ritsu: I intend to cross the barrier and come here again and I am sure we will meet again someday.

Eve (*smiles bitterly*): Hm.

Pause. Eve stands up.

M6 Destiny

君は誰 誰

君は誰 誰

見たことのない人

知ったことのない人

君は誰 誰

でも一目でわかった これは

でも一音を聞いた これは

なぜ なんて どうして
 なぜ なんて どうして
 最初なのにでもわかる
 最初なのにでも知る
 運命の輪が動き始めた
 運命の日が来た

君は誰 誰
 君は誰 誰

Eve (*to Ritsu*): You are a coward Ritsu. Why are you not accepting who you are? Why are you afraid of yourself?

Pause.

Eve: Thank you Suzuko san! I had fun.

Eve leaves the bar and exits.

Ritsu: 君やこしわれやゆきけむ おもほえず
 夢かうつつか寝てかさめてか
 かきくらす心のやみにまどひにき 夢うつつとは今宵さだめよ
 勝ち人の渡れど濡れぬえにしあれば
 またあふ坂の関はこえなむ

Pause.

Ritsu: The poem we learned together...

Ritsu cries. He tries to kill his weeping by masking his face with his hand, but it does not really work.

Scene 17

We are definitely not in a flashback anymore. Maybe we're in a dream. Suzuko is at the same place from the end of the last scene. A bell rings. Lev appears out of nowhere.

Lev: You are here. Finally.

Pause.

Lev: Actually I should say "I am" here because you are me.

Pause.

Lev: Don't be shocked like that. You should not feel surprised. You know all the way from the start that this is something you imagined.

Pause.

Lev: Don't show that sad face to me. How long are you going to lie to yourself?

Pause.

Lev: Okay, let me explain to you. Looks like you are not catching up with YOUR imagination.

Pause.

Lev: *(showing around)* This is a bar you created in your dream that is exactly the same as "the World".

Pause.

Lev: *(pointing to herself)* I am the past version of you.

Pause.

Lev: (*pointing to Suzuko*) You are the creator of this world.

Pause.

Lev: You were so sure whose call I was waiting for, so you stopped me from touching my phone.

Pause.

Lev: Wasn't the smashing of the phone intentional? But you pretend to have done it by accident. You are a great actor.

Pause.

Lev: You do not want me to pick up that call and be in that toxic conversation. But I picked up that call anyway.

Pause.

Lev: So you regret doing that. I will give your line right back to you. "Stop lying to yourself, Lev".

A long pause.

Lev: You did not go home that summer. You stayed and worked in this bar.

Pause.

Lev: And you never go home. That's why you say "Try to talk to them or you might not have another chance". You cut your connections with your family.

Pause.

Lev: But you regret doing that. I will give your line right back to you. “Stop lying to yourself, Lev”.

A long pause.

Lev: Great, looks like you are still not understanding. You want me to “make a choice” because you have never made that choice by yourself.

Pause.

Lev: Did you? Maybe you did. Making the choice to change from Chinese to Japanese and even changing your name.

Pause.

Lev: But you are still in “that gap”.

Pause.

Lev: So you regret doing that. I will give your line right back to you. “Stop lying to yourself, Lev”.

Pause.

Lev: You panicked when you saw everything was still going the way you knew.

Pause.

Lev: So the deepest part of your heart knows that you want to change them. Then, you created me and tried to “save” me, trying to change the past, the present, and the future.

Pause.

Lev: But who the fuck are you? Making decisions for me??? I will not regret what I did and the choices I made. If you are me, you should already know my personality. I take all responsibility for what I do. So WAKE UP! Stop being someone not like yourself! What happens to you that makes you like this? “Running away might be the easiest thing to do, but you are just blinding yourself to the suffering and problems you have to face eventually. Running away is never the solution to anything”, right?

Pause.

Lev: If you regret something, don’t change it in your imagination! Fix them in the reality!

Pause.

Lev: Oh god, why I am yelling to myself...

Pause.

Lev: I am you, and you are me. I do not think me 10 years older will be unreasonable like you. So wake up and look forward. There is no time for you to waste in the past, all possibilities lie in the future.

A bell rings.

Lev: Oh, it’s time.

Pause.

Lev: So this is goodbye. Think about what I said, what your heart said.

Pause.

Lev: Goodbye, Suzuko.

Pause.

Suzuko: Goodbye, Lev.

A bell rings again. Lev disappears from the stage, and Suzuko appears to be sleeping on her arms at the bar table. Suzuko gradually wakes up. Blackout.

Scene 18

We're back in the bar in the present time. Suzuko is in the bar.

M7 Kintouka

人は孤独な島の主

命はきんとうの花

恋は花見

一秒一秒を

朝夕君を思う

人は孤独な島の主

命はきんとうの花

恋は花見

一秒一秒を

Lights up on Ritsu entering the bar.

Suzuko: Hey.

Ritsu: Hi.

Pause. Suzuko starts to make an Aviation for Ritsu. Ritsu sits in one bar chair while Suzuko makes the drink. A silence between them before Suzuko finishes the drink and hands it to Ritsu.

Suzuko: There you go.

Pause.

Ritsu: I don't know what to say.

Suzuko: Then you don't have to say anything.

Pause.

Suzuko: I don't know what to say either actually.

Ritsu: Then you don't have to say anything.

Both laugh bitterly.

Suzuko: How is Eve?

Ritsu: He went to Japan.

Suzuko: Okay...

Ritsu: He broke up with me, and...

Suzuko: You don't have to say it anymore if you don't want to.

Pause.

Ritsu: It hurts... It hurts a lot...

Suzuko: Yes, it does.

Ritsu drinks half of the glass.

Suzuko: How are you?

Ritsu: It hurts but I feel good. Isn't it weird? I don't know how but I feel okay actually. I like the hurting in some way. Just immersing myself in that pain feels good. It makes me feel that he is still with me. He is still here. So I like that pain, it makes me happy. It makes me feel alive.

Pause. Suzuko looks at the music box in the corner of the table and picks it up.

Suzuko: You know, Eve talks about this that day, the farewell party day.

Suzuko winds the coil spring up and releases it. The melody starts to play.

Suzuko: I remember I brought this from China and we always play with it here when we are here together. Just sitting here, listening to it, and enjoying with nothing in mind.

Ritsu: Yes, I also remembered that. That was some naive time when we have nothing to worry about. I like those days. Those carefree days.

Suzuko: You know what, Eve also said he saw you in it, he saw you caging yourself in it, playing the same melody all around. Then, he said he knew what you wanted from him the first time you met each other.

The melody goes slower and gradually stops.

Ritsu: Yes, he always sees through me. He sometimes know me better than myself. While I'm still diving in the pain, he already moves forward to somewhere else.

Suzuko: I've long known that you are caging yourself in someway, but... I am also caging myself, making walls for myself in a way.

Ritsu: I... I... I know because I am in that cage and I saw Eve, the naive, carefree, and brave Eve who is out of this cage, I want him, but I actually... want to be him, to be a person like him. But I cannot, I never could. I lived the life that is designed and became a professor, a gay person that is afraid to even say it out loud, to even admit it... But deepdown, I really want to be him and I admire his braveness so much that I unbelievably fell in love with him... Is this actually love? I don't know. But I know I admire him so much.

M8 Kintouka reprise (looks at the song score for detailed parts of Suzuko and Ritsu)

人は孤独な島の主
命はきんとうの花
恋は花見
一秒一秒を
朝夕君を思う

人は孤独な島の主
命はきんとうの花
恋は花見

一秒一秒を

人は孤独な島の主

命はきんとうの花

恋は花見

一秒一秒を

朝夕君を思う

人は孤独な島の主

命はきんとうの花

恋は花見

一秒一秒を

朝夕君を思う

Suzuko does not know what to say.

Ritsu: I know it's weird.

Suzuko: Well, I was preparing a TED talk to comfort you. Looks like you do not need it.

Ritsu: You do not judge me for what I've done?

Suzuko: No. We have been friends for so long, I know who you are, it will be too late for me to judge you. And I don't think I have the right to judge you and Eve. I love both of you. All I can do is to be there for you and Eve.

Pause.

Suzuko: You are always my friend, no, my family. Because, you know, we are not that kind of "normal" person if we were back in the other side of the earth. You are my family here. We are each other's family. And this bar, this "world" is always somewhere you can come back and rest and be yourself.

Ritsu: Thank you, Suzuko.

Suzuko: Actually, I changed my name back to Lev.

Ritsu: *(surprised)* Oh...

Lev enters the bar from upstairs. She stands behind Suzuko.

Ritsu: Congratulations, Lev.

Suzuko: Thank you.

Lev walks downstage and talks to the audience. The stage is left with a spotlight on her.

Lev: Welcome to the world.

End of Play

About the world M1

M1

Carina Jiang

♩=92

Reiko

Violin

Piano

Wel - come

R

Vn.

Pno.

Wel - come

wel - co

R. me to the world

Vn.

Pno.

me to the world

R. wel-come wel-come wel - co

Vn.

Pno.

wel-come wel-come wel - co

R

Vn.

Pno.

me to out world

This system contains measures 1 through 3 of the musical score. The vocal line (R) begins with a half note G4, followed by a half note F4 in measure 2, and a half note E4 in measure 3. The lyrics "me to out world" are aligned with these notes. The violin (Vn.) part plays a half note G4 in measure 1, a half note F4 in measure 2, and a half note E4 in measure 3. The piano (Pno.) accompaniment features a continuous eighth-note melody in the right hand and a static bass line of two octaves of G2 in the left hand.

R

Vn.

Pno.

a world _ you might

This system contains measures 4 through 6. The vocal line (R) has a half note G4 in measure 4, a half note F4 in measure 5, and a half note E4 in measure 6. The lyrics "a world _ you might" are aligned with these notes. The violin (Vn.) part plays a half note G4 in measure 4, a half note F4 in measure 5, and a half note E4 in measure 6. The piano (Pno.) accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note melody in the right hand and static bass line in the left hand.

R

feel

fa - mi - liar

Vn.

Pno.

Measure 1: Vocal (R) has a half note 'feel'. Violin (Vn.) has a half note. Piano (Pno.) right hand has eighth notes, left hand has a chord.

Measure 2: Vocal (R) has a half note 'fa' and a half note 'mi'. Violin (Vn.) has a half note. Piano (Pno.) right hand has eighth notes, left hand has a chord.

Measure 3: Vocal (R) has a half note 'liar'. Violin (Vn.) has a half note. Piano (Pno.) right hand has eighth notes, left hand has a chord.

R

or a _ world you _ know

no - thing a-bout

Vn.

Pno.

Measure 4: Vocal (R) has a half note 'or', a quarter note 'a', a half note 'world', and a half note 'you'. Violin (Vn.) has a half note. Piano (Pno.) right hand has eighth notes, left hand has a chord.

Measure 5: Vocal (R) has a half note 'know'. Violin (Vn.) has a half note. Piano (Pno.) right hand has eighth notes, left hand has a chord.

Measure 6: Vocal (R) has a half note 'no', a half note 'thing', and a half note 'a-bout'. Violin (Vn.) has a half note. Piano (Pno.) right hand has eighth notes, left hand has a chord.

R

Vn.

Pno.

But thank you for your com-ing you are step-ping

R

Vn.

Pno.

in to a world you are

R

Vn.

Pno.

break-ing a wall

The first system of the musical score consists of three measures. The vocal line (R) begins with a slur over the notes G4, A4, Bb4, and C5, with the lyrics 'break-ing a wall' underneath. The violin (Vn.) line follows the same melody. The piano (Pno.) accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and chords in the left hand.

R

Vn.

Pno.

The second system of the musical score consists of four measures. The vocal line (R) is silent, indicated by a whole rest. The violin (Vn.) line has a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth rest. The piano (Pno.) accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern in the right hand and chords in the left hand.

R

Vn.

Pno.

Measures 1-4 of the first system. The vocal line (R) is silent. The violin (Vn.) plays a dotted half note in measures 1-3 and a half note in measure 4. The piano (Pno.) features a continuous eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a static bass line in the left hand.

R

Vn.

Pno.

Wel-come

wel-come

wel - co — me

Measures 5-8 of the second system. The vocal line (R) enters with the lyrics "Wel-come" in measure 5, "wel-come" in measure 6, and "wel - co — me" in measures 7-8. The violin (Vn.) and piano (Pno.) continue their parts from the first system.

R

Vn.

Pno.

to the world

First system of music (measures 1-4). The vocal line (R) has lyrics "to the world" under a slur. The violin (Vn.) and piano (Pno.) parts provide accompaniment. The piano part features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and chords in the left hand.

R

Vn.

Pno.

wel-come wel-come wel - co me

Second system of music (measures 5-8). The vocal line (R) has lyrics "wel-come", "wel-come", "wel - co", and "me" across the measures. The violin (Vn.) and piano (Pno.) parts continue the accompaniment. The piano part features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and chords in the left hand.

R

Vn.

Pno.

to our world



R

Vn.

Pno.

a world _ you might _ feel _ fa - mi liar



R

Vn.

Pno.

— or a world — you might know — no-thing a - bout

First system of music (measures 1-3). The vocal line (R) has lyrics: "or a world you might know no-thing a - bout". The violin (Vn.) and piano (Pno.) parts provide accompaniment. The piano part has a steady eighth-note melody in the right hand and chords in the left hand.

R

Vn.

Pno.

But thank you for your

Second system of music (measures 4-6). The vocal line (R) has lyrics: "But thank you for your". The violin (Vn.) and piano (Pno.) parts provide accompaniment. The piano part continues with a steady eighth-note melody in the right hand and chords in the left hand.

R

Vn.

Pno.

com-ing we are try-ing to show the world



R

Vn.

Pno.

We are glad you are here



R

So thank you for your com - ing _ So en-joy

Vn.

Pno.

R

what you're think - ing _ So let's see where this is _

Vn.

Pno.

R

Vn.

Pno.

go - ing

This musical score block contains measures 13 through 18 of a piece. It features three staves: a vocal line (labeled 'R'), a violin line (labeled 'Vn.'), and a piano line (labeled 'Pno.'). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line begins in measure 13 with a half note G4, followed by two measures of rests, then a half note G4 in measure 16, and a half note F#4 in measure 17. The lyrics 'go - ing' are placed under the notes in measures 13 and 14. The violin and piano parts provide harmonic support with sustained notes and chords. The piano part features a series of chords in the right hand and a sequence of chords in the left hand, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 17.

Can you see me M5

Carina Jiang

$\text{♩} = 80$

Voice 1

Voice 2

Violin

Piano

V1.

V2.

Vn.

Pno.

Through a mask _ on the stage

Through a show _ I see you

Eve: I see you too

V1. 8 Through this door _ to that side _ Through this world _ I see lies

V2. Eve: Huh?

Vn.

Pno.

V1. 8 Who am I _ won - der - ing in this won - - der

V2.

Vn.

Pno.

V1.  Who should I ____ find when there's ____ no - bo - dy ____ to find

V2. 

Vn. 

Pno. 

Detailed description: This system contains the first two measures of a musical score. The V1 staff (Soprano) has a treble clef, key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a common time signature. It contains the lyrics "Who should I ____ find when there's ____ no - bo - dy ____ to find". The V2 staff (Alto) is empty. The Vn. staff (Violin) has a treble clef and contains the same melody as V1. The Pno. staff (Piano) has a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and contains a supporting melody in the right hand and chords in the left hand.


V1.  ____ I want e-very-thing a-lign ____ so be ____ a - lined ____ When on-ly one is

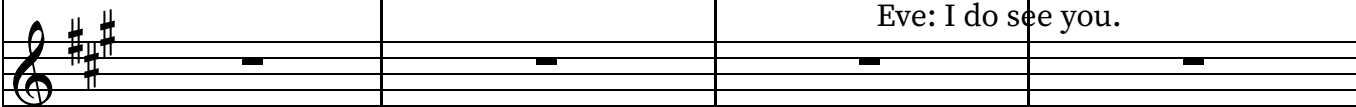
V2. 


Vn. 


Pno. 

Detailed description: This system contains measures 3 through 5 of the musical score. The V1 staff continues the melody with the lyrics "____ I want e-very-thing a-lign ____ so be ____ a - lined ____ When on-ly one is". The V2 staff remains empty. The Vn. staff continues the melody. The Pno. staff continues the supporting accompaniment.

V1.  e - very-thing Can you see me _____ Can you see

V2.  Eve: I do see you.

Vn. 

Pno. 

Detailed description: This system contains the first four measures of a musical score. V1 (Soprano) sings 'e - very-thing' in the first measure, 'Can you see me' in the second, and 'Can you see' in the fourth. A long melisma 'me _____' spans the third and fourth measures. V2 (Alto) is silent in the first three measures and enters in the fourth with 'Eve: I do see you.'. Vn. (Violin) plays a melodic line starting in the second measure. Pno. (Piano) provides harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands.

V1.  me _____

V2.  Eve: I do see you.

Vn. 

Pno. 

Detailed description: This system contains measures 5 through 9. V1 continues the melisma 'me _____' from the previous system. V2 enters in measure 6 with 'Eve: I do see you.' and remains silent thereafter. Vn. continues its melodic line. Pno. continues the accompaniment. The system concludes with a final measure where all parts have rests.

V1. 8 Through a mask _ on the stage Through a show _ I know you

V2. 8 of our lives Through our youth _ I know you

Vn.


Pno.


V1. 8 Through this door _ to which side _ Through this world _ I tell lies


V2. 8 Through this door _ to my side _ Through this world _ I sur-vive

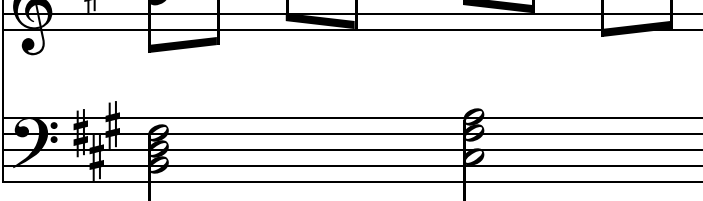
Vn.

Pno.

V1.  Who am I — won - der - ing in this won - - der

V2.  I find you — won - der - ing in this won - - der

Vn. 

Pno. 

V1.  Who should I — find when there's — no - bo - dy — to find

V2.  when there's — al - ways me — to find

Vn. 

Pno. 

V1. 8 I want thing be in con-trol so be con-trolled When on-ly you are

V2. 8 When on-ly you are

Vn.

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 1 through 3 of the musical score. V1 and V2 are vocal staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature. V1 has lyrics: "I want thing be in con-trol so be con-trolled When on-ly you are". V2 has lyrics: "When on-ly you are". Vn. is a violin staff with a whole rest in measure 1 and 2, and a half rest in measure 3. Pno. is a grand staff with a continuous eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

V1. 8 e - very-thing Can you see me _____ Can you see

V2. 8 e - very-thing I do see you _____ I do see

Vn.

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 4 through 7 of the musical score. V1 and V2 have lyrics: "e - very-thing Can you see me _____ Can you see" and "e - very-thing I do see you _____ I do see". Vn. has a whole rest in measure 4, and then a half note in measure 5, followed by a half note in measure 6 and a quarter note in measure 7. Pno. continues with the same eighth-note accompaniment.

V1.  me 

V2.  you 

Vn. 

Pno. 

Detailed description: This system contains the first three measures of a musical score. V1 and V2 are vocal staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature (C). V1 has a lyric 'me' and V2 has a lyric 'you'. Both have a long horizontal line under the lyrics. Vn. is a violin staff in treble clef with the same key signature. Pno. is a piano grand staff with treble and bass clefs and the same key signature. The first measure shows the vocalists entering with a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The violin and piano accompaniment also enter in the first measure. The second and third measures continue the vocal melody and accompaniment.

V1. 

V2. 

Vn. 

Pno. 

Detailed description: This system contains the next three measures of the musical score. V1 and V2 are vocal staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature (C). Vn. is a violin staff in treble clef with the same key signature. Pno. is a piano grand staff with treble and bass clefs and the same key signature. The first measure shows the vocalists with a whole rest, followed by a half rest, and then a quarter rest. The violin and piano accompaniment continue. The second and third measures continue the vocal melody and accompaniment. The system ends with a double bar line.

Destiny M6

Carina Jiang

♩=110

Voice

Piano

Red. p

Red.

3

V.

Pno.

き み は だ れ だ

Red.

Red.

5

V.

Pno.

れ

Red.

Red.

V. 8 き み は だ れ だ

mf

Pno. *Red.* *

V. 8 れ

f

Pno. *Red.* *

見 た こ と の

Red. mf *

V. 8 ない ひ と 知 っ た こ と の

Pno. *Red.* *

V. 8

ない ひ と き み は だ れ だ

Pno. *Red.* * *f* * *Red.* *

V. 8

れ だ も ひ と 目 で わ か っ た こ れ

Pno. *Red.* * *ff* * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* *

V. 8

は だ も い っ ち お と を き い た こ れ

Pno. *Red.* * *ff* * *Red.* * *Red.* * *mf* *

V. *8*

は なぜ なんて どうして なぜ なんて

Pno. *And.* *f*

V. *8*

どうして 最 - 初 な の に でも わかる 最 - 初 な の に

Pno. *mf*

V. *8*

でも 知 る 運 命 の 輪 が う ご き は じ め た う ん 命 の

Pno.

V. 8 日 が き た

Pno. *Red.* *p* *

V. き み は だ

Pno. *Red.* *

V. れ だ れ

Pno. *Red.* *

V. 8

き み は だ

mf

Pno. *Red.* *

V. 8

れ だ れ

Pno. *Red.* *

Free myself M2

M2

Carina Jiang

A

f

♩ = 40

Voice

Violin

Piano

mf *sfp* *mf* *sfp* *mf*

I can see the crowd in

B

V.

Vn.

Pno.

mf

red run-ning out. They are all ask-ing me to give up now. Shou - ting run - ning

V. 
no where to hide. Cal-ling es-ca-ping from light. Shou - ting run - ning

Vn. 

Pno. 

V. 
no where to hide. Hope - less just like this world of wild

Vn. 

Pno. 

C

V. Stru - gg-ling with my life. 'fraid of this pass - ing time.

Vn.

Pno.

V. May - be I'll just leave this be-hind. May - be just say good - bye.

Vn.

Pno.

Score for measures 1-5, marked with a box containing 'D'.

Instrumentation: V. (Violin), Vn. (Viola), Pno. (Piano).

Measure 1: V. rests; Vn. quarter note G4, quarter note A4; Pno. right hand eighth notes G4-A4-B4, left hand half note G3.

Measure 2: V. rests; Vn. quarter note B4, quarter note A4, eighth note G4, eighth note F#4; Pno. right hand eighth notes A4-B4-C5, left hand half note A3.

Measure 3: V. rests; Vn. quarter note E5, quarter note D5, eighth note C5, eighth note B4; Pno. right hand eighth notes B4-C5-D5, left hand half note B3.

Measure 4: V. rests; Vn. quarter note A4, quarter note G4, eighth note F#4, eighth note E4; Pno. right hand eighth notes C5-B4-A4, left hand half note A3.

Measure 5: V. rests; Vn. quarter note D5, quarter note C5, eighth note B4, eighth note A4, marked with a triplet '3'; Pno. right hand eighth notes G4-A4-B4, left hand half note G3.

Score for measures 6-10, marked with a box containing 'E'.

Instrumentation: V. (Violin), Vn. (Viola), Pno. (Piano).

Measure 6: V. rests; Vn. quarter note G4, quarter note A4; Pno. right hand eighth notes G4-A4-B4, left hand half note G3.

Measure 7: V. rests; Vn. quarter note B4, quarter note A4, eighth note G4, eighth note F#4, marked with a triplet '3'; Pno. right hand eighth notes A4-B4-C5, left hand half note A3.

Measure 8: V. rests; Vn. quarter note E5, quarter note D5, eighth note C5, eighth note B4; Pno. right hand eighth notes B4-C5-D5, left hand half note B3.

Measure 9: V. eighth notes G4-A4-B4-C5, marked with a forte *f* dynamic; Vn. quarter note A4, quarter note G4, eighth note F#4, eighth note E4; Pno. right hand rests, left hand half note A3.

Measure 10: V. eighth notes D5-C5-B4-A4; Vn. quarter note D5, quarter note C5, eighth note B4, eighth note A4; Pno. right hand rests, left hand half note B3.

Lyrics: I can see the haze of black shou-ting out.

V. You all are like those kids a - round. Cry - ing ly - ing no where to hide.

Vn.

Pno.

V. Shou - ting how - ling loud. Cry - ing ly - ing no where to hide, hope-

Vn.

Pno.

V. less just like this world of wild. Struggle to stay a - live.

Vn.

Pno.

V. I'm not a-fraid of time. May - be just stare at them this time.

Vn.

Pno.

mf

V. May-be go home to night. Spi - rit a - way. All gone a - way.

Vn.

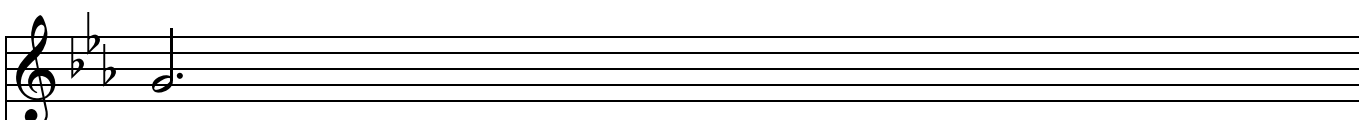
Pno.


I

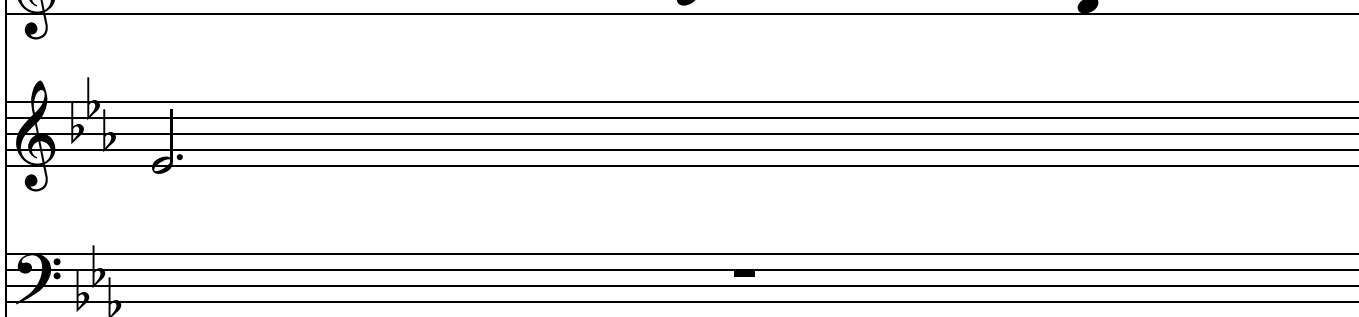
V. if all things are full - of grief set a - side. Stru-gg-ling with my

Vn.

Pno.

V. 

Vn.  life.

Pno. 

V. 

Vn. 

Pno. 

'fraid of this pass - ing time. May - be I'll just leave this be-hind.

V. May-be just say good-bye.

Vn.

Pno.

mf *sfp* *mf* *sfp*

mf *sfp* *mf* *sfp*

Free myself reprise M4

Carina Jiang

$\text{♩} = 40$
mf

Voice

过 眼 云 烟 全 部 不 见 如 果

Violin

Piano

V.

一 切 如 此 悲 哀 就 不 爱 我 试 着 挣 - 扎

Vn.

Pno.

V. 

我 感 到 害 - 怕 或 者 就 这 样 离 开 吧

Vn. 

Pno. 

V. 

或 者 就 再 见 吧

Vn. 

Pno. 

mf *sfp* *mf* *sfp*

I am...where? M3

Carina Jiang

$\text{♩} = 90$

Voice

Violin

Piano

*Red. * Red. * Red.*

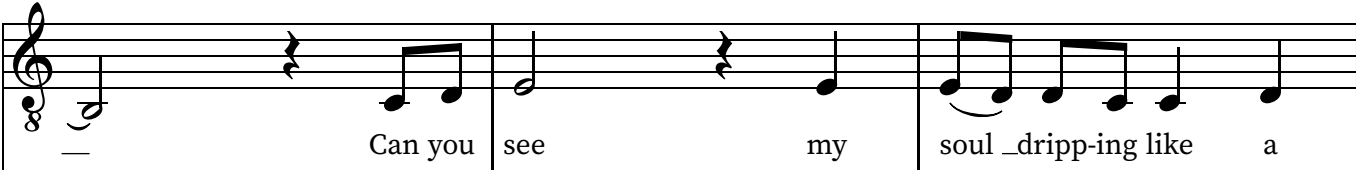
V.

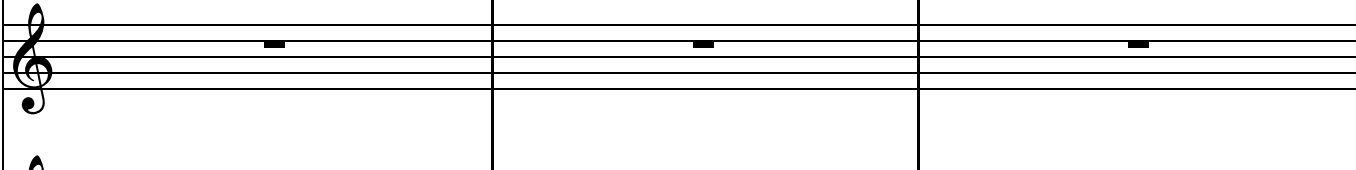
Vn.

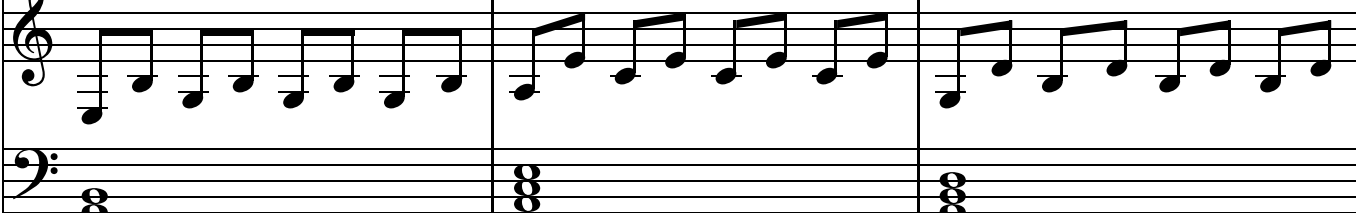
Pno.

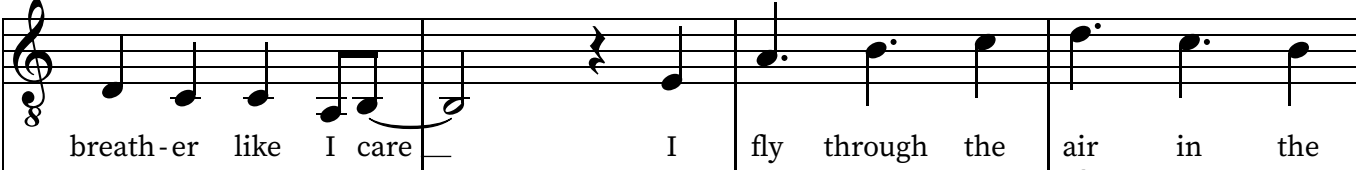
Can you hear my heart pound-ing like a ri - ver in the air

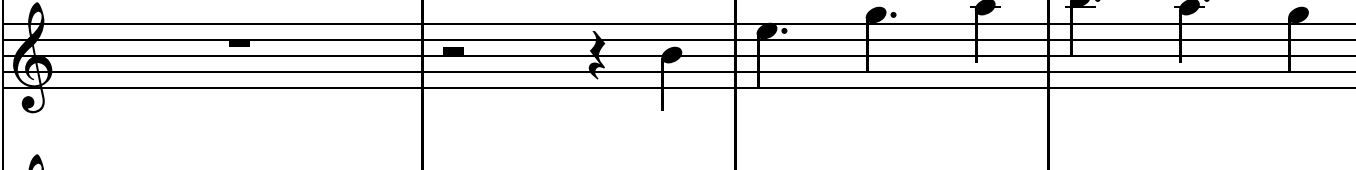
** Red. * Red. * Red. **

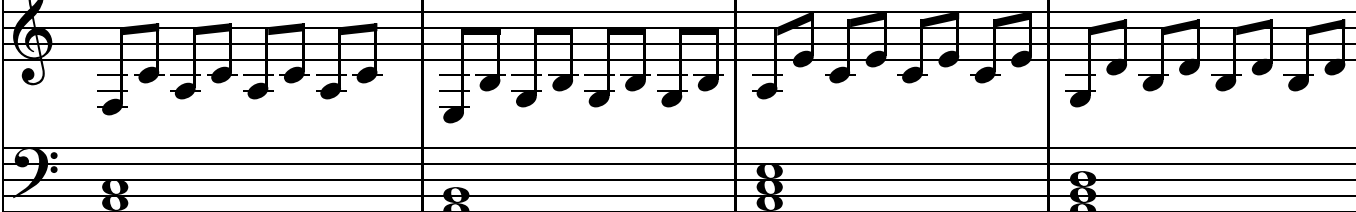
V. 
Can you see my soul dripp-ing like a

Vn. 

Pno. 
Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* *

V. 
breath-er like I care I fly through the air in the

Vn. 

Pno. 
Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* *

V. sky of my heart I run through the ri - ver of my

Vn.

Pno.

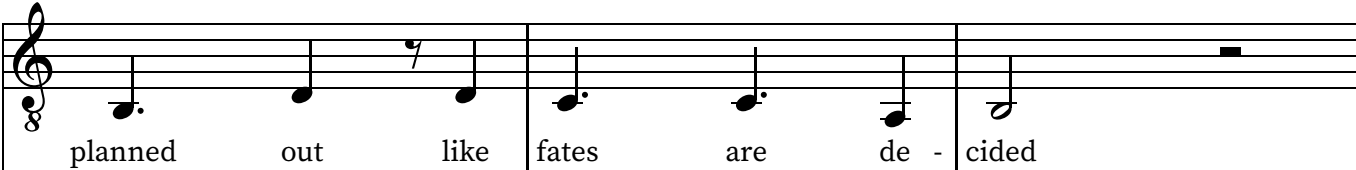
Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

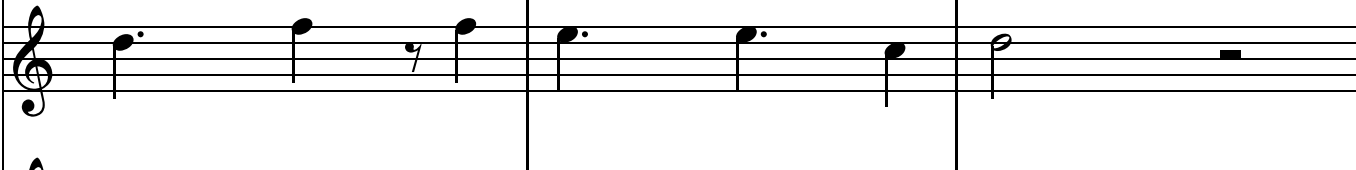
V. dark Words are all


Vn.

Pno.

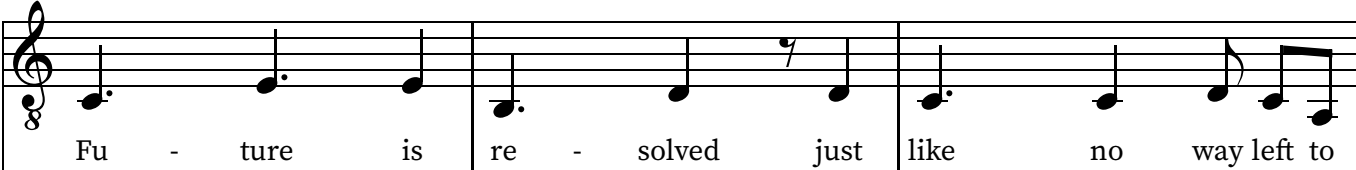
Red. * Red. * Red. *

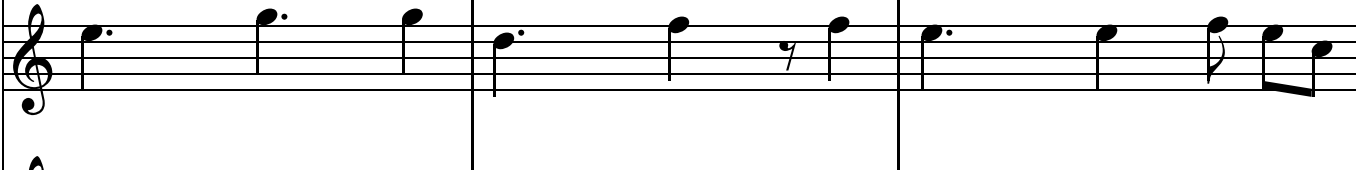
V. 
planned out like fates are de - cided

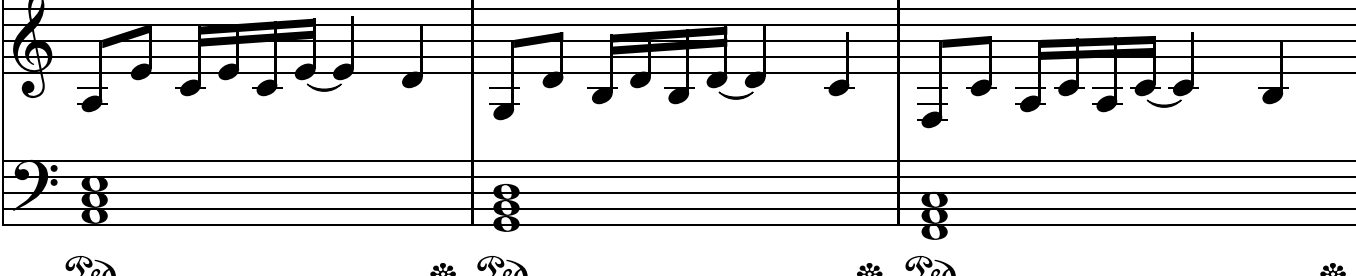
Vn. 
planned out like fates are de - cided

Pno. 
planned out like fates are de - cided

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* *

V. 
Fu - ture is re - solved just like no way left to

Vn. 
Fu - ture is re - solved just like no way left to

Pno. 
Fu - ture is re - solved just like no way left to

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* *

V.

Vn.

Pno.

Ped. * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* *

V.

Vn.

Pno.

Ped. * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* *

V. told Re - veal my own mind

Vn.

Pno.

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* *

V. Like I don't mind Re - mem - ber my -

Vn.

Pno.

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* *

V. self _____ in mind Good bye

Vn.

Pno.

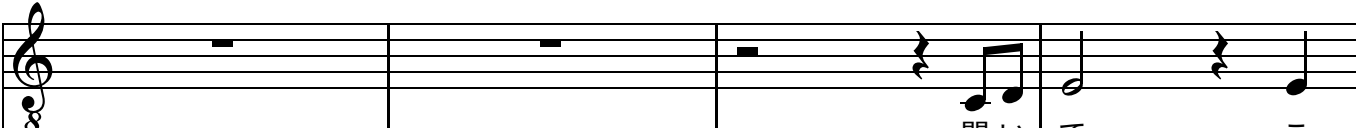
Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

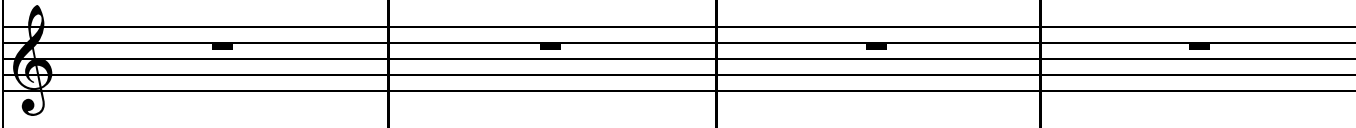
V.

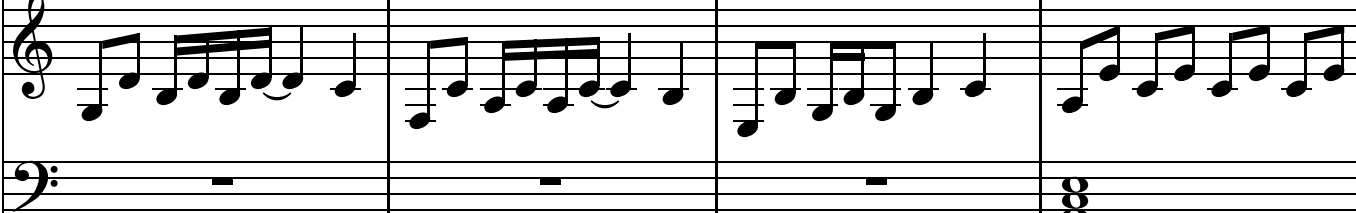
Vn.

Pno.

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

V. 

Vn. 


Pno. 

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

聞いてこ


V. 

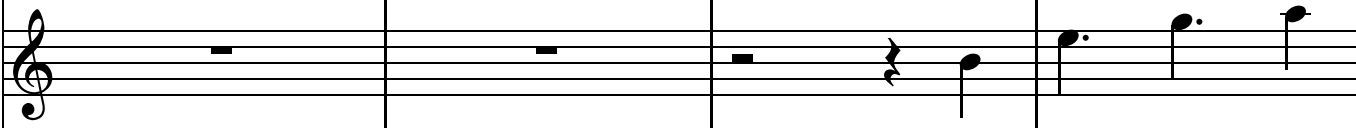
Vn. 

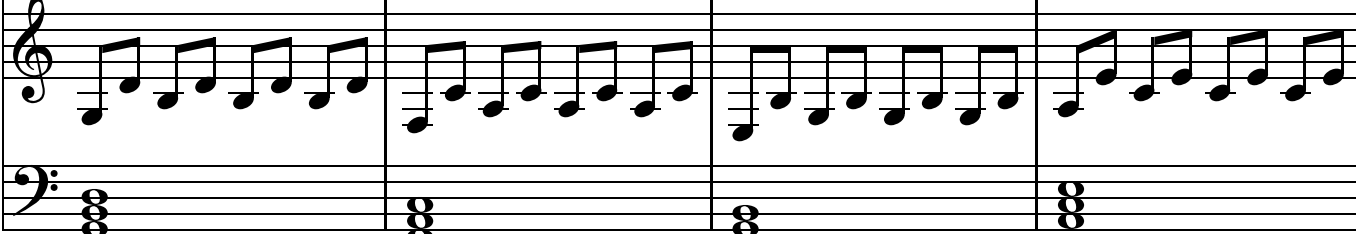
Pno. 

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *


の _ ころ は 宙 に 浮い てる _ 見 _ て こ


V. 
 の た ま し は 呼 吸 し て る こ こ ろ の


Vn. 

Pno. 


Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* *


V. 
 そ ら に と び ま う く ら い や


Vn. 

Pno. 

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* *

V. 

Vn. 

Pno. 

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

V. 

Vn. 

Pno. 

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

V. 8 決 め も う 逃 げ ら れ ない

Vn.

Pno.


Red. * Red. * Red. *

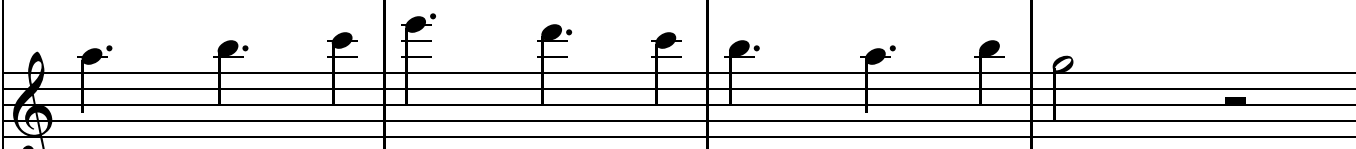
V. 8 負 け た ゲー ム は 制 御 が ない

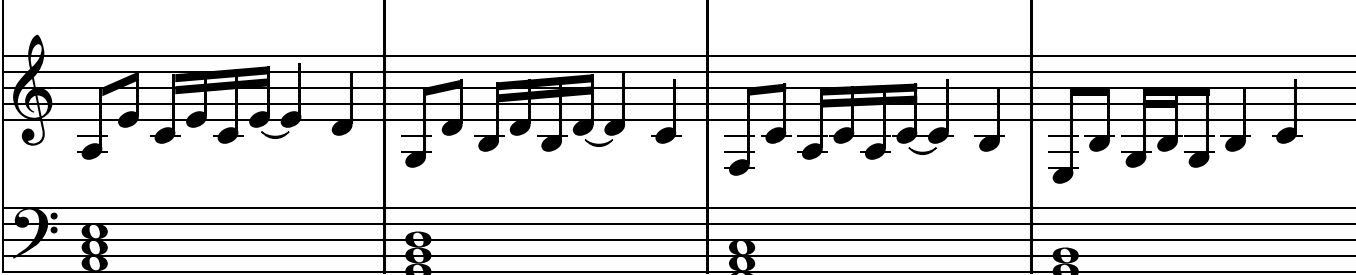
Vn.

Pno.


Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

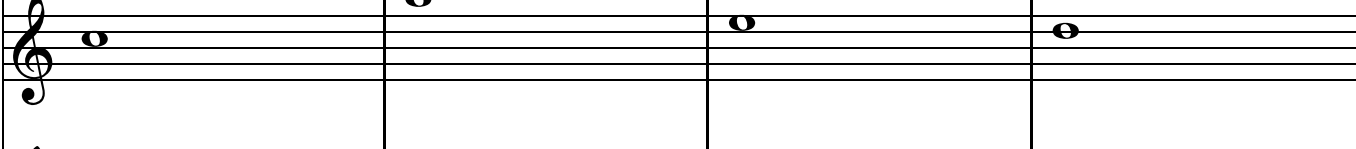
V. 


Vn. 

Pno. 

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* *

V. 

Vn. 

Pno. 

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* *

V. 8 分の幻想となり Good -

Vn.

Pno.

Red. * Red. * Red. *

V. night

Vn.

Pno.

Red. * Red. * Red. *

V.

Vn.

Pno.

Red. * Red. * Red. *

V.

Vn.

Pno.

Red. * Red. * Red. *

きんとうか M7

Flower of Paradise

Carina Jiang

$\text{♩} = 65$ A *mp* gently

hi to wa ko do ku na shi ma no nu shi i no chi wa ki n tou no ha - na

5

ko i wa ha na mi i chi byo i chi byo wo

9 B *mf* freely

13 a sa yu ki mi wo o mo u hi to wa ko do ku na shi ma no nu shi

16 i no chi wa ki n tou no ha - na ko i wa

ha na - mi i chi byo i chi byo wo o

きんとうか Reprise M8

Flower of Paradise

Carina Jiang

$\text{♩} = 65$ A
mp gently

Voice 1

hi to wa ko do ku na shi ma no nu shi i no chi wa ki n

Voice 2

mp

hi to wa ko do ku

Violin

4

V1.

tou no ha - na ko i wa ha na mi

V2.

na shi ma no nu shi i no chi wa ki n tou no ha - na

Vn.

mp

7

2

V1. i chi byo i chi byo wo a sa yu ki mi wo o mo

V2. ko i wa ha na mi i chi byo i chi byo

Vn.

10

V1. u

V2. wo a sa yu ki mi wo o mo u

Vn.

14

B
mf freely

V1. hi to wa ko do ku na shi ma no nu shi i no chi wa ki n

V2. hi to wa ko do ku

Vn.

V1.
 tou no ha - na ko i wa ha na - mi i chi

V2.
 na shi ma no nu shi *mf* i no chi wa ki n tou no ha - na

Vn.

V1.
 byo i chi byo wo o

V2.
 ko i wa ha na - mi i chi byo i chi byo wo o

Vn.

C

delivering to each other

V1.
 hi to wa shi ma no nu shi

V2.
 ko do ku na

Vn.

V1. i no chi wa ko i wa ha mi

V2. ki n to no ha - na ko i wa na mi

Vn.

33

V1. i chi byo wo o mo u

V2. i chi byo a sa yu ki mi wo

Vn.

37

D *f* clashing

V1. hi to wa ko do ku na shi ma no nu shi i no chi wa ki n

V2. *f* hi to wa ko do ku na shi ma no nu shi i no chi wa ki n

Vn.

V1.

 tou no ha - na ko i wa ha na mi

V2.

 tou no ha - na ko i wa ha na - mi i chi

Vn.

V1.

 i chi byo i chi byo wo a sa yu ki mi wo o mo u

V2.

 byo i chi byo wo o a sa yu ki mi wo o mo u

Vn.