

SOPHIE BETH SCHULMAN

"DON'T LAUGH" A SENIOR VOICE RECITAL AND HONORS CAPSTONE

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Performing Arts

University Honors in Musical Theatre

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Sophie Schulman prepared a senior voice recital exploring the works of many composers ranging from Joni Mitchell to Kurt Weill, Maury Yeston, and Stephen Sondheim, to Joni Mitchell and Joe Iconis. The recital included music from the jazz, folk, and musical theatre genres. She worked vocally on all of her pieces with her voice teacher, Dr. Stacey Mastrian, and completed written work about each character's physical and emotional life and their motivations. As she continued to work on her recital repertoire, she coached her pieces with professors Sariva Goetz and Karl Kippola to develop specificity and clarity in her acting choices. She presented a portion of her program to a panel of jurors from the music and theatre faculty and then performed the full program in the Abramson Family Recital Hall in the Katzen Arts Center, accompanied by Andrew Welch, an alum of the American University Honors Program. Through this work, she expanded her musical knowledge by exploring new genres, and got her first opportunity to perform a solo program. She also added to her audition and concert repertoire, leaving her more prepared to enter the professional acting world.

“Don’t Laugh” from *Hot Spot*

Objective: I want the audience to stay seated and listen.

I nudge Maybe it’s my name

I prod Maybe it’s my face

I pry Maybe it’s my both

I angle All I know is

Show me a glass of water,

I’ll show you a soggy dress.

I beseech Show me a tube of toothpaste,

I’ll show you a mess.

I needle Show me a fresh laid side walk

and guess where my footprints are

I put the screws to Show me a fire hydrant

I’ll show you my car

I challenge Show me the latest dance step

I’ll show you the latest fall

I provoke Show me the train to Boston

I’ll show you St. Paul

I solicit Show me a hundred lighters,

I’ll show you the one that won’t.

I levy Show me a priceless vase—

I stop No don’t!

I guilt Show me a cancelled party

I’ll show you the only guest

I sue Show me an open manhole

And I’ll do the rest

I confront Show me a broken window

I’ll show you a bat and ball

I grill Show me the boat to Europe

I’ll show you St. Paul

I oppose Ask me to give directions

I’ll show you a vacant lot

I mock Show me a knot that’s tangled

I’ll show you a tangled knot

I pull in Show me a nest of hornets...

I propose Maybe I can do—

Don’t laugh—

Good.

I catch Maybe I can do—

Don’t laugh—

Well.

I broach Maybe you could be

Who knows

Proud

I dare Alright, so laugh
I appeal But not too loud.
I cross-examine If I can convince
I implore Don't laugh
I cross-examine me,
Why can't I convince
I warn don't laugh
I cross examine you
I plead Give me half a chance
Just half,
And then,
Don't laugh
I inspire maybe I could be proud of me too.

This song is a direct address to the audience and an introduction to my recital. So, the setting is the Katzen Recital Hall. I want the audience to applaud, and I want them to stay and listen to the whole program, but I know the odds are against me. Everyone else's recitals are filled with beautiful songs and arias that showcase their flawless, glowing sopranos or crazy high belts. My recital is mostly filled with funny, quirky songs, many of which showcase how awkward I am.

But, I need the audience to see that this recital is going to be great. It won't be the usual fare, but it'll be fun and exciting. After all, awkward is funny, right? So, I start off by detailing all the things I don't do well. I'm clumsy, messy, scattered... the list goes on. But, I try! That is the bottom line. And maybe I can be great. Maybe I can do a wonderful recital and not only make them proud, but make myself proud as well. And that will honestly be a harder task. But before I can believe in myself, I need them to believe in me.

There are a lot of important people in this audience. And before I walk on stage, I picture all of them. To start off with, my parents flew in from California. This is one of the few times

they've been able to see me perform since I started college, and they paid for my education. So, I feel obligated to prove to them that it was worth it.

My friends and peers are here as well. I love all of them, and this is a very supportive department, but there is also an element of competition there. And a lot of them have already given great recitals this semester. Mine is the last, and I want to prove to them that while my recital may be different, and while I might be different and quirky, I can still give a good performance.

I also have friends here who aren't performers. Keeping them engaged will be even more difficult. A lot of them don't even like musical theatre, or have very little exposure to it.

Before I walk out, I spill a whole glass of water on my dress. There is no time to wait for it to dry, and I have nothing else to wear, so I have to go out there regardless. When I walk out onto the stage, I know I'm going to have to fight to keep the audience in their seats, especially now that I look like a soggy mess. I have an intermission, and they could leave in the middle. It is graduation weekend, after all. Everyone's families are here, and there are a million other things they could be doing with their time. But I know I have a good product, and I know I have a good recital planned. I have put a lot of work into this, and I want them to stick around to see it.

“Miss Marmelstein” from *I Can Get It For You Wholesale*

Objective: I want him to call me something other than Miss Marmelstein.

I nudge Oh, why is it always Miss Marmelstein?

I prod Miss Marmelstein?

I shake Miss Marmelstein?

I prompt Other girls get called by their first names right away
They get cozy intimate ... Do you know what I mean?

I spur Nobody calls me: "hey, baby doll!"
Or "Honey Dear" or "Sweetie Pie"

I incite Even my first name would be preferable
Though it's terrible, it might be better: it's Yette!

I suggest Or perhaps my second name that's Tessye
Spelled T-E-S-S-Y-E!

I shut down But no, no, it's always Miss Marmelstein!
You'd think at least Miss M. they could try...

I mock Miss Marmelstein! Miss Marmelstein!
Miss Marmelstein! Miss Marmelstein! Miss Marmelstein!
Oh, I could die!

I impress I'm a very willing secretary
Enjoy my work as my employer will corroborate

I placate except for one disappointment one fly in the ointment
It's great I mean simply great

I goad But the aggravation of my situation
I might as well get it off my chest
It's the drab appellation

I boast Oh pardon the big words I apply

But I was an English major at C.C.N.Y.
Drab appellation!

I inspire By which I am persistently addressed
Persistently, perpetually, continually and inevitably addressed!

I challenge Believe me, it could drive a person positively psychosomatic

I plead Why is it always Miss Marmelstein?
Miss Marmelstein? Miss Marmelstein?

I hint Other girls get called by their nick names right away
slightly naughty or riske
Do you know what I mean? Ha! Ha...Mmmmmmm!

I coax Nobody calls me : "Koo-Chee-Koo" or "Boobala" or "Passion Pie"

I inspire Even "Hey There Babe!" thought not respectable
Ain't so objectable
It's kind of crummy but chummy

I interrogate Of course if I got married, that would do it
So, where's the lucky guy? Hmm??

I excite Till then it still is Miss Marmelstein! Everyday I get more and more fussed

I prompt Miss Marmelstein! Miss Marmelstein!
Miss Marmelstein! Miss Marmelstein! Miss Marmelstein!

I threaten Ooooh...!
I could Bust!

My name is Yette Tessye Marmelstein. Try living with that. I am on my third date with this guy that I'm really interested in. On the first date, he called me Miss Marmelstein. I let it slide, because we didn't know each other very well. I thought he was just being polite.

The date went well, aside from that. He's a very good listener and a good conversationalist. He's smart and cute and so interesting. But, he is very formal. Sometimes I don't know if I'm on a date or just out with a friend. Is he attracted to me at all? I can't tell. We haven't made any physical contact, and our third date is coming to a close. He initiated all of our "meetings"- I don't even know if I should continue to call them dates- but the mixed signals are killing me.

He has walked me home, and we're on the doorstep of my apartment. I keep doing that jingly key thing you're supposed to do when you want someone to know it's ok for them to kiss you, but it is not working. He just said, "Goodbye, Miss Marmelstein," and I just cannot keep it in any longer. I blow up in his face. I need him to give me a sign that this is going somewhere.

Obstacles: He's on the timid side, and I don't want him to run away in fear because of my tirade. I want him to know how I feel, and I also want him to know I'm worth going through all of this for, but I don't want to scare him away.

Also, I'm not someone who tends to blow up. I'm by no means reserved, but I don't tend to get visibly angry with people, especially those I don't know very well. I let a lot slide off my back. I'm very opinionated, and it's usually not difficult for me to share those opinions but confrontation, on the other hand, is very hard for me. But it's become clear to me that I'm going to have to be the one to move this relationship forward.

“My Grandmother’s Love Letters” from *December Songs*

Objective: I want him to kiss me so we can make up and get back together.

I ease I went up to my attic

To put away your letters

In a grey metal box

With two broken locks

Next to an old birdcage

I intrigue When I went to put your letters inside

I found another packet

Covered with dust

And smelling of must

That came from another age... → **Unit 1: This is why I’m here**

I draw in My grandmother's love letters

Held in her trembling hand

When she was seventeen

I enchant They were a world to her

They were her youth

They made her whisper low

Seventy-seven years ago → **Unit 2: Listen to me**

I rattle My grandmother's love letters

So firmly in her grasp

She'd read one line and gasp

That means she breathed

The air of long ago

I impress upon I loved her so → **Unit 3: This is important**

I shake Some things you never know

What makes the tide come in

And the little flower grow

I wake up How Father Time decides

When he'll come for one of us → **Unit 4: It wasn't your fault**

I warm Some things you never know

What makes the eagle fly

And the southern wind blow

I warn These things they come, they go

Like portents, omens, dreams

You never know → **Unit 5: Everything changes**

I grab My grandmother's love letters

When she was seventeen

Think what they had to mean

They were a world to her

They were her youth

She tied them with a bow

Seventy-seven years ago → **Unit 6: Love is precious**

I shake My grandmother's love letters

So firmly in her grasp

She'd read each line and gasp

And I'm the air she breathed so long ago

I plead I miss her so → **Unit 7: We can do this**

I soothe Some things you never know

What makes the tide come in

And the little flower grow

How Father Time decides

When he'll come for one of us → **Unit 8: It's going to be ok**

I assuage Some things you never know

What makes the eagle fly

And the southern wind blow

I beg These things they come, they go

Like portents, omens, dreams

I embrace You'll never know → **Unit 9: I love you and I'm sorry.**

Character Name: NA

Super Objective: I want to cherish every moment.

I am speaking to my boyfriend. Last week, we got into a huge fight and I decided we should take a break. I went up to the attic to put away his love letters; I didn't want to think about him while we were apart and that was proving very difficult. Everything reminds me of him. So, I decided I'd hide them from myself for now.

But when I went to put the letters inside this grey metal box next to the old birdcage my mom bought at some auction, I found another stack of letters inside. They were tied with a blue bow. I undid the ribbon and opened the letters. They were from my grandmother to my grandfather at the start of their relationship. They started dating right before they went off to college, and they wrote letters to stay in contact while they were away. The letters were so beautiful. I had always known they loved each other; it was evident as I was growing up. They did everything together. But, I had never thought about them in such a romantic context and I never knew they had been in the exact same position as my boyfriend and I.

Sadly, my grandmother died last year. She and my grandfather had both lived with us all throughout my childhood. My grandfather died when I was 12, but my grandmother still lived with us until her death. They were a huge part of my upbringing. I loved her so much and I miss her every day.

When I saw those letters, I knew I had to get back together with my boyfriend. Yes, we'd had our problems but they seem so insignificant now that I'm looking at the big picture. We'd been trying long distance, and it was frustrating both of us; that's why we decided to take this break. We wrote letters and skyped all the time, but it obviously wasn't the same as being

together. We were both dealing with a hundred things and adding a long distance relationship into the mess seemed like overkill. We just weren't sure whether it was worth it; whether this would actually go anywhere.

But those letters made me realize it could. So, I got in my car and drove the six hours to his school and knocked on his door. It was impulsive, but I had to do it. I know I can't let this relationship die, because I love him and because I will regret not giving it a real shot and letting the details get in the way. There is so much in this world that you can't control. Things come and go and there's no way of stopping time. But now I know that you have to hold on to the good things before they slip away.

“Blue Hair” from *The Black Suits*

To Whom Are You Speaking: My baby sister, Sarah

What Do You Want: I want her to help me dye my hair blue without telling our parents.

Ride In: I’m babysitting Sarah, and she found some blue hair dye while snooping through our parents’ bathroom cabinet. She called me in to look. I think it’s from an old Halloween costume. She brought it to me to ask what it was, and that’s when I got the idea to dye my hair blue.

Impress I’m bored I’m awesome it’s almost one. The internet’s down and my homework’s done.
Excite And I’m sick of brown and it looks like fun, so I’m gonna dye my hair blue.

Inspire I’m independent I’m totally rad

Amuse Gonna dye my hair gonna make Chris mad. And he’ll make a snotty face and I’ll say, “You’re not my Dad! No I’m gonna do what I want to and I wanna dye my hair blue.

Animate And it’s gonna look like Wonderful super fantastic coolness remarkable

Electrify Wonderful super fantastic coolness remarkable

Shut down Wonderful super fantastic coolness remarkable and blue.

Entertain I bet John’s gonna love it I bet he’ll say, “Man, I used to have blue hair back in the day,”

Impress And I’ll pretend I didn’t know and I’ll be all, “No way! No I didn’t know didn’t have a clue when I went and dyed my hair blue you had nothin’ had nothin’ to do with why I dyed my hair blue.”

Assure I’m not one of those girls who does things for guys

Reassure Screw their compliments I know they’re all lies

Challenge I put blue in my hair cuz I want blue there. Don’t care what they say back at school

Enlighten But if John says he likes it then it’s like whatever You know it’s like cool

Rouse And if he does I’ll be wonderful super fantastic coolness remarkable

Enliven Wonderful super fantastic coolness

Thrill He makes me feel wonderful super fantastic coolness remarkable and blue

Let in I'm not the brightest. I'm not the most colorful

Guilt I'm a really bad speller. I blend in ev'ryone always forgets my name

Divulge I hide my box of Barbies in the cabinet underneath my t.v.

Inspirit I'm not the coolest but pretty soon my hair will be

John is the coolest guy I've ever met. I'm in the eighth grade, and he's a junior in high school. He's in the same grade as my sister Katherine, and I've had a huge crush on him since the first time I saw him when I was twelve. He had blue hair and he was wearing ripped jeans and a Pink Floyd t-shirt. He had me at hello.

And now I have to get him to like me back. We will only have one year of high school together, so I want him to notice me now. That way we can spend that last year together just being in love. So, I need to dye my hair blue.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of obstacles to this goal. First of all, Sarah is a tattletale, and if she calls mom to tell her I'm thinking about using her old dye on my hair, you will hear a scream unlike any yet heard on this planet.

Also, I'm not very good with beauty stuff, so I'm going to need Sarah's help to dye all of my thick hair. Sarah, who is 11, is just starting to notice boys, so if I can get her on my side by explaining the whole John thing, this may all work out. I just need to convince her that this is a worthwhile endeavor and that dying my hair blue will be cool and exciting. And if John says he likes my hair, the whole thing will be worth it.

Another obstacle is that dying my hair blue makes me a target for bullying at school. But I'm willing to risk and brave that in order to make John fall for me. However, I can't have Sarah

thinking that I am only doing this for a guy; I'm also doing it for myself. It's very important to me that she learns self-worth and doesn't grow up craving popularity and the approval of the men around her. We're both stronger than that.

Also, there is a time crunch. My parents are coming back in an hour, and if we don't dye my hair blue by then, it won't happen. My parents would never let me. So, if I don't do it now while they're out, then I won't ever get the chance again. This is the moment and I'm seizing it!

“River” by Joni Mitchell

Objective: I want him to kiss me so we can make up and get back together

I charm It's comin on Christmas. They're cuttin down trees. They're putting up reindeer and singin songs of joy and peace.

I regale Oh, I wish I had a river I could skate away on.

I amuse But it don't snow here. It stays pretty green. I'm gonna make a lot of money, then I'm gonna quit this crazy scene.

I entice I wish I had a river I could skate away on.

I thrill I wish I had a river so long I would teach my feet to fly.

I seduce Oh, I wish I had a river I could skate away on.

I involve I made my baby cry.

I persuade He tried hard to help me, ya know. He put me at ease.

I seduce And he loved me so naughty made me weak in the knees.

I plead Oh I wish I had a river I could skate away on.

I impity I'm so hard to handle. I'm selfish and I'm sad. Now I gone and lost the best baby that I ever had.

I lure I wish I had a river I could skate away on.

I draw I wish I had a river so long I would teach my feet to fly.

I beg Oh, I wish I had a river I could skate away on.

I sadden I made my baby say goodbye.

I tempt It's comin on Christmas. They're cuttin down trees. They're putting up reindeer and singin songs of joy and peace.

I hint Oh, I wish I had a river I could skate away on.

Elliot and I met on a train. Literally. It was the most bizarre and amazing thing that ever happened to me, and I can't actually believe that is wasn't just some scene in a movie or dreamed up. I saw him in Penn Station and thought, "I would like to be friends with that guy." I guess sometimes, you just know.

I loved everything about Elliot. The stupid way he smiled and said, “Hi,” every time he saw me, his love for Nabokov, his horrible puns, the way he told me he thought I was beautiful, his willingness to pick me up from the train after work, no matter how late it got, just so he could say “hi,” the way he wanted to know all about my friends from home, and the way he generally cared about every aspect of my life.

After two whirlwind, amazing weeks with him, he went on a trip to Iceland. While he was there, I constantly fantasized about how he would find some beautiful, blonde, Icelandic girl and run away with her. I became sad and selfish, and even when he came back and was just as loving as before, I distrusted him.

At the end of the summer, I and we both went back to school. We never really talked about breaking up, it was just kind of understood that it wasn’t realistic or normal for two twenty-one year olds to start a long distance relationship after only having dated for a month and a half. Also, I could see how much I frustrated and hurt him with my jealousy. I became almost manic towards the end of the summer—always panicked about where the relationship was going and whether he really wanted to be with me or if this was just a physical fling and I was reading too much into it.

Once we went back to school, we rarely talked. I could tell he wasn’t that interested in speaking to me. After all, I had messed everything up—ruined the end of our perfectly blissful summer. But, then, we graduated and both moved to New York City. I wanted to see him and apologize so desperately. I wanted him back. I thought about him constantly and compared every potential love interest to him; they never measured up. So, after six months of agonizing about it, I asked him to get coffee with me in December. He said yes, and now I’ve come to meet him at

his apartment. I knocked on the door, he answered, and said his stupid, grinning, “hi.” He asked how I was, and these are the first words I blurted out.

“Over the Rainbow” from *The Wizard of Oz*

Objective: I want her to smile

I encourage: When all the world is a hopeless jumble
And the raindrops tumble around
Heaven opens a magic lane

I reassure: When all the clouds darken up the skyway
There's a rainbow highway to be found
Leading from your window pane
To a place behind the sun
Just step beyond the rain

I entice: Somewhere over the rainbow way up high
There's a land that I heard of once in a lullaby
I enchant: Somewhere over the rainbow skies are blue
And the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true

I excite: Someday I'll wish upon an star
And wake up where the clouds are far behind me
Inspirit: Where troubles melt like lemon drops
Away above the chimney tops
That's where you'll find me

I nudge: Somewhere over the rainbow bluebirds fly
Birds fly over the rainbow, why then, oh why can't I?

I reason: If happy little bluebirds fly beyond the rainbow
Why oh why can't I?

I am singing this song to my best friend. We're both graduating this year, and we're really freaking out about finding jobs and making a living as actors. All of our classes are about auditioning and we've read dozens of books and articles about how impossible this profession is and how we may end up alone and living in a box. Some of them even tell us that if we make the decision to become performers, we will have to put our careers before our family, even our

potential children! This is not a fun prospect, and while I'm not sure I believe it, it still scared the living daylight out of me.

But, it's hit my friend even worse. She's considering giving up and pursuing something else. But she's so talented and I absolutely cannot let that happen! She tends to be really high-strung and very impulsive; she also has problems with stress and depression. She's sobbing her eyes out, and we have a mock audition in Fun IV today. Class starts in twenty minutes and I need her to pull herself together and get ready to go in there and give a great audition.

The auditor is the casting director from Arena Stage, and the last time she was seen by him, she was the only one at the audition who got a callback. He could be her ticket to a job, if she can just go in there and knock it out of the park. But, unfortunately, I've been trying to console her for a half an hour and nothing is working. Time is running out, and I also really need to go warm-up for class. I have to cheer her up, and fast. I know that becoming an actor seems like a pipe dream. I tend to be really positive about our prospects all of the time but, inside, I'm freaking out to. I need to reveal to her that this is something I struggle with too. She's not alone. Our class is actually one collective freak out.

She's moaning about how she feels like everything is turned upside down, and I need to get her to believe in herself and believe that things will work themselves out. When G-d closes a door...

“Can’t Stop Talking” from *Let’s Dance*

Objective: I want her to be happy for me

Excite His eyes,

Poke his nose,

Amuse his fingers,

Arouse his toes

Elicit His smile when he says please

Delight And when he sneezes, his sneeze

Thrill His arms, chest, coat, vest

Encourage His everything is sweeter than sweet

Persuade I try and try but honest to Pete I can’t stop talkin’ about him

And talkin’ about him and talkin’ about him

Clarify I can’t stop talkin’ about the man that I adore

Assure I can’t stop talkin’ about him

And talkin’ about him and talkin’ about him

Refute I can’t stop talkin’ about him

Negate and though I seem a bore I simply can’t stop tellin’ about him and yellin’ about him and tellin’ about him

Animate I can’t stop hollerin’ over the moment that we met

Impress He had a pinstriped whatd’yecallit a beautiful smile, a barrel of money

Contend I can’t stop talkin’ about him yet

Shake He kissed me a bell went “boing”

Shock A whistle went “whoo”

Alarm A trapped door opened and I flipped right through

Scold And now I can’t stop talkin’ about him and talkin’ about him and talkin’ about him

Accuse And if he was yours, well neither would you!

AJ: Now would you please stop talkin’ about him and talkin’ about him and talkin’ about him

Contradict But I can’t stop talkin’ about him and talkin’ about him and talkin’ about him

AJ: Then don’t stop talkin’ about him and talkin’ about him and talkin’ about him

Snub Well, I won't stop talkin' about him and talkin' about him and talkin' about him

Kindle I can't stop talkin' about him
And talkin' about him and talkin' about him

Rouse I can't stop talkin' about the man that I adore

Stagger I can't stop talkin' about him
And talkin' about him and talkin' about him

Bewilder I can't stop talkin' about him

Affect and though I seem a bore I simply can't stop tellin' about him and yellin' about him and tellin' about him

Electrify I can't stop hollerin' over the moment that we met

Astound He had a pinstriped whatd'yecallit a beautiful smile, a barrel of money

Counter I can't stop talkin' about him yet

Shock He kissed me a bell went "boing"

Astonish A whistle went "whoo"

Stagger A trapped door opened and I flipped right through

Oppose And now I can't stop talkin' about him and talkin' about him and talkin' about him

Rebuff And if he was yours, well neither would you!

My best friend Sarah always has a boyfriend and is always bragging about it. She is one of the nastiest girls I have ever met, but she lived on my floor freshman year, and now I can't get away from her. I try to be civil, but it's difficult. She cannot stop bragging about her boyfriend, and how wonderful he is, and how she has so many job offers for after graduation, and how she gets straight A's every semester, blah, blah, blah.

She makes so many off-handed snarky comments, and she is so passive aggressive. Passive aggressiveness is one of my biggest pet peeves. It's why I am more drawn to guys as friends. Girls are just so under handed; nothing is said outright. Sarah is the queen of the passive aggressive crowd.

I try not to play into her games but this time, I just can't resist. I'm walking with AJ, and we just bumped into Sarah outside of Katzen. The first thing she asks me is how single life is treating me. Ick. She's having trouble with her boyfriend, but she doesn't think I know. Her boyfriend is definitely kind of an asshole. I have a new boyfriend, and he's perfect. I just want to rub it in her face a little bit. I know it's wrong, but I cannot stop myself.

And after all, if she's gonna dish it out, she should be able to take it! She's always blabbing about her boyfriends when I'm single. She even tells me how she feels sorry for me when I don't have what she's got. It's infuriating!

And since she's been single, she's just been ragging on me for other things. The other day, we were looking at a picture of me and a few friends and her exact words were, "Wow, you guys look great! The wonders of makeup..." I mean, COME ON! She's terrible.

My biggest obstacle is AJ. He's trying to be a friend and keep me from being a bitch, but I want to be a bitch for once! I always let her walk all over me, and I can't do it anymore! I want Sarah to give me a hug and be happy for me; or, at least, pretend to be happy for me. I always do it for her!

“You Won’t Be Satisfied (Until You Break My Heart)” by Freddy James and Larry Stock

Objective: I want Adam to apologize.

SOPHIE

Accuse-You won't be satisfied until you break my heart,

Charge-You're never satisfied until the teardrops start,

Flirt-I tried to shower you with love and kisses,

Guilt -But all I ever get from you is,

Naggin' n' braggin',

My poor heart is saggin',

Look down on-The way you toss my heard around's a cryin' shame,

Challenge-I'll bet you wouldn't like it if I did the same!

Reproach-You're only happy tearin' all my dreams apart,

Scold-Oh you won't be satisfied until you break my heart!

AJ:

You won't be satisfied until you break my heart,

You're never satisfied until the teardrops start!

I tried to shower you with love and kisses,

But all I ever get from you, is

Naggin' n' braggin' ,

My poor heart is saggin' . . .

The way you toss my heard around's a cryin' shame,

I'll bet you wouldn't like it if I did the same!

You're only happy tearin' all my dreams apart,

Oh you won't be satisfied until you break my heart!

(Piano solo)

SOPHIE:

Shame-The way you toss my heard around's a cryin' shame,

Tease-I'll bet you wouldn't like it if I did the same!

AJ:

You're only happy tearin' all my little dreams apart . . .

SOPHIE:

Banter-Oh, You won't be satisfied,

BOTH: Until you break my heart

In this song, I am speaking to my boyfriend Adam, played by AJ. I love him, but our relationship is not going well. We are constantly bickering, and he is always nagging me about every little thing.

He's frustrated with me, because we don't spend enough time together. He goes to a different university, which makes things difficult. He can't understand why I am constantly at rehearsal, in class, practicing, or doing homework. And, on top of that, I'm definitely someone who needs alone time. I love him, but once I get out of class and rehearsal, I'm so exhausted I'm not really game to do anything but sit on my butt and watch TV.

In addition to being annoyed with Adam for failing to be understanding, I'm frustrated at his consistent holier than thou attitude. He's always bragging about everything—how his school is better than mine, how his grades are better than mine, how he got nominated for some special award at graduation. It really grates on my nerves. It's not like he does it outright; he's much smarter than that. It's subtle, which makes it even worse.

But the worst thing about the situation is that I still love him. In some ways, he's so wonderful to me and wonderful for me. While he does brag all the time, he's also constantly picking me up when I'm down. He's fun, adorable, and so, so smart and interesting. I love being around him, but then he starts doing these little things and I want to kill him. I want him to apologize to me so we can kiss and make up. If he can't see that what he's doing is wrong and try to fix it, I'm going to have to end things.

“Stay Well” from *Lost in the Stars*

Objective: I want him to promise he'll return home.

I scold If I tell truth to you my love, my own
Grief is your gift to me grief alone.

I berate Wild passion at midnight
Wild anger at dawn

I guild Yet when you're absent, I weep you gone. → **Unit 1: This is hurting me too**

I bless Stay well,
O keeper of my love,
Go well through out all your days.

I charm Your star, the luckiest star above,
Your ways, the luckiest ways. → **Unit 2: May G-d bless you**

I assure Since unto you my one love is given,
And since with you it will remain.

I begrudge Though you bring fear of hell
Despair of heaven
Stay well,

I plead Come well to my door again. → **Unit 3: I will always be here**

I accuse When you have fled from me, my love, my own
I've waited quietly here alone → **Unit 4: That doesn't mean this doesn't hurt me**

I beg So come back at midnight or come back at dawn

I appeal Now that you're absent I weep you gone → **Unit 5: And it will continue to hurt me**

I warn Go well though wild the road and far
Stay well through darkening days

I bless Your star be still my luckiest star
Your ways the luckiest ways → **Unit 6: Be safe**

I caution Though into storm your lone bark be driven

I entreat Though my eyes ache for you in vain → **Unit 7: I'll miss you**

I beseech Though you bring fear at dawn, despair at even
Stay well

I entice Come well to my door again → **Unit 8: Please come home again**

Character Name: Irina

Super Objective: I want him to get clean and marry me.

Objective: I want him to promise he'll return home.

I am talking to my boyfriend. We are at my house, and it's 10 pm. He's about to leave and I've stopped him in the entryway, but I can't let him leave before talking to him.

Even though he hasn't said so explicitly, I know that he's going to hang out with his friends and use. I don't really know what drugs he's involved in, but I know it's bad. He tries to keep it from me, and he does a pretty darn good job. For years I had no idea how bad it was. We were friends for years before we got together, and I knew he'd had problems with drugs in the past. He started smoking pot when we were in the sixth grade, which was obviously on the early side. I vividly remember that when he stopped, he made me promise I would tell his parents if he ever got into drugs again.

In high school, he started smoking again, but that didn't really bother me. We're from California, after all. Almost everyone I know smokes pot. I've always figured it's better than cigarettes. But then the last time I went to a party with some of his friends from school, they kept talking about all these crazy drugs they'd tried recently. I could see him trying to shush them, but it was too late. I'd already heard.

I still didn't really know whether to be concerned or not. Unfortunately, a lot of my friends do drugs occasionally. It makes no sense to me, but oddly enough it doesn't seem to interfere with their lives too much. They all come from very wealthy families and aren't hurting for money, and they somehow manage to sober up for classes. A lot of them get better grades than I do.

But, eventually, I had to bring it up. He started using more and more frequently and avoiding my calls for days at a time so that I wouldn't know what was going on. Once I asked him outright, he was honest with me. And once I understood the severity of the situation, I had to

tell him what I thought. He goes to an Ivy League school, holds a job, and still makes straight A's, but what he is doing is still dangerous. It's only a matter of time before things fall apart. He's ruining his body and his life.

I hate seeming judgmental. I tend to be overly cautious; I didn't even drink until I turned 21. And so I'm always worried that people will think I'm judging their decisions. And that's the last thing I want my boyfriend to think. I want him to be able to trust me; I love him and always have. He's the one and all that cheesy stuff. But, in all seriousness, he's the guy I want to marry. I need him to get through this so that we can be together. I wish I could give him an ultimatum, but I know that won't work.

We've now had three huge arguments about this, one of which was tonight. He's left angry every time, and I hate what our time together has become. This is a last ditch attempt. I've decided to approach things from a different angle. I know I can't stop him from using drugs by telling him how it'll hurt him; it's time for me to show him how much it's hurting me. And I want him to know that no matter what, he can always come home to me. That's what I want. I want him to come back here, no matter what state he's in. I need him to come back, because I need to know he's alright. I'm laying a blessing on him that he will return home safely. If he doesn't come back, I will have to continue enduring this crazy relationship where I don't see him for long stretches and constantly worry that he's hurt.

I'm assuming that this conversation isn't going to go well. I know he doesn't want to come home afterwards, because he doesn't want me to see him like that. I've never seen him on drugs before. And he's angry with me. He wants his space. At first, he's resistant; he keeps

trying to leave and evading the issue, claiming it's not a big deal and that he'll see me soon. But, eventually, he gives in and promises he'll come back once he leaves his friends.

“My Lifelong Love” by Georgia Stitt

Objective: I want them to offer me this apprenticeship

Ease in He wasn't much to look at

I wouldn't call him 'fun'

Impress He was twelve years old and I was just eleven

Charm My friends said I was crazy

But my innocence was won

by the boy who introduced my heart to heaven

Excite He was the smartest boy in the whole sixth grade

And I couldn't believe I'd found him

Assure Though his teeth were in braces and his dockers were frayed

I just wanted to be around him

Reveal There are men who make you lose yourself

Or fill you with regret

But Adam won my lifelong love Because he played the clarinet

Encant Doo doo doo, doo doo doo doo

doo doo, doo doo doo doo doo

Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo

Doo doo doo doo doo doo

Move I wanted nothing more than to share a stand

With this prodigy of perfection

Illustrate I dreamt of after school practice with the Junior High band

Where we'd sit in the woodwind section

Bolster So I marched into the band room and became a devotee

Elucidate For Adam was my lifelong love and this would make him notice me

Flirt Doo doo doo, doo doo doo doo

Doo doo, doo doo doo doo doo

Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo

Doo doo doo doo doo doo

Amaze Oh, how I practiced

Concern God, did I suck

Encourage Adam gave lessons

I was in luck

Distress All the scales he made me learn by heart

Incite I had never seen him look so cute

Dazzle I told him that his music was an art

Depress He told me that his girlfriend played the flute

Embarrass I was the dumbest girl in the whole fifth grade

And now everyone else had seen it

Shock I announced I'd quit the band! My decision has been made.

Reassure But I wish that I didn't mean it

Captivate For the music had a hold on me much more than any fling

Inspirit I knew I found my lifelong love

And Adam didn't mean a thing

Charm The marching band was not for me

But in the choir I could sing

Amuse Doo doo doo, doo doo doo doo

Doo doo, doo doo doo doo

Doo-bee doo-bee

Doo-bee Doo-bee Doo

Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo

Assure He was the smartest boy in the whole sixth grade

Musical Title: NA. This is an art song, of sorts.

Character Name: Again, there isn't one. So, in a way, I'm playing me. I guess that makes my character's name Sophie.

Super Objective (objective for entire play): This song is the whole "play". But my super objective in life is to be a performer and create good theatre.

Moment Before: So, it's about 1:00 in the afternoon, and I am at a job interview. Well, it's really more of an audition/job interview. I'm auditioning for a yearlong apprenticeship, so in addition to the audition portion, I also have to sit down with the casting director and answer some interview questions. After all, they're considering hiring me for a whole year, so they want to know whether they like me as a person in addition to whether they think I can act, sing, and dance. The audition went pretty well; after all, I did make it to the interview portion. The vibe in the room is really positive, and I can tell the casting director is interested. He's nodding his head and smiling a lot, so I guess that's a good sign. And I've been in the audition room a lot longer than anyone I saw go in before me. And the casting assistant/intern seems pleased as well.

So, I'm feeling like this job is mine to lose. And I really, really want it. Their season is incredible and I can tell from meeting their staff that this is exactly the kind of environment I would like to work in. Not to mention that this is my last chance to get an acting job before I graduate. If I don't get cast, I'll have to start looking for "day jobs".

We've now reached the last question in the interview: "Describe someone in your life who inspired you to go into the performing arts." To my surprise, the first person that comes to mind is my fifth-grade crush, Adam Wagner. I desperately try to think of some better, more sophisticated answer, but I can't! They're staring at me expectantly, and I decide I just have to blurt something out so I go full force into my Adam saga. Embarrassing.

Obstacles (internal and external): My nerves are definitely getting in the way. As is how much I want them to like me and how much I want to achieve my objective, if that makes any sense. I want this job so badly and the stakes seem so high that I am tripping myself up.

And then the casting assistant had to be this really cute guy. And now I'm telling him about my fifth grade crush. So, things aren't going super well in the, "let's make a good first impression on this attractive straight guy who likes theatre and might be my coworker for the next year," department. His presence is making me a LOT more nervous.

And the room is this really scary grey box. There is nothing to look at besides these two terrifying people. I mean, they're actually really nice, but one is about to decide my future and the other one is really hot. I mean, really hot. And also really nice. So, the fear is definitely getting in the way.

Also, the fact that they're sitting at a table and I'm still standing is a big obstacle. They asked me to demonstrate one of my special skills during the interview portion, and then I never sat back down. So, now I'm stuck here on the "x" in the middle of the room. I'm having a hard time connecting to them.

Humor in the piece: This piece is chock full of humor, some intentional and some unintentional. The fact that I am nervous, added with the fact that I have naturally quirky movements and thought patterns makes for some unintentional humor.

But, I am also intending to be humorous. I realize that this is another opportunity for me to "act" in this audition. After all, acting is just telling a story, and they've given me the outlet to do just that. I embarrassingly picked a really ridiculous one, but now I have to embrace it with full force. Humorous parts include my description of Adam at the very beginning of the song,

and my reaction to his telling me he has a girlfriend. Plus simply the fact that I am telling this story at all.

“My Party Dress” from *Henry and Mudge*

Objective: I want Diane to invite me to the party

I call Did you see my party dress?

I pique This morning I was feeling dressy.

Mother thinks I'll get it messy,

I allure But you cannot see where I have spilled.

I reveal I spilled here.

And here.

And here.

And here.

I nudge Oh no, that was on my other dress.

I alarm John Michael stole my birthday cake,

And Jenna Walker tried to take

My Crunch 'n Munch. It wasn't fair.

I grabbed the punch.

I climbed the chair.

I apprise And then I fell and punch went everywhere.

On the floor.

On the chair.

I amuse On his shoes.

In her hair...

I impress But it wasn't on my party dress.

John Michael once made fun of soccer,

So I stuffed him in a locker.

I awe I play soccer and I play the flute.

I blow away I do art,

And discovery camp,

And tumbling,

And tee ball,

And I play piano every night.

I excite My dad says I'm a prodigy,

But I think I would rather be

The FBI or CIA,

A secret spy who saves the day,

I rouse And when I finish saving it I'll play

Ode to Joy,

Injun Joe,

Frère Jacques,

Allegro,

The Pachelbel Canon,

I grab And also this song I wrote

Ah-ah-ah

La-la-la-la-la

La-la-la-la-la

La-la-la-la-la.

I show off It has words:

“I’m a spy,

And it’s really fun,

And I wear a cape,

And...”

Do you like party dress?

When I do pirouettes it rustles.

I inform I buy all my clothes in Brussels.

Dad says that’s where Brussels Sprouts are from.

I brief I’ve toured Brussels,

And Paris,

And Vienna,

And this one time,

We pretended

To go to Rome

But we went to Iceland.

And in Iceland,

My dad presided

Over an international corporate trade hearing...

I caution Woops, that was a secret.

And we saw the Reykjavik Ballet.

My dance class is on Saturday.

I educate Miss Laura and Miss Lisa say

I’m much more bright than I appear

I chassé right. It’s very clear

That I’ll be in the Nutcracker next year

I inspire As a mouse,

Then a soldier,

Then a marzipan

Or a candy cane,

Then a Russian,

Or an angel,

Then a Polichinelle.

I demonstrate Let me dance to this song,

‘cause I wrote it so well.

It goes “Ah-ah-ah.

I boast I will dance until

I play all the parts

In the great ballet.”

I urge Sing with me!

Ah-ah-ah.

I display I will do a turn.

And another turn.

I sway Mother says I’ll quit.

I will never quit.
I flaunt I will do a split.
And I guess that's it.
I rally Oh and one day when I'm president,
My bedtime will be very late
So I have time to legislate
The kinds of laws I think are cool.
I'll pass a clause to banish school.
And then all of the countries that I rule
I placate Will be peaceful,
And happy,
And comfortable,
And satin,
I excite And frilly,
And pretty,
And lacey, and silky, and perfect, and pink
Like my pa-ah-ah-ah-ah...
My party dress.

My name is Annie and I am 6 years old. My parents are having a dinner party, and they told me I am not invited. How rude. I am supposed to play up in my room and play with my little brother, but that idea does not interest me one bit. Adam is four and very dull. So, I have snuck downstairs to join the party.

My mom's best friend Diane is here, and she is the coolest. She wears beautiful clothes and she is beautiful. She is a designer, and she is very fancy. I want her to see my new party dress. If I come show her my dress and show her how interesting I am, maybe she will make my mommy and daddy let me stay at the party. That is my objective: I want Diane to invite me to the party. If she invites me, mommy and daddy have to let me come, because Diane is so cool.

So, I crawl down the stairs and wait until Diane goes into the kitchen alone. Then I sneak in and start my pitch. I need to be very interesting very fast, because my mommy and daddy could walk in at any minute. And mommy, especially, can be a little scary when she's angry.

And Diane does not know me very well, so I must show her my winning personality right now and I only have 5 minutes and I must be funny and cool. Especially I must be cool.

But sometimes I get a little distracted and then I forget what I was talking about and I don't say what I meant, because something else becomes more interesting and I have to talk about it. My mommy says I might have ADD, but I don't know what that means. But if it means that I sometimes start talking about the wrong thing, then yes, I have that. But I must stick to my topic and get an invitation to this dinner!

“Mr Bojangles” by Jerry Jeff Walker

Charm I knew a man Bojangles and he'd dance for you
In worn out shoes
With silver hair, a ragged shirt, and baggy pants
He could do the old soft shoe
Impress He would jump so high, jump so high
Then he'd lightly touched down

Inspire I met him in a cell in New Orleans I was
down and out
He looked to me to be the eyes of age
as he spoke right out
He talked of life, talked of life, then he laughed
and slapped his leg a step

Draw in He said his name "Bojangles" and he danced a lick
across the cell
He grabbed his pants and spread his stance,
Oh he jumped so high and then he clicked his heels
He let go a laugh, let go a laugh
and shook back his clothes all around

Captivate That was Mr. Bojangles, Mr. Bojangles
That was Mr. Bojangles,
G-d he could dance

Stir He danced for those at minstrel shows and county fairs
all throughout the south
He spoke through tears of 15 years how his dog and him
How they traveled about
The dog up and died, up and died
And after 20 years he still grieves

Caution He said I dance now at every chance in honky tonks
for my drinks and my tips
But most the time I spend behind these county bars
'cause I drinks a bit
He shook his head, and as he shook his head
I heard someone ask him please

Urge That was Mr. Bojangles, Mr. Bojangles
That was Mr. Bojangles,
G-d he could dance

Bewitch That was Mr. Bojangles, Mr. Bojangles
That was Mr. Bojangles,
G-d he could dance

I really struggled with the character work for this song, and I've decided to take a completely different angle on it than my usual schematics. We'll see if it works!

My objective in this song is to attract the attention of the boy I'm singing to. This song is not about me, but is rather a vehicle to impress him.

I am in Katzen practicing the song "Mr Bojangles" for my upcoming AMPL performance. The performance is three days ago and I am freaking out. I don't feel prepared at all and I hate playing guitar in public, not to mention the fact that I don't really feel comfortable singing pop or folk songs for an audience. It's not that I don't like the song; it's actually one of my favorites. In a way, that's another obstacle. I love it so much and I want to do it justice.

As I'm practicing, this guy I have a huge crush on walks by my door and stops and waves. I need a break from practicing, so I wave him in. We don't have any classes together besides AMPL and I rarely run into him, so I figure I should take every chance I get to say, "Hi."

He comes in and I ask him how he is. He tells me about his week and then he asks me about mine. I don't have much of a filter, so I start telling him all about how this song is frustrating me. He's a musician too, so I figure he'll understand. But, of course, he asks to hear it. Uh oh.

I try to brush it off and change the subject, but he is having none of it. He really wants to hear this song. I don't want to seem like a wimp, so I decide I should give it a shot. After all, it would be good to do it for an audience. And maybe I can charm him with my beautiful voice? Doubtful. Oy.

My obstacles are many. I'm nervous, to start off with. I'm also concerned with how I look while I sing, which is making me really self-conscious. On the other hand, I want him to think I'm good, so I want to emote and really tell the story. I also feel like getting into it will make me less nervous.

The ideal outcome of this situation would be that he is so enchanted by my performance that he asks me out. That's obviously really unlikely, but a girl can dream! While this isn't what ends up happening, I'm still really happy that I went through with this. It's really unlike me to be bold—to have stopped him in the hallway and invited him in and then to have sung this terrifying song for him.

So, I'm proud of myself. And, he seems really impressed. He's never really seen me perform before, and I feel like he now has a much better idea of who I am as a person, because performing such a big part of my life. And he's now one of the few people who've seen me play guitar, so I feel even more like I've shared part of myself with him.

I feel like this will change our relationship in a lot of ways. We will go from awkward waves in the hallway to real conversations. This is a big step!

The humor in this piece comes from a couple of things. One, the fact that I am singing about being in jail is a bit humorous. After all, I'm probably not your most likely candidate for jailbait. But also, the description of Mr. Bojangles starts off very lightheartedly. Not necessarily humorous, but definitely entertaining and charming. He was an interesting character, this Mr. Bojangles. Even the fact that he named himself Mr. Bojangles is a tribute to his sense of humor.

