Ashley: a chamber opera in four scenes.

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ASHLEY: A CHAMBER OPERA IN FOUR SCENES

By

Rron Karahoda
B.A. Bard College, 2013
M.A., University of Louisville, 2022

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
School of Music of the University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Music
in Music Composition

Department of Composition
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2022
ASHLEY: A CHAMBER OPERA IN 4 SCENES

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A Thesis Approved on

Wednesday, May 4th, 2022

by the following Thesis Committee:

________________________
Dr. Allison Ogden

________________________
Prof. Michael Ramaeh

________________________
Dr. Krzysztof Wolek
I dedicate this work to all the families of which I am a part, to my grandparents, and to our ancestors without whose gifts of humility, kindness, and strangeness I would not be whole.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my mentor and professor Dr. Allison Ogden, for making the dream of this opera and future works a reality and for opening a door to a new world of possibilities through her all-encompassing support, expansive knowledge, and robust mastery.

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A big thank you goes to my newest colleagues, particularly Tanner Jones, Isaac Smith, Roger Knight, Emery Tackett, and Isaac Barzso for their endless creativity, friendship, and kindness, in making these categorically unimaginable years cherished, and for becoming permanent fixtures in my life for the journey ahead.

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Finally, I thank Eni, Teuta, and Jeton Karahoda, Tobi and Andy Gottesman, Bayla and Luis Gottesman de Ramirez, all my family abroad, the families in Louisville and Texas I have joined in these past 5 years, and for all the families that helped raise me.
This thesis is an intimate chamber opera which explores an original story of a young woman finding her place in the world at the same time she is dealing with unresolved feelings of regret, jealousy, and confusion over her sister's death. This journey is complicated by people on all sides seeking to benefit by exploiting her and her sister's legacy. As these two threads collide, the opera reveals itself to be about introducing and synthesizing dualities (in the dialectical sense of thesis–antithesis–synthesis), both musically and dramatically. Octatonic and whole tone pitch sets learn to intermingle, as do whole families of instruments. Even the role of the voice splinters and is reconstructed as principals give way to an onstage chorus, only for the line between character and chorus to be blurred at the climax of the final scene.
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CAST

Soprano – Ashley
Soprano – June/Olivia
Alto - Kai
Tenor – Irv
Baritone – Ambrose
SATB Chorus – Guests

ENSEMBLE INSTRUMENTATION

Solo Flute I + II
Solo Clarinet in Bb I-II
Solo Trombone
Solo Percussion
Solo Violin I + II
Solo Viola
Solo Violoncello
Solo Contrabass

PERCUSSION LIST

Tian Jin Gong w/ filled water container
Temple Blocks
Feng Gong
Concert Bass Drum
Vertical Kick Drum w/ 8” splash
Vibrraphone
Crotales

DURATION

Total – 26’
Scene 1 – 5’
Scene 2 – 9’
Scene 3 – 4’30”
Scene 4 – 7’30”
PERFORMANCE NOTES

All performers:

\[ \times \] Indicates free or unmetered time.

\[ \frac{120-180}{186} \] Indicates the duration of a period of free or unmetered time, and denotes the end point for such a section.

Flute:

Air tone: Produce an air sound in addition to pitch, the amount of pitch is determined in the score.

Bisbig.: Bisbigliando. A timbral trill using alternate fingerings. Unless otherwise indicated, pacing should be like that of a typical trill.

Clarinet:

\[ \text{Flt Fluttertongue:} \] Perform a single pitch tremolo by fluttering the tongue behind the reed or using a glottal growl. This second option is preferred throughout the opera.

Bisbig.: Bisbigliando. A timbral trill using alternate fingerings. Unless otherwise indicated, pacing should be like that of a typical trill.

Trombone:

Air + Fluttertongue: Produce an air sound in addition to pitch, the amount of pitch is determined in the score. At the same time, perform a fluttertongue effect through a glottal growl. The performer will be called upon to transition from producing no pitch to full pitch while using this technique.

Split tone: Produce an unstable noisy effect by lip bending the partial not in the parenthesis down to a point midway between itself and the included partial.

Singing through the instrument: The performer uses the throat to “sing” the pitch indicated by the diamond notehead into the instrument while playing the indiciated pitch.

\[ \theta-90^\circ \] The performer should turn in their place or seat such that a slight doppler effect is generated. \( \theta \) is considered to be the performer’s default “facing forward” position in the ensemble.

\[ \text{AEIOU:} \] The performer should change their embouchure to the designated vowel shape such that a unique tone is produced. “A” represents the default. Bracketed vowels indicate embouchures the performer may choose and switch between freely.
Embouchure rate of change: Used in tandem with the bracketed embouchure notation, this vibration graphic indicates the general rate at which the performer switches between embouchures. The smaller wave indicates a faster rate of change, and the larger wave a slower one.

Percussion:

Tan Jian Gong: To be performed with a bucket of water easily accessible to the performer. Each line on the staff indicates the level to which the gong is submerged as it is played. The performer should always leave some amount of space left for them to bow the gong, and should be actively bowed while submerged. Attention should be paid to bring out the pitch shifting effect of submerging the gong, both after bowing and while bowing.

![Staff notation](image)

Arco: Bow the gong with the indicated bow at a perpendicular angle. While submerging the gong in water, the available space will shrink both on the instrument and in relation to the container of water. Some amount of deviation from this angle is expected, and experimentation can yield interesting, repeatable interactions between the bow, gong, and water to add variation to the performance of this instrument. Bow speed should be variable, based on the performer’s interpretation.

Temple Blocks: A set of five temple blocks pitched to the D pentatonic scale {D4 - B4}

Feng Gong: The performer should drag a friction mallet in a circle near the rim of the gong, moving in an either clockwise or counter-clockwise direction (whichever is more comfortable). The motion around the circle should be uninterrupted but can be slowed drastically at the player’s discretion, as with rubato.

Arco: Bow the gong with the indicated bow at a perpendicular angle. Bow speed should be variable, based on the performer’s interpretation.

Concert Bass Drum:

Tremolo: All tremolos are double stroked.
**Vertical Kick Drum w/ 8” splash:** A standard kick drum should be turned on its side, such that the drumhead is facing up and parallel with the ground. A loose 8” splash should be placed on the drumhead at all times. Its starting position is not specified. Dampening is allowed if the splash resonates audibly with other instruments while not being played.

![Diagram of a standard kick drum and splash cymbal](image_url)

**Tremolo:** All tremolos are double stroked. A dashed slur indicates that the gesture should continue as one motion and the strikes reapplied for the duration of the slur.

- Strike the kick drum on the raised rim that borders the drumhead.
- Slide the splash cymbal over the drumhead until it crashes into the raised rim such that a sound with a strong attack and short decay is produced by the splash cymbal.
- Pick up one end of the splash cymbal such that it is at or nearly at 90° to the drumhead. Then, push that same end towards the drumhead with enough force such that it wobbles (but does not bounce out of the drum) and produces intermittent sounds through its interaction with the drumhead. It is not to be stopped until it comes to a rest on its own, unless otherwise muted by the score. The performer will want to leave themselves enough physical space to play in the instrument while this is taking place.

**Vibraphone:**

- **Arco:** Bow the tone bars vertically at a perpendicular angle.

**Crotales:**

- **Arco:** With one hand, Bow the edge of a specified crotale vertically at a perpendicular angle. A finger or fingers from the other hand should be used to stabilize and slightly dampen the crotale to produce a clearer tone.

**Vocalists:**

- **Naturale:** Sing in a typical, “operatic” fashion.

- **Sprechgesang / Sprechstimme:** Perform in such a way that a vocalization some amount between speaking and singing is achieved. Sprechgesang is closer to singing, while sprechstimme is closer to speech. In the case of whispering, the performer should be audible to the audience, while still communicating the...
core qualities of said action (e.g. breathy, pitchless, enunciative, registrally high, etc.)

Conversational speech: Represented by lyric content without pitch or rhythmic notation. In one instance, a performer will be called upon to speak to the audience and to their fellow performers. This voice should be audibly distinct and wholly different from sprechgesang, and should not be performed as though metered. Instead, the performer should sound as though they are giving a talk or a presentation rather than singing.

Strings:

Nat.: Naturale. Cancels currently active technique like rauschen or slow bow or col legno, but does not affect bow position.

Ord.: Cancels currently active technique and resets bow position.

Sp. / St.: Sul Ponticello / Sul Tasto. Also includes molto and poco versions.

Cl./Cc.: Col Legno / Con Carni. Default is Battuto, unless Tratto is specified. Con carni cancels Col legno.

Lv.: Let vibrate.

Light Hand Pressure: With light finger pressure applied to the string (lighter than needed for a true harmonic). May include an instruction for Rauschen, in which the cello is bowed quickly (flautando) such that an airy or white noise sound is produced.

Slow bow: With light finger pressure applied to the string (lighter than needed for a true harmonic), the cello is bowed slowly, such that a groaning/moaning or static-like sound is produced.

Circ.: The performer plays the given passage or gesture using circular bowing, such that the bow does not rise from the instrument.

Col Legno Vertical: Play the instrument col legno tratto and gliss vertically with the bow up and down the string to and from the indicated pitches. A higher note indicates the bow should move towards the bridge, whereas a lower note indicates moving towards the fundamental of the current string.

Vb.: While the cello is fingered in typical fashion, the bow is held at a slightly wide angle (con carni) with the sand moved vertically such that a rich, noisy sound is produced.

Ricochet: the bow is dropped on the string such that it bounces and carries enough momentum for multiple bounced strikes in quick succession.


**LIBRETTO**

Setting:
An apartment in Crown Heights. Lighting is warm, soft, and even. ASHLEY and GUESTS are walking around as though the paintings and objects are in a museum. The paintings are portraits, like a mix between Basquiat and Modigliani. Although the space is tidy, two objects in the background stand out as important: A human-sized floor-length mirror covered and concealed by an opaque sheet, and a glass box containing a headless mannequin with a brown and white feathery mantle and accompanying mask draped over it.

**Scene 1**

IRV, an tired-seeming middle-aged man enters the apartment through a door on stage right carrying a stack of cushions and walks over to center-stage. ASHLEY, a seemingly self-assured young woman in her late 20’s to mid 30’s and currently standing awkwardly, notices IRV putting the cushions out, and moves to center-stage to meet him.

ASHLEY: Excuse me,
Do you want help?
I don’t know what
I’m supposed to be doing.

IRV: Actually,
That’d be great.
Just here,
In a circle, thanks.

(Ashley picks up a cushion from the pile and places it on the ground.
Together, they make their way around in a circle.)

Is this your
First time?
ASHLEY: Is it obvious
I’ve never been
To a seance before?

(IRV places the last cushion down, stands up, and chuckles.)

IRV: Not at all!
It’s just Olivia’s fans
don’t usually volunteer.
I’m Irv, by the way.

(IRV extends his hand towards Ashley for a handshake.
Ashley chuckles back and takes their hand.)

ASHLEY: And I’m Ashley.

IRV: So, if spirits
aren’t your thing.
What brings you
To a seance
In Crown Heights?

ASHLEY: It’s not what, but who.
Olivia?
ASHLEY (cont.): She was my sister.

IRV: (Shocked) Come again?
You’re Olivia’s sister?
I thought she
Didn’t have siblings.
ASHLEY: I’m not surprised.
She left home
As soon as she could
We stopped talking
After that.

IRV: I’m sorry,
I’m having trouble
Wrapping my mind
Around this.

ASHLEY: Don’t worry about it!
I’m used to it.

IRV: No, it’s just,
Why now?

ASHLEY: You know June,
The psychic here?

IRV: The Medium.

ASHLEY: Yeah, her!.
Every year
She sends me
A letter
Inviting me to come.

IRV: Huh, really.
ASHLEY: I've always stayed away.
    But this year,
    I can’t stop
    Thinking about her.

IRV: Wondering why things
    Turned out
    The way they did?

ASHLEY: Something like that.
    How about you?
    Why are you here?

(IRV considers Ashley for a moment, as if trying to read her mind, or her aura. He can’t decide whether to speak or not.)

IRV: She changed my life.
    I do this to
    Celebrate her.

ASHLEY: And hold on
    A little longer?

IRV: (Smiling) Something like that.
    Hey, I should
    Finish getting ready,
    But I’m glad you’re here.
    If you need anything,
    Let me know.

(IRV walks away, joining the GUESTS. ASHLEY leaves center stage and walks over to the glass case containing the mantle. [Lights die down around ASHLEY] Everyone else freezes in place.)
ASHLEY: When our mother told us
That we were now sisters,
I saw us as stars,
Radiant upon the world.

But Solar systems die
When their suns turn pale.
And when you were gone,
You took your light with you.

I’ve tried shining on my own
But I’m just a moon
So please, make me bright
Like you used to do.

Scene 2:

[[Lights come back up on stage, but are slightly colder now.] ASHLEY leaves the glass case and goes back to looking around the apartment. IRV walks over to it and begins cleaning it with a duster. JUNE, KAI, and AMBROSE enter the stage from the main door and walk over to IRV.]

JUNE: So?

IRV: So?

JUNE: What do you think
Of our guests?

IRV: Were you
Going to tell me
Olivia had a sister?
JUNE: *(Excitedly)* So, you met?
I'm surprised
You didn’t
Know about her.

AMBROSE: Aren’t you supposed
To know things
Like this?

IRV: Olivia always said
She didn’t have
Any family left.

KAI: Looks like
Olivia didn’t
Tell you everything.

JUNE: That’s enough.
It took her long enough,
But she’s here.
Just think,
We could get back
All that we lost.

IRV: *(Defensively)* Don’t even
Think about it.
JUNE: Come on, Irv.
If Ashley has half
Her sister’s talent,
She could inherit
The power of the mantle.

(Spoken) I wouldn’t have
To read palms.

AMBROSE: (Spoken) I could quit
Cutting hair.

KAI: (Spoken) And I could quit
Tending bar.

JUNE: And you could
Relive all those
Good memories.

IRV: It won’t
Bring her back.
Olivia didn’t die
So we could
Endanger her sister!

AMBROSE: Hold on!
Who’s talking about
Harming Ashley?
KAI: It's just a test.
If she passes,
She fills the
Hole in her heart

JUNE: And we all get
What we want.
Including you.

IRV: You promise
This won’t be
A repeat of last time?

JUNE: Of course!
Come on,
Let’s get started.

JUNE takes her place in center stage. KAI and AMBROSE silently inform the GUESTS that they should head
to the cushions laid out near center-stage. IRV finds ASHLEY before turning off the lights in the apartment
[Lights shift to low, warm light focused on center stage]. IRV and ASHLEY take their spots next to each other.

JUNE: (Speaking) Good evening everyone,
Thank you all for
Being here tonight,
For it means that you, like me,
Believe that death is merely a crossing over.
As we begin,
Hold out your hands
When you are ready,
Join in so Olivia
May speak through us,
And transform us anew.
Everyone holds out their hands as instructed. First, JUNE begins to chant, followed by IRV, KAI, and AMBROSE. As each person enters the chant, they stand up. Only ASHLEY does not, even at her entrance.

JUNE [ET AL.]: Olivia!
   Come join us now
   And hear our praise.
   For it was your
   As light through haze
   Did free us from
   Our endless daze
   But now once more
   We seek your ways
   Please tear these veils
   That cloud our gaze.

ASHLEY: What are these feelings
       Calling to me?
       Moments of memory,
       Foreign and familiar.
       Is that you, sister?
       Or is it still me?

(GUESTS stand, ASHLEY remains seated. JUNE notices, walks behind Ashley, and puts her hands on ASHLEY’s shoulders.)

JUNE: [Whispering] My dear, are you okay?

ASHLEY: [Caught off-guard] June!
       It’s all of this
       It’s… overwhelming.
JUNE: I know you
Have questions,
And I can help.

ASHLEY: How?

(JUNE leads ASHLEY over to the glass box containing the mantle and mask, opens it, and offers its contents to ASHLEY.)

JUNE: Join us and
Let her guide you.

ASHLEY: I've tried shining on my own
But I'm just a moon
So please, make me bright
Like you used to do.

(ASHLEY accepts and JUNE places the mantle and mask on her. The chanting from the guests changes into moans and other sounds. [Lights change color rapidly and seamlessly] JUNE, AMBROSE, KAI, and IRV all pull out masks, and they encircle ASHLEY until she emerges transformed. ASHLEY walks toward the audience past center stage, and the GUESTS collapse in their places. [The lights come back up, but they are cold now.])

Scene 3
(ASHLEY looks around her at the collapsed GUESTS as JUNE walks over to join her.)

JUNE: Much better,
Wouldn’t you say?

(ASHLEY does not respond. She keeps looking at the unconscious GUESTS.)
JUNE (cont.) Don’t worry,
They’re alright,
They won’t even remember any of this.

JUNE: I envy you.
These are
Your first steps
Into a whole
New world.

KAI: Enjoy it.

AMBROSE: I know I will!

JUNE: Irv will stay and
Help you.

(JUNE, KAI, and AMBROSE move to exist through the apartment door on stage right.)

JUNE (cont.): Oh, and Ashley?
I can’t wait
For everything
We’re about to
Accomplish together.

(JUNE, KAI, and AMBROSE exit stage right.)

IRV: So, how do you feel?

ASHLEY: It’s... confusing.
Like I’m not alone in here.
IRV: I promise,
Everything will be
Alright.
I’m here to help.

ASHLEY: Then why tell me
This was to
Celebrate her?

IRV: It was,
I didn’t know
June planned this.

ASHLEY: But here we are.
What happens next?

IRV: I help you control this,
Just like your sister did.
Let’s focus on that confusion.

[ASHLEY centers herself while IRV looks on. [Lights become slightly warmer]]

ASHLEY: All my life
I’ve wanted
To have the
Life you lived.
And now that I
Stand here
I’m not sure
That I’m ready.
All this power
And you chose
ASHLEY(cont.) To leave it.

How can I be stronger

Than you were,

And go on without you?

IRV: Look at how

She’s changed

Just like when

We were young

Back then,

Nothing could stop us.

Because we had each other.

All our love

And still you chose

To leave me.

How can I be stronger

Than you were,

And go on without you?

[ASHLEY and IRV look at each other. [The lights return to even emphasis. They are slightly warmer than before.]]

IRV: Do you understand now?

ASHLEY: It’s amazing.

I can feel your thoughts.

[IRV indicates that ASHLEY is right.]

She had this and you,

Why give it up?
IRV: I ask myself that
Every day.

ASHLEY: I feel the answer
Calling out to me.

(ASHLEY moves towards the mirror.)

It has to do with this,
doesn’t it?
This is where it happened,
Isn’t it?
Where she...?

(IRV follows ASHLEY, and puts his hand on her shoulder.)

IRV: It’s best we
Leave that alone.
Your future is waiting.

ASHLEY: How can I do this?
If I don’t understand?

IRV: It won’t bring her back.
But thanks to you,
I can relive our life.

ASHLEY: You can’t live on
Good memories.
If you won’t help me,
Then I’ll do it myself!
IRV: No!

Scene 4

[ASHLEY grabs the veil on the mirror and pulls it off in one swift motion, revealing the mirror in its entirety. IRV falls unconscious, and they slump to the floor. On the other side stands a figure dressed exactly like ASHLEY. ASHLEY reaches out towards the mirror, and her action is mirrored by the figure until their hands touch. ASHLEY retracts her hand, while the figure’s hand remains. [Lights come down with spotlights focused on the mirror. There is a mix of warm and cold, exchanging dominance.]]

ASHLEY: Olivia?

OLIVIA: Hello, Ashley.

ASHLEY: I can’t believe it.
Are you a phantom or
Do you recognize me?

OLIVIA: A phantom?
Let me remember.

ASHLEY: It’s me, your sister!

OLIVIA: You’re my dear sister!
Now I remember!
You’re my dear sister.
Why are you sad?
We’re back together!
You did it!
We’re reunited forever!
Everything is in the past now.
We can look towards
Your future
OLIVIA (cont.): By showing you
How to use
My power!

ASHLEY: What do you mean?

OLIVIA: Isn’t that why you’re here?

(ASHLEY gestures to herself and her changed appearance)

ASHLEY: I didn’t want this!

OLIVIA: You can’t fool me dear sister.

ASHLEY: I came for you!

OLIVIA: You came for yourself!

ASHLEY: That isn’t true!

OLIVIA: No need to hide
From me

OLIVIA (cont.): The things you want.
Now that we’re
Here together,
We can find greatness!

(ASHLEY retracts her hand from the mirror and turns around. GUESTS stir and crawl unnaturally from their places to behind the mirror with OLIVIA, forming a mass around her. As ASHLEY sings, OLIVIA and GUESTS reach out and latch onto ASHLEY, slowly pulling her through the mirror and enveloping her in hands and arms.)
ASHLEY: Of course!

How could I

Forget your quest?

Your need for ever more praise!

I never understood it

I just wanted to be myself.

But your successes

Cast a long shadow

Over me.

Your greatness made me worthless.

And the day you died

Is when I learned that lesson.

But what I want to know is

Why, through my mediocrity

Oh, why wasn’t my love for you

Enough to save you.

JUNE (represented by a supernumerary), KAI, and AMBROSE return. Seeing what is happening, they wake IRV, who rushes over to ASHLEY and holds onto her to keep her from being pulled through to the other side.

JUNE rushes over too, trying to push ASHLEY through so as to not lose her power. KAI and AMBROSE do not participate yet out of fear. From here on out, there is a tug of war over ASHLEY. OLIVIA, JUNE, and GUESTS slowly gain ground.

OLIVIA: Such heavy weight!

Upon your heart!

How can you claim

This power of mine

If you want my love

More than your own life?
ASHLEY: Tell me,
Why wasn’t I
Enough for you?
Olivia!
Please let me be
Enough for you!

OLIVIA: My dear Ashley,
Your burden’s great!
Let me bear its weight!

ASHLEY realizes what is happening to her and grabs the sides of the mirror pulling herself back through to her side of the mirror. She is not able to break free of OLIVIA’s grasp and JUNE’s support, but KAI and AMBROSE are moved and join in. Together, their struggle for control continues.

{Lights start to come up, and warmth of color grows.}

ASHLEY: And give my life to you, for what?
You can’t be my sister!
I know what happened now!
Darkness grew within her light
And then you filled her
Heart with clouds.

OLIVIA: Ashley,
My sister,
We only need each
Other to be happy.

{With each phrase, IRV, KAI, and AMBROSE almost succeed at pulling ASHLEY completely from the mirror.}

{Lights continue to come up, and warmth of color increases}
ASHLEY: I deny you,
Resist you,
Release you!
I've tried to
Shine on my own
But I thought
I was the moon
Because of you,
No more!

If you don't join me,
You'll be alone
In a life with
No light of its own.

No more
O Phantom!
I finally see
What you hid
From my sister!

If you don't join me
You won't be special
And you'll be
All alone,
OLIVIA(cont.): Just like your Olivia.

You must be with me

Like you're

Supposed to be!

(Ashley breaks free, and June is pulled into the mirror with Olivia. The mass of hands recede back into individual guests, who then slide onto the floor on Ashley’s side of the mirror. Ashley, Irv, Kai and Ambrose all join together and face the audience.)

Ashley: Together we are suns,

And we are bright,

Like we're

Supposed to be!

FIN
ASHERLY

Scene 1, The Apartment
"Excuse me, do you want help?"

Music and Libretto by
RON KARAHODA (2022)
Ashley: "C'mon, do you want help? I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing."

June: "I was just wondering..."

Kai: "I think I got it."

Irv: ""
Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Tbn.

Tj. G.

Ashley

June

Kai

Irv

Ambrose

Gst. (S)

Gst. (A)

Gst. (T)

Gst. (B)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Ashley’s fans don’t usually volunteer. I’m Irv, by the way.
I'm Ashley. So, if spirits aren't your thing, what brings you to a seance in Crown Heights?
It's not what, but who.
I wasn't surprised. She left home as soon as she could.

I thought she didn't have siblings?
We stopped talking after that.

I'm sorry, I'm having trouble arranging my mind around this. So, why now?
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Tbn.
Tj. G.
Ashley
June
Kai
Irv
Ambrose
Gst. (S)
Gst. (A)
Gst. (T)
Gst. (B)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

You know June? The psychic here?

Yeah, The medium?

The no di um!
Every year she sends me a letter inviting me to come. I've always stayed no way, but this year, I can't stop thinking about it.
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Tbn.
Tj. G.
Ashley
June
Kai
Irv
Ambrose
Gst. (S)
Gst. (A)
Gst. (T)
Gst. (B)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
Oboe
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vi.
Vi.
Vla.
Va.
Cello
Violin 1
Violin 2
Violin 3
Violin 4
Viola
Cello
Violin 1
Violin 2
Violin 3
Violin 4
Viola
Cello
Flute 1
Flute 2
Clarinet 1
Clarinet 2
Trumpet
Trombone
Ashley
June
Kai
Irv
Ambrose
Gst. (S)
Gst. (A)
Gst. (T)
Gst. (B)
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
Some thing like that.
How about you? Why are you
Won der why things turned out the way they did?
She changed my life. I do this to celebrate her.
I should finish getting ready, but I'm glad you're here. If you need anything, let me know.
When our mother told us that we were now sisters, I
Ashley
21
when their suns turn pale and then

let pitch emerge

one full rotation starting at top, low.

Ashley

June

Irv

Ambrose

Gst. (S)

Gst. (A)

Gst. (T)

Gst. (B)

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vla.

Vc.

Ch.

pp

p

mp

p

mp

p

mp

p
you were gone
you took your light

you were gone
you took your light
I've tried shining — — — — —

h = 84

93

mp

mp

mf

mf
Fl. I
B. Fl.
Cl. I
B. Cl.
Ther.
F. G.
Ashley
June
Kai
Irv
Ambrose
Gat. N
Gat. A
Gat. T
Gat. B
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
97
mp
mf
mp
mf
mf
mp
mp
mf
p
sempre
sempre
sempre
sempre
sempre
like you need to do.

Ashley

June

Kai

Irv

Ambrose

Gal. (N)

Gal. (A)

Gal. (T)

Gal. (B)

Vlc. I

Vln. II

Vln.

Vc.

Ch.
Scene 2: The Seance

"What do you think of our guests?"

Ashley 30
What do you think of our guests?
Fl. I
Fl.
Cl. 1
Cl. 2

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

Ashley
June
Kai

Andreana

Gat. (S)
Gat. (A)
Gat. (T)
Gat. (B)

Vla. I
Vla. II

Vla.

Vc.

Ch.
That’s enough.

It took her long enough, but she’s here. Just think, we could get back all that we didn’t tell you or say things...
Come on Irv. If Ashley has half her sister's talent, she could be - her! the power of the man she is!

Don't even think about it.
I wouldn’t have to read palms.

But I could quit cutting hair.
And you could re-live all those good memories. It won't bring her back. O-l-i-a didn't die so we could endanger her
It's just a test. If she passes - she fills the sis tert.

Hold on! Who's talking about harming Ashley?
And we all get what we want.
In the thing...

A hole in her heart...
You promise this won't be a repeat of last time?
Good evening everyone,
Thank you all
For being here tonight,
For it means that you, like me,
Believe that death
is merely a crossing over.
As we begin,
Hold out your hands
When you are ready,
Join in so Olivia
May speak through us,
And transform us anew.
Join us, and hear our

Come and hear our
Union

What are these feelings ex-Brexit to

Join our praise. Hear our praise

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.

Join us.
June notices Ashley
and walks over to her.

June: is it me?

Ashley: it’s all of this. It’s...

June: My dear, are you okay?

Kai: Join us.

Ashley: Join us.

Kai: Join us.

Ashley: Join us.

Kai: Join us.

Ashley: Join us.

June: Join us.

Kai: Join us.

Ashley: Join us.

June: Join us.

Kai: Join us.

Ashley: Join us.
At each repetition of phrase: Freely choose between Join; Free; Hear, Praise
Repeat phrase and rapidly increase speed independently of others.
I've tried singing on my own. But I'm just a snorer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ashley</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Kai</th>
<th>Irv</th>
<th>Ambrose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

mooso

So please make me bright

just like you
Scene 3: The Change

"Much better, wouldn't you say?"

Much better, wouldn't you say? Don't worry they're all fine. They won't even remember a few of these.
June

I envy you. These are your first steps to a whole new world. I'll stay and help you. Oh, and Ashley? I need

Kai

Kai

Ivy

Andromoe

I know I will!

Gat/S

Gat/A

Gat/T

Gat/B

Vlc I

Vlc II

Vln

Vc

Ch
wait for every thing we're a-bout to an eensy-weensy to go ther!

June

Kai

Lux

Ambrose

Gat./S

Gat./A

Gat./T

Gat./B

Vlc. I

Vln. II

Vln.

Vc.

Ch.
It's confusing. Like I'm not alone here.

So, how do you feel?

Not alone in here.
I'm here to help! Not a lone in here. Why tell me this?

Then why tell me this was to cele-eve-ery-thing will be alright. I'm here to help!
Ashley

June

Kai

Irv

Ambrose

Gst. (S)

Gst. (A)

Gst. (T)

Gst. (B)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Ashley

But here we are. What happens? It was! I didn’t know June planned this. Why tell me this? June planned this. Why tell me this? June planned this. Why tell me this? June planned this.
I'll help you control this, just like your sister did. Let's focus on that connection.

June planned this.

Ashley

next?

Irv

I'll help you control this, just like your sister did. Let's focus on that connection.

June planned this.

Ashley

next?

Irv

I'll help you control this, just like your sister did. Let's focus on that connection.

June planned this.

Ashley

next?

Irv

I'll help you control this, just like your sister did. Let's focus on that connection.

June planned this.

Ashley

next?
All my life I've wanted to have the life you lived. And look at how she's changed. Just

Ashley

June

Kai

Irv

Ambrose

Gst. (S)

Gst. (A)

Gst. (T)

Gst. (B)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

\( q = 76 \)
now, now that I stand here. I'm like when we were young. Back then, nothing could stop us. We...

very slow bow

Ashley
not sure that I’m ready. All this power and you cause we had each other. All our love and still you chose to leave me. How can I be...
Ashley

Ashley: chose to leave it. How can I be stronger than you?

June

June: stronger than you were? And go on without you?

Kai

Kai: Look at how she's changed. Just

Ivy

Ivy: vocal fry

Gal. (B)

Gal. (B): vocal fry

Gal. (A)

Gal. (A): vocal fry

Gal. (T)

Gal. (T): vocal fry

Gal. (R)

Gal. (R): vocal fry

Vlc. 1

Vlc. 1: vocal fry

Vla.

Vla.: vocal fry

Vn.

Vn.: vocal fry

Vn.

Vn.: vocal fry

Vc.

Vc.: vocal fry

Ch.

Ch.: vocal fry
were? and go on with-out you? All my life I've want-ed to

like when we were young. Back then, no-thing could stop us be-came we had each oth-er. All our love and still you chose to

very slow bow

very slow bow
have the life you lived. And now, now that I stand here, I’m not sure that I’m real.

leave it. How can I be stronger than you were? And go on without you?

Ashley

June

how it. How can I be stronger than you were? And go on without you?

Andromoe

Gst. (S)

Gst. (A)

Gst. (T)

Gst. (B)

Ashley

June

Kai

June

Ashley

June

Ashley

June

Ashley

June

Ashley

June

Ashley

June

Ashley

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Ashley

June

Ashley

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Ashley

June

Ashley

June

Ashley

June
All this power and you chose to leave it. How can I be stronger than you.
All our love and still you chose to

were? and go on without you?

vocal fry

very slow bow

vocal fry

very slow bow

very slow bow
How can I be stronger than you were and leave it.

How can I be stronger than you were and leave it.
It's amazing! I can feel your thoughts if she could go on without you? Do you understand now?
Fl. 1

A. Fl. 2

Cl. 1

B. Cl. 2

Fl. 1

A. Fl. 2

Cl. 1

B. Cl. 2

Fl. 1

A. Fl. 2

Cl. 1

B. Cl. 2

Fl. 1

A. Fl. 2

Cl. 1

B. Cl. 2

June

Ashley

Irv

Ambrose

Gat. (S)

Gat. (A)

Gat. (T)

Gat. (B)

Vlc. 1

Vlc. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Ch.

Thoughts

Thoughts

Ask

Ask.

Thoughts

Thoughts

Ask

Ask.

Thoughts

Ask

I feel the answer calling out to me!

I ask myself that every day.

443
It has to do with this, doesn't it? This is where it happened, isn't it? Where she...

How can I do... It's best we leave that alone. Your future is waiting.

Where.

Where.

Where.

Ashley: It has to do with this, doesn't it? This is where it happened, isn't it? Where she...

June: It's best we leave that alone. Your future is waiting.

Ashley: Here, can I do...
Ashley

If I don't understand?

You

Won't bring her back. But thanks to you, I can re-live our life.

Leave.

Leave.

Back.

Back.

Live.

Live.

Back.

Leave.

Leave.

Back.

Live.

Live.
can't live on good memories. If you won't help me, then I'll do it myself!

No!

Live!

Live.

Back.

Live.

Live.
Scene 4: The Mirror

"Olivia! I can't believe it."
Fl. 1

A. Fl. 2

Cl. 1

B. Cl. 2

Tim.

Perc.

Ashley

Olivia

Kai

Irv

Ambrose

Gst. (S)

Gst. (A)

Gst. (T)

Gst. (B)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

473

mf

p

f

subito

o

liv

I can't be...

Who's there?

w/ rattan brushes

Vertical Kick Drum

w/ 8" splash

slide splash across drum head

龚玲

w/ 2.75" friction mallet

—

w/ rattan brushes

Vertical Kick Drum

w/ 8" splash

Feng Gong

w/ 2.75" friction mallet

1/4 rotation clockwise.
Are you a phantasm? - or do you recognize me? It's me, your Amf-phantasm? - Let me re-mem-ber.
Fl. 1
A. Fl. 2
Cl. 1
B. Cl. 2
Ths.

Yes, your sis-ter!
I'm your dearest sis-

Are you a phan-
I'm your dearest sis-

You're my dear sis-
You're my dear sis-

Why are you &

Ashley

Olivia

Kai

Ambrose

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

Ashley

Olivia

Kai

Ambrose

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

Ashley

Olivia

Kai

Ambrose

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

Ashley

Olivia

Kai

Ambrose

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

Ashley

Olivia

Kai

Ambrose

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
We're back together! You did it! We're reunited for ever. Everything is in the past, now.
What do you mean?

I didn't want this...

We can look towards your future by showing you... Is that why you're here?
I came for you!
That is not true!
You can't fool me, my dear sis-
You came for yourself!
No need to...
Of

hide from the things you want. Now that we're home we can find great music!
But your success casts a long shadow over me. Oh, your great need made me
worth less, and the day you died is when I learned that lesson. But what I meant to know is why through my mediocrity. Oh, why, wasn’t my love for you enough to:

Ashley

Olivia

Kai

Irv

Ambrose

Gst. (S)

Gst. (A)

Gst. (T)

Gst. (B)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Ashley

Olivia

Kai

Irv

Ambrose

Gst. (S)

Gst. (A)

Gst. (T)

Gst. (B)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
Oh! such heavy weight! U-pon your heart! How can you claim this power of mine if you want my love more than your own life? such heavy weight! U-pon your heart! How can you—
Wasn’t I enough for you? Why wasn’t I enough for you? I’m enough. I am.

How can you claim the power of life? How can you claim the power of mine? How can you claim the power of mine?

No! No! No! No! No! No!

Come! Come! Come! Come! Come! Come!
Ashley

"Please let me be enough for you."

Olivia

"claim this power of mine? How can you claim this power of mine?"

Irv

"Come!"

Ambrose

"Come!"

Gal. (S)

"Come!"

Gal. (A)

"Come!"

Gal. (T)

"Come!"

Gal. (B)

"Come!"

Vln. I

"PP"

Vln. II

"PP"

Vla.

"PP"

Vc.

"PP"

Ch.
then you stripped her heart of love!

Live! Live! Live! Live! Live! Live! Live! Live! Live!
Fl. 1

A. Fl. 2

Cl. 1

B. Cl. 2

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Ashley

Olivia

Kai

Irv

Amphion

Gal." (S)

Gal." (A)

Gal." (T)

Gal." (B)

Vlc. I

Vlc. II

Vln.

Vc.

Ch.
Ashley

I deny you resist you, re-leave you!

Olivia

Kai

Ivy

Ambrose

Gal. (S)

Gal. (A)

Gal. (T)

Gal. (R)

MINE!

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
Ashley: I've tried to shine on my own but I thought I was the moon because of you. No more!

Olivia: If you don't join me you'll be a bore in a

Irv: Shine! Shine! Shine! Shine! Shine! Shine! Shine! Shine!

Andromo: Shine! Shine! Shine! Shine! Shine! Shine! Shine!

Gat. (S):

Gat. (A):

Gat. (T):

Gat. (B):

Vlc. I:

Vlc. II:

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Kai

Tbn.

Cl. 1

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Cl. 1

Tbn.

Vln. II

Vln. I

Cb.
Ashley

Olivia

Kai

Irv

Ambrose

Gat. (S)

Gat. (A)

Gat. (T)

Gat. (B)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Ct.

Vc.

w. 3

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Rron Karahoda
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Louisville, KY 40204
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ABOUT
Rron Karahoda is a composer based in Louisville, KY who explores how music, narrative, and human experience inform each others’ creation and audiences’ connections to themselves and the community around them. To Karahoda, his work is, as all music is, a conduit through which we form connections with one other and through which we can better understand the historical and contemporary contexts that are inextricable from the social, political, ecological, economical, and imaginative dimensions of abstract and concrete expression that shape those connections.

His work has appeared at the Whitney Museum of American Art. His music has been both performed and recorded by the Nou Lou Chamber Players and Da Capo Chamber Players. His music has been written about in publications including Hyperallergic and the Village Voice. Karahoda is completing his Master’s degree at the University of Louisville under Dr. Allison Ogden and Dr. Steve Rouse and his past teachers have included Kyle Gann, Joan Tower, George Tsontakis, and Alisher Latif-Zade.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Degrees
2013 B.M. in Music Composition; Bard College, Annandale-On-Hudson, NY. Composition studies with Dr. Kyle Gann, Dr. Joan Tower
2022 M.M. in Music Composition; University of Louisville, Louisville, KY. Composition studies with Dr. Steve Rouse, Dr. Allison Ogden

COMMISSIONS/COMPETITIONS
2021 Relay. Nou Lou Chamber Players. 11/8
2021 Isope No. 1: Triels. University of Louisville String Orch.
2021 Appassionata. Louisville Civic Orchestra; Pandemic Composition Contest Winner. 5/28
2016 Children’s Suites for Mother’s Day. Choo Train Daycare. 05/16
2015 Under Inspektion (Webseries). Alessio Franko, Max Marcellus. 07/15
2015 Between the Sidewalk and the Street (Webseries). Daniel Goulden, Jasper Johnson. 06/15

PUBLIC PERFORMANCES
2022 Blue Magic. 2 performers with MaxMSP patch and 2 Nintendo Switch Joycons. University of Louisville, Louisville, KY. 11/29
2021 Relay. Nou Lou Chamber Players. University of Louisville, Louisville, KY. 11/8
2021 Appassionata. Louisville Civic Orchestra. Logan St. Market, Louisville, KY. 4/3
PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2022  Guest Instructor: Electronic Composition. Youth Performing Arts School; Louisville, KY
2021-22  Teaching Assistant to the Electronic Music Studio; University of Louisville, KY
2018-18  Annual Fund and Foundations Manager; Kentucky Opera; Louisville, KY
2017-18  Manager of Donor Stewardship, Fund for the Arts; Louisville, KY
2016-17  Manager of Administration and Operations; The Hugo Kauder Society; New Haven, CT

GRANTS

2019  Brown-Forman; Operating Support for Kentucky Opera. $150,000 awarded.
2019  Gheens Foundation; Support for Youth and Community Programming. $10,000 awarded.
2019  Fund for the Arts; Operating Support for Kentucky Opera. $440,000 awarded.
2019  KY Arts Council; Operating Support for Kentucky Opera. $32,000 awarded.
2019  Louisville Metro Government; Support for Kentucky Opera’s Youth and Community Programming. $10,800 awarded.
2016  National Endowment for the Arts; Support for Recovering Voices project with Hugo Kauder Society. $10,000.

MEDIA COVERAGE

2016  Penny, Daniel. Felix Bernstein Tackles his Most Ambitious Project Yet, A Justin Bieber Opera. The Village Voice. 01/13

PUBLICATIONS


COMPLETE CATALOGUE OF WORKS

Opera/Vocal Music

2022  Ashley: A Chamber Opera in 4 Scenes. 2 sopranos, alto, tenor, baritone, 2 Flutes, 2 Clarinets in Bb, Percussion, SATB Chorus, 2 Violins, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. [27]
2019  Post-Game - Zizdorran’s Aria. Soprano, Flute, And Guitar. [2]
2016  Bieber Bathos Elegy. [27]
  Variations and Improvisations on “The Sun’ll come out Tomorrow” from Annie. Principle Voice and SATB Youth Chorus + [12]
  Duet: Ah well, and I shall go far away. Tenor, Spoken Voice, Violin, and Violoncello. [15]
Electronic
2021 Blue Magic. 2 performers with MaxMSP patch and 2 Nintendo Switch Joycons. 2 channels. [8’]

Orchestra & Chamber Work
2020 Isotope No.1: Triels. String Orchestra. [3’]

2020 Appassionata. String Quintet. [3’]

Radio & Video
2017 The Underground Man. Spoken Word and Piano. [7’]

2015 Under Inspektion. (Webseries). Piano and Synthesizer. [15’]

2015 Between the Sidewalk and the Street (Webseries). Piano and Synthesizer. [5’]

Dance
2013 Trickster Song Cycle: 28’
1. Ever of the Unburdened. Principle Dancer, Bassoon, and Violoncello [7’]
2. Let it Come, Let it Go. Principle Dancer, Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Fr. Horn in F, Trumpet in Bb, and Contrabass [7’]
4. The Crow’s Ruin. Flute, Bassoon, Fr. Horn in F, Viola, and Violoncello [7’]

Languages
English: Native
Albanian: Native/Intermediate
Spanish: Beginner

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