1. Art Songs (pp. 1-4)
2. Pocket Operas (pp. 4-5)

**ART SONGS**

**WHILST ALEXIS LAY PRESS’D –** Soprano – **Dur: 2:51**

**RANGE: B3 - B5** Text: John Dryden (17th c. Brit)

DESCRIPTION: a bawdy song of shared climaxing.

**CLEOPATRA** – Soprano or Mezzo-Soprano – **Dur: 3:53**

**RANGE: C#4 - E5** Text: Anna Akhmatova, English translation: Cori Ellison (21st c./USA)

DESCRIPTION: A moody, wistful glimpse into Cleopatra’s last moments. Commissioned for Elizabeth Futral.

[AUDIO RECORDING: CLEOPATRA](https://www.justinefchen.com/hiddentreasuresvocal) [top of web page] [SCORE: CLEOPATRA](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/vfxdr4jwi5hv7ugw5tohk/Cleopatra-PERUSAL-SCORE.pdf?rlkey=2mssios5roxhukfausotd1w0v&st=i202pc4p&dl=0)

**PHILOMEL, dramatic song cycle** – Coloratura Soprano –5 mvmts – **Dur: 15 min.**

**RANGE:** G3 – D6 Text: Justine F. Chen (after Ovid, 9th c./Roman)

DESCRIPTION: A multiple-perspective retelling of the story from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. The story of Philomel follows the events around a princess, who after getting raped and mutilated by her sister’s husband Tereus, obtains her revenge and transforms into a nightingale.

This dramatic song cycle is a vocally challenging work to sing in its entirety. There are less acrobatic movements that could be excerpted. This cycle is more of a monodrama, acting REQUIRED. Imagine Schubert’s ERLKING meets Britten’s RAPE OF LUCRETIA.

[AUDIO: PHILOMEL](https://www.justinefchen.com/philomel-complete) [web page] [SCORE: PHILOMEL](https://www.dropbox.com/s/bjqbrg8na2z4zeq/CHEN-Philomel%28piano%20vocal%29-PERUSAL.pdf?dl=0)

[SCORE FOLLOWER VIDEO: MOVEMENT V](https://vimeo.com/1001837402/4b1a33f871)

**RANGE BREAKDOWN BY MOVEMENT:**

Mvmt 1: E4-G#5

Mvmt 2: G3-F#5

Mvmt 3: C#4–Bb5

Mvmt 4: C4–A#5

Mvmt 5: C#4–D6

**ALIGHT**, song cycle –Soprano – **Dur: 14 min**

**RANGE: Bb3 – B5** Text: Ophelia Hu Kinney (21st c./USA)

DESCRIPTION: These songs of Asian Americana were a commission from Singaporean-Minnesotan Jennifer Lein. She paired me with the poet and preacher Ophelia Hu Kinney, especially her poetry that highlighted the Asian-American experience. Songs 1, 3, and 4 are more straightforward art songs, but Song no. 2 requires much acting. Lean into it.

SONGS: 1. mOthertongue (F4-B5) 2. what i mean when i say what i mean (D4-Bb5) 3. This Yellow (D#4-A5) 4. Earth Dogged (Bb3–A5).

**QUARANTINE B\*TCH: RSVP** – Mezzo-Soprano – **Dur: 1:28**

**RANGE: C4 – A5** Text: Christina Kelly (21st c./USA)

DESCRIPTION: A pithy, self-deprecating portrait of a certain personality (mine) that overwhelmingly favors sedentary lethargy over social interaction. Commissioned by Kara Dugan as part of 5 commissions “endeavoring to represent our collective experience of transitioning out of Pandemic life.”

[AUDIO RECORDING: RSVP](https://www.wqxr.org/story/artist-propulsion-lab-2021-commissions/) (scroll down to my picture) [SCORE: RSVP](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ybyet48i9kbn4kx149c5t/CHEN_QuarantineB-tch_RSVP.PV.pdf?rlkey=bhl2f7mu03w3in1akwqpv4zr7&st=t9csba4d&dl=0)

[VIDEO OF RSVP PERFORMANCE](https://youtu.be/k2WHpGptFdw?si=Wgz_HE8ekS_RlaUI&t=66) [LIVE]

**TRUE SOUTH** – Mezzo – **Dur: 7 min.**

**RANGE: B3 – A-flat5** Text: Kara Coryell (21st c./USA)

DESCRIPTION: this moody, bluesy art song was written expressly for mezzo Blythe Gaissert for her 2025 recording. The poem which speaks of the toxicity of southern niceties likens the suffocating culture to kudzu. The poet and Blythe grew up in the same town.

**Letter to My Sons upon the Death of My Father** – Mezzo – **Dur: 12 min.**

**RANGE: G3 - B5** Text: Jacqueline Goldfinger (21st c./USA) [LINK TO FILM OPERA](https://filmfreeway.com/LettertoOurChildren)

DESCRIPTION: a monodrama that was written for film, mourning the loss of my father, I wrote this work reminding my young children about him, and simultaneously celebrate the people who support- the ones who help behind the scenes, who show up every day.

**NEW YORK SCENES, modern song cycle** – Baritone – 4 Songs **Dur: 12 min.**

(also available for Bass, Mezzo-Soprano, and Soprano)

**RANGE: Baritone B2 - Bb4; Bass G#2–G4; Mezzo B3-Bb5** Text: Justine F. Chen

[BASS AUDIO RECORDING](https://www.justinefchen.com/hiddentreasuresvocal) [SCORE](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/a9332d24ev8xeroxpp746/JFChen_New_York_Scenes-baritone_full.pdf?rlkey=s31pztoeuokj6hhhi8capyb5i&st=wqyturij&dl=0): NEW YORK SCENES (this score is the Baritone version w/ all the trimmings)

[SCORE FOLLOWER of PLATFORM ANXIETY](https://vimeo.com/1015300394/ef4491eb7e?ts=0&share=copy) (Bass)

[SCORE FOLLOWER of INTERNAL MONOLOGUE DRINKING SONG](https://vimeo.com/1001837535/c0dd9f4360) (Bass)

DESCRIPTION: I call this work “modern song cycle” because of the specific acting demands required of the singer. The singer-friendliest songs are the first “home” (3 min.) and perhaps(?) “The Internal Monologue Drinking Song” (1:50). The other songs are more visually intimidating, and rhythmically challenging. It is difficult to imagine most singers even considering singing the second song “Pardon?” after seeing the music, but I could imagine – with work and enthusiasm – a younger singer championing “Platform Anxiety” (5 min.)- always an audience favorite.

**NEW YORK SCENES RANGE BREAKDOWN BY VOICE TYPE/MOVEMENT:**

Baritone 1. B2 – F#4

2. D3 – A4

3. G2 – Bb 4

4. Eb3 – F4

Bass 1. G#2 – D#4

2. B2 - F#4

3. E2 - G4

4. C3 - D4

Mezzo 1. B3 – F#5

2. D4 – A5

3. G3 – Bb 5

4. Eb4 – F5

Soprano 3. A3 – C6

**TWO OR MORE SINGERS**

**TO BELONG –** **Dur: 3:40**

2019 original, smaller version: countertenor, sop., ten.; violin, cello, piano

2021 revision for more singers: soprano, mezzo, tenor, baritone; violin, cello, piano

**RANGE: sop. G#4 – G# 5; ct E4 – E5; ten. G#3-E4** Text: Justine F. Chen (21st. c. USA)

[SCORE FOLLOWER VIDEO: TO BELONG](https://vimeo.com/1001837286/4b112b30c9?share=copy)

* from SWELL, a theater work created by immigrants and children of immigrants, about the experience of being an immigrant. Concept/Curator: Melisa Tien.

DESCRIPTION: This song is about yearning to belong: the rhythm and cadence of the text suggests various modes of speech: learning a language, wedding vows, a toast full of hope for the future. The music itself puts the listener in a kind of quietly despairing limbo. Not quite like - but similar to - watching someone falling in slow motion to a death of loneliness… or just eternal, endless falling.

**POCKET OPERAS**

**DECOHERENCE**  – Soprano and Mezzo – **Dur. 3:51**

**RANGE: Soprano Eb4 - G5 Mezzo-Soprano Bb3 - E5**

Music: Justine F. Chen Text: [Andrew Moodie](https://tapestryopera.com/bios/andrew-moodie/) (21st c. Canadian)

[SCORE: DECOHERENCE](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/g3xrg316ekmjd9mfm51b5/CHEN-MOODIE-decoherence_PV_issuu-perusal.pdf?rlkey=kab6od2bxj4i8fjly8v5vvoed&st=yno1jlro&dl=0)

SYNOPSIS: Two Sisters. One tragic event. Inspired by Euripides' play Medea, Decoherence explores the relationship of two sisters and hints at a dark past that leads to a disturbing event that destroys a home and shatters lives.

MUSICAL PROFILE: A moody scene, beginning ominously, the darkness seeps in deepening slowly.

**CHICKEN OR BEEF?** - Tenor and Baritone – **Dur. 4 min.**

**RANGE: Tenor G2 – A4 Baritone Ab2 – E4**

Music: Justine F. Chen Text: [David James Brock](https://www.davidjamesbrock.com/) (21st c. Canadian)

[SCORE](https://issuu.com/justinefchen/docs/chen-brock_chickenorbeef_issuu_perusal): CHICKEN OR BEEF?

Riffing off the sibling rivalry in *King Lea*r's Edmund and Edgar: each of two brother bulls tries to convince the other to head to the barn. What is at stake? Today isn't just any old day: it's Slaughterday!

MUSICAL PROFILE: A comedic and slightly dark scene exploring sibling rivalry. Think… the elegance of Noel Coward. Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, if they were competitive brother bulls.

(Apologies, I own no recording for either DECOHERENCE or CHICKEN OR BEEF? However, I was told that one exists at the Tapestry Archives in Toronto)

**VOICE FOR A FUTURE NIGHTINGALE** –Soprano, Mezzo, Tenor – **Dur. 6:15**

**Range: Soprano Db4 – F5 Mezzo: A3 – A5 Tenor: Db3 – G4**

Music: Justine F. Chen Text: [Ken Gass](https://www.canadiantheatre.com/dict.pl?term=Gass%2C%20Ken)

[RECORDING: VOICE FOR A FUTURE NIGHTINGALE](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/wnnse87uwocs71u4mikap/CHEN_VOICE_FOR_A_FUTURE_NIGHTINGALE.mp3?rlkey=j20xa28dlvckbqwbwdcsz145k&st=3viev1te&dl=0)

[SCORE: VOICE FOR A FUTURE NIGHTINGALE](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/elk8eu5pnpjas17o0jbnt/VOICE-FOR-A-FUTURE-NIGHTINGALE-complete-PV.pdf?rlkey=xuc11dsyjpc6y9vopiyg81syr&st=fnq306vw&dl=0)

SETTING: Based on the story of Philomel from Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*. Procne sends her husband, Tereus, on a voyage to fetch her younger sister, Philomel, whom she has not seen in five years. On the return journey, Tereus is so struck by Philomel’s beauty that he rapes her, then cuts out her tongue to prevent her from ever telling what happened. Locked away in a cave, unable to speak, Philomel weaves a tapestry that depicts the truth of her violation.

Here are links to [recordings and scores](https://www.justinefchen.com/hiddentreasuresvocal), and [videos](https://www.justinefchen.com/videos-interviews) of interviews, people singing my work, and also some [score follower videos](https://www.justinefchen.com/videos-score-followers).