

Musical Scene - Assignment

Little Dog Laughed

Write a duet for the final moments of *Little Dog Laughed* by Douglas Carter Beane. Start any time after the moment in which Diane says: “Mitch, you want to be a movie star.” (page 48 in the Dramatists Play Service, Inc. acting version)

Before you begin writing: Jot down some notes about what is happening in the scene. It is complex in the way it plays with space and time - not at all linear in the conventional sense. Make some decisions about how to musicalize this scene: What will be the central musical idea? The central lyric idea? How can you take an AABA tune and manipulate it for these 4 characters to differentiate both their speech patterns and their attitudes in the moment of the play? Who is feeling what? How can the music and lyrics help communicate those feelings and, more importantly, transfer those feelings to the audience?

Who is feeling the most? What is that character feeling? How can you make the audience experience that feeling? Also: what can or should be spoken rather than sung - why? How can this be integrated into the musical scene? What, if anything, can be omitted?

This will end the play. Make sure the audience feels something at the end: Happy, sad, hopeful, hopeless, etc. You ought to be able to answer the following questions;

- *Which character has the most to gain?*
- *Which character has the most to lose?*
- *Which character has the most promising future?*
- *Which character is least likely to be happy next year?*

Lyricist and Composer: Create an AABA tune with a recurring lyrical and musical anchor that can be used by all four characters. This can be a phrase that means different things to different people, or a phrase that means the same thing to all four of them. Develop the musical scene around this anchor (musically and lyrically). Note that you are also free to add musically contrasting additional C or even D sections.

Use underscored dialogue where and if necessary. Make sure there is adequate space in the music for any underscored dialogue. If possible, truly underscore the dialogue - that is, punctuate the dialogue with musical riffs and decorations at the appropriate points rather than just keep playing the tune while people are talking. This means there may be measures of little musical activity, perhaps only a sustained note in the strings, for instance, punctuated by an orchestral sting or clarinet riff to emphasize a word or phrase with particular import. (NOTE: Also make sure that pertinent stage directions are clearly indicated in the score.)