

THE *Lotte Lenya* COMPETITION SONGBOOK

“New Year’s Eve” from *Darling Grenadine*

Music and lyrics by Daniel Zaitchik

SHOW SYNOPSIS

When charismatic songwriter Harry falls for clever actress Louise, all of Manhattan glitters with the blush of new love. But what happens when the sparkling fantasy begins to dissolve? What begins as a whimsical romantic comedy that nods to the backstage musicals of yesteryear, becomes an intimate, contemporary exploration of addiction and denial, as both Harry and Louise must confront patterns in their own behavior they’ve been unwilling to see.

SONG CONTEXT AND SCENE DESCRIPTION

It’s New Year’s Eve and Harry sits alone in his apartment with a bottle of champagne. After an unexpected tragedy incited an alcohol relapse, he’s irreparably damaged his closest relationships. His girlfriend Louise has finally walked away, and his brother Paul has just come over to tell him that after years of enabling, he, too, has to sever the relationship. As Paul says goodbye, he suggests it might be a good year for resolutions. Harry scoffs at the idea that people are able to miraculously change at midnight “because of the entirely arbitrary position of the planets.” He’s not ready to take responsibility and make fundamental changes in his life.

Now we see Harry truly alone for the first time, grappling with bitterness, resentments, and sorrow. Just days ago he was deeply in love, had promised to commit to sobriety, and life was on the up. Yet as the start of another year approaches, here he is again, feeling stuck as the flawed man he believes he’ll always be. The cyclical pattern of the highest highs and the lowest lows is nothing new to Harry, but this time no one will be knocking on his door to check on him.

As Harry sits in a haze of memories and existential questions, midnight strikes (after the lyric “No, the lights, those sentimental lights have me inventing things”) and the fireworks begin. He rushes outside to his rooftop and curses them. Standing alone in the cold night air, Harry hears Auld Lang Syne being sung from nearby apartments. He watches the fireworks with bitterness, trying not to give in to their beauty. But though he pushes them away, just as he pushes away really looking at himself, in the final moment of the song we catch a quick glimpse of who Harry really is, who he *wants* to be: a true romantic and an optimist with an open heart; someone who can and will change. The truth is, Harry loves fireworks. And as we hear the last chord on the piano, his face reflects their colors in quiet wonder.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Harry. 30s. Baritone; a distinctive contemporary singer-songwriter type voice. An atypical leading man with an old-fashioned flair. Incredibly likeable, his easy-going charm hides a wounded, vulnerable side, rooted in a difficult childhood and struggles with addiction.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Although Harry is at a point of existential crisis and is inebriated in this moment, this is not an 11 o'clock number where the emotions are meant to be illustrated with grand acting or drunkenness; it's an internal rumination, meant to be performed with stillness and an almost boyish simplicity. Please note that for solo performance purposes, the melody of Auld Lang Syne played on the piano represents Harry hearing others singing the song in the distance.