

# THE *Lotte Senya* COMPETITION SONGBOOK

**“Day 23” from *I Sailed***  
*Music and lyrics by Daniel Rudin*

## **SHOW SYNOPSIS**

*I Sailed* is inspired by the recent story of Juan Manuel Ballestero, who sailed alone from Portugal to Argentina to be with his father after the coronavirus left all trans-Atlantic flights cancelled indefinitely. In this story, the father is turning 60 and Juan is 31.

Juan’s father is a head-in-the-clouds free-spirited adventurer, prone to exaggeration and over-rosy storytelling. His mother is a straight-edged pragmatist who appreciates, but often attempts to counterbalance her husband’s idealism. Juan is the paradox that his parents’ marriage produced. As he grows up, he feels the inner tension between these voices; he admonishes his pragmatic instincts for not dreaming big enough, but also finds himself attempting to pull his most passionate moments down to earth.

In *I Sailed*, the contradictions of Juan’s relationship with his parents – admiration and frustration, love and resentment, guilt around competing expectations – are born out in scenes from Juan’s late adolescence and early 20s until a climactically explosive argument with his mother sends him on a multi-year journey around the world, attempting to form an identity distinct from his parents. *I Sailed* flashes between scenes of Juan on the boat and scenes from his past that led him to undertake his Atlantic crossing.

In the course of his travels, Juan begins a romantic relationship that swings from passionate and mutual love to a tense and uncertain animosity. We see this relationship rise and fall between scenes on the boat and scenes from his life with his parents; as Juan, in turn, discovers traces of his parents in his own patterns and habits of love

Juan is driven out onto the Atlantic in the midst of a global pandemic by a restless searching for the kind of person he wants to be. In letters to his parents he contends with his past, his multiplicity, and his burning contradictions. Through writing, he takes his first steps toward imagining his future in a time of endlessly expanding uncertainty, accepting his past, accepting his parents, and accepting himself.

Easier said than done. The show ends when Juan reaches the shore.

## **SONG CONTEXT AND SCENE DESCRIPTION**

The voyage from Portugal to Argentina takes Juan 85 days. We find him here, of course, on day 23. At this point he has settled into his routine and become acquainted with the monotony of days alone at sea. He is coated in a layer of salt, his khaki shorts have softened and mildewed,

and his sea sickness has metastasized into a cognitive haze, producing memories and associations over which he probably doesn't have full control.

Juan is just getting used to his mode of travelogue letter-writing on this occasion. Something about this moment – perhaps it is the particularly expansive refraction of the sunset across the clouds, or the unusually-calm sea – that pulls him into a space of nostalgia and sentiment. Here, he becomes exposed to himself and his imaginary scene partner (Papa) and realizes a crucial aspect of this journey he has taken: He has things to tell his father, he longs for connection with him, but is uncertain of what that connection will look like after years apart. He sees so much of his father in himself, and longs to feel seen and accepted by him. Looming over his anticipatory excitement is the fear that he won't – that Juan will arrive at home and will have changed so much and made so many mistakes that the acceptance and connection he imagines will no longer be possible.

The impetus for writing is the loneliness of the voyage; over the course of the song, he conjures past and future images of his father to keep him company. At the end, just as he starts to think he can imagine his destination and the connection he'll feel when he gets there, he remembers the length of his solitary journey ahead.

### **CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

Juan is 31, with a bright smile and an awkward yet endearing appearance. He has thick, messy hair, is wearing Birkenstocks and is sporting a new beard. Lyric baritone with the ability to shift vocal quality for comedic effect. Vocal range is D#3 – G4.

### **PERFORMANCE NOTES**

The song should begin with a wistful levity and attempt to maintain this affect until the emotional weight of Juan's memories and imaginations necessitate a heightened level of expression.

The composer has attempted to be very detailed in the notation of rhythms, so performers should avoid rhythmic alterations (such as back-phrasing and extended pauses) to the extent that such adherence to the ink is comfortable and natural.