

THE *Lotte Lenya* COMPETITION SONGBOOK

“Loser Dumplings” from *Interstate*

Music and lyrics by Melissa Li, Additional lyrics by Kit Yan

SHOW SYNOPSIS

Interstate is an Asian-American pop-rock poetry musical that follows Dash, a transgender spoken word performer who becomes internet-famous along with his best friend Adrian, a lesbian singer-songwriter. Fueled by a desire to connect with their community, the duo embarks on a road trip across America for their first national tour. The personal and political messages in their music inspires Henry, a South Asian transgender teenage boy from Kentucky, to start blogging about his own gender journey. While Dash grapples with the reality of learning how to be a man in America, Henry finds solace in Dash’s art as he figures out his own identity and faces his family’s reactions. Together, and in parallel, they both search for answers to their own struggles on the open road. *Interstate* is a touching story about how two transgender people at different stages of their journey navigate love, family, masculinity, and finding a community in the era of social media.

SONG CONTEXT AND SCENE DESCRIPTION

In Act 1, Dash and Adrian spend much of their time living out their dream of touring. Unbeknownst to Dash, Adrian is being wooed by a record label that wants to sign her as a solo act. They experience a rift in their relationship when Dash dominates the conversation during a radio interview and, later, when being harassed by two drunk guys at a bar, Dash kisses Adrian without her consent to prove his masculinity. Racked with guilt, Dash asks advice from his father, who suggests to him that he might be in love with Adrian, and that Dash should reveal his feelings for her. As he comes to the realization himself, he sings “Loser Dumplings” backstage, right before they have to perform. He first sings to himself as he recalls a loving memory about Adrian, but halfway through the song (“**And I’m realizing it now...**”), Adrian enters the room to get ready to perform, and he sings directly to her, telling her how he feels.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Dash is a vivacious and easy-going transgender man in his early 20s, who has a supportive family and a strong sense of identity and pride. He is an activist, who is driven by his love of his community. He’s a bit goofy on the outside, sometimes borderline immature, but on the inside, he is deeply sentimental and a bit fragile (as most men are). At the beginning of the show, he does not realize that he can both be a trans man and be the perpetrator of toxic masculinity at the same time – a lesson he learns by the end of the show.

The performer should be an Asian-American individual (including mixed ethnicities) in their early to late 20s, who self-identifies anywhere on the transgender and gender non-conforming spectrum including, but not limited to, transgender, genderqueer, non-binary, or gender questioning. Individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+ are also welcome to perform the song, with preference to trans and non-binary individuals.

Although the music is currently written in the key of G major, with a range of C3-G4, we recognize the gender-limiting language of voice and musical theater, and welcome transpositions, with written authorization, as needed.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

“Loser Dumplings” is a belty pop contemporary musical theater song. The performer should be comfortable singing in a pop style. Certain moments in the song allow for improvised runs and melismas, so the performer should also be comfortable with those flourishes.