

THE *Lotte Lenya* COMPETITION SONGBOOK

“Sorry” (standalone song)

Music and Lyrics by Harry Castle

SHOW SYNOPSIS

Although a standalone song, “Sorry” is inspired by a scene from the screenplay for the television series *It’s A Sin* by Russell T. Davies. The performer may consider watching at least the last episode of the series for a dramatic expression of the themes of the song.

SONG CONTEXT AND SCENE DESCRIPTION

“Sorry” is about a young man who is dying from AIDS, set in late 1980s or early 90s NYC. He is lying in a hospital bed, very unwell, and his parents, who know nothing about his condition, come to visit him on the ward. The young man has purposefully kept the truth from them, fearing a negative response, but the cat has somehow been let out of the bag and his parents have finally tracked him down. The song begins as they burst into his hospital room, but stop in their tracks, taken aback by how sick he is. In the silence that follows, the man attempts to explain the situation, eventually managing to convey both the gravity of his illness, his reasons for handling things the way he has, and the peace he has made with his end.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

The character singing this song is unnamed, because one of the thoughts behind the song is that this person could realistically have been any young queer man, non-binary or trans+ person who was having sex with HIV+ men at the height of the AIDS crisis. The character is described as a young man in the scene synopsis because that is the lens through which the song was written, but performers who do not identify as male should feel free to construct the character however they need to in order to claim their rightful place in this story. Whatever identity, traits and characteristics the performer chooses for the character, two key aspects are a) their unwell state, and b) their pride in who they are.

The song is suitable for performers aged anywhere between 19 and 32. Vocal range: Ab2-Ab4.
Voice type: Baritone/Baritenor/Tenor

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Much of “Sorry” is conversational in nature, and performers should lean into the hesitation and uncertainty that characterizes this interaction. As you practice the song, it would probably be helpful to hold in mind a time when you really struggled to find the right words to tell someone you love something very important. Crucially, this character is *not* saying “sorry” for being queer, or for embracing their sexuality in a time of high judgement and an unknown, terrifying

risk. They are instead apologizing for the very existence of the moment in which the song unfolds, for the need to explain at all, and for the culture which has enforced this moment of anger and potential catharsis on themselves and their family. This emotion should help performers to set up the defiance of the bridge in a way which brings an audience with them through this complex, sensitive, and powerful topic.