The Persistence of Smoke: Opera in One Act,

Libretto by John Justice

by

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Department of Music
Duke University

Date: ______________________

Approved:

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Scott Lindroth, Supervisor

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Stephen Jaffe

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Anthony Kelley

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Thomas Rankin

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Music
in the Graduate School
of Duke University

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_The Persistence of Smoke_ is a documentary opera. The libretto is based on interviews with various individuals related to the former Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company headquarters in Durham, North Carolina.

The cigarette industry once dominated Durham, but saw its decline in the 1990s as the link between cancer and smoking became increasingly clear. The American Tobacco Company and the Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company were once the biggest cigarette manufacturers in the city. As these companies left Durham, their factories and tobacco warehouses first sat vacant, but were gradually preserved and transformed into new spaces for offices, apartments and restaurants.

This project focused on the former Liggett and Myers headquarters along Main Street, a collection of buildings now known as “West Village”. I interviewed current and former Durham residents who had a connection with these buildings, including local business representatives, community leaders, former Liggett employees, historians, current residents in the downtown area, municipal urban planners, journalists, and an architect. These interviews were given to local playwright John Justice, who created a libretto based on the themes that emerged.

The opera’s story focuses on Kevin, an architect about to unveil his visionary master plan for redeveloping several defunct cigarette factories in an unnamed city. As Kevin leaves his newly renovated apartment for the press conference, he is confronted by his estranged father Curtis, a former cigarette worker who desperately wants to reconcile
and reconnect, deliriously recalling the glory days of tobacco and the money that followed.
DEDICATION

The music of *The Persistence of Smoke* is dedicated to John Justice.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ......................................................................................................................................................... iv
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................................... viii
Characters and Orchestra ............................................................................................................................. ix
Full Score, *The Persistence of Smoke* ........................................................................................................... 1
Biography ...................................................................................................................................................... 290
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to John Justice for his libretto and his enthusiasm, as well as the sixteen individuals interviewed for this project, graciously contributing their time and sharing their memories of and vision for Durham, North Carolina:

Anonymous
Diana Bello
Faye Broadwater
Deborah Chay
Dale Coats
Ted Conner
Matthew Coppedge
Kevin Davis
Scott Harmon
Joseph Lee
Steven Medlin
James Screws
Amanda Smith
Matthew Tallaminee
Ken Rumble
Jim Wise
CHARACTERS

KEVIN (baritone)
architect, about to unveil his plans for the city’s old tobacco warehouses

SKYLAR (mezzo-soprano)
his wife

CURTIS (bass-baritone)
his father, a former cigarette factory worker

WOMAN (lyric soprano)
a local citizen at the press conference

ORCHESTRA

B-flat Clarinet
F Horn

Percussion
Snare Drum
Kick Bass Drum
Hi-Hat (optional)
Bass Drum
Brake Drum
Anvil (shared with Banjo)
Large Suspended Cymbal
Small Suspended Cymbal
Crotales (higher octave)
High Wood Block
Vibraphone (with motor)
Tam-Tam
Scrap Metal (various pieces, for Accordion)

Amplified Banjo (doubling on Anvil)
Accordion (or Synthesizer)

Piano

Violin
Viola
Cello
Double Bass
In KEVIN and SKYLAR’s downtown loft, converted from a cigarette factory warehouse. They are sitting and drinking coffee with CURTIS.

**Prelude**

Slow, \( \dot{\times} \approx c. 40 \) rall. . . . .

Clarinet in Bb

Horn in F

Percussion

Amplified Banjo*

Accordion (or synthesizer)

Piano

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

* sounds an octave below the written pitch.

Libretto © 2011 John Justice, Music © 2011 George Lam.
A tempo, $\frac{1}{4} \approx c. 40$

Cl. in B♭

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

\[ \text{mm} \quad \text{mp} \quad \text{pp} \]

\[ \text{mf} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{pp} \]

\[ \text{pp} \quad \text{mp} \quad \text{pp} \]

A tempo, $\frac{1}{4} \approx c. 40$

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

\[ \text{pp} \quad \text{mf} \quad \text{pp} \]

\[ \text{pp} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{pp} \]

\[ \text{pp} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{pp} \]

\[ \text{pp} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{pp} \]

\[ \text{pp} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{pp} \]
A Tempo (\( \dot{\ \ } \ = \text{c.} \ 40 \) )
SCENE ONE

Flowing, \( \dot{\ \dot{\ = \ c. \ 96}} \)

Cl. in B

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

\( \text{pp} \)

\( \text{ff} \)

\( \text{AØ7} \)

\( \text{fast rolls, any octaves, ad lib.} \)

\( \text{ad lib.} \)

\( \text{Flowing, } \dot{\ \dot{\ = \ c. \ 96}} \)

\( \text{Flowing, } \dot{\ \dot{\ = \ c. \ 96}} \)

\( \text{ff} \)

\( \text{ad lib.} \)

\( \text{Flowing, } \dot{\ \dot{\ = \ c. \ 96}} \)
rall.

Cl. in Bb

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
taste, that you like, light up a Lucky Strike.

Meno Mosso, \( \mathbf{q} = c. 76 \)
What if I told you that blood always trumps time?

somenthat fast and with rubato, as in speech *

* this applies in all recitatives throughout.
What if I swear you were always there,

Meno Mosso, \( \dot{\frac{1}{2}} \) = c. 76
always on my mind.
Slow, with rubato ($\approx c. 60$)

Cl. in B♭

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

rall.

And

rall.
what if I say, my son, I came here to-day just to tell you I'm
Kevin
As suming it's not a lie, or

Curtis
dying. And what if I say my son

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.
P

Ch.

03052011

22
Kevin

merely your latest scam, I'll look you in your blood-shot eye,

Curtis

I came here today just to tell you...
and swear... I don't give a damn.

I saw you... on the TV...
You're gonna show everybody your plans for
With Motion, $\frac{1}{\text{c. 72}}$

Excuse me, the dying part is real,
but it's no big deal, it howls a little in the night.
The bark is way worse than its bite.
Insistent, $j = c. 92$

Cl. in B♭

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Vln.

Vc.

Cb.
The machines roared, the ma...
12 Slower, mysterious, \( \text{\textit{\textbf{f}} } = \text{\textit{\textbf{c}. 84}} \)

- Clarinet in B♭
- Horn in F
- Percussion
- Banjo
- Accordion
- Piano
- Curtis

- Violin
- Viola
- Violoncello

and the golden leaf poured,
and the golden leaf poured into packs and cartons, in this room
where the machine roared.
Reminiscent, slow, \( \text{\textit{p}} \) = c. 48

The city roared, with all its might
sweet place the music took us.
The city air was thick with a smell on a
night like this, even a blind man could tell, the
thick sweet air they breathed... cigarettes was...
A tempo (\(\text{\textit{} = c. 48}\))

- Cl. in Bb
- Hn. in F
- Perc.
- Bajo
- Accordion
- Piano
- Curtis
- Violin
- Violin
- Viola
- Cello

\(\text{pp} \text{ dolce}\)

T-bones, and bikes, stoves, frocks, and Fords, to

\(\text{sempre sostenuto}\)

Money,
carry us to the beach where it's always sunny.

accel.

50
Cl. in Bb

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

machines roared, and the golden leaf poured.

52
and the golden leaf poured...
poured into packs and car-tons. Before, long be-
One day back then, in a happier time, your ma-ma and I made you a gift that I’ve come to find,

behind these walls of original brick, or under the heart pine floors
I don't really remember. But it's here. I know, the
Curtis lights up a cigarette.

gift I got to show you... while I'm still above the dirt...
Oh, let him. Just look at him.
I see an old sinner.
Look at the sorrow in his eye, searching.

too tired to sin...
for your love.

see an old sinner, too tired to sin, who ran away.
to the yearning in his voice, he's suffered even...
Do as you wish, you always do. Give him a

He's suffered enough.
chance, he'll hurt you too.

accel.

con sord.
Insistent as before, \(\dot{j} = c. 92\)

Cl. in B

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Insistent as before, \(\dot{j} = c. 92\)

I'm bub-bing with joy.

\(\text{ad lib.}\)

Insistent as before, \(\dot{j} = c. 92\)

\(\text{ad lib.}\)
I see your mother the first time I saw her at her work station right over.
there. We broke for lunch at noon, and shared ba-lo-ney, a Ne hi, and a...
I sang Hank Williams and won her smile.
I sent her home with a lover's note that led our hearts to

p

PP

PP
You were conceived right here where you've hung that pretty picture of the
water lies

(\( \dot{\ \dot{\ \dot{\ \dot{\ \dot{\do
for rebuilding the city's new heart and soul.
Two thousand people waiting at the hotel. I don't
want to smell his tobacco breath.
No, I don't want to listen to his bullshit story.
Kevin

do n't give a damn.
poco rit.  . . . . .  Meno mosso, \( \dot{\ \ = \ \ c. \ 52} \)

Cl. in B

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Here______ we were______ happy

poco rit.  . . . . .  Meno mosso, \( \dot{\ \ = \ \ c. \ 52} \)

pp

Meno mosso, \( \dot{\ \ = \ \ c. \ 52} \)

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp
servants of the humming machine.
The machine that made a village a town and a town a
26

What we did on the line.
paved the streets, lit the lights, raised the steeples.
bought the school books opened the hospitals
Cl. in B

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

from our machines.

pp warm

pp warm
By the thousands millions, by the jumping ga-
Cl. in B

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Cl. in B

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

zil- lions, from the ma -
pre-ty song, but it's all gone.
Your faculty paradise was running on lies piled on top of lies...
A bit slower, $q = \frac{c}{60}$
They called them "Cof-fn Nails!"

Oh no, not

No body told me
You used to sing to me:

\begin{eqnarray*}
& \text{rall.} & (\text{c. 44}) & \text{A tempo, } & (\text{c. 60}) \\
& \text{Cl. in B} & \text{pp} & \text{pp} & \\
& \text{Hn. in F} & \text{PP} & \text{PP} & \\
& \text{Perc.} & \text{PP} & \text{PP} & \\
& \text{Banjo} & \text{PP} & \text{PP} & \\
& \text{Accord.} & \text{PP} & \text{PP} & \\
& \text{Pno.} & \text{PP} & \text{PP} & \\
& \text{Kevin} & \text{PP} & \text{PP} & \\
& \text{Vln.} & \text{PP} & \text{PP} & \\
& \text{Vla.} & \text{PP} & \text{PP} & \\
& \text{Vc.} & \text{PP} & \text{PP} & \\
& \text{Cb.} & \text{PP} & \text{PP} & \\
\end{eqnarray*}
"Tobacco is a dirty weed, I like it. It satisfies no normal need, I like it."

"It makes you thin, it makes you lean, it takes the hair right off your bean, it's the worst darn stuff I've ever seen, I like it."

"We can't all be as smart as you."

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Father said he didn't know, let it go.

And if he was in fact ignorant, if

he speaks from an addiction, he had company.
The proof was in my mother's...

There was n't no proof._

Adagietto, \( \text{\( \dot{\text{J}} \) = c. 72} \)
From the stuff he made here in this...
Cl. in Bb

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Kevin

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Coughing—her lungs loose from her

loft.
and the rest.
Deep in the night, a graveyard cough, from the

Cl. in Bb

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Kevin

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
I had a nightmare on the other side of the bedroom wall.
of floating alone in dead black space,
screamed, but her pain

Kevin

PP

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

I

Perc.

Banjo

Pno.

Kevin

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
screamed louder and she didn't hear me.
He wasn't there.
he ran, He didn't hear her tombstone cough.
You weren't there, either of you.
Kevin

to hear the cough or to hear it when it
stopped.
Once, in a Main Street

we were, happy servants,
I saw an old man with a hole in his throat. Drinking coffee with his buddies, of the humming machine.
When the

kid-ding a-round, time to kill.

Kevin

that made a village a town and a town.

Curtis

sensa sord.
old man spoke through the hole in his throat, croaking voice, through a
...that made a village a town, and a town a city.
The sound hurt to hear, but worse, most shocking to see.
he was still sucking on paved the streets, lit the lights, bought the school books,
Kevin

king-sized Chesterfield blowing smoke rings.

Curtis

opened the hospitals at the flow...
Circles of smoke flowing out through the hole in his throat.

flowed, all of it
Sucking on a king-sized Chesterfield.

By the
thousands, millions, by the jumping gazelles, all of it
flown from the machine... we tended... so...
Meno mosso, $\dot{=} c. 66$

Circles of smoke floating out through the hole in his throat.

tender,

Meno mosso, $\dot{=} c. 66$
Cl. in B

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

prince of the city

I know in your eyes, I'm the prince of the city

I know in your eyes, I'm the prince of the city

rall. . . . . . . . . . . .
Let me rest just for a minute. I'm a tad dizzy, and things are blurry. I need to lie down just for a
That's enough.

minute, then I'll go. You may be right about the future, but there's things about the
Kevin: Sky-lar, we're leav-ing. Shut the door when you're done.

Curtis: past_ that you don't know_
KEVIN and SKYLAR are in a crowded downtown hotel auditorium on one side of the stage. KEVIN is presenting his plans for a big new downtown residential and commercial district. SKYLAR sits behind him and slightly to the side. CURTIS stays behind in the loft, on the other side of the stage.
Ease back into Tempo I ($\lambda = c. 72$)
What we are building is nothing new.
What we are building is nothing new.
Its paths and parks and mar-kets and lofts...
Cl. in Bb

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Kevin

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

live and powered by its own strong.
Cl. in B

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Kevin

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Cl. in B

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Kevin

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
The new city
xists in-side each of us, in-side where we che-rish a city that is our
What we are building is nothing new.

A Tempo (\( \frac{\text{c. 72}}{} \))
Treat-ing the old mills and fac-to-ries and stores
with love, for every bit of wood and glass,

Kevin

pp

ad lib.

Kevin

mp

pp

Kevin

mf

Kevin

Kevin
Cl. in Bb

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Kevin

Pno.

brick and stone

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

PP colla voce, espr.
cleaning, planning, making straight and
Each plank and every nail to re-as-
Cl. in Bb

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Kevin

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

sem-ble the old, while em-brac-ing the new.
What we are building is nothing new.
Cl. in Bb

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Kevin

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Gifts in our hand, geothermal,
car·bon foot·print,
Trac·ing light·er pat·terns

03052011
as we begin to live in the new city.

Kevin

accel.

accel.

Vln.

Vln.

Vc.

Cb.
So you see, I've created...
a - ted no - thing____ All I've done____ is

senza cord.
translate your deepest, innermost desire.
That's all.

That's what an
rall.

Kevin

ar-chi-tect

it's what I do,

translate dreams,
Tempo I (≈ c. 72)

Cl. in Bb

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Kevin

that's all.

Tempo I (≈ c. 72)
What we are building is no-thing new.
Andante, $\frac{1}{4}$ = c. 88

(CURTIS, smoking a cigarette, is hammering on the bricks and ripping up the floor.)
It's here.

Some - where,
her and me put it here where it wouldn't suffer damage.
I know it’s here, in this room where e-v’ry thing’s the same, but...
At this point in my life, one brick looks like another.

accel. . . . . . . . (\f = c. 126)
Andante, $\frac{1}{4} = c. 96$

Cl. in B

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Now I'm a fellow with a heart of gold, and the

una corda

p oss staccato

p fortissimo

Pno

Pno

Pno

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
ways of a gentleman I've been told,  
kind-of-a-guy that wouldn't even harm a flea.  
But if
me and a certain character, the guy that invented the cigarette, I'd murder that son of a gun in the first degree.
It ain't cuz I don't smoke 'em my-self, and I don't rec-kon it 'll hinder your health, I
smoked them all my life and I ain't dead yet. But nicotine slaves are all the same, at a
pet tri’part-ty or a po ker game, e v’y thing got ta stop while they have a ciga-rette.
Smoke, smoke, smoke that cigarette.
Puff, puff, puff... till you
smoke yourself to death. Meet Saint Peter at the golden gate, tell Saint Peter he'll have to wait, I just
Perc.:
\[ D^7 \quad E^7 \quad D^7 \quad A^7 \]

Barito:
\[ D^7 \quad E^7 \quad D^7 \quad A^7 \]

Accord.:
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{(The phone rings.)} \\
\text{(Ringing continues.)}
\end{array}
\]

Curtis:
\text{got\-ta have a\-no\-ther...}

Vln.:
\text{66}

Vla.:
\text{66}

Vc.:
\text{66}

Cb.:
\text{66}

\[ \text{03052011} \]
Tell St. Pe-ter, I just got ta have a no-ther
I'll take your questions now. Yes?

What's the cost? How bad's the pain?
What's our loss? What's your gain? How much will it cost to live in this place?
Yes, Mis-ter All-good, How-dy, Mis-ter Hay-ward.
There's a

Good to meet you. You just off the train from the New York office?
very nice range of unit prices. Something for just about everyone. One bed
one bath town-hous-es, start-ing in the mid - two - hun-dreds. On up to, oh, two
who stays poor? Who can afford this dream of yours?

All are welcome, that's the plan.
My home's under water, Will you lift me up, help me live in your mansion on the hill? Will you?
at a tricky time. Sales are flat, profits down.
and low-down, can-cer ru-mors fly-ing, me-ta-sta-ciz-ing, from town to_
Cl. in B

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

rall. . . . . . . . . . . Slower, \( \frac{72}{2} \) = c. 86

town.

To-bac-co grow-ers are greed-y, plant wor-kers slack.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Ch.

Slower, \( \frac{72}{2} \) = c. 86

rall. . . . . . . . . . . Slower, \( \frac{72}{2} \) = c. 86

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp
poco accel. . . . . . . . . .

Kevin
Pro-vi-sions are made to help, sub si-dies,
low in-t'rest

Curtis
Smok-ers, have the jit-ters,
reck-less sci-en-ce on the at-tack.

poco accel. . . . . . . . . .
there's a very nice range of unit prices, something for just about everyone.

cuse me, sir, but I got to ask you why. Why do you torture us with a

vision of happiness that we can't buy? What's the haul? What's the

take? How many millions will you make?

I'm afraid that's all the time we have for now.
It's not a question if it's good or bad or green or black or old or new.

You just got to ask yourself who you're talking to.

It's people assigned to dirt streets nobody else wanted, assigned to projects that had to do. People who made a neglected square mile blossom, blossom and

blossom and bloom until the freeway cut it in half.
You're not the first. We've been de-veloped, and re-developed, and re-re-developed. We've been developed,
screwed, glued, and urban renewed to a fare-thee-well, and the one common thing time after
We've got a nickel, and the new thing costs a

poco rall. . . . Un Poco Meno, \( \ddot{=} \) c. 66
Tempo I (\( \approx c. 72 \))

Cl. in Bb

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Woman

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

p

pp

con solo

pp

p

pp

mp

pp

dime.

So forgive me, but time is short, so let's cut to the bone in all this space

pp

marked

77

220
that you've designed, does your father have a home?  

If I see the re
cy-cle and the sol-ar, one good thing piled on top of an other. But hard as I look,
Cl. in B
Hn. in F
Perc.
Banjo
Accord.
Pno.
Woman
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

{pp 79

314

{mp p

Woman
don’t see, I can’t see a room for your father. Is there a place for him? Where will he

{pp

Vla.

PP

Vla.

PP

{mp

Vc.

PP

Ch.

PP

223
Where will he be? and all the others like him, and like me? Is there a place for your father?
Where will he stay? Where will he be? And all the others like him,

(Curtis continues hammering, then stops, exhausted and out of breath.)

Shit. I'm such an old fool.

When I grow too old to dream, I'll have you to remember. When I grow too
Curtis

old to dream, I'll still have you in my heart. So kiss me, my

sweet. So let us part. And when I grow too

old to dream, that kiss will live in my heart.
Calm, \( \dot{\cdot} \) \( = c. 58 \)

Vibraphone
soft yarn

(Telephone rings again.)

Curtis

83

Vln.

con sord.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

ad lib.

(telephone rings again)

Vln.

(telephone rings again)
Thank you.
I don't know.
you think it won't change a thing? You think not? Same old opinionated
Lucy. You stick around and see.
Ma'am, these buildings sit empty, decaying.
vestors need re-turns, num-bers, a guar-an-tee
These buildings sit empty, decaying. Re-development...
hard as I look, I don't see, I can't see, a room for your father.

number, a guarantee.
Is there a place for him?

Where will he stay?
Where will he be?

These buildings sit empty, decaying.
Where will he stay? I don't see, I can't see a room for your father.

Kevin

Kevin

So let us part.

Curtis

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Ch.
I don't see, I can't see,
guara... These buildings sit empty,
let us part,
When I grow too old to
I don't see a room for your father. Where will he go? Where will he go? Where will he go?

re-de-velopment needs capital, numbers, a guarantee

dream, when I grow too old

mf  \ p  \ f

mf  \ p  \ f

mf  \ p  \ f

mf  \ p  \ f
poco rall. . . . A tempo (\( \dot{\text{q}} = \text{c. 56} \))

Cl. in B♭

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

pp

poco rall.

A tempo (\( \dot{\text{q}} = \text{c. 56} \))

pp

f

pp

p

una corda

pp

ad lib.

pp

\( \dot{\text{q}} \) al lib.

poco rall. . . . A tempo (\( \dot{\text{q}} = \text{c. 56} \))
Remember that in O-cra-coke?
caught you in the dunes, sneaking a smoke...
made the mistake of making a joke, "You're only human," I said.
"Come join the crowd, be one of us regular folk."
You can stay with me," I begged. "And we will fail together."
And then I caught the hurt in your eye and heard the words you spoke.
cold, so clipped, and mysterious
never understood.
"I can not fail," you said. "If I fail, I saying this now?"
fall from the necessary height. And once begun, the
falling never ends. I can't accept failure. I can not. What kind of way is that to live?
Such a sad thing to say, such a tragic aspiration.
I'd forgot the whole thing until today.

We made
Your body softened, you were through. Your eyes closed, love in the dunes.
your breathing slowed and I whispered,
"My poor little superman, if per
éc- tion is your plan, it’s a pre-scrip-tion for dis-sas-ter. Where will you go?, What will you do?
I'm only human, Kevin. What are you?
straight from your heart, with heroic ambition, and humble submission,
Sky-lar, is it your aim to drive me to my knees?
If so, rejoice! You win. Sky-lar, I don't blame you, or him, or
a-ny-one, but please stop, sof-ten your heart to me, I'll
start a-gain, em-brace you, and dad-dy, and be-gin liv-ing at.
Too late, too late.  You ought to have listened to last.
him, to me, to the community, instead of bending all else to your will. You
'might've listened more, you might've stood still for a minute, just one
father. I'll have my lawyer call on Monday.
SCENE THREE

KEVIN comes back into the apartment, alone. CURTIS is completely exhausted now, sitting on the floor, almost in a fetal position. We see him rocking back and forth, cradling a dusty record in his arms.

Slow, \( \frac{1}{4} \) = c. 44
rall...

---

Cl. in Bb

Hn. in F

Perc.

Banjo

Accord.

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

---

KEVIN comes back into the apartment, alone. CURTIS is completely exhausted now, sitting on the floor, almost in a fetal position. We see him rocking back and forth, cradling a dusty record in his arms.

Slow, \( \frac{1}{4} \) = c. 44
rall...

---
Kevin Once I saw an old movie, Fats Waler as a private eye

Kevin in a very natty pork pie hat who steps into a room where...

Kevin where some artist of chaos had his fun busting furniture, smashing crockery

Kevin and shredding sofas and beds, strewn corpses wall to wall

Kevin and black and white blood covering all. Fats steps over the sill

Kevin and into the carnage takes a good look at what some bad man had done

Kevin and has this to say: "One never knows, do one?"

Curtis drops the record on the floor. Kevin picks it up, and plugs in the turntable. Scratching of needle on old vinyl record. Throughout the song that follows, a baby cries softly every now and then.
Darling little Kevin, our gift from heaven, sleep on, sleep on.

Safe in our hands, our perfect little man, sleep on, sleep on.

We'll tell you a secret, if you promise to keep it, dream on, dream on.

Your future we behold, your life will be pure gold, dream on, dream on.

You will do great things, you will see a new day, you will build a great city, you will be loved every step of your way.

When the time is come,
and we are old, you will make a home and with you we'll stay.

Sleep on, sleep on.

When the time is come, and we are old, you will make a home.

Darling little Kevin, our gift from heaven, sleep on, sleep on.

Sleep on, sleep on.
February 25, 2011
Durham, North Carolina - Somerville, Massachusetts

END OF OPERA
BIOGRAHY

George Tsz-Kwan Lam is a composer living in Somerville, Massachusetts. George is interested in writing music that directly engages with everyday life, exploring the intersection between music, theater, and the documentary.

George has collaborated with a number of ensembles and artists, including Contemporary Musiking (Hong Kong), Volti (San Francisco), American Opera Projects (New York City), Red Clay Saxophone Quartet (Greensboro, North Carolina), Boston University Concert Band, Charles River Wind Ensemble (Boston), Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Hong Kong Voices, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Benjamin Rogers, Robert Maril, and Ruby Fulton.

George Lam has previously studied at the Peabody Conservatory of Music and Boston University, and have attended the 2006 Aspen Music Festival and School's composition master class as a Schumann Fellow, as well as the 2004 Dartington International Summer School as an Angus Allnatt Foundation Fellow. Other recent fellowships and residencies include American Opera Projects’ Composers & The Voice workshop series, the Virginia Arts Festival John Duffy Composers Institute, and the Volti Choral Arts Laboratory commissioning and residency program. George is the recipient of a 2009 American Music Center Composer Assistance Program grant for his orchestral work The Queen’s Gramophone, as well as the 2010-11 Evan V. Frankel Fellowship in Humanities at Duke University. George Lam is currently co-artistic director of Rhymes With Opera.