

The Release (a musical drama in one act). **Music by Linus Lau & Libretto by Daniel Lee**

SCENE I. FASHION STUDIO

RECITATIVE/ TRIO: THE PHOTO SHOOT

(Jack is a photographer for a major Hollywood fashion magazine. His partner, Juan Regaro, is a film producer.)

JACK

(snapping photos of a model)

Give me all you got, you're talking to the lens,
you're my angel-- talk to me!

The camera loves you, baby, talk to me.

I love you, you love me, we all love each other!

Speak to me... come on... work with me! Loving it! Loving it!

Oh, you're so beautiful... That's it: you're loving every minute of it!

JUAN REGARO

(to 2nd model)

Your hips are too big,
your breasts are too small,
your legs are too short.

JACK

Give me more, give me more. That's right!

Show me love, Give me love. Yes!

JUAN REGARO

I cannot work with this...

I cannot work with this!

(waves the model off)

JACK

No more of you, dear.

Go grab your coat now.

JUAN REGARO

Nexxtt!

(enter Jen, Jack's wife)

JACK & JUAN REGARO

Jennifer! (Jennifa!)

JACK

(pointing to the backdrop)

Get up there and show me what you've got.

JEN

Is that any way to talk to your wife?

JACK

Ha ha ha!!!

JUAN REGARO

It's the kind of a life that sucks you in and never lets you go!

JACK

Saw my past disappear now it's the only world I know.

JEN

I cannot believe that I'm actually part of this business of show...

JUAN REGARO

Fashion!

JACK

Turn to the left!

JUAN REGARO

Fashion!

JACK

Turn to the right!

JEN

Saved from the street by a man who offered me love!

Fashion!

JACK

Feel the camera flashes!

JUAN REGARO

Fashion! So many gorgeous asses!

JEN

If not for Jack, this never would be,
yet I still feel the cage and I need to be free!

JEN & JACK

Fashion!

JUAN REGARO

Snort it up and feel the whirlwind!

Fashion!

JACK

When every pretty girl's your girlfriend!

Juan Regaro, my friend,

let's wrap this session up.

I'm ready for a party.

Let's pack our stuff and go!

JUAN REGARO

What better way to spend the New Year?

JACK

Than cutting up and breathing deep, dear?!

JEN

Now I can feel it, something's drawing near!

JACK

Don't worry. At my place, there's plenty of beer!

JEN & JUAN REGARO

Fashion!

JACK

Turn to the left!

JEN & JUAN REGARO

Fashion!

JACK!

Turn to the right!

ALL

Fashion!

Black.

SCENE II. JACK'S MANSION

RECITATIVE: --NEW YEAR'S EVE

The Release (a musical drama in one act). **Music by Linus Lau & Libretto by Daniel Lee**

(Jack and Jen dance; the lights are dim. This is a party populated by the glitzy, seedier upper class. The Viper Room denizens, the coke-snorting artists, and the self-absorbed members of the fashion world)

JACK

God I love you so;
you are such a prize.
I know that you'll
never part with me.
Jen, my love.

JEN

Once I was all alone and lost!
But you brought me to the light!
Made me realize what life could be.

JACK

And what is that?

JEN

You and me...

JACK

Jen you know that I'd do anything for you.

JEN

I know.
(Jack releases his hold from Jen.)

JACK

Come on, let's drink; we have
so little time before the
new year comes, my dear,
let's have a toast!

JEN

Jack, I shouldn't!

JACK

Nonsense!
Just one more toast! To our
future! And to you,
my beautiful wife.

JEN & JACK

Cheers!

JACK

Pardon me, my dear...

JEN

Where are you going?

JACK

There are some friends I have to see...

JEN

Who?

JACK

Carrie and Mac, don't you remember,
the couple we drank with last time?

JEN

Those creeps.

JACK

And we can't leave until I say
"hi" to Marisa,
I think I can get her to pose
for my next issue.
Come now,
They're our *friends*, Jennifer.
Let's not have them thinking badly of us, Jennifer!

JEN

...but, Jack...

JACK

Stay here.
Mingle.
I'll be back shortly.
(Jack exits)

JEN

Alone.
I hate when he leaves me alone.
Why does he do this all the time?
But then, maybe he's right.
I should mingle...

(seeing his window of opportunity, Juan Regaro appears)

JUAN REGARO

Jennifa,
How are you Jennifa?
You look completely fantastic!

JEN

(desperately looking for some way to escape)
Oh, Juan. How are you?

JUAN REGARO

Oh, I'm just fabulous!
Say I was thinking that
you would be absolutely
perfect for the role of the
"midwife" in my newest film:
"SEARCHING FOR THE SUNSET"...

JEN

I don't think so Juan.

JUAN REGARO

(ignoring Jen)
Now the role requires you show some skin,
but I'm sure that you have nothing to be ashamed of.
Jennifa, Jennifa, Jennifa!

JEN

Excuse me, Juan. I think I see someone I know.
(walks away rapidly)

The Release (a musical drama in one act). **Music by Linus Lau & Libretto by Daniel Lee**

JUAN REGARO

I'll call you!
I'll call you, Jennifa!

JEN

(sits at bar and says to Pete)
Please save me.

PETE

Would you care,
would you care for a drink, ma'am?

JEN

I must not, I'm afraid I don't drink...
Sorry!

PETE

That's so strange I thought I
saw you drink with
someone over there.

JEN

Oh. My husband, Jack

PETE

He is a very lucky man.

JEN

That's what everyone tells me.

PETE

But is it true?

JEN

Sometimes I don't know the
answer to that question...

PETE

You need a drink.
Get one now 'cause they're going fast!
I know you don't, but hey:
It's New Year's Eve.

JEN

(smiles)
Alright, champagne please.

PETE

Champagne, then!
(pours her a drink)
Champagne for the lovely lady!

JEN

You are a very, very kind man...

PETE

That's what everyone tells me.

JEN

But is it true?
(silence)

Well then...

PETE

Well then miss, can I get you
anything more?

JEN

Anything for a headache?

PETE

(pours her a shot of vodka)
Try this...
It's supposed to cure headaches!

JEN

Why thank you!
Won't you have one with me tonight?

PETE

No, no. I can't, dear.
No, no. I can't, dear.
I'll just watch while you drink yours down...
I'm working tonight.

JEN

I see... slow evening tonight?

PETE

I like it slow... it gives me time to think.

JEN

About what?

PETE

About life in general, love in general...
about being alone this New Years Eve.

JEN

I know the feeling.

PETE

But I thought you were married.

JEN

Oh, he's off in his own little world,
there's no place in it
for me sometimes.

PETE

That's too bad.
(pours another drink)
That's on the house.

JEN

You really shouldn't do this.

PETE

(gazes deep into her)
My pleasure.

JEN

Tell me your name.

PETE

They call me Pete.
What is yours?

JEN
My name is Jen,
Been a pleasure
talking with you.

PETE
Jen don't leave yet.
Party's just begun, dear,
have another drink!
(pours another shot for Jen)

JEN
I thought you'd never ask!
I thought you'd never ask!
(pause)
Pete my dear:
What are you trying to do?

PETE
Get under your skin, dear.

JEN
I think that you might.

PETE
I'll pour you some more...

JEN
(leans in)
What are you thinking?

PETE
(to himself)
The most beautiful woman
I ever saw.
Face like the snowfall
I am in awe.
I want to touch her
I want to feel
the heat on my back
and know this is real.
But I can't play games
with someone like this
for her voice
may whisper
'You've sown me, you own me.'

*(Jack, cheery and drunk comes
back and sees Pete)*

JACK
Hello, hello, hello,
how are you my dear!
Who's your new friend?

JEN
This is Peter.

JACK
Young chap! Where are you headed?
Why don't you stay for a party?
The people are coming in right now
The drinks can serve themselves!
Join the fun, chap!

JEN
Oh Pete, please do,
I'll be so bored here...
...Have you ever wanted something
and not known why?

PETE
You won't be able to control this...

JEN
What in the world are you talking about?

PETE
I don't know... never mind.

QUARTET: COUNTDOWN TO THE NEW YEAR
*(celebrities, photographers, and models arrange themselves
around Jack, feeding off his inebriated vibe. Jack puts his
arm around his buddy, Juan Regaro)*

JACK
Juan, it's time to cast away
the veins of our formality,
No excuses for our sweet humanity!

JUAN REGARO
Humanity!

JACK
(grabbing Jen)
Come Jen, your display time is here!
At the dawn of the spanking new year!

JEN
(disgusted)
Jack, let me go,
you're hurting my hand!
Let go!

JUAN REGARO
What is wrong with her?

JACK
Forget her! She is sober!
(to Juan and partygoers)
Come one and come all, let's begin the night's fun
come women, come men, and come on, everyone!
We've got lots of liquor and plenty of skin.
Give in to temptation...

JUAN REGARO
...Let the party begin!

JACK
Drink up, be a slave to your pleasure.

JUAN REGARO
There are so many bodies and so little time
to drink up with salt and a twist of the lime.
The women-- the girls-- I cannot help but stare,
and some of them not even ready to wear!
Drink up, and forget your excuses!

PETE

The Release (a musical drama in one act). **Music by Linus Lau & Libretto by Daniel Lee**

I'm not sure what I'm doing here,
or if I should question at all
the motives behind what I'm thinking tonight
or if I should let myself fall...

JEN

But the reasons don't really matter
what matters is you're not alone,
on this New Year's night,
you Peter, just might
feel something that you've never known!

JACK

I pull off the mask that I've made for myself,
replace it with the mask of personal hell.
I can't feel the light of the sun on my skin,
but only the cold of the dark of my sin.

JEN

This is bigger than you or me,
we cannot even understand.
Hold me, Pete, I'm getting dizzy.
My quiet heart lies in your hands.

PETE

These small, concealed looks that you give me:
do they mean what they think that they do?
Tonight is the night I forget all the rules,
the price of good fun is my soul!

JEN

Why do I need to reconcile?
Can I trust that Pete will care?
Oh, is this even worth my while,
someone please answer my prayer!

PETE

If I do this, then promise me,
you will want me still the same!
I can't suppress my deepest fear,
that this is some kind of game!

JACK

Down the hatch the poison goes,
what greater good will come?
What greater question can I pose,
than: Am I still the one?

JUAN REGARO

Should auld acquaintance be forgot
and never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And auld lang syne!

ALL

Should auld acquaintance be forgot
and never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And auld lang...

Black.

SCENE III. THE BEDROOM UPSTAIRS

ARIA: "JEN'S SEDUCTION"

(Jen and Pete enter, close the door behind them. They turn and stare into each other's eyes for what seems like an intense, electric

eternity. Music begins as Jen walks toward Pete. Pete backs up from her and toward the bed.)

JEN

Come on sweetheart,
please take off your shoes.
You look tense,
relax, Pete, don't refuse.
You know that I
want to be close to you.
Kiss my face.
Melt into my embrace, Pete.
I know I want you;
I know you want me.

Come on sweetheart
Any way at all.
On your floor or
Up against the wall.

PETE

Jen, you're drunk,
your words I cannot trust...
but can I believe your
sweet face?

Your eyes have
hypnotized me.
You know I want you;
You know you want me.
Wrap your body around me,
and show me that you love me...

Black.

RECITATIVE: THE NEXT MORNING

PETE

I did not know what heaven
was until I woke and saw your
eyes.

JEN

I did not know I'd love again
until you gazed right back at me!
You're all that I'd ever desire
in a man!

PETE

(he caresses her cheek)
Your eyes... have frightening clarity.

JEN

I can see myself in you...

PETE

Your breath and beauty consume me.

The Release (a musical drama in one act). **Music by Linus Lau & Libretto by Daniel Lee**

I can feel your breath inside my chest
I can taste your soft skin,
and I know that I love you.
Jen please say you are mine!
Jen please say you are mine!

JEN
(realizing what she's done)

I want to tear my heart out
and hear myself scream
'cause I know I can't love you.

PETE
No! Jen, please don't say that!

JEN
I can't, Pete I'm so sorry!

(Pete sadly leaves)
Alone.
I hate when he leaves me alone.
Why does he do this to me every time?
But then, maybe he's right.
Maybe he's right...

RECITATIVE: JACK COMES IN UNEXPECTEDLY
(Jack opens the door and enters, more than a little hug over)

JACK
Jennifer! Are you in here, darling?
Jennifer?

(no answer)
Jennifer, ARE YOU IN HERE?
JENNIFER?

JEN
(she collects her sheets)
I'm in here!

JACK
Did you sleep OK?

JEN
What? Are you even going
to apologize for how
you behaved last night?

JACK
I was drunk,
I'm so sorry.

JEN
You were with "them" and not with me!

JACK
Jen what's wrong?
I've never seen
you behave like this before!

JEN

I never see
you anymore!
You are much less
of a lover than some!

JACK
What, Jen?
What's that supposed to mean?
Don't think for a minute that I was too
drunk to notice you:
You were upstairs with that bartender!
You just remember who pays for your
wardrobe; who pays for your jewelry;
who picked you up out of that nothing
existence of yours and gave you
something better—gave you something exciting.

JEN
(tears begin forming)
I never asked you to.

JACK
Didn't you?

JEN
What did you need?

JACK
What did I need??
Where would you BE without me!?!
Where would you be?
What were you looking for in that bartender...

JEN
His name is Pete!

JACK
I DON'T CARE!!!
What did you need that you
DIDN'T ALREADY HAVE????!!!

(silence. She eyes him. He knows the answer.)

Jen dear, do you doubt that I love you?
Do you doubt that I can?
I have three dimensions. You can't just dismiss this.
I'm not the villain...

JEN
Then who is?

JACK
Why must there be one?
Jen I'm so sorry...
come here.

(he pulls her close to him)
I love you,
I love you,
you know that I do!
You worry too much!

The Release (a musical drama in one act). **Music by Linus Lau & Libretto by Daniel Lee**

Black.

*with you women
anyway?
Are you trying to convince
you or me?*

SCENE IV. STREETCORNER—THE NEXT DAY
RECITATIVE & DUET: "JACK WILL COME AGAIN"

*(Pete enters with a dozen roses,
Jen is walking down the street)*

PETE
Jen, there you are,
thank you for meeting me here.

JEN
You shouldn't call during the evenings!
You should know better!

PETE
I'm so sorry, but I had to see you again!

JEN
What did you need?

PETE
(holding up the flowers)
I brought these for you.

JEN
Thank you, but I can't take them.
They're very sweet,
but they'd remind me of you!

PETE
What's wrong with that?

JEN
I want to forget you.

PETE
What we shared you can't ignore!

JEN
Leave me alone!
I'm warning you.
Please!
Give me my space!
Pete...
I wasn't thinking clearly.
I realized today
that I'm still in love with Jack.

PETE
But you saw how he treated you
at the party!

JEN
I know but he never used to be
that way!

Please, Pete, give me my space!

PETE
What is wrong

JEN
What do you want?

PETE
I don't know what I want.
I just know how I feel.
And love has blinded me!

JEN
Blinded you?

PETE
It has, and I can't see through,
I hear only the beating
of a heart in love with you!

PETE
Let me comfort you,
Spend my life with you,
Warm you with my
Kiss and my embrace,
Let me touch your face.
Jen, I think that
we should run away,
Just the two of us,
We can disappear
into the dark,
just the two of us.
Jen, my darling,
Do you understand?
Will you come with me?
Come and take my hand
and you will see
what you mean to me.

JEN
Jack will come again!
Jack will come again!
Jack will come again!

JEN
Jack will change for me.
Your words can't sway me now.

PETE
But no, you must hold on to
your husband Jack.
You must let go of the truth.
And though, the night recoils
into darkness
where abstract thoughts are screamed
and we talk but don't care what we mean...

DUET: "SOMETIMES"

PETE

Once in a while someone touches your heart
and nothing can keep you apart.
Sometimes it's just not enough to want her.
Sometimes you just have to lose.
Sometimes I want to say, "‘til we meet again,"
But I know I should run, never to return.

JEN

There is a time you must say "no" to love
and turn away from those for whom you care.
Sometimes it's just not right to love him,
Sometimes it's best to run away.
Sometimes I want to say, "‘til we meet again,"

PETE

Please don't leave me,
I am dying!

JEN

But I know I should run, never to return.

PETE

Love me forever darling...

JEN

...I don't want to...

PETE

But can't you see? I love you!
Nothing will change how I feel...

JEN

There is a time you must say "no"
to love and turn away from those for whom you care.

PETE

Sometimes it's
just not enough
to want her.
Sometimes you just
have to run away.

PETE

I need you now...
Here by my side...
I can't live...
without you...
Please change
your mind!
I need you now...

JEN

I must live...
without you...
If I could, I would
help you now...
Only wish I could
help you now...

One day you
shall see...

PETE & JEN

How much you mean to me!

PETE

Maybe someday I will reclaim her heart
and nothing will keep us apart.

JEN

Maybe someday you'll see what you mean to me.

PETE

Please don't leave me, I am dying!

JEN

But for now, I must be who I have to be...

PETE

Someday my love.

JEN

Someday you'll see.

PETE & JEN

What you mean to me!

PETE

As much as it hurts right now,
I am going to leave you...

JEN

Why do I feel?
Why do I feel
depressed and lonely?
Why do I feel?

TRIO: "PRAYING SONG I"

(Pete and Jen walk away from one another on the street. Jack walks into a circle of light from above. all three stand now under similar providential spotlights.)

PETE

Lord as I stand here all
alone and confused,
can you tell me why,
you took Jen away from me
and left me dying?

JEN

Lord God, I never meant

JEN
Sometimes it's
just not right
to love him,
Sometimes it's
best to run away.

The Release (a musical drama in one act). **Music by Linus Lau & Libretto by Daniel Lee**

to hurt or offend,
I just needed love,
why did I drive Pete away
when he just loves me?

But Jack, my love
why have you abandoned me,
I scream!
Why haven't you come back
home to me?
Why haven't you made
love to me?
What is wrong here?
What is wrong with us?

(enter Jack)

JACK
I'm a soul with no pilot.

JEN
I'm a moon with no world.

JACK
My hate is gone.

PETE
I will drown in this ocean,

JEN
Melodrama unfurled.

PETE & JEN
If you can hear my voice,
know that I lust for you,

PETE
...know that I cry for you...

JEN
There's a price for my sin,

PETE
But I need to reach out,
Jen, I need to reach out,

JACK
There's a swelling within,

JACK, JEN, PETE
There's a screaming without!

PETE
With my heart I can trace...

JACK
...tracks of tears
down your face...

PETE
Need to love what I can't.

JEN
What does anyone want?!
(Jen and Pete exit)

ARIA: "YOU"

JACK
Jen,
When I look in the mirror
and
I don't like what I see.

I see a man
who tossed what he had.
And expected you
to love me.

I don't want to compete for you.
But,
my desires are torn.

Jen, dear, I need you
and I want you to know that,
In spite of
this mask I've worn,

You
shined the light that opened my eyes
you made it soft

and

You
showed my heart what it was to love --
made it soft.

You
opened up my eyes to let me see.
You let me see!

But I didn't like what I saw!
Suddenly aware of every flaw!
Ripped the temptation from my skin!
Sucked the abstraction from within!!!

You
showed my body what it was to love
you made me hard

and

You
made me question what it was to love
you made it hard.

You
opened up my eyes to let me see.
And I did see

But my vision blurred when you came!
Blinded me and I forgot your name!
The sun fell out of the sky!

The Release (a musical drama in one act). **Music by Linus Lau & Libretto by Daniel Lee**

And anger entered my eye!
Ripped the temptation from my skin!
Tore the abstraction from within!
Was this heaven or hell?!
What were you trying to sell?

(Jack leaves)

SCENE V: PETE/ JEN'S BEDROOM
DUET: "PRAYING SONG 2"

PETE
There are days I've spent,
Alone all by myself,
with nothing on my mind,
but your face, your kiss,

JEN
There are nights I've spent,
Alone all by myself,
and I wake with your name
on my lips, my love,

PETE
I've lived very well,
but I'd give that all away,
for one more chance with you,
for your touch, your kiss,
Love me gently.

JEN
Jack has done me well,
but I'd give that all away
for one more chance with you,
for your touch, your kiss,
Love me gently.

JEN
I'm so sorry you're in pain,
Fate made things turn out this way.
I just want another chance,
wish I could throw the past away!
I wish I knew all the answers,
to all the questions life is giving me!
I wish I could do things differently,
to kill the pain I caused you.

Please, God tell me if I can,
change things back the way they were.
Turn the world the other way and
make that man love me again!

PETE
Please, God...
Make her love me.
PLEASE GOD!

JEN & PETE
I wish I knew all the answers,
to all the questions you are asking me!
I wish I could do things differently,
to kill the pain I caused you.

JEN
PLEASE, GOD
Are you even there?
Do you even care...
anymore?

Do you represent
everything I know...
to be true?!

I don't want to think

I just want to do,
not regret!
I don't want to deal...
I just want to
fall in love!

PETE
PLEASE, GOD!
Can you even hear
anymore?
... everything I hate...
... to be true?!
I just want to feel...
not regret!
...with what happens next,
I just want to
fall in love!

BOTH
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME,
I AM DYING!

The Release (a musical drama in one act). **Music by Linus Lau & Libretto by Daniel Lee**

*(Jen and Pete are about to embrace,
when suddenly...)*

SCENE VI: STREETCORNER
DUET: "INERTIA / MOMENTUM"

*(Jen realizes her love for Pete
and runs out of the house in search
for him.)*

JEN
There is a time you must
say "yes" to love
and turn away from those
for whom you care.
Sometimes it's just not
right to stay here,
Sometimes it's best to run away.
Sometimes I want to say, "til we meet again,"

JACK
Jen, where are you going?

JEN
and I know I should run, never to return!

JACK
JEN! STOP!

(Jen runs away from Jack's house and into the street)

PETE
There is a time you must go to your love, and say:
"Nothing will keep us apart."
Sometimes it's just not enough to want her.
Sometimes you have to run away.

PETE & JEN
But I am caught in the
inertia,
the momentum.
I can't
control myself
My life
commands itself!

PETE
I need you now...
Soon, Jen,
you will see
how much you
mean to me!

JEN
I was wrong before.
Understand:
I can save us now, Pete my love.
Soon, Pete,
you will see
How much you
mean to me!

JACK
(entering with a gun)
STOP!!!!

RECITATIVE:
FINAL CONFRONTATION

JACK
Hold it right there...

PETE
What now?

JACK
...my little friend!

PETE
What now?

JACK
This game has gone much too far!

PETE
Shoot me now! I don't care.
I just want to die!
Shoot me down and be gone
pull the trigger, I dare you!
What's the matter what's taking you
so long to kill me?
(points to Jen)
Go to your woman she needs you!

JACK
LEAVE HER OUT OF THIS!!!
This is between you and me!
Stop the charades!
You took all that I had!
My life's been degraded!
I don't want to destroy you,
you leave me no choice!

(Jack pulls the trigger in madness, hits Jen.)

PETE
NO!!!

JACK
Look what you made me do!!!!

(Jack fires once more, and Pete falls to the ground)

Black.

SCENE VII. HOSPITAL

RECITATIVE AND ARIA: "I"

(Jen is in a hospital bed, unconscious.)

JACK

(sitting by Jen's side)

Oh, Jen...
I eat you.
I sleep you.
I breathe you.

This heart aches in its silent weight,
and its tears are squeezed from a man
who lays at your side,
whose life is filled with regrets.

I am a shell of a man without you,
I am a bird without wings.

Have I mentioned that you haunt me,
appearing in everything I see?
and I did see!

But then I didn't like what I saw!
Suddenly aware of every flaw!
Ripped the temptation from my skin.
Sucked the abstraction from within.

I cannot live without you anymore,
please take me back!
Part of me thinks that I should leave it as it is,
and use the pain to add wisdom to my eyes.
But I

I'd trade it all
I'd live through the eyes of a fool
just to hold you once more,
hear your voice just once more,
taste your tears once more.

Oh, Jen.
I miss you.
I need you.
Come back to me.

(Jack bows his head over her.)

ARIA: "BLUE"

(Jen awakes)

JEN

In my life

I've seen the ocean,
and I've felt
felt the pain of the sunset.

in my beating heart
I'm feeling,
and the moon
light blue on the waters,
in your singing eyes
I'm reaching
to the moon
light blue on the waters.

still I dream,
I dream about you,
were you here
when I was falling?

now this foolish heart
is breaking,
and I'm finally
close to the horizon.

*(Jack sees that Jen is now awake.
Their eyes meet.)*

Black.

FIN.