

“Ties That Bind”

Karen’s aria from
Wiccans of Norwalk

FORCES **Soprano
& Piano**

Music by Evgeniya Kozhevnikova
Book & Lyrics by Marianna Mott Newirth

Commissioned by Jennifer LeDoux
Created at Really Spicy Opera's Aria Institute for
Composers and Librettists: Soprano Low-Residency Edition

About the Opera

CHARACTERS:

Karen Porter: Soprano -
Rebecca, her friend

The two friends connected long ago in elementary school as kindred spirits. They remained friends all the way through high school. After graduation, Karen leaves for Berlin for a gap year. The two friends make bracelets for the other and a pact to keep connected. The year is long. This aria takes place as they get together the day Karen returns home.

What is happening?

- The intertwining lives of Rebecca & Karen, two girls growing up together, besties into young adulthood. When Karen takes a gap year to live in Berlin, Rebecca finds work in their hometown of Norwalk, Connecticut. They keep in touch, but when Karen returns, Norwalk is the same but Karen is not. The two women must now confront what their relationship is, who they are for one another and how they manage to take their long term friendship into the future while embracing a new way of seeing the world around them.

Who is present?

- Rebecca is in the room with Karen - they have just had an argument within minutes of not having seen one another in well over a year.

Who wants what and why?

- Rebecca wants to pick up where they left off but Karen has to admit, she has changed.

Where is the tension?

- Both women want to connect but they have to come to terms with the reality that their connection must come from a new place. The old way doesn't work and they almost lose one another. Both have to adjust. They find something and make a new pact.

The 5 Whys

Why is this important to the character?

- Karen has had an eye opening experience living abroad. Her world has expanded far beyond the insular Norwalk, CT. She wants to show her best friend what she's discovered.

Why is this important to the audience?

- The audience has witnessed Karen's transformation and they need to know how the two friends will remain connected.

Why is this important to the plot?

- This scene is right after the peripeteia of our opera, Karen's moment of 'wokeness', and it's important to see if she will maintain her new world-understanding upon going home. The two have just had an argument.

Why is this important to the pacing?

- This aria is near the end as we move into the concluding scenes & resolve the story arc of this long term friendship.

Why is this important to the creative team?

Jane and I explore the pains and joys of friendship, expressed musically. It is bitter sweet.

Libretto

The arc of this aria is to capture their past relationship, understand their present relationship and see their future relationship. Dramatic question: Can friendship endure when we are no longer certain we know one another like we once did?

Location: Rebecca's bedroom (still the same from childhood)

Current status of the moment: The two friends (now young women) have just had an argument while standing amid their childhood memories. On Rebecca's bedside table is the music box she plays every night before she goes to sleep. This is the deep breath right after the fight. Karen chooses to reach out in the midst of a painful moment.

Section Divisions, Tempo Instructions, etc.	Lyrics	Stage Directions	Musical/Expressive Instructions, Suggestions, etc. time suggestion
		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p><i>Karen grabs the music box from the bedside table and makes it play... a melody they are both familiar with from childhood.</i></p> </div>	
<p>Waltz-like wistful memory a little bit witchy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">You <u>are</u> my friend. My ever, very best friend.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*You are my friend. My ever, very best friend.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Play, never ending play. Sun, never setting on my very best friend.</p>	<p><i>m9</i> *deepen the emotion of this moment with this repetition.</p> <p><i>Karen, holding the music box, reaches it out to hand to Rebecca in an attempt to deepen their connection. Rebecca does not take the music box.</i></p> <p><i>Not giving up, Karen twirls around just like the little ballerina inside the box. She laughs at herself and then gently closes the box, replacing it on the table at m18</i></p>	<p>Intro - a common theme - friends motif</p>

Libretto

	<p>I went away *I went away, to discover something new!</p> <p>And yes, new friends came my way. That's true. (I wanted that, too)</p>	<p>* deepen the emotion of this moment with this repetition.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><i>Rebecca is clearly still hurting and Karen moves carefully, picking up the bag she carried in with her - holding it in a vulnerable moment of hope.</i></p> </div>	
	<p><i>during the transition m37 - m40</i></p>	<p><i>Karen gently places the bag she's holding on the table next to Rebecca's music box.</i></p>	
<p><i>shift into 4:4</i></p>	<p>The tie that binds me tight to you, holds me steady through and through.</p> <p>The ties* that bind us.</p>	<p><i>m45 Karen open's the bag</i> * deepen the emotion of this moment with this repetition.</p>	
<p><i>discordant - undertain</i></p>	<p>Pinky promises, solemn oaths kept you close while I journeyed through bizarre, uncertain, amazing worlds.</p>	<p><i>As Karen opens the bag, Rebecca notices that Karen is still wearing the wrist-band they made for each other before they parted.</i></p> <p><i>Rebecca feels her own wrist, remembering the moment before, during the fight, where she took her's off, thinking Karen had removed her band a long time before.</i></p>	
<p>coming back into a stable place</p>	<p>And now I am home with you, my ever, very best friend.</p> <p>We <u>are</u> kindred spirits, me and you.</p> <p>The ties that bind to the end of time...</p> <p>My ever, very best friend.</p> <p>We'll always be the best of friends.</p>	<p><i>m58 Karen reaches in to collect the gift hidden within the bag.</i></p> <p><i>m65 at the high note, Karen reveals the gift and stands, holding it through.</i></p> <p><i>m70 She holds out the gift to Rebecca who carefully steps forward, accepting the offering. The two friends sit on the bed together while Rebecca unwraps Karen's gift.</i></p>	