



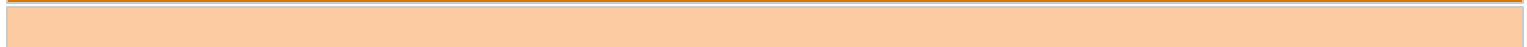
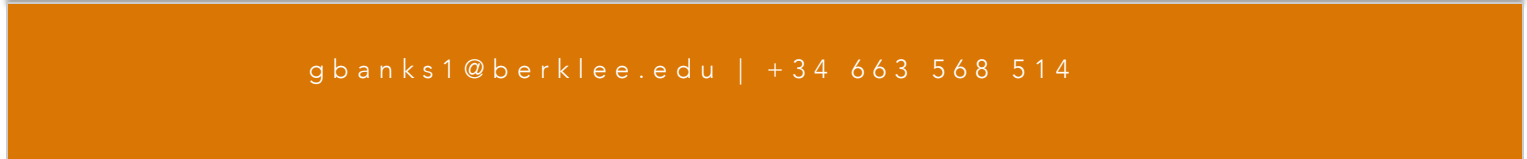
Tracking the Story

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Summary

For my culminating experience, I have chosen to create a soundtrack for a non-fiction novel. The book I have chosen is a newly-released New York Times Bestseller, *The Interestings*, by Meg Wolitzer. I have created a full-length album of songs that relate to the text explicitly (through in-text callouts) or in some way capture the feeling of the themes expressed throughout.

Book soundtracks are a very recent trend in the field of entertainment and experience curation. There have been many apps developed to allow consumers to DJ their reading experiences and share it with others to set the literary mood. Taking this into consideration, I fused my interest in this new trend with my long-standing relationship with film soundtracks to create a work that is slightly less specifically concurrent and instead more derivative.

I initially designed this project as a practical study of curation and licensing for my future and continued work as a Music Supervisor. Instead of the traditional television or film source material, I chose to explore the recent trends of pairing books with music. This keeps me up to date on trends in music pairing with new media, but also works in my favor by allowing me a fairly static material with which to work over the course of a year for the sake of the project, where films and television may work at a much faster pace.

What I Did & How it Fits

My first step after researching several book options was to read the chosen material, *The Interestings*, written by Meg Wolitzer in April of 2013. Reading through it, I annotated key points of the story; particularly “musical” moments where there were specific callouts during party scenes, etc. as well as dramatic moments that didn’t specify music, but that I felt could benefit from musical pairings. This “spotting” session, I have learned from many interviews with professional music supervisors along with my own work, is a key first step when reading through film/TV scripts. Furthermore, I have learned that music supervisors must work with moments the director has called out and add to that, proposals of original musical moments. I created a spreadsheet (attached in the Appendix) of all the moments I was proposing, noted the emotion of the “scene,” what I felt was its relative importance/prominence in the overall story, and a preliminary list of reference tracks based on initial impression.

Once I had a list of about 50 “cues,” I began my music research process, consulting Billboard charts, online articles, and the text itself to place the musical aesthetics of the time period(s) featured throughout the novel; in this case, music from the 1970s through the 2010s. From here, I did what any music supervisor would do and started with the resources I currently have/know. For me, this was my vinyl collection. I spent hours upon hours combing through my vinyl collection to find songs I thought could possibly work for key moments on my list. Once I exhausted that resource, I moved online to find similar and additional tracks. My selection process ranged from everything from whether the song was specifically called out in the novel, to whether it aligned with personal aesthetics, to whether the date of recording aligned with whether or not it would have been plausible to have existed in the world of the novel (counting

several years before as an option), to preferably any combination of all three. For one moment in particular, I decided to look further into a Korean band I found at a showcase at MIDEM. I feel that utilizing all resources (personal collections, referrals from friends and strangers, resources that fall into your lap, and those you stumble upon) is a key aspect of seeking the best music options for a sync project. Your competitive advantage in the market when competing for a freelance project is your ability to be creative, original, and resourceful. After I looked into the band itself, I had the assistance (and translation) of a friend to help me to navigate KOMCA – the Korean Music Copyright Association—to find rights owners for the song. Taking this work beyond borders is very important given that when sourcing music, you can find inspiration and talent everywhere, especially in the digital era. This exploration into how another country organizes its publishing information will help me in the job market by giving me more options for sourcing, and can also be utilized as a compulsory aspect of a global Masters program.

Taking that into account, I wanted to design a project that was diverse in resources. Within my project, whether I sourced pre-existing material, or worked to record new pieces, I wanted to incorporate music from Creative Commons licenses, covers, public domain, traditional sync/master uses, and 100% original compositions.

Initially, I set out to record 6 wholly original songs, and “license” 6 pre-existing songs. This changed throughout the course of the project for a few reasons. It very soon became obvious that my resources (specifically time and personnel) would not permit me to record 6 entire songs. I chose instead to delve into quality over quantity. I co-produced—and at times co-wrote—and creatively directed three songs which included a

wholly a cappella track, a new age, electronic based track, and a retro soul cover with a full band.

On the side of the licensing part of the project, I had intended to go through the motions of acquiring the licenses, pretending that this was a real project. In a meeting with Marjorie Scheker of Warner Chappell Music Spain, I learned that I should probably shy away from this activity, as in the world of licensing (on the sides of the rights owners), it would cost more to process my pretend request than they would get in return considering this project was just hypothetical. It would be counterproductive for me to attempt this process and possibly annoy people with whom I may need to collaborate at key points in my real career in the future. Relationships are everything and I didn't want this project to set me up for failure in the future. Instead, I researched each song's publishing and master rights owners and their contact info, everything short of actually reaching out to these parties. This affected the scope of some of the more practical parts of my original plan, like budgeting.

The recording process was a huge learning experience. I have close to no recording experience, nor experience even being in a recording studio, so I learned from all sides. I created 6 song briefs (attached) for those pieces I knew I wanted to record. From there, I looked at my resources around Berklee and sent applicable ones to people I thought would make a good fit based on their interest in the project and my examination of their portfolios (A&R). For example, I enlisted the help of artist/composer Tess Tyler for a song that I knew could benefit from her ironically melancholy/chipper aesthetic, based on what I heard going through her SoundCloud catalog. Once the songs were recorded, I was sent mixes and I offered creative input for editing.

My coursework in Liz Teutsch's class in the fall semester, "Production Analysis," was *really* critical during this stage. I am not a musician and have little experience talking about music with technical jargon. However, I found myself commenting on specific instrumentation, song form, tempo, and mixing techniques that I knew nothing about before starting at Berklee. The last-minute decision to enroll in that class proved to be invaluable for my project, and surely for my career ahead.

Also helpful from my coursework was the legal consultation I received from Enric Enrich. There were many sensitive legal and copyright-related issues to consider with this project; everything from the copyrights related to the book itself (for which I received the author's blessing, but not her permission to tie any aspect of the project to her name and licensed material) to the licenses through which I could use the pre-existing material and the rights assigned to me to the original content via the composers. I bounced many ideas and concerns off of Enric based on what I learned from his class and seminars and together we drafted several agreements, such as the Work Made for Hire agreement (attached in the Appendix).

My next step was to narrow down the list of pre-existing songs I had initially proposed. For this, I simply chose to revisit my original list to see if I still had the same connection to those I felt strongly about at first. When I created the very first list of cues, I labeled them with colors from Green to Red. A deep green meant I felt the moment or song proposed definitely needed to be considered for the final cut. My connection weakened respectively for those I marked with yellow or red. So for the editing process, I selected mostly from the 'green' options.

Challenges

Many of the challenges I faced stemmed from my relativeness newness to certain activities. I have, however, learned the difference between ‘challenge’ and ‘impossibility.’ It was certainly challenging producing the last track, a cover of ‘Sunny,’ given that I had asked the assistance of some of the most talented (and charismatic) performers in the school. At the top and bottom of each day, for over a week, I was forced to realign the recording schedule. Be it other gigs, rehearsals for upcoming shows, or the availability/access of the scoring stage, I hit walls at every turn. Although I feel that my past experience coordinating video shoots as a film producer gave me some experience in this, it was definitely a challenge. I learned a lot about people over the course of this program and this project. To my knowledge there is no ‘All You Need to Know About Music Supervision’ book with chapters dedicated to dealing with people. I feel like I have learned an incredible amount about (creative) people and the way they work by just diving in to this project. This is considering that many of my collaborators are still pretty much strangers, having known them for 10-11 months at most. My coursework in Global Leadership and Management helped me to at least mentally prepare for issues involving creative control, having different conversations, negotiation, and general assertiveness. Being in the trenches of it all, I know I picked up on a lot of social cues that will be advantageous in my career moving forward.

Creatively, it was a challenge to make 16 songs from over a dozen different artists from around the world, alluding to moments in a book that itself follows 6+ different characters over a 40-year period sound like a cohesive work. As I set out initially, this really tested my skills in curation. A soundtrack (or any album, really) should be dynamic

enough to not sound like the same song played 12 different times, but not too scattered to where it's difficult for the listener to grasp the connections. As with everything, I did the best I could, but I know there is still a lot to learn.

What's Next/Left?

There are many different outlets through which to exhibit this “playlist,” such as through Spotify or apps like Booktrack™ that allow users to sync the songs/playlist to their audiobooks, etc. Based on my promise to the author to keep the project a strictly academic project, and my own goals to work on the ‘means’ as opposed to the ‘end,’ I opted to stay away from distribution media and focus more on the content itself. The technology is already born, if I decided I wanted this album to be synced. It is also born if I just wanted it to be a derivative concept album (through shareable playlist apps like Spotify).

Instead, once I felt comfortable enough with the development of the content, I plan to use this completed project to pitch to my resources for a film project of similar aesthetic characteristics. With this, I will be able to show that I am capable of sourcing relevant period-music (research through to licensing) and am able to co-produce, co-write, and otherwise coordinate the production of new music. This project will serve as a portfolio piece to demonstrate my music supervision-related competencies.

What it Means

This project lies at the intersection of a few recent phenomena in the entertainment industry, especially as it relates to books and music. The first is a

technology in its infancy that allows readers to play music to accompany their text. This user-generated technology allows people to DJ their readings. There are technologies being born that even allow authors to submit their own soundtracks, based on what they had envisioned while writing and emphasizing key scenes.

The other very recent, perhaps more mainstream trend is the tendency of young adult fiction to be optioned into films with prominent soundtracks that take on lives of their own. One example of this is the book *The Fault in Our Stars* by author John Green which was a bestseller, optioned into a movie currently being screened nationally in the U.S., and has been receiving a ton of press and buzz because of its star-studded soundtrack. Whether the author initially envisioned a song by Ed Sheeran playing during any given chapter of the book means little. However, now the brands are linked through the world of the film. My soundtrack project does just this (links book to music), while paying close attention not to refer too much to visual elements, or what would be the film as intermediary. Another similar example is the book-turned-movie-turned-soundtrack of *Divergent*.

While I wouldn't gamble to say that the film as the intermediary is soon to disappear, I believe in the strong relationship between a book (specifically Young Adult Fiction) and contemporary music, especially for marketing purposes.

Final Considerations

When I began the GEMB program and my thesis project in the fall, I entered with a strong work ethic, a can-do attitude, and a bit of music supervision experience from indie projects in Miami. Over 11 months, I believe I have strongly improved upon my

understanding of the legalities involved in IP and licensing/publishing, confidence in negotiation and project management, record producing, songwriting, production analysis/critical listening, creative direction, A&R, economic considerations of the intersection between the industries of film and music, and more. The limits of my project and overall time leave me with a desire to learn much more after the completion of the degree. In July/August I will enter the professional world seeking further knowledge on the topics of film music budgets and financing, cue sheet cadence, and overall more knowledge of all aspects of the business/legal and creative sides of the music supervision process. Whether speaking with Marjorie Scheker, Robert Kraft, and hearing countless interviews and conferences on the subject, it seems that often the only way to learn is to just do it, and that the learning process never ends. I am confident that I will gain such knowledge in more hands-on work, starting in August with my internship with The Cutting Edge Group in Beverly Hills.

In all, this project was incredibly relevant to my future career as well as my year here at Berklee Valencia. This project would not have been possible without my coursework here, the faculty who served as invaluable mentors, the professional contacts I have developed, the musical resources available to me here, and the overall confidence to figure it all out. The competencies I have acquired and practiced in the process of the completion of this project will be carried on with me for many years to come. I am excited to dive right in and show off all I have learned in theory and in practice.

Appendix

Original Song Briefs

1.

Will You, Won't You?

(actualized)

Scenes:

(p.50-51)

“The driver took the two women and Mo in the black Range Rover, and during the ride Ash said, ‘So this is my big return to New Haven. And not to have lunch with an old professor, or give a talk, but to learn what’s wrong with my uncommunicative and unhappy little boy.’ The nut of what she was saying was: this is awful. Mo couldn’t hear her; he was listening with headphones to a CD of a picture book about a runaway truck, the same CD he listened to often. The two women regarded him for a few seconds, then Ash unbuckled her seat belt and reached over, pressing her face into his soft white neck. He twisted around to get away but saw he was trapped by the seat belt and stopped protesting.

Jules knew, during the drive, that Mo would be given a diagnosis the next day, and it seemed clear finally what it might be. But until not long before Ash had made the appointment it hadn’t occurred to them that Mo was ‘on the spectrum,’ as everyone casually put it lately, just the way people also casually said ‘chemo,’ all of it seen as part of the perils of the modern age. Instead, before then, Mo had seemed mostly anxious and disconnected, shrieking and crying for reasons that he was unable to explain.”

(p. 376-7)

“Mo lay on his stomach on the carpet like a much younger boy. So many Lego pieces were scattered around him that it appeared as if there’d been a volcanic explosion and all the flung bits had cooled and hardened. Jonah stood in awe, just looking; long ago he’d loved Lego too, and what all those little pieces could do. In a sense, he’d gone to MIT because of Lego, and now he worked for Gage Systems because of his early interest in what interlocked and what did not.

“What are you making?” he asked.

“A garbage claw,” said the boy, not looking up.

“How does it work?” Jonah asked, and he crouched down and let Mo Figman give him a demonstration of the uses of his invention. Right away he saw that Mo possessed a visceral understanding of mechanics that went deep and wide. Jonah questioned him about the functionality of the garbage claw, and asked him a series of problem-solving questions relating to use, form, durability, aesthetics. Mo shocked him with his cool skill, yet he was grim about it all, too.”

Analysis:

Mo Figman is the second child of Ethan Figman and Ash Wolf. Ethan is the creator of a Seth McFarlane-style animated series and Ash Wolf is an occasional director of plays. The couple is massively rich (Wolf comes from a rich family) and are constantly in the public eye. Mo’s diagnosis on the autism spectrum is heart-breaking to Ash, who feels like this is the one imperfection in her otherwise fairytale life. Ethan, it is later revealed, skipped the opportunity to travel with Ash and Mo for the testing, claiming he was on a business trip, when really, he just couldn’t stomach the circumstance.

Mo keeps to himself often. He is a bit socially awkward and pitied by adults, but is happiest in his own world: listening to his favorite CD and building with Lego. He is a child with so many adult concepts thrust upon him. His “condition” precedes his presence. He is compared constantly to his sister, Larkin, who like her mother, is beautiful, charming, and very artistically talented.

Mo relates well to Jonah, a lifelong friend of Ethan and Ash. Jonah himself is at times socially awkward and prefers to keep to himself.

Brief:

The lyrics for this song will be taken from a poem/song found in Lewis Carroll’s “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” (1865).

**"Will you walk a little faster?" said a whiting to a snail,
"There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's treading on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle – will you come and join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?**

**"You can really have no notion how delightful it will be
When they take us up and throw us, with the lobsters, out to sea!"
But the snail replied "Too far, too far!" and gave a look askance --
Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.**

**"What matters it how far we go?" his scaly friend replied.
"There is another shore, you know, upon the other side.
The further off from England the nearer is to France --
Then turn not pale, beloved snail, but come and join the dance.
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?**

The mood of the piece should be heavy, yet childlike. Emotion should be derived from simplicity (rather, the song is what it lacks). The lyrics themselves are very juvenile, so the performance need not be stereotypically animated. It should really resonate with the listener. There should be irony in the juxtaposition of such simple lyrics with a heavy, adult tone. The arrangement should be very simple and all acoustic. Percussion (maybe bells, maybe tabla) is highly preferred, but not required. The length should be at least 2 minutes, and no more than 5 minutes.

Additional lyrics can be added for timing and theme, but should remain in the same jovial sentiment.

References for performance/genre/mood (in order of priority):

- “Kiss From a Rose” by Becca Stevens
- “Tom’s Diner” by Suzanne Vega (1987 version with vocals only, not any of the 1990s dance mixes)
- “I Bought You a Coat” by Tess Tyler

2.

“Moving Day” Song Brief

(actualized as “Sunny”)

(pp. 346-347)

“Then they were in another place half a dozen blocks north, a cleaner, brighter place, ‘an elevator building!’ they remarked to each other with wonder, as if such a thing were unheard of. They actually owned this apartment, and on moving day, when the miracle elevator took them upstairs to their new, bright, though slapped-together rooms with the smell of paint and polished floors, they felt as if they had been saved. They weren’t saved; they’d only been transplanted somewhere different and better, in a co-op whose mortgage Ethan had cosigned. And Dennis’s depression was certain to hang around like a paint smell that wouldn’t fade, but still it was something...

[Ash] went right to work, tearing open cartons and helping Rory’s bedroom—an actual bedroom of her own, not just a corner of a living room turned into a bedroom at night. Jules could hear them, Ash’s soft voice inquiring, and then Rory’s loud voice intoning, ‘Don’t put the Rollerblades away, Ash. Mom and Dad say I can wear them IN THE APARTMENT like my Indian moccasin slippers.’ They were in there together, the best friend and the little girl, until the room was completely unpacked. At eight in the evening Ash was still at the new apartment, and they all ate Vietnamese food from what would become their primary takeout restaurant for over twelve years, until it closed during the recession of 2008.... The three adults were hopeful – even guardedly, Dennis.”

Analysis:

This is one of the happier, most hopeful moments of the book. For once, Jules isn’t jealous of Ash and she has something to celebrate of her own. However, this is pretty false hope. The new apartment only comes from a generous (\$100K) gift from Ethan and Ash, which caused a lot of tension between Dennis and Jules at first. Dennis will be depressed, regardless of the square footage of their new home. Jules still will never have all that Ash has or has access to. This happy moment precedes Ash finding out that her mom, Betsy, passed.

Brief:

The song should be a semi-retro, soulful, upbeat tune. You should even be able to whistle the melody at parts (whether or not whistling is featured in the song). The upbeat nature should almost be ironic (but not naïve!), given that this moment is a façade covering real life. Perhaps some of the lyrics can give a gentle nod to superficial happiness. Perhaps this can portray a Pain/Pleasure paradox: a happy, upbeat song, with darker lyrics.

Melody References:

- “I Can See Clearly Now” by Jimmy Cliff


♩ = 63

SUNNY

TRANSCRIBED ALEX WILLIAMS


INTRO BALLAD

Gm⁹ Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Eb⁹ Am⁷ D7([#]5)




VERSE

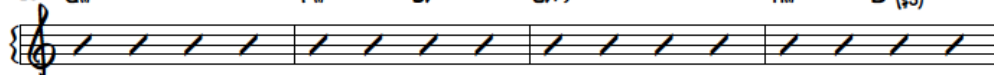
5 Gm⁹ Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Eb⁹ Am⁷ D7([#]5)



9 Gm⁹ Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Eb⁹ Am⁷ D7([#]5)



13 Gm⁹ Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Eb⁹ Am⁷ D7([#]5)




17 A7(SUS4) D7([#]5)



♩ = 143 FASTER SAMBA

19 Gm⁹ Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Eb⁹ Am⁷ D7([#]5)



3.

“Drama of the Gifted Child” Song Brief

(not actualized)

(p. 222)

‘This is a *Drama of the Gifted Child* thing, right?’ Ethan asked.

‘In a way, yes. I left it out for you the other day, by the way. Did you actually read it?’

‘I skimmed it.’

‘You skimmed it? It’s a very short book, Ethan.’

‘So short it’s like a haiku, right?’ he said. ‘Well, I think I can sum it up in haiku form.’ Then he said:

*‘My parents loved me
narcissistically, alas
and now I am sad.’*

‘Don’t make fun of me,’ Ash said. ‘It’s an important book.’

Ash had lately become obsessed with *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, by the Swiss-trained psychoanalyst Alice Miller, which had become a cult hit when it was published several years earlier. Ash said it was the best book she’d ever read. Much of it dealt with the lasting damage done to children by narcissistic parents. Ash had read the book closely, writing in its margins, feeling certain it was relevant to herself and several of the people she knew. The Wolfs, particularly Gil, had always had so many expectations for her, certain that Goodman would never achieve much. He would disappoint them, but she wouldn’t. Golden Ash, with her beauty, her thoughtfulness, her plays, her industry, was a narcissistic parent’s dream. But Ethan’s mother and father never once pushed him; they’d been too absorbed by their own dreadful marriage and then by their own split to pay too much attention to their son’s precocious, burgeoning abilities.”

Analysis:

This book that Ash is obsessed with is an important symbol of the relationships all of the Interestings have with their parents. Here, it is explained that Ash was pressured by her parents to do great things. Goodman, was never really expected to do all that much. However, when he gets in trouble, his parents bend over backwards to make sure he has everything he needs in Iceland. Ash as an adult is very much concerned with appearances and staging, hence her career as a Broadway director. This is also evident in her reaction to her son getting diagnosed with Autism. She is devastated.

Jules is embarrassed by her low-to-middle class family in the humdrum suburb of Underhill. As an adult, she constantly bickers with her husband Dennis because they are not as successful as Ash and Ethan. They have nothing. They struggle to make ends meet and it’s too much for her to bear.

Jonah has a noteworthy relationship to his mother, Susannah, who raised him on tour without a father, and without really someone trustworthy to talk/relate to. This leads to Jonah being susceptible to manipulation by Barry Claimes, whom he genuinely looked up to and respected,

and then later to the Moonies, a cult he joins that makes him feel unconditionally loved by a family structure.

Ethan's parents, also explained here, were too wrapped up in their divorce to pay much attention to him. This caused him to "escape" to his own created world of The Figmans, which as an adult made him a millionaire.

Brief:

An acoustic, weighty and emotional song similar to "Daughters" by John Mayer about the ins and outs of how much the relationships with parents can shape their child's adult lives. Can tell a story within the song about a man or a woman who is completely the product of their parents' parenting style.

Arrangement/Genre:

- Mostly open
- Acoustic
- Male or female vocals
- No more than 4 minutes
- Contemporary

4.

“Jules Redecorates Lois’s house for Ash” Song Brief

(actualized as “All in Time”)

(pp. 160-1)

“One Saturday morning in May, Ash took the Long Island Railroad out to Underhill to spend the weekend at the Jacobsons’. There was a time when Jules would have dissuaded her from coming, but not now. None of her friends had seen her small house or her dull, unfancy suburb; they had all expressed an interest in visiting her before, but Jules had deflected it, saying something meaningless like, ‘All in good time, my pretty.’ But now Ash needed to get away from her parents and the city. Before she arrived, Jules went around the house, glaring at everything, trying to find clever ways to make the place look better. She stalked through the rooms, her eyes narrowed in assessment, snatching up an ugly ashtray and spiriting it into a drawer, removing a pillow that her mother’s sister, Aunt Joan, had embroidered from a kit with the words *Home Is the Place Where When You Have to Go There They Have to Take You In – Robert Frost*. Jules couldn’t bear the image of Aunt Joan, who had never read a poem in her *life*, stitching the name “Robert Frost” in green yarn, as if that somehow made her ‘literary.’ The pillow went into the drawer beside the ashtray, and as Jules closed the drawer her mother saw her and said, ‘What are you doing?’

‘Just straightening up.’

Lois glanced around the room, noticing the way the rug had been vacuumed within an inch of its life, items on surfaces had been regrouped, and a shawl had been thrown across the couch, not to hide any stain or imperfection but to hide the couch itself. Seeing her mother see the house from Jules’s perspective made her ashamed of herself. Suddenly Lois Jacobson, who had been given no credit for anything seemed to know everything. She’d lived through the death of her young husband, and now she was a single mother with two daughters, one in college at nearby Hofstra but living at home for financial reasons; and one who had made it clear that she preferred a richer, more sophisticated and engaging family over her own.”

Analysis:

Jules, who was only able to attend camp because of a generous scholarship, has kept her below par home life away from her rich, Manhattanite, daughter-of-a-lawyer, son-of-a-rockstar friends. However, it is now that Ash really needs to get away, that Jules has to somehow make her home look wealthier/classier/more tasteful than it is. Her mom catches her “redecorating” and is hurt and embarrassed because that house is the best she can do.

References:

- The theme of the film “Imitation of Life”
- The song “Royals” by Lorde
- Jealously, embarrassment, shame, low(er) income, posers
- 1976

Arrangement:

- Open to suggestions
- Could be similar to the arrangement of “Royals,” but not as urban/contemporary
- Open to genre, but should be earthy with low vocals

All in time

Moderate ballad ♩ = 104

A. J. E. Palmer

1 *mp* When I ___ try to call ___ you're ne-ver home ___ or so you say, When we ___ come a round ___ you're ne-ver free,

2 *mp* we ___ come a round ___ you're ne-ver free,

3

4

5

5.

“Barry drugs Jonah” Song Brief

(actualized as the acquisition of Goonam songs)

(pp. 99-105)

1.

“Jonah... was sitting and sweetly singing a weird little song he’d made up on the spot. In his high, preteen voice, Jonah sang:

Because I am a piece of toast

You can bite me,

You can break me,

You can butter me,

You can take me...

Then the lyrics and music ran out, and Jonah lost interest and put down the guitar. But Barry Claimes recognized that Susannah’s son and his song fragment were delightful. Barry’s own songwriting had always been forced. He was never going to be a good lyricist like Pete, one of the other Whistlers, who got all the credit for everything. Barry came over near Jonah and busied himself with a fancy, elaborate banjo riff, which naturally captured Jonah’s attention...

...They sat together in the Solarium, and Barry said, ‘So why don’t you mess around with the guitar and see what you come up with?’

‘Mess around?’

‘Yeah, you know. Play some stuff, like you were doing the other day. You came up with some really neat beginnings of songs.’

Jonah said, in a formal voice, ‘I don’t think I can do that again.’

‘Well, you’ll never know if you don’t try,’ said Barry.

Jonah sat for an hour with the guitar, while Barry sat in the corner observing him, but the scene was so peculiar that Jonah felt nervous and unable to come up with much of anything. ‘Not a problem,’ Barry kept saying. ‘You’ll come back again tomorrow.’

For some reason, Jonah did want to come back; no one other than his mother had ever paid this much attention to him before. Sitting in that living room again on the second day, Barry Claimes asked him, ‘You like gum?’

‘Everybody likes gum.’

‘That’s true. It sounds like a song you’d write. “Everybody Likes Gum.” But there’s a new kind. It’s wild. You should try it.’

He pulled a pack of ordinary-looking Clark’s Teaberry gum from his pocket, and Jonah said, ‘Oh, I’ve had that kind before.’

‘This is a limited edition,’ said Barry. He handed a stick to Jonah, who unwrapped it and folded it into his mouth.

‘It’s bitter,’ said Jonah.

‘Only at first.’

‘I don’t think it’s going to be very popular.’

But the bitterness went away, and the gum was like all gum everywhere, putting you more in touch with your own saliva than you’d ever wanted to be. Barry said, ‘So. Guitar or banjo? Choose your poison.’

‘Guitar,’ said Jonah. ‘And you play banjo.’

‘I’ll follow your lead, my lad,’ said Barry. He leaned back against the couch, watching Jonah as he painstakingly picked his way through the few new chords that his mother had taught him. Barry took his banjo and played along. This went on for half an hour, an hour, and at a certain point Jonah noticed that the walls of the room appeared to be going convex and concave, buckling but not collapsing. It was like a slow-motion earthquake...”

2.

“‘Sing me something about Vietnam,’ said Barry.

‘I don’t know anything about Vietnam.’

‘Oh, sure you do. You know all about our country’s dirty war. Your mom has taken you to peace marches; I went with the two of you once, remember? You’re like a mystic. A child mystic. Unspoiled.’

Jonah closed his eyes and began to sing:

***‘Tell them you won’t go, my lad
to the land of the worms and the dirty dirt.
Tell them you won’t go, my lad,
‘Cause you’ve got life to live right here on earth...’***

3.

“Once Jonah came up with an entire song about a character called the Selfish Shellfish, and Barry found this particularly hilarious. Off the top of his head, Jonah sang:

***‘...And the ocean belongs to me, just me
I really don’t want to share this sea.
Maybe I’m really selfish
But selfishness is something that happens to shellfish...’***

‘The last two lines are a little artless,’ Barry said. ‘Selfishness doesn’t “happen” to someone. It’s how they behave. Plus, you’re squeezing too many words in there. And “really, really” isn’t a good idea in a song. But never mind, the concept is solid. A selfish shellfish who wants the whole ocean to himself! Oh, man, you’re a genius, lad.’”

Analysis:

Barry Claimes, veteran (yet fading) folk singer-songwriter drugs former flame Susannah Bay’s young son and milks him for his songwriting talents. Barry takes advantage of Jonah’s lack of a father-figure and his need to feel loved by a male companion. Later, many of these songs are barely adapted and performed by Barry in concerts.

Brief:

The lyrics of these little tunes should be preserved, mostly for their simplicity and youth. Because Jonah is exposed to a lot of folk styles because of his mother and her friends, along with inspiration from Barry and his banjo, the primary genre of this song should be folk. However, the hallucinations should be accounted for with some type of trippy/electronic/rock elements, reflecting 1970s Newport, but also respecting the dominating folk environment.

Arrangement:

- Young male or adult female vocals
- Acoustic guitar
- “Random” electrified colors/chords throughout
- Perhaps a neurotic rhythm or bed section (not necessarily percussive)
- Experimental, perhaps a-melodic
- Wet with effects
- Lyrics can be combined within one song. Will speak to the a-linearity of the piece

References:

- Psychedelic Folk
- Acid Folk
- “Song for Wild” by Mark Fry 1972
- “Garden Botanum” by These Trails 1973

6.

“The Wind Will Carry Us” Song Brief

(not actualized)

(pp. 28-9)

“[Barry] waved modestly to the campers and then began to play his banjo while Susannah played her guitar. The two instruments came together and then backed off shyly, then came together again, finally forming the preamble to Susannah’s signature song. Quietly at first, then more forcefully, she began to sing:

I’ve been walkin’ through the valley, and I’ve been walkin’ through the weeds.

And I’ve been tryin’ to understand just why I could not meet your needs.

Did you want me to be like she was?

Is that all that was in your heart?

A prayer that the wind would carry us...

Carry us... apart...”

Feeling/Emotions:

- 1974
- Hippie/Folky
- Campy
- Iconic
- “Full of feeling and warmly received

Arrangement:

Simple with an acoustic guitar, female vocals, and banjo

Lyrics:

Expand upon this Verse and Refrain with at least one more Verse in the theme of an ex-girlfriend wondering why she wasn’t enough to keep the relationship strong. Timing should be targeted around 2 minutes.

Notes:

It is brought up at least once in the book the irony that it isn’t likely that wind would bring people apart, rather bring them together because the wind would blow in one direction.

WORK FOR HIRE AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT MADE the ____ day of _____ 20__, by and between _____ (hereinafter referred to as "COMPOSER") and _____ (hereinafter referred to as "GABRIELLE") for the creation of a "work for hire" as defined under §101 of the 1976 Copyright Act of the United States.

WHEREAS:

GABRIELLE is in the process of editing a collective work consisting of a multi-song soundtrack accompaniment supporting a non-fiction novel (THE COLLECTIVE WORK), in which she intends to include a specific composition created by COMPOSER. COMPOSER is the sole and exclusive author of the composition entitled _____ (THE COMPOSITION) which he/she has created specifically to be included in THE COLLECTIVE WORK, together with other creative contributions.

The Parties AGREE on the regulation of THE COMPOSITION as a WORK MADE FOR HIRE under:

According to 17 U.S.C.A. § 101, "work for hire" shall be defined in this case as it is "a work specially ordered or commissioned for us as a contribution to a collective work... or compilation." in the terms agreed in this document.

The COMPOSER accepts to contribute with the COMPOSITION to THE COLLECTIVE WORK without a specific monetary retribution just for the fact that THE COLLECTIVE WORK is part of a multi-song soundtrack accompaniment supporting a non-fiction novel, which will include this work together with the work of other contributors, for not-for-profit and educational uses.

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Thus done and signed this _____ day of _____, 20__.

COMPOSER

Print Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

GABRIELLE

Print Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Final Cue Sheet / Song Explanation

“I Got a Plan to Rule the World”

MC Cullah

(3:01)

This song is the “opening theme” of the book. As the group christens themselves the Interestings and lifts their paper cups in a “ludicrously ceremonial moment” this song represents pretension, irony, and rebellion.

“Misty Blue”

Dorothy Moore

(3:42)

This song represents themes of long-gone relationships throughout.

“How the Heart Approaches What it Yearns”

Paul Simon

(2:49)

This song can represent themes in the later years of the Jules/Ethan/Dennis love triangle. However, it can more specifically relate to the end of the book when Jules and Ethan kiss in his office and things get complicated.

“Long, Long Day”

Paul Simon

(3:50)

This song covers Jules and Dennis’s sex scene at the camp. The mood is heavy and laborious, with Jules over-emphasizing their middle age and their weary spirits. The acquisition of the camp seems like it would finally make Jules happy, but it still comes with a lot of worry and fear of inadequacy.

“God Bless the Absentee”

Paul Simon

(3:18)

With all that is going on with his family life and the concern for Mo’s future, Ethan finds an escape by delving into workaholicism his animation studio, sleeping at times in his office. It is later revealed that Ethan avoided going with Ash to receive Mo’s testing/diagnosis.

“Till the Next Goodbye”

The Rolling Stones

(4:37)

This slow song is playing at the End of Summer Party, 1975.

“I’m So Glad”

Cream

(3:58)

This is a celebratory song that plays at the End of Summer Party, 1975.

“Jesus”

Velvet Underground

(3:22)

This song could do double duty as reflecting Jonah’s spiritual enlightenment with the Moonies, or when Dennis falls ill and Jules resorts to praying, although never religious.

“Watermelon Man”

Herbie Hancock

(6:29)

A classic, upbeat Herbie Hancock song. The group parties in the Labyrinth for the NYE 75-76 celebration.

“Goodbye to Childhood”

Herbie Hancock

(5:50)

The mood of the party turns dark and sober when the Wolf family receives a call claiming Goodman raped Cathy.

“Long and Healthy Life”

Goonam

(4:23)

This is one of two songs that follow Jonah on his very trippy, very drug-induced, Moonie-inspired journey.

“Flu Illusion”

Goonam

(5:53)

This is one of two songs that follow Jonah on his very trippy, very drug-induced, Moonie-inspired journey.

“Sunny” (2014)

James Brown (Cover) – Luis Regidor Pain, Jana Sustersic, Alex Williams, Ricardo Curto, Daniel Toledo

Produced by Gabrielle Banks. Transcribed by Alex Williams

(3:07)

Things are finally looking up for Jules as she, along with Rory and Ask, unpacks the new apartment Ethan helped her and Dennis buy. Their days are brighter and Rory is excited and enthusiastic.

“All in Time” (2014)

Written by A.J.E. Palmer and Gabrielle Banks.

Produced by A.J.E. Palmer and Gabrielle Banks.

Performed by Jelena Ciric, Lauren George, Tess Tyler, Robin Boyd, Luiza Sales.

(2:50)

Jules preps her house for Ash’s visit, hiding anything embarrassing that would give (further) clues of Jules’ homely mediocrity compared to Ash.

“Will You, Won’t You?” (2014)

Written, Co-produced, and Performed by Tess Tyler.

Co-produced by Gabrielle Banks.

(3:17)

This song relates well to Mo Figman’s autism diagnosis. . He is a child with so many adult concepts thrust upon him. His “condition” precedes his presence. He is compared constantly to his sister, Larkin, who like her mother, is beautiful, charming, and very artistically talented. Mo relates well to Jonah, a lifelong friend of Ethan and Ash. Jonah himself is at times socially awkward and prefers to keep to himself.

“Fast a Fadin” (2014)

Written and Performed by Daniel Gadd

(2:05)

This song has more of an overall thematic place in the story. It seeks to oppose the opening MC Cullah song in style, honesty, and theme. It would come towards the end of the book or towards the end of the derivative album.

Spotting Session Excerpts (complete spreadsheets available in attached .xls file)

Page #	Scene Description	Quotes	Point in Story	Characters	Mood	Music Suggestions	Specific Callouts
4	The group gets together and names themselves the interestings.	"From this day forward, because we are clearly the most interesting people who ever fucking lived, because we are just so fucking compelling..." "In a ludicrously ceremonial moment they lifted paper cups and joints."	Intro, 1974 camp	Ash, Goodman, Ethan, Jules, Cathy, Jonah	sarcastic, anthemic, introductory	MC Cullah "I Got a Plan to Rule the World"	All the President's Men (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRPNpLZSQ0)
no	Jonah shows us new additions to his music collection	"I've got some new tapes. Really good acoustic stuff. Just listen to this riff, it will amaze you."	Beginning, 1974 camp	Jonah and all	new discovery, indie		
no	Jules becomes Jules, via Ash	"Jules. There it was, right there: the effortless shift that made all the difference."	Beginning, 1974 camp	Jules and Ash, and all	knighting, rebirth		
no	Jules hears Jonah play his guitar for the first time	"He was one of those people whose musical ability seems effortless, careless, ingrained."	Beginning, 1974 camp	Jonah and Jules, and all			Amazing Grace
19	Ethan kisses Jules for the first time	"His mouth attached itself to hers; she'd been aware that he smelled of pot, but up against her he smelled worse -- mushroomy, feverish, overripe." "This was 'My First Penis.'"	Beginning, 1974 camp	Jules and Ethan	awkward, confusing, milestone		

49	Reactions of Dennis and Jules to the Christmas letter	"Throughout their marriage, he often smiled at her with a kind of sympathetic affection." -- "Everything gets bad around Christmas. There's also seasonal affective disorder, right? I always worry about that." -- "That's not going to happen. You're fine." -- "And so are you." "But just hearing it aloud or seeing it on the page reminds me of everything. I can't help it."	2009 NYC	Jules and Dennis	Anxious. Dennis is chronically depressed and anticipating wintertime seasonal sadness. Jules is anxious because each year when they receive a Christmas card from Ash/Ethan, she doubts her decisions and gets anxious about all she doesn't have. Jules is usually the level-headed one, except when it comes to Ash/Ethan. But Dennis seeks to comfort her.	Not "Sunday Morning," but something like it. "Come and rest your bones with me..." Paul Simon from the "One-Trick Pony Album"	
maybe	Jules travels with Ash to New Haven to have Mo evaluated. He is diagnosed on the autism spectrum	"So this is my big return to New Haven. And not to have lunch with an old professor, or give a talk, but to learn what's wrong with my uncommunicative and unhappy little boy."	Early 2000s	Jules and Ash, plus Mo and Ethan	Child's play. Ash finds her first and only flaw: her son. She has a breakdown while Jules awkwardly plays oblivious. Mo just listens to his CD of a picture book about a runaway truck on repeat.	"Will You Walk a Little Faster?" Public Domain cover. Maybe ask Tess? Liked the ending of her song "I Bought You a Coat."	
maybe	Jules meets Dennis at a dinner party. She flashes back to growing up in a small town and being judged and noticed. She relishes on being in the city now, specifically at a haircut place in the Village, being unjudged and unnoticed.		1981, Isadora's apartment	Jules			"A song by the Ramones rattled the barbers' chairs, and you could close your eyes and listen to it along with the strangely satisfying sounds of your own wet hair being severed from your head"
maybe	Robert tells the story of his relationship with Trey, up to the point of him contracting AIDS.	"And afterward it was sort of dark in the room, and I was just tracing my finger along his shoulder, and I said something like, 'Follow the dots.' And he said 'What?' And I said 'Your Birthmarks.'"	1981, Isadora's apartment	Robert, Isadora, Jules	soft, passionate, haunting and abrupt, nauseating, fearful, impending doom		

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