

Speaker 1: 0:01

[inaudible] that's most native to your voice? Was, was it opera at first or? No, definitely not. That was just the podcast, I guess we're recording. Oh , okay . Sorry . Yeah . Nevermind. Well , um, you know, could be, could be just keep on trucking, just keep on trucking onward through the fog , through the fog

Speaker 2: 0:23

Over the, the , uh, source of that fill . And it's like a smoke shop in Austin, Texas, Austin. They used to be rolling papers in the seventies,

Speaker 1: 0:33

As we are trying to attribute it to like some theologian to my uncle. Who's said it for like 25 years of parallel uncles smoking. And so I texted him, I texted him yesterday and he's like, I have no idea I've been quoting it for so long. I'm like, was it president Eisenhower? It's like, I have no idea. Nope.

Speaker 2: 0:59

We're rolling papers from Austin, Texas in the

Speaker 1: 1:01

Seventies.

Speaker 3: 1:17

[inaudible]

Speaker 1: 1:18

Welcome to hyphenated life. We invite you to join us on this journey to explore the connection of the sacred and the secular that inspires us to become more fully alive.

Speaker 3: 1:43

[inaudible]

Speaker 2: 1:44

On hyphenated life. We're joined by an old friend of mine, Kristen Gornstein. Um, Kristen and I met at CU Boulder and graduate school music program. We were both in the vocal performance , um, department being voice majors and taking voice lessons and singing in college operas and , uh, doing , uh, upper level graduate theory, electives and things like that. Oh, you skipped that part. Yeah . I took a class in progressive rock music that was maybe the highlight of my graduate career. Kristen has recently moved back to the Boulder area, her and her husband, Ryan and beautiful daughter, Julia , uh, bought a condo in Gunbarrel. Uh, I believe in the powder powder horn fields. Um, all of the, the gun and ammo sort of references of Gunbarrel, Colorado, which is a cool little , uh, section of Boulder, basically just North East a little bit. Um, so they moved back here after really traveling the world. Um, I know that you spent some time with Ryan and Sweden , um, and for the most part the last 10 years or so , uh, I have lived in New York city or thereabouts near, near New York city , um, doing the thing right, doing the whole that's , that's what you do. You, you train, you work hard, you get the Rocky montage and you get good. And then you go to you move to the big city where you can do auditions at the drop of a hat, right. Bounce around and, and, and, and work it. And you did that , um, for 10 years. And that's super awesome. And now you're back in Colorado, which makes me happy because now we can hang out and be friends again, and actually kind of come on board with our pine street church band here, the pine street band, no relation to the East street band. Um, Bruce is in the news lately. Huh? For sure.

Speaker 4: 3:45

Yeah. For bull commercial purple

Speaker 2: 3:47

Jeep with G bring the country together, back together. The , the reunited States of America, the reunited States of America, he has a podcast. That'll probably come in a few notches down on the rankings.

Speaker 1: 3:59

Well, he and president Barack Obama, right ? Yeah . That's where you're going. Yeah .

Speaker 2: 4:04

Um , so I'll be excited to hear that maybe we'll have, have them on, at some point I don't have to I'll talk to our booking agent and see

Speaker 1: 4:13

[inaudible]

Speaker 2: 4:13

That whenever we can find some time to squeeze them in. Um, but , uh, yeah. So you've joined the pine street band and brought your yeah. Your considerable talents. And , uh, I'm so excited to have you back as a friend, as a colleague, as a music maker. Um, and so today we have you here on hyphenated life. We want to note for our , our , a lot of our audiences is congregants and members of pine street, church affectionately known as pine heads, which I believe I coined when I was, we were doing a grateful dead song , um,

Speaker 1: 4:46

Ripple. Oh, I love that one. Yeah.

Speaker 2: 4:48

And I said, I was talking about Deadheads. And then I think I said pine heads and it stuck. That's what our congregation members are called literally. Now, is it like, it's stuck like you ,

Speaker 1: 5:01

Um , move on and they don't want to be called pine [inaudible] . What do you think ? You probably say it more than I do.

Speaker 4: 5:11

Well, I mean, you know, part of , uh, part of creating change and being effective is not worrying about who gets the credit for the things that really stick right there . There was, I'll have to, I'd have to look back, but there, there was a early Sunday after I came here. Yeah. Were you guys saying the , the pine street band saying a grateful dead song? It was , uh , you know, so the Deadheads and there was something in the sermon about pine heads and then someone reminded me that pine heads is only one vowel away from being pinheads. Right. Yeah . But we , we just moved on from that. Yeah . It's a bowling term,

Speaker 1: 5:52

I think. Right .

Speaker 4: 5:54

Pinheads, but no, yeah. Pine heads is sort stuck for whatever reason.

Speaker 2: 5:58

I'm not sure. I like it. Yeah. It's fun works . Yeah . So yeah. Pine street band, here we are. Um, and we have you on today , uh , because we want the pine heads to get to

know you a little better. And because , um, one of the things we like to talk about here at hyphenated life is how music and the arts intersect with the world of spirituality. Um, we really tried to break that divide between the sacred and the secular and say that these things can't really be separated. Um, and so I, you know, I think as a musician, as a fellow musician , uh , you know, I almost don't, even if you've spent your life committed to being a musician and making music, you know, no matter what your background or beliefs are, there's some component there. There's got to be right for every person, you know, I'm most don't even think it needs to be asked, but we want to talk about that today. Um, and so I was thinking one where one place we could start would be like a little bit of, you know, so we know you went to Butler university, got an undergraduate in vocal performance, CU Boulder for graduate degree in vocal performance and a major way to New York. Um, and I'm sure there were, there were some, you know , summer programs and things like that along the way. Can you give us like a little, some of the highlights for you of your performing career of the last 10 years or so, and it doesn't have to be exhaustive or, or list like, but

Speaker 5: 7:24

No , I have the worst memory, so it'll be like, whatever pops floats stay surface. Unfortunately. So anyone listening that I don't mention that was an integral part of like eight years of that life . I'm sorry. Yeah, we let's see. So after , um, right, we left Boulder because Ryan got a Fulbright , uh , to go study, fiddle music, teach , um, American fiddle music, and then learn the Swedish tradition. Um, so we went to Stockholm for a year and loved it. It was like hard but wonderful. And he'd already, he's like Swedish American. So he'd been going there his whole, whole life going to visiting family. And so he had a community already, which made it wonderful. In fact, we just zoomed , uh, with two of our good friends who we are still in touch with , uh, just yesterday. So we made some lifelong friends and , um, I got involved in an opera program there. And actually , um, I would say no real to no real fault of like CU or Butler. I wouldn't have said that I was a good singer at that point when I graduated from my masters , I wanted to be. Um, but I think I didn't really have the technique to get me there. So it was pretty frustrating because I knew I, I felt that I had the potential. Um, but I knew I wasn't really good enough. So that was my goal. And it happened to be that Nick Carthy at CU recommended a teacher in Sweden that he had worked with before as when she was a singer, her name is Grinnell Bowman. So I took lessons with her and , um, man, the first month that I showed up, she just like gave me these exercises to do that. I would come home and my jaw hurts so much that I literally, I could not sleep at night. It was just painful. And right when I was about to quit and say like, this seems insane. Like, why would you be taking lessons and then be in pain from it? You know, I ran into somebody in the hallway of this , uh , school where I was studying in Sweden and he was a coach that I really loved and trusted and out of the blue, like speaking of spiritual nudges, I think he said , uh, Hey, how's it going? You're sounding great. Don't give up. Like, that's a great , um, it's a , it seems like it's working for you and then just walked away. You know, I thought like, Oh wow, that was, it really felt like , uh , a huge , um, directional nudge from the divine, you know? Um, and so I did, I kept at it and like within the week, something like cracked open, my jaw was just really, really tense. And , uh , I was able to like move my tongue in a way that I hadn't, that you actually have to be able to do to make a really loud noise. You have to have like a free neck and , um, everything in

there has to be kind of released. So she was able to do that. And , um, that started me on a journey of like actually learning how to do what I wanted to do. So Grinnell , I worked with her for six, seven months, and then I came back and was able to find a teacher on the East coast, Brayden Harris who , um, really like gave me a technique. So I think that was, I don't know, it , you know, you always look back and you can see a line of like a narrative. Um, but even in those moments, I knew like, Oh, this is hugely different. You know, this is going to make, turn my path. I think, and Braden is, he doesn't intend to be a guru, but he is one of those people who's just like spouting wisdom, you know? So we were like, he taught me how to sing, but he also gave me a joy back that I had totally lost from , um , the education system, you know, it's hard work and it's a funny, funny , uh, thing, singing classical music. It's a lot of, as you know, right wrong. A lot of like, you have to be good, you have to be perfect in order to be accepted into this club, but then you look around and you see like, Oh, the people doing it. Aren't perfect. So it's a confusing and I think often hurtful world. And , uh, I knew it just wasn't working for me, but also I was not enjoying it. I wanted to be better. I also like, didn't want to be better because I didn't want to be a part of that crappy club of like horrible people.

Speaker 6: 11:29

Um, yeah. And then

Speaker 5: 11:30

Just like learn from my current teacher who I still work with. Um, that's really not about that. It's about like cha if you want to , for me, I wanted to be as good as I could. So I made it about that. And then along the way, then I started to get better work and work with people I love and made some connections with like companies that I continued to work with, you know, but that was like as a result of loving the singing and loving practicing. Um, so yeah, I've done work with, there's a company called heartbeat opera that I sing with pretty regularly. I'm an associate artist. I'm doing quotes with my fingers here. Guess I don't really know what that means. Um, onsite operas and other great New York innovative company that I worked with loft opera, which is unfortunately since folded, but they were like doing really cool. Like they would just go rent out a loft in the middle of Williamsburg, Brooklyn that was like otherwise empty. You take the train into the middle of like this industrial area. And then like, see a line of people waiting by a taco truck. You'd go there and there'd be an opera in the building that was like, kind of gave me my start and an edge in that , um, you know, cool opera scene in New York

Speaker 2: 12:41

Shattering the , the norms expectations, especially with something like opera

Speaker 5: 12:46

Hardest part, I think is getting people to show up oftentimes. And like once you do with the right mood and the right show, people will like love it. And that was their, that was their goal. And they really, really did that. But , um, they've since moved on to other things, but that, yeah, that opened the door for me to just meet people there. And I've been fortunate to do a good mix of like traditional opera and Mozart, which is my favorite, he's my favorite guy. Uh, and then like new modern stuff and Baroque opera, which I also really love. So yeah, it's been, it has been looking backwards, a total dream, you know, going forward difficult and , um, new, York's not easy place to live, you know, so we're really, really happy to be back here and we'll see, you know, the

pandemic is sort of like a time to step back and I don't know , ask ourselves, what are we doing in New York? And is it the best place to raise our kiddo? We don't have family there. You know, we had a few friends, but , um, here we have a real community. So , um, yeah, with singing, we'll see what happens, but I can now say I'm really proud of what I've done so far and everything else is just going to be like all joy. I've determined not to stress about it anymore.

Speaker 4: 14:03

That's beautiful. Well , Chris , and I'm so happy that you're part of the pine street church band and the connection you have with David. And I think other members of the band too , that have some history altogether. Cool. Anyway, I was kinda curious and we're talking a little bit before. I think we hit, we hit the record button today, but when you talk about your teacher that kind of , um, uh, sort of unlocked the vocal technique and kind of opened up a whole new kind of world for you. I was curious because your native tongue, so to speak in terms of music, has that always been classical and opera or were you kind of raised and conditioned done in other genres that led to that?

Speaker 5: 14:47

Yeah, no, not at all. Um, although we listen to a lot of classical music. My mom like played it in the house, but it wasn't something that they grew up with. My mom or dad. Um, they were music lovers, neither one of them were really musicians, but they just really, really both had that in common. They loved music. And , uh, so I grew up listening to a wide variety of things and I became a , uh , deadhead in the way that , uh, only a 17 year old kid who isn't allowed to tour with the grateful dead could be. Yeah . A lot of my friends actually went to the last show that he ever performed at soldier field in Chicago. Um, which I think was 1995. So

Speaker 2: 15:28

It had the baby. Yeah, I remember I was in eighth grade. So that had to be 1995, I think. Yeah. Maybe 94, 95.

Speaker 5: 15:37

It was a hot topic. Jerry Garcia in my upbringing. I grew up in like a, kind of a vacation town for people from Chicago. Um, so it was a, like a beach vibe on Lake Michigan. So very , um, relaxed and a lot of like white people listening to reggae music. We'll put it that way for , for better or mostly worse. Um, so yeah, I grew up singing like classic rock and listening to that, also singing in like my church choir. And , um, didn't really have classical music on the radar, but what appealed to me, like when I , I started taking voice lessons might just at the end of my junior year of high school, I just liked the challenge of it. And like, you know, singing was always a joy, but I had never really encountered something that I thought like, Oh, I can't do that. And to be honest, I tried to drop out cause it was hard. And my voice teacher, she was just another very charismatic person , um , very Christian. And she says, she's running like a missionary. That's like, you know, also happens to be a music shop. So she was really like took it upon herself to encourage like everybody that came through the door and also teach them music basically. So she kind of called me out. She definitely called me out Becky, I will send this to her so she can listen. She said like, you are good at a lot of things. And I can tell that this is doesn't come easily to you and you just want to quit and go find something else that is easy to you. But , um, what would happen if you stuck with it? And nobody had ever talked to me like that before. No one had ever called me out on

the stuff that I, I didn't know that was transparent, you know, but she saw that. And who knows, like if somebody had said that to me about welding, I think I would be like a master welder right now. Like I don't think it was really about like, was I like born to be a musician? I don't think so. I think it was like the challenge of the music. Yeah.

Speaker 2: 17:35

Yeah. I think, um, singing and practicing singing at a, at a very intentional technical level is so unique. Um, you know, compared to say an instrument, um, because your instrument is your body, you know? So, uh, it's, it's something that in there all kinds of voice teachers, vocal coaches out there. Um, but if, if a person has never studied voice on that level, it's really hard to explain to them what a lifetime of studying voice actually looks like. Right. I mean, for every minute that you're on stage in a, in a well attended, successful professional performance, there's a lifetime of like in a tiny practice room, you know, making weird sounds with your voice and, and, you know, um, and, and in that way, there's an intimacy with the instrument that I think is unique to, uh, singing. And so, so much so that like, you often, there's the joke about drummers, right? Like that they're not musicians, but literally like in, in things where there are instrumentalists and singers, it's often like, Oh, the musicians and the singers, you know? Um, and I don't, I'm not trying to bring any like, pity to that or like, that's not fair, but it, they are really different.

Speaker 5: 18:57

I think. I mean, I think that stems from the fact that like, when you're like, for example, Ryan said, Oh, I want to get Jr. Our daughter a, uh, one 16th size violin. So she can put on her buyout in 20 years that she started when she was one and she's going to be two in two months. Um, but there's something to that like violinist, he started when he was three years old and that's like pretty normal, you know? I mean, um, oftentimes singers, like I started taking lessons when I was 17. Some people go to college and then realize like, Oh, okay, this thing I've done passively. I want to do professionally, but I need to catch up with the music theory. So, you know, I, I do recognize that that's a real thing, right? Like instrumentalists have been learning music theory and thinking about music. Most of them, since they were little kids and singers come along and have to learn it on as they pick it up. Yeah. I started piano. Like we were all saying, ah, that's not our primary instrument. That's right. Yeah.

Speaker 2: 19:55

I have a table of piano flunkies here between Andrew, myself and Chris. And I we've probably set some sort of record for a number of classes messed up at one table.

Speaker 5: 20:07

Unlike you guys though, I called it early on. I call it like in one semester I was like willing to take the abuse. I remember at CU I think it was, no, it was in my undergrad, there was a substitute teacher. She was like very strict Russian woman. And I started taking lessons with her to try to amp up my piano playing. Cause it was so terrible. And I played my first song for her and I'll never forget. She looked at me and breathed out and went, Whoa, that was a really bad [inaudible]. And it was horrible at first, but now I like love that. Yeah, she is right. That was really bad, but I never stopped. I still continue to hack away at the piano. So anyhow, yes. I completely agree with what you're saying. Like there is a, I don't think it's earned cause like who should get abuse for not being as good of a musician, you know, but I understand where it's coming from that sort of, um,

label of like instrumentalists or musicians. And then the singers were often at all , always, always at the bottom of the pyramid of like the hierarchy, you know, were instructed to like listen to the pianists when we coach with them. Um, and then that results in like us not thinking for ourselves or thinking for ourselves and not advocating for our own musical choices, you know , um, I was thinking about , um, Tanglewood, which I was lucky enough to participate in. It's a really great summer program in , um, in Massachusetts attached to the Boston symphony orchestra. And I did that in 2015 and we were paired up with several pianists there , like six pianists and maybe 30 singers. And they gave you an assignment of some songs and um, said, okay, meet with a pianist ahead of time. And then we will coach with a , um, you know, professional coach and then you'll eventually perform them. And , um, the pianist, there was one out of the six that I worked with, who actually said, well, what do you think? Um , it was maybe the first time anybody, any piano set ever asked me that. And , um, that's Jeremy who we were talking about before the podcast started my collaborator. I was kind of stunned, you know, like you shed a single tear, nobody's going to think.

Speaker 2: 22:28

Yeah. I mean, yeah, that's, that's a , that's a collaborative pianist. Right, right. Yeah .

Speaker 5: 22:32

And that was, you know, supposedly they all, like, they all work collaborative pianist and I don't mean to knock them. Right. But , um, it's, it's that role, right . That we play that we fit into. And I think you come in, you have one hour to make music. It makes sense, right. That somebody has to take charge. And so often it's not the singer, but , um, but it doesn't have to be that way. Like we can be musicians because I failed freshmen piano and for our listeners out there who wonder what collaborative penis ? Um , yeah. What, what, what's the definition of, right. Do you want to take that one

Speaker 2: 23:10

In the classical music world? You have a side note here, a piano performer who, who would focus on solo repertoire? Um, either just piano or, or ensemble repertoire, I guess that's collaborative as well,

Speaker 5: 23:26

Playing with an orchestra. Those people you see up at the dramatically

Speaker 2: 23:31

On and off and those types of things, that's it ? That would be a solo pianist , a collaborative pianist is someone who focuses or, or enjoys the ensemble , uh , part of playing the piano. Right. And specifically

Speaker 5: 23:46

Also you can, I think now , um, there are pianos to work with instrumentalists and pianists who specifically work with singers , um, and it's different like singers and then also , um, wind instruments, right? So people who like need to breathe like a oboe or something along those lines where you're making, it's a different requirement than a violin where you can like, you know, put the bow on the, on the violin and make a sound and you don't really have to quote breathe. So , um, I think it's like the pianists that I work with, focus on people who breathe.

Speaker 2: 24:18

Yeah. Yes. Where the breathing is involved in the music

Speaker 5: 24:21

Making. Exactly. Yeah, yeah,

Speaker 2: 24:23

Yeah. That was something, I mean, you don't really come across until you get into the classical music world. Um, and, and you see, there are programs you can, you can , uh, get a degree in collaborative piano versus piano performance, for example. Um, and you come across people who that is really their passion, you know, with a musician there's this performance it's kind of takes me into the next area I want to go into, which is sort of the dynamics of the relationships , um, and interactions of performers , uh, in an ensemble of performers and an audience. Um, that's one thing that has always sort of philosophically fascinated me and I've been attracted to about music is this symbiotic relationship , um, between making music with other musicians and making music for people who are listening to it. Um, and, and that, for me, that's sort of where the , the rubber meets the road, so to speak. That's what makes a lifetime of practice and a small little room kind of , uh , that's the payoff for it, for me, that that's where I have , I've had those transcendent musical experiences as a performer. It's for me, it's been where the audience is there with you, right. They're not passively listening, they're invested in experiencing the music that's being performed. And , and I often say that's as critical of a role in , in the whole experience as the performer is. Right. Because performing for no one can be, you know , I'm not saying it's worthless, but , um, it's not the same. Right. Um , yeah.

Speaker 5: 26:06

Yeah. I would have to agree with that. I think it's like, that is a sort of a , um, like in another life also I worked on a cruise ship and there was this one guy who kept, Cornelli saying like, the audience has the most important job, you know, just as much of a, like he would put it in his cabaret and I kind of like laughed at it, but obviously it's still with me 15 plus years later, like, Oh yeah. Like if you, do you have to have people to perform for and with in a way, I mean, yeah, there are so many avenues of , um , making music or performing. And I think I gravitated to live performance for that reason. You know, you could be a studio musician and record stuff in this setting like we do for the , um, Sunday morning stuff. For example, there isn't an audience. And , um, I like have to imagine that there is, I like think, Oh, I'm singing for the people sitting home, like imagine people in their couch or whatever dining room table, like participating in that. Because for me that is such an integral part of , um, what we do. It's an exchange of energy,

Speaker 2: 27:13

Right? Yeah. It's like cyclical energy

Speaker 4: 27:16

Ethos that you miss . I mean, even as a , a nerdy preacher pastor, like there's a , that audience performance moment, it's performing the words , so to speak in my, in my industry. But there , when you miss that sort of live dynamic, you can't, you can't feed off that sort of collective energy that you normally do. It really is, you know, for 40 plus weeks until the last four weeks sitting in front of a laptop, you know, trying to figure out how to generate a sermon. And I love what you just said. I mean, there's some spiritual and musical imagination to, you know , um , uh , imagining an audience in front of you, but that is, that is quite an endeavor to figure out. But I , I love the last few weeks just seeing the pine street church band and Kristin with your I'm coming on board, there is a

difference to that. And David I've noticed that in YouTube is like, I can tell that that you all are imagining people in front of you. And it, it makes a difference. I know to me, I completely cried last Sunday, like watching. Um, and, and, you know, there's this wonderful spiritual author, Frederick Buechner, who says , uh , the presence of tears means the Holy is near and, and, and you all help that come to life in our context. And so what you're talking about, I think transcends industries, so to speak or vocations, but , uh, but both of you communicate that and in beautiful ways, and thank you , I'm a witness.

Speaker 5: 28:52

I would rather have a live performance with imperfections, like any day, any day over like a pristine, like, you know, re re re rehearse three recorded something for, and I think it's, there are different kinds of musicians or different kinds of performers in that way, I guess you could say. Um, and we each do it for different reasons, you know, and I think , um , some people really want that perfectionist, like , uh , they want to make the most perfect thing they can make, but I would rather have like a really inspired performance that has some hiccups, but reaches people and then in turn reaches me, you know, it's a cyclical for sure.

Speaker 2: 29:34

The energy of an attentive listener impacts you , you know , the performer on the yeah. You

Speaker 5: 29:42

Make different choices. Absolutely.

Speaker 2: 29:45

Um, yeah, I mean, we've kind of been talking around this a bit, but you know, it's been almost a year to March 15th, I think, is the sign on the church's doors saying we're closed due to COVID and we're here at, you know , um, we're almost there. It's almost been a year basically since everything that we're talking about has ended. Right. There've been a few bubbles up here and there, Oh, at the Boulder theater, there's a VIP, we're selling a hundred seats like that happened for a month or two, and then they shut it back down again. Um , certainly in the, in the classical music world of orchestra and opera it's across, across the world, certainly across our country,

Speaker 5: 30:27

Basically nothing. Yeah. There've been like a few, like you said, very few groups of people who have come together and are doing like , uh , isolating and then doing performances, but not 1% of the performances probably that take place during the year. Yeah. It was nothing. Yeah .

Speaker 2: 30:42

I mean, in, in a pandemic , uh, with civil and social unrest and isolation and fear of, of sickness , um, one thing that would be nice to have would be that experience. Right. And that's gone too. So I , I, sorry, I took us down where were getting really dark here, but , um, you know, as a performer, you know, not so for, for the audience, which is everybody and for the performers it's been , um, gosh, I don't know if you can speak to that. How , how has that made you feel as a performer and , and I'm sure you go to see music as well.

Speaker 5: 31:20

Oh, absolutely. Yeah. It's been a bizarre, I think, as a freelancer. Well, first of all, we moved twice, as I was saying, we're pre podcasts . So we moved from New York to Indiana for seven, eight months, and then to Colorado in October. So it's been disorienting in that, you know, in that way to know like we left and also there's nothing, it's not happening without us. It's not like you move away and you know, Oh yeah, life is going on there. It's like, well, that's frozen too . So a little bizarre, but yeah. As w as a freelancer, your schedule's erratic some weeks, you're so busy and then some weeks you have absolutely nothing. So it took months, I think really months for me for, to click into place for me to understand, Oh, this is not just another sort of dry period where I have less work. No one is working like there's no, there is no work. And , um, yeah, I think I'm, I'm in some ways, a really slow learner in that way. So it did take until the end of the summer, I think was when I really got it. Like, okay, I, if, if I want to sing, then I have to just do it for my own self. And then that was actually when I started to practice again, I had just sort of like got, Oh , you know, I think you all have young children have had young children like that daily. Um, you know, the days are very short. In some ways you wake up, you , uh, take care of your kiddo. It's nap time, you do one business thing, they wake up, you take care of them, it's dinner time. And then I would just go to bed. So that was the first seven months of a pandemic.

Speaker 2: 32:57

It was a distraction from the strategy tragedy of, you know, personally, you know ,

Speaker 5: 33:02

A real blessing to have such a young kiddo who just needs that constant one-on-one attention. He didn't really have time to , um, spiral in any way because somebody had to like change her diaper and make dinner and things like that. So that was, was great actually. And I had been back to work , uh, sooner than I would have liked as a singer, but, you know, that's, those are the things. If you get a contract, you take it basically , um, unless something terrible happens. So I think she was six weeks old when I went back to do a show. And , um, luckily it was like an hour away from home. And so we , um, Ryan came with, and we all stayed in like a dorm at Bard college and did a show there and then Kipsy close. It's just North of there. Yeah . It's in Annandale on Hudson. Oh, that's right. Like a little cute, cute town, but yeah, maybe two hours North of New York on the Hudson. Beautiful. So pretty, so pretty. It was idyllic, but also I was like strung out and sort of like, really not at my best. Yeah. It was not at my best. And it's a very, like, it's a horror show , uh, opera. So it was like,

Speaker 2: 34:17

Hmm , not Rocky horror.

Speaker 5: 34:19

I wish, I wish no, it was called Ocwen Netta . Super cool show. It was a , um, the second time this group had performed it, Beth Morrison project is like a new opera company and they do basically all brand new stuff. Um, and they had done it at their festival a year prior, and then we re you know , put it up again at Bard for their summer, summer opera festival. It was awesome. But also, yeah, that just sorta started a long , uh , string of like, man, I would really prefer to be home right now, hanging out with my six month old or whatever it is. So all that to say, when the pandemic happened, personally, I felt grateful for the time at home. And , um, yeah, it's not all bad or all good

for sure. But we are so lucky keeping that in mind. Like we, yeah, we were lucky to be able to stay home and feel safe, you know?

Speaker 2: 35:12

Yeah. I can certainly relate to that. Um, are Emily and I's son born in right at the beginning in may? Um, definitely a , a , a turn away from some of that stuff, even if, you know, you have to, it's not like , uh , it's not sticking your head in the sand it's it's pandemic or not your world shrinks when you have a kid. Right. So , um, yeah, Kristen , I want to , uh, kinda , uh , as Andrew says, and finally , um , everyone loves him .

Speaker 1: 35:45

It's a quick wake up . He's almost done with just seven points I will discuss, is it eight or 10 or 12 minutes after, right after saying finally did I, did I say finally , already?

Speaker 2: 36:01

Um , no, I w I wanna , uh, I wanna talk a little bit about a project that you've done this past year , um , that you put together . Yeah. And, and a potential , uh, project on the horizon that you're currently working on. Um, you mentioned earlier , um, Jeremy Chan pianist, collaborative pianist friend that you met at Tanglewood, which tied another beautiful part of the country. That's like paradise up there. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 5: 36:30

For that one, actually, when we were like moving out of New York back to Indiana, like, could we not turn around and go back to the Berkshire ,

Speaker 2: 36:37

Just pitch a tent, get a van . Oh man. The Tanglewood I performed there when I was in the American boy choir. Um, and w we actually , uh , performed in this concert. I don't , it was over, I couldn't have been over the summer. It was John Williams that film composer conducting this, like medley of all of his music. It was , it had like looking back, it had to be like a booster fundraiser thing. Right.

Speaker 5: 37:04

Do a lot of pop stuff. Yeah. It's like a big part of that scene

Speaker 2: 37:08

And we sang the choir parts. So like, I couldn't even tell you at this point, but how exciting was that for like a 12 year old? And they're like playing the star Wars music and you're like, and you're looking at this place, like, is this a real place? It's amazing. Anyways. Uh, and then as I got older, Tanglewood was a dream of mine to do that program. So I'm very happy for you that you got to do that

Speaker 5: 37:31

So much. It was all a dream of mine as well. And I auditioned like four times, I think. So that was one of, I wasn't, I can't say I've always been tenacious. Like , uh , sometimes you don't get in, you think, well, that's that, you know, but for whatever reason, I just kept applying and kept banging my head against the wall. And finally, they let me in , honestly, they need it . They like rarely at this stage, they're like very art song focused. And they were doing opera that summer because it was the 75th anniversary. So they needed some old people. I'm an old people. And so I got in and , uh ,

Speaker 1: 38:05

Exactly,

Speaker 5: 38:07

That's good. As my dad says, it beats the alternative. Right. It's true. Uh, happy to be there and happy to be an old person. Yeah .

Speaker 2: 38:14

Yeah. So , uh, this collaborative pianist, Jeremy Chien , tell us about , um, the project that you did in the project that you have coming up and also how, how are, how the hyphenated life listeners can find that and, and help support what you're doing, the awesome, you know , artistry that you're putting out there. Thanks. Yeah,

Speaker 5: 38:36

It's a , so the first project that we did is an EAP , um , of six songs. And it was actually stuff that we had already recorded , um, in 2019, yeah. Jeremy called and said, Hey, I booked this recording studio for a full day to do some other projects, but we have a couple hours in between where there's just nothing happening. And , um, I had just had junior , she was maybe four or five months old. So I was hanging around at home and he said, just drive on down to the Bronx and let's do a little bit of recording. Like we could use it to apply for things in the future. Um, and so we did, we pulled out some songs that we'd done at Tanglewood together. We met doing this set of cabaret songs by , uh , composer, William Bolcom. There are like 80, I think, 60, 80 songs, a lot of them. And we picked like five or six that we did a set with a tenor , um, Barrett. And he's like a wonderful, wonderful, funny tenor. So we had done this pretty silly set and we decided we would rerecord a couple of those. And then some stuff we just worked on over the years together. So we did that. And , um, yeah, just because of, I think, because it was such a relaxed feeling like they just all worked. We had fun, there was no pressure, there was no deadline. We were just able to kind of make music together. And that was that I kind of put them on my computer and , uh , forgot about it and got an call from him at the end of the summer, I would say saying, Hey, I would really love to put these together as an AP . Would you be up for that? So he listened back through them. And I, as I was , I was saying earlier all but one made the cut and , uh, that was pretty,

Speaker 7: 40:15

Pretty cool. You never know when you're doing

Speaker 5: 40:17

The live performance, you think it's good or you're having a fun time, but , um, are they quote good?

Speaker 7: 40:23

He likes CD material. Yeah. That was,

Speaker 5: 40:26

You need to listen back with that ear and think like, Hey, yeah, we've got something here. So we record it, put that down and had it mastered and released , um, online only. So it's available. However, you might listen to online music, Spotify, or Apple music , uh , Amazon, all of those online music players you can go to. And then I'm talking about, you know, how enjoyable that was. We decided to do another project together, mostly to just give us something to do during the pandemic, have something positive to think about. And so we decided to take all of the music that we have it's ever been written for us, or that we premiered either for solo piano or , um , piano and voice and put them together in a CD. So that is , um, in the works. I think we decided at the end of it, that it would be better to wait until we could record it together in person. We thought originally

of doing like a remote thing, but I mean, we could do that. It just seems like if we're just doing it for the joy of it, why, why not wait until we can get together and do it in person. So it looks like we'll be doing that this summer. And, um, we'll probably have some physical copies of, uh, CDs as well as the yeah. MP3 stuff. So, um, yeah, you can find that online and absolutely. Please do. There's a link on my website, I believe to the Spotify thing. So that's Kristin gornstein.com.

Speaker 2: 41:51

Well, we'll put some links in our, uh, episode descriptions as well. Great. Yeah. And yeah, Christian, I can't thank you enough for joining us here on our hyphenated live podcast today.

Speaker 5: 42:02

Thank you. And finally, um,

Speaker 2: 42:08

Yeah, not just for joining us today on the podcast, but it's great to have you back in the beautiful state of Colorado and looking forward to our adventures and misadventures over the next, however long. Um, and I think today, we, I think what we want to do is send our listening audience out with a, uh, almost a musical sending benediction. We were going to listen to, uh, one of the songs that Christian recorded. It's a William Bolcom cabaret song called Ballou. And I don't know, do you have anything you want to talk about that? So what's some background you you've mentioned that William Bolcom has composed like 80 plus cabaret songs.

Speaker 5: 42:46

Um, yeah. And

Speaker 2: 42:48

He has, you know, for a, probably if you don't know who William Bolcom is and you're hearing cabaret songs, it might not be exactly what you think it is, but he is a classical composer from New York. Um, and I don't know if you have any thoughts about this particular piece in the text or anything.

Speaker 5: 43:05

I wish that I would have, um, re-read the synopsis because he writes a little story about each one of them in the front of the book and this text is, um, dedicated to his group, I believe. So it was like a spiritual, um, event that he had in a conversation that he had that sort of enlightened him, um, in the text basically says, all I want to do is sit real still with you. Um,

Speaker 2: 43:31

Oh, that's where the name of the EAP comes. Yeah,

Speaker 5: 43:34

Exactly. Still. And also we wanted to say in the name of the EPE still that we were like, you know, still continuing on to be musicians, even though, um, there was no one to perform for, we still considered ourselves, uh, as relevant, I think. Yeah. That's beautiful.

Speaker 8: 44:12

[inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible] No, [inaudible]

Speaker 3: 45:23

Uh,

Speaker 8: 45:35

[inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible]

Speaker 3: 46:01

That's right .

Speaker 8: 46:08

[inaudible]

Speaker 3: 46:22

[inaudible]

Speaker 8: 46:23

I do know this about people. I don't [inaudible]

Speaker 3: 47:10

That

Speaker 8: 47:24

[inaudible] [inaudible] , that's why [inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible]

Speaker 1: 48:27

Good person . That was stunning. We didn't even listen to [inaudible] . I would say that was uncannily, silky legato. I just want to say that what a great thank you people.