when I was

(2025)

for unaccompanied
voice

Karmit Fadael

when I was

When I was is written for and commissioned by the International Vocal Competition and is the compulsory work for its theatre in song competition in 2025. The piece will be premiered during the competition 26th of September – 28th 2025

Instrumentation

unaccompanied voice available in the following transpositions:

- Soprano
- Mezzo Soprano/Alto
- Tenor
- Baritone
- Bass

Duration: app. 2″30

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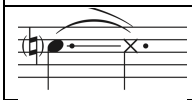
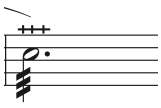
Explanatory note

This piece explores the feeling of not being able to let go of something or someone. The persistent thought keeps haunting you at any given moment of the day. It might even block you, not being able to sing or be present. Will you be able to let go? Does this make you go crazy? And what do you have left when these thoughts take you over?

Important messages

- Instead of using character suggestions the marked words indicate thoughts that provoke characters
- It is up to the singer to choose the dynamic range of the piece; one can chose to be more on the softer quiet side but can also chose to use their full dynamic range.
- The tempi written in the score refer to the more traditional notated phrases in the piece. The graphic moments are more about setting an atmosphere and building towards an emotion or expressing something extra musical.
- In E one can chose their own style and syllable. What do you want to portray after a meltdown? Maybe you want to go very slow, insecure and quiet or perhaps energized because everything came out or maybe even stuck and more apathetic. Feel free to play around and create what you have in mind.

Legenda

	Air and wave like breathing sounds, often deep breaths soft but audible for the audience.
	Slowly glissando from a pitched note to an unpitched breathy sound.
	A very short, shocked inhale.
	Spiraling almost ruminating thoughts while almost inaudible extremely quick whispering ‘when I was [fill in the preference]’. On the following page you can find many possibilities to fill in the x – but feel free to make up your own. It’s not about the text; more about creating the atmosphere.
	Go from a pitched note to an unpitched vocal fry.
	Go extreme – build a little meltdown/breakdown. This can ofcourse can be very loud and extravert but also internally blocking, freezing and possibly going silent is one of the many possibilities.
	Tremolo while gently tapping your mouth with your hand.

Possibilities of 'When I was [x]'

1. When I was kissing
2. When I was dancing
3. When I was singing
4. When I was laughing
5. When I was crying
6. When I was talking
7. When I was walking
8. When I was running
9. When I was studying
10. When I was cooking
11. When I was painting
12. When I was sleeping
13. When I was reading
14. When I was writing
15. When I was driving
16. When I was working
17. When I was playing
18. When I was eating
19. When I was traveling
20. When I was dreaming
21. When I was swimming
22. When I was jogging
23. When I was knitting
24. When I was meditating
25. When I was praying
26. When I was shopping
27. When I was exercising
28. When I was drawing
29. When I was building
30. When I was thinking
31. When I was talking
32. When I was cooking
33. When I was celebrating
34. When I was volunteering
35. When I was waiting
36. When I was organizing
37. When I was hiking
38. When I was reflecting
39. When I was playing music
40. When I was fixing
41. When I was cleaning
42. When I was driving
43. When I was gaming
44. When I was chatting
45. When I was researching
46. When I was exploring
47. When I was socializing
48. When I was singing along
49. When I was brainstorming
50. When I was sewing
51. When I was learning
52. When I was thinking deeply
53. When I was practicing
54. When I was planning

55. When I was comforting
56. When I was mentoring
57. When I was observing
58. When I was imagining
59. When I was celebrating
60. When I was reminiscing
61. When I was daydreaming
62. When I was teaching
63. When I was recording
64. When I was debating
65. When I was observing
66. When I was laughing hysterically
67. When I was celebrating
68. When I was daydreaming
69. When I was playing chess
70. When I was attending
71. When I was helping
72. When I was hiking
73. When I was reflecting on the past
74. When I was meditating
75. When I was imagining
76. When I was texting
77. When I was receiving news
78. When I was shopping for groceries
79. When I was unpacking
80. When I was searching
81. When I was sketching
82. When I was brainstorming ideas
83. When I was editing photos
84. When I was listening to music
85. When I was playing sports
86. When I was participating
87. When I was recording a video
88. When I was staring at the sky
89. When I was exploring new places
90. When I was reminiscing about old times
91. When I was solving a puzzle
92. When I was working out
93. When I was thinking about the future
94. When I was relaxing
95. When I was playing with my pet
96. When I was fishing
97. When I was attending a party
98. When I was having a conversation
99. When I was creating something new
100. When I was playing with kids

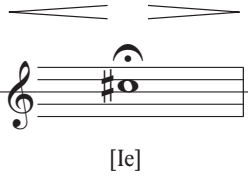
when I was

Soprano

Karmit Fadael

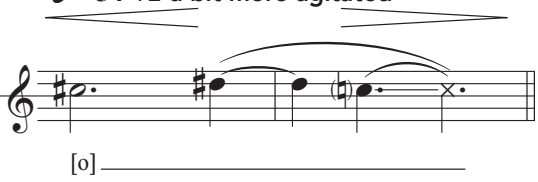
A **Calm down, relax**

*Take a couple of deap breaths
in and out



*Breathe
in and out

♩= 54-72 a bit more agitated

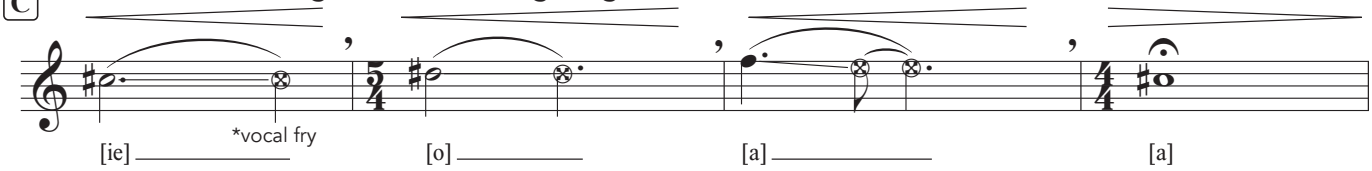


B **Can I let go?**

*Shocked
breath

*When I was [x]
*Softly in a whisperlike voice start spiralling thoughts
grow more and more intense & louder over time
Repeat until created atmosphere is tense and anxious

C ♩= 54-72 **it's taking over, but I'm fighting back**



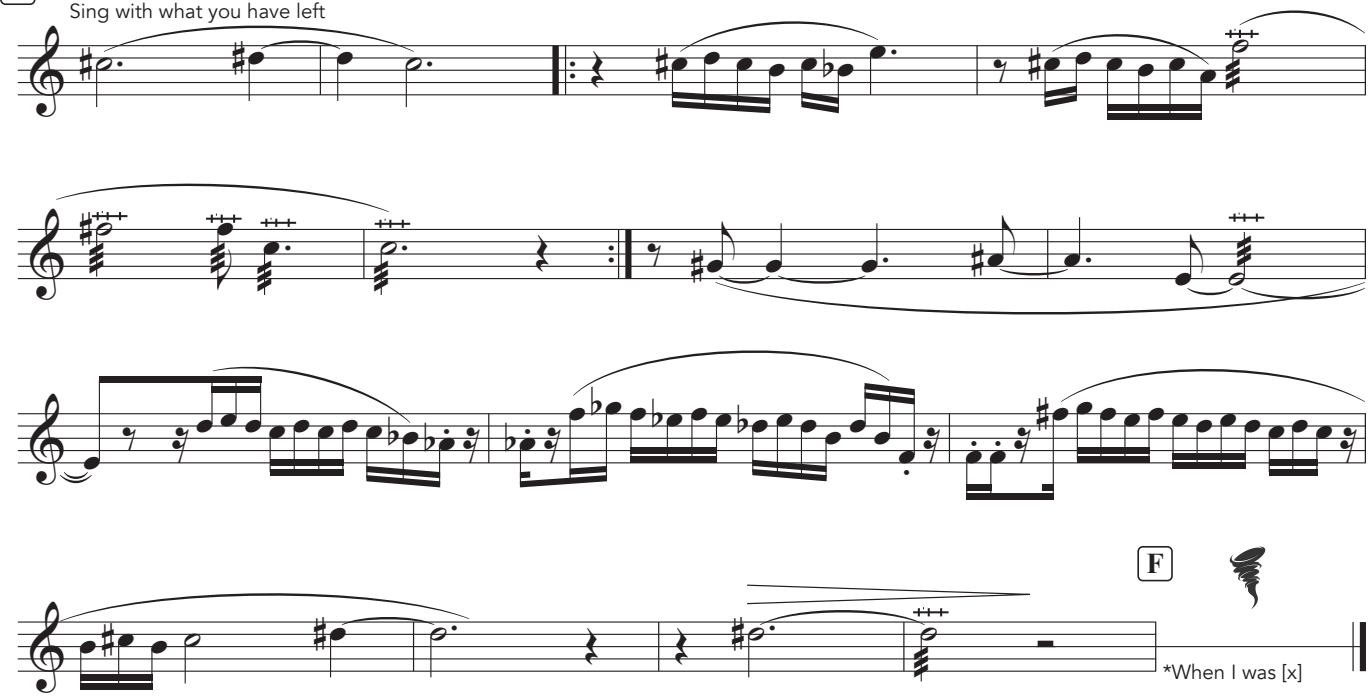
D **I'm losing it**

**Trying to
find peace**

*Softly in a whisperlike voice start spiralling thoughts grow more and more intense
& louder over time until you go crazy (the lightning symbol)..

E ♩= 60-90 **Rubato**

Sing with what you have left



F

*When I was [x]

*Softly in a whisperlike voice
spiralling thoughts al niente

Karmit Fadael 2025©

when I was

Mezzo/Alto

Karmit Fadael

A **Calm down, relax**

*Take a couple of deap breaths
in and out

[Ie]

*Breathe
in and out

♩= 54-72 a bit more agitated

[o]

B **Can I let go?**

!!!

*Shocked
breath

*When I was [x]
*Softly in a whisperlike voice start spiralling thoughts
grow more and more intense & louder over time
Repeat until created atmosphere is tense and anxious

C ♩= 54-72 it's taking over, but I'm fighting back

[ie] *vocal fry

[o]

[a]

[a]

D **I'm losing it**

!!!

!!!

**Trying to
find peace**

*Softly in a whisperlike voice start spiralling thoughts grow more and more intense
& louder over time until you go crazy (the lightning symbol)..

E ♩= 60-90 Rubato
Sing with what you have left

F

*When I was [x]

*Softly in a whisperlike voice
spiralling thoughts al niente

Karmit Fadael 2025©

Tenor

when I was

Karmit Fadael

A **Calm down, relax**

*Take a couple of deap breaths
in and out

[Ie]

*Breathe
in and out

♩= 54-72 a bit more agitated

[o]

B **Can I let go?**

!!!

*Shocked
breath

*When I was [x]
*Softly in a whisperlike voice start spiralling thoughts
grow more and more intense & louder over time
Repeat until created atmosphere is tense and anxious

C ♩= 54-72 it's taking over, but I'm fighting back

*vocal fry

[ie] [o] [a] [a]

D **I'm losing it**

!!!

!!!

**Trying to
find peace**

*Softly in a whisperlike voice start spiralling thoughts grow more and more intense
& louder over time until you go crazy (the lightning symbol)..

E ♩= 60-90 Rubato

Sing with what you have left

F

*When I was [x]

*Softly in a whisperlike voice
spiralling thoughts al niente

Karmit Fadael 2025©

when I was

Baritone

Karmit Fadael

A **Calm down, relax**

*Take a couple of deap breaths
in and out

[Ie]

*Breathe
in and out

♩= 54-72 a bit more agitated

[o]

B **Can I let go?**

!!!

*Shocked
breath

*When I was [x]
*Softly in a whisperlike voice start spiralling thoughts
grow more and more intense & louder over time
Repeat until created atmosphere is tense and anxious

C ♩= 54-72 it's taking over, but I'm fighting back

*vocal fry

[ie] [o] [a] [a]

D **I'm losing it**

!!!

!!!

**Trying to
find peace**

*Softly in a whisperlike voice start spiralling thoughts grow more and more intense
& louder over time until you go crazy (the lightning symbol)..

E ♩= 60-90 Rubato
Sing with what you have left

F

*When I was [x]

*Softly in a whisperlike voice
spiralling thoughts al niente

Karmit Fadael 2025©

Bass

when I was

Karmit Fadael

A **Calm down, relax**

*Take a couple of deap breaths
in and out

[Ie]

*Breathe
in and out

♩= 54-72 a bit more agitated

[o]

B **Can I let go?**

!!!

*Shocked
breath

*When I was [x]
*Softly in a whisperlike voice start spiralling thoughts
grow more and more intense & louder over time
Repeat until created atmosphere is tense and anxious

C ♩= 54-72 it's taking over, but I'm fighting back

*vocal fry

[ie] [o] [a] [a]

D **I'm losing it**

!!!

!!!

**Trying to
find peace**

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& louder over time until you go crazy (the lightning symbol)..

E ♩= 60-90 Rubato
Sing with what you have left

F

*When I was [x]

*Softly in a whisperlike voice
spiralling thoughts al niente

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