THE LIFE AND DEATH(S) OF ALAN TURING
A HISTORICAL FANTASIA ON THE LIFE OF ALAN TURING
Composer: JUSTINE F. CHEN | Librettist: DAVID SIMPATICO

“Our opera imagines the man inside the legend of Alan Turing: his unique perspective of the universe, his unabashed view of his homosexuality, and his impact on the future of civilization. This piece is relevant today not only for restoring Turing to our collective memory, but also because the institutionalized homophobic attitudes faced by Turing continue to threaten the lives of gay men and women across the globe. In fact, this opera is not merely about homophobia, it is about prejudice. This opera celebrates the power of memory, creativity, and the potential within us all to live fully and truly.”

-Justine F. Chen and David Simpatico

Commissioned by American Lyric Theater in 2012 to commemorate the Turing Centennial, The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turing is a two-act opera inspired by the life of the groundbreaking computer scientist, Alan Turing. After saving England in World War II by cracking the Nazi U-boat code, he was found guilty of gross indecency for a homosexual relationship. He chose chemical castration over imprisonment as his punishment. Two years later, Turing was found poisoned near a cyanide-laced apple with a bite taken from it. The apple is believed to be a reference to his obsession with Disney’s Snow White, and the image is rumored to be the inspiration for Apple Computer’s logo. Turing’s mysterious death was labeled a suicide – but there are many other theories.

HISTORY
Commission: September 2012
Libretto Workshop & Reading: February 2013
Piano/Vocal Workshops & Concerts:
- June 2013 (Scenes)
- October 2015 (Chorus Scenes and Dramaturgy)

PERFORMANCE FORCES
Alan Turing - Lyric Baritone
Christopher Morcom - Lyric Tenor
Sara Turing - Coloratura Soprano
Fred Clayton / Winston Churchill - Bass Baritone
Joan Clark - Mezzo Soprano
Steve Todd / Arnold Murray - High Lyric Tenor
Don Bayley / A Bobby - Bass
SATB Chorus: Chatters, Wrens, Crypts, Carolers, Judge Harrison, School Boys
Orchestra: 28-36 players (exact instrumentation to-be-determined)

NEXT STEPS
Revisions: October 2015 - December 2016
P/V Workshop & Concert: January 2017 (Full P/V Score)
Orchestral Workshop: TBD 2017-18
Premiere with Producing Partner: TBD

Composer and violinst JUSTINE F. CHEN joined American Lyric Theater’s Composer Librettist Development Program as a resident artist in 2010, and has been the recipient of many prestigious awards and commissions. A native New Yorker, she has been commissioned and performed by New York City Opera, New York City Ballet, The Juilliard School, and New York Festival of Song. The New York Times described her dance score as “the kind of propulsive, emotionally resonant score that choreographers tend to dream of.” Her first opera was presented by Juilliard, NYCO’s VOX Showcase, and Chants Libres. Recent projects include songs for soprano Jennifer Zetlan’s Marilyn Horne Foundation Recital, and for Elizabeth Futral’s Cleopatra-themed NYCO recital. She earned her DMA, MM, and BM from Juilliard in violin and composition, and specializes in contemporary music performance.

DAVID SIMPATICO joined American Lyric Theater’s Composer Librettist Development Program as a resident artist in 2010. His works have been presented at major theatres around the globe, including Lincoln Center, NYC Town Hall, the Hammersmith Apollo (London), Williamstown Theatre Festival, Ensemble Studio Theatre, the New York Shakespeare Festival, and the New York Theatre Workshop. Using the safety net of comedy to explore life-and-death issues, his work examines man’s struggle to claim his place in a chaotic universe. He was recently an Artist in Residence at Pace University, where he taught and led a staged reading workshop of his play Bad Blood. David writes, directs, edits and stars in Zombie Hideaway, a webisodic series, as well as Rev. Jimmy’s Lake of Fire, featured on his new Youtube channel, Noise Ball. He graduated Northwestern University with a BS in Theater.