

Rated R for Rat

A Chamber Opera in Three Scenes, an Interlude and a Postlude
For Singers, an Actor, Chorus and Chamber Orchestra

A Libretto

by
Wang Jie

Wang Jie Music © 2017
All Right Reserved

Contact:
Wang Jie
209 West 109th Street #5E
New York NY 10025
(212) 380-1483

MAIN CHARACTERS

LARK	High Lyric Soprano	Young court singer and announcer. She possesses heavenly voice that pleases the Zodiac Gods, She is about to find out that her singing heals humans' ailments. Despite her potential music power, she serves the Rat's court, in a cheerleader uniform, repeating mindless athletic repertoires centuries in centuries out.
PEASANT WOMAN	Mezzo-Soprano	Peasant Woman: A disease ridden human on earth who sings soulful music full of longing.
RAT	Basso Profundo/Bass-Baritone	Rat: CEO of the Zodiac Kingdom, the head of the Zodiac operation. Together with his fellow Zodiac gods, the twelve Zodiacs install personalities in human babies in exchange for their placenta. All of them are placenta addicts.

NON-SINGING

THE ROOSTER/GRIM REAPER	Male voice/actor	One of the Zodiac gods, the Rat's sidekick. Comical and loyal, he talks with a stutter and repeats everything the Rat says. The Grim Reaper A.K.A. Death, is an immortal who speaks the human language.
-------------------------	------------------	--

SECONDARY CHARACTERS

THE REMAINING TEN ZODIAC GODS, HUMANS ON EARTH.	SATB Chorus of minimum 16 voices	Varies characters in their costumes
Children ages 6 to 8	Child actors	One of them accidentally kills the Lark with a slingshot

DURATION

Appr. 80 minutes

ORCHESTRA

Fl, Cl, Bsn, Hn, Tpt, Trbn, Tba, Timp, 2 Perc, Keyboard soloist:
Hpsd(amplified)/Cel/Pno, Strings.

SETTINGS

The Heaven beyond the sky. A conference room in the Zodiac
Palace.

The Earth, spooky and barren. Outdoor.

The Earth, green and lavish. Outside of a fairy-tale hut.

CURTAIN DOWN

PRELUDE

0:00 – 2:00 Adagio misterioso

THE EARTH. THE ZODIAC ALTAR. PRESENT DAY.

In front of the curtain, the stage sets an enormous jug bearing the Rat's crest. Unusable chairs litter the altar. A diseased new mother kneels in front of the jug with her baby in arms.

PEASANT WOMAN

MOST RIGHTEOUS RAT:

LORD OF LIGHT AND NIGHT

I BRING YOU MY MOST PRECIOUS AFTER-BIRTH.

MAY MY CHILD BE GRANTED WEALTH AND WIT.
AND MODESTY.

A WINSOME FACE.

MAY HE BE GRACED WITH HIS LATE FATHER'S
GOOD TASTE IN WOMEN.

MAY HE BE WISE AND FAIR.
BRAVE, STRONG.
HEALTHY.

OH RIGHTEOUS RAT:

THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE.

WITH THIS, MY PRECIOUS TETHER
I BESEECH YOU.

While Peasant's prayer continues, a pre-recorded (with massive reverb) Rooster voice with megaphone distortion effects interjects.

"A public service message for all expectant parents:

Please submit your request to the Zodiac Gods for a face and a soul for your newborn immediately after the day of your Blessed Event. The Zodiacs (in their divine wisdom) will consider the details of your request, and for the price of the placenta (please add shipping and

handling) will bestow your newborn with a personality you will cherish forever.

Act now because no one wants to be born without a face."

The Peasant Woman continues her prayer. She attaches a big envelop to the side of the jug as it slowly begins to ascend. A loud baby cry ends the scene.

CURTAIN UP

SCENE I

2:00 – 15:00

THE HEAVEN. CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE ZODIAC PALACE. PRESENT DAY.

The stage sets a conference room in meticulous condition. The same jug from Prelude, is situated near the conference table, heavily guarded by the servants. At the center of the conference table is a large bamboo vase filled with Kau Cim, i.e. Japanese prayer sticks. Chorus members: Eleven Zodiac Gods (minus Rat) dressed in pristine suits and tie labeled with high-end brand names, ten of them lined up in front of the jug, dinner plates in hand. Rooster holds a megaphone towards a pipe coming up from the floor. At the other side of the stage, a billboard sized graph alarming the plummeted human birth rate. One servant is stuated at the graph board with a pointing stick.

LARK calls the morning council from off stage. She knocks on the door but is ignored.

LARK
(off stage, yodel)
YO! IT'S THE MORNING!

Knocking continues, but the the door of the conference room remains shut. Music continues as Snake presents a new graph titled: Bail Out Plan.

CHORUS (GODS ONLY)
HEAVEN IS UNDER A CURSE.
PARADISE TURNS FOR THE WORSE.
WORST DEFICIT!
ROOSTER, AGAIN!

Rooster points the
megaphone into the pipe.

ROOSTER
A public service
message for all
expectant parents:
Please submit your
request to the Zodiac
Gods for a face and a
soul for your newborn
immediately after the
day of your Blessed
Event... (interrupted by
the Lark barging in)

LARK
(off stage, yodel)
YO! IT'S A BRAND NEW
DAY!

CHORUS (GODS ONLY)
WARNING, WARNING!
BLEAK FORECAST FOR THE WORST MORNING!

As music continues, Lark
kicks the door open and
barges into the conference
room, all sexy and chipper,
as if her presence is
desired.

LARK
(on stage, yodel)
Yoo-Hoo!
GOOD MORNING TO THE BEST MORNING!

DRAGON wolf-whistles
sarcastically.

LARK (CONT'D)
OX, TIGER, ROOSTER;
RABBIT, SNAKE, PIG, LOTS OF FACES!

(mechanically)
SIXTY-FIVE DEGREES, SUNNY AS ALWAYS.
WELCOME TO THE PALACE IN THE SKY.
THIS IS THE PLACE
FOR ZODIAC MAGIC TO TAKE PLACE.

CHORUS

DIVIDE!
ONE BITE AT A TIME!
MINE, MINE, MINE!

LARK

FIVE THOUSAND FORTY-SEVEN YEARS,
SIX MONTHS AND TWENTY-TWO DAYS,
THE ALMIGHTY TWELVE HONOR YOUR FACE,
THIS IS YOUR "PAYMENT" HARD AT WORK.
FOR A MEMORY TIME CANNOT ERASE.

CHORUS (GODS ONLY MINUS PIG)

(to Pig)
IT'S YOUR TURN TO BREAK THE NEWS.
(Pig solo to Snake)
WHAT? IT'S YOUR TURN!

The chorus members take
turns pointing fingers at
each other.

CHORUS (CONT'D)

YOUR TURN, YOUR TURN,
YOUR TURN..
NO IT'S YOUR TURN!

LARK

FIVE THOUSAND FORTY-
SEVEN YEARS SIX MONTHS
AND TWENTY-TWO DAYS,
THIS IS YOUR "PAYMENT"
HARD AT WORK.
FOR A MEMORY TIME CANNOT
ERASE.

CHORUS (CONT'D)

WAIT A MINUTE!
(beat, to Rooster)
IT'S YOUR TURN!

ROOSTER

Nah nah nah nah...
I only report positivity.
If you don't have pleasant things to say,
just come sit right by me.

LARK

WELCOME TO HEAVEN!
THIS IS THE PLACE
WHERE HOPES AND DREAMS COME TO DIE.
THESE ARE YOUR GODS,
MASTERS OF A FISHING ROD.

CHORUS

DIVIDE!
ONE BITE AT A TIME!
MY BITE THIS TIME!
WHAT IF THIS IS THE LAST BITE?
HAS THE REHAB UPDATED WIFI?

LARK

I AM DIFFERENT.
TODAY IS DIFFERENT.
TELL ME YOUR HOPES AND
DREAMS.
I GIVE YOU TRUTH AND
BEAUTY.

Chorus

TODAY IS A ONE-BITE
DAY.
DIVIDE!
MINE, MINE, MINE!

Chorus continues in the
background.

LARK(CONT'D)

WELCOME TO MY AUDITORIUM IN THE PALACE.
(switch to singing)
THIS IS THE PLACE
FOR THE FOOL IN A GILDED CAGE.
TO THE TWELVE REVERED I SERENADE.
ONE CERTAIN TUNE,
LIFELESS REPEATS FOR TONELESS TASTES,
(switch back to mechanical yodeling)
LABORING FIVE THOUSAND FORTY-SEVEN YEARS,
SIX MONTHS AND TWENTY-TWO DAYS.
SAD BUT TRUE.
(switch to a soft tone)
THAT SAID,
(back to yodeling)
TODAY IS MY LUCKY DAY,
BECAUSE THE TWELVE WON'T BE TWELVE FOR
LONG.

TODAY IS THE DAY,
YOURS TRULY, THE INCARNATION OF HEAVENLY

SONG, BEHOLDER OF ALL MUSIC DIVINE AND
TRUE, IS DUE FOR A PROMOTION.

(Greet's Snake)

How are you today, sir?

The Snake ignores her. Lark
doesn't mind, as if his
rudeness is expected.

LARK (CONT'D)

TODAY IS THE DAY,
THE ROYAL FOOL EARNS A SEAT AT *THAT* TABLE.

(Adds her pink chair to the council table
next to the Monkey and greets him too.)

What about you, my clever lord?

The Monkey ignores her as
well. Again, the Lark
doesn't mind.

LARK (CONT'D)

FAREWELL, THE MINION, SERVING UNCHANGING
EARS FOR COUNTLESS YEARS.

HELLO, FREEDOM TO SING THE BEAUTIFUL AND
TRUE!

FAREWELL, CLOWN TO THE ULTIMATE COUNCIL
(CIRCUS) KNOWN TO MEN.

HELLO, POWER TO SPELL M-U-S-I-C ON EVERY
NEWBORN'S FACE.

TODAY IS THE DAY,
A singing lark destined for truth and
beauty, will join the ultimate council
known to men!

(She stands on her pink chair, the extra
chair.)

*Music comes to a stall while Lark is still uplifted with
hope.*

CHORUS

(yawn)

WHAT'S ALL THIS WEIRD NEW MUSIC?

Lark checks her watch.

LARK

The Boss should arrive shortly,
to announce my...

(sing)

PROMOTION!

My license to sing not for you, but for
me! Me me me!

ROOSTER

Hahaha...that's cute.
Now be a good girl and make me some
coffee.
Oh, sing that number we like, would you?

LARK

(beat)

Ugh, For the very last time, whatever you
like!

(To orchestra pit)

Maestro, recapitulation!

SIXTY-FIVE DEGREES, SUNNY AS ALWAYS.
WELCOME TO THE PALACE IN THE SKY.
THIS IS THE PLACE
FOR ZODIAC MAGIC TO TAKE PLACE.
DILIGENT, INDUSTRIOUS, GENEROUS,
BENEVOLENT,
YOUR PLACENTA HARD AT WORK.

Unnoticed by Lark, the Rat enters. All Gods run back to
their seats. The Rooster about to announce Rat's arrival,
but the Rat signals all to be quiet and let him hear the
Lark's song.

FIVE THOUSAND FORTY-SEVEN YEARS,
SIX MONTHS AND TWENTY-TWO DAYS.
FABULOUS GODS TOIL AT THIS PALACE,
A RAT CALLS THE SHOTS.
A RAT IS THE BOSS!
OBEY, OBEY, OBEY!

My boss has no sense of fashion but plenty
of fat! His neck is puffier than
my...(indidating her voluptuous hip)

BUT TODAY IS THE DAY,
MY FAT BOSS PLOTS TO ANNOUNCE MY
PROMOTION!

In anthem like manner.

TODAY, WHEN TWELVE BECOMES HISTORY.
THIRTEEN IS THE NEW BLACK!

As the Lark indulges her delusional glory, the Rooster taps on her, suggesting that the Rat has been right behind her this whole time.

LARK (CONT'D)

Eh, oops!

The Rat ignores the Lark.

LARK (CONT'D)

(nervous laugh, snaps her finger, snare drum plays a roll.)

LONG LIVE THE RAT!

ROOSTER

Hail to the Chief!

(then cues the Lark with an enormous remote control.)

Lark turns around to conduct the chorus.

CHORUS

(lethergically)

LONG LIVE THE RAT...

15:00 – 20:00

Rat processes to the head of the table, but he trips over Lark's pink chair.

RAT

(displeased)

Well, now that the court entertainer is publically displaying PMS, explain this girlish thing at once!

ROOSTER

Unacceptable!

Like in a high school classroom, several gods raised their hands unwillingly. But the Lark raises hers with great enthusiasm.

LARK

(Hop)Pick me! Pick me, pick me!

The entire cast ignores
Lark. The Snake slingshots
a paper ball at the Lark.

LARK

LONG LIVE THE RAT!

(hands over an application form)

My Twenty-Second application for
promotion, from your most devoted
musician, sir.

RAT

NOTED. MOTION FOR PROMOTION WILL BE
DISCUSSED TOMORROW.

ROOSTER

Noted! Motion for promotion will be
discussed tomorrow. Let's get on with it.

LARK

But...but Sir, that's been the same answer
for five thousand and forty-seven years,
six months and twenty-two days!

RAT

NOTED.

ROOSTER

Noted! Motion for promotion will be
discussed tomorrow.

Rooster activates the Lark
again with the enormous
remote control.

LARK

BUT...BUT...

(as if electrified, turn to orchestra pit)

Maestro! From the top!

LARK

(mechanical yodeling)

SIXTY-FIVE DEGREES, SUNNY AS ALWAYS.

THIS IS THE PALACE IN THE SKY.

THAT IS A SATELLITE PASSING BY.

servants present the content of the jug to the Rat. But
the surface of the jug is so dirty that the servants'
white uniform all gets stained.

CHORUS

MINE, MINE, MINE...
TODAY IS A ONE BITE DAY.

LARK

BLACK SMOG WORSENS BY DAY.
EARTH COULD HAVE BECOME AN ASHTRAY.
THERE IS NO MORE VISIBILITY TO THIS DAY.

BUT WE'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT
FOR THE RAT IS OUR SAVIOR...
SAVIOR, SAVIOR, SAVIOR, SAVIOR,...

As if a skipping record, the Lark is stuck on a word.
Monkey pulls on her wings and unstucks her.

LARK

(embarrassed, nervous laugh, cue
orchestra)
LONG LIVE THE RAT!

20:00 – 30:00

All cast applauds Lark's performance as music comes to a
sectional break. A fresh placenta is lifted from the jug
and now settled on the council table in front of the Rat.
All Gods except for the Rat drool.

CHORUS

(making drooling noise)
(SLURP SLURP)

The Rat couldn't wait any
longer, stuffed his face
with the entire placenta.
All other Gods spring from
their seats in disbelief.

CHORUS (CONT'D)

(gasp)

RAT

(gulps down, burp)
HM...GOOD STUFF!
DON'T WORRY. NEXT OFFERING BELONGS TO YOU
ALL.

CHORUS

(sigh)

Ugh

(taking turns)

Tell him, tell him, tell him, tell him..

(lastly, Dragon to Rooster)

TELL HIM!

ROOSTER

I will!

RAT

GOOD STUFF NEVER GETS OLD!

(to Lark)

AND YOU, GOOD SOLDIER.

KEEP UP THE GOOD MUSIC!

NOW, UNVEIL THIS PRAYER!

(shake the bamboo vase)

The moment the Rat turns to talk to the Lark, the remaining Gods leap for the crumbs on Rat's plate, fight and devoured it.

ROOSTER

(opens the envelope)

Unveil this prayer!

Rooster hands the prayer to Lark for announcement.

LARK

(Announces in Recitative)

Dear Lord, most righteous Rat, All-knowing King of Heaven, blah blah blah...May my child be granted wealth and wit.

And modesty if you see fit.

May my child be blessed with a winsome breast.

May he be graced with his father's good taste...blah blah blah

Be wise and fair.

Brave and strong.

Healthy as the day is long.

A lover. A leader. A healer...

ROOSTER

(interrupts Lark)

Wait, wait, wait a second. Who is this greedy control freak?

LARK

(looks for a signature at the bottom)

Eh...for baby Xzaiden, Xzaiden with an "x", Bunguin!

CHORUS

BUNGUIN! HAAAAHA...STUPID NAME FOR THE MOST STUPID BLOODLINE.

RAT

(One strike at the gavel)

WHO DO THEY THINK WE ARE?! SANTA CLAUS??

ROOSTER

What do they think we are?! A dollar store??

RAT

GOOD REASON TO MAKE ANOTHER DIMWIT!

LARK AND ROOSTER

ATTENTION! FINAL VOTE ON BABY XZAIDEN BUNGUIN, AS FOLLOWS:

Ox pulls a Kau cim stick from the bamboo vase and spits on it.

Lark collects the kau cim sticks as the voting continues and inserts them into the same envelop that previously contained the prayer.

CHORUS

(Ox solo)

VACUITY!

(tutti)

AYE AYE!

Dog pulls a stick and spits on it too.

CHORUS (CONT'D)

(Dog solo)

VULGARITY!

(tutti)
AYE AYE!

Dragon follows.

CHORUS (CONT'D)
(Dragon solo)
NARCISSISTIC OBSESSIVE DISORDER!
(tutti)
AYE AYE!

Rooster follows.

ROOSTER
Flamboyance, shamelessness and dishonesty!

RAT
(pounds the gavel)
ENOUGH! THE TRICK IS TO MAKE THEM JUST
STUPID ENOUGH TO THINK THEY ARE SMART.
EXCESSIVE STUPIDITY MAKES THE SMOG WORSE!

ROOSTER
Enough! Don't make the smog worse. We now
have zero visibility!

As the Zodiacs walk back to
their seats, disappointed,
Rat takes out a kau cim
stick too. Rooster presents
to Lark.

RAT
(Clears his throat, sings attentively, as
if announcing an Academy award)
MAKE HIM A BLOND AND GIVE HIM WEALTH.

Lark inserts the last stick
into the envelop and tosses
it back into the jug.
Orchestra makes a sound
resembling a winning casino
slot machine.

RAT (CONT'D)
WELL DONE. WHAT A WASTE. NEXT!

No one moves.

RAT (CONT'D)
NEXT OFFERING. NOW!

CHORUS

(taking turns)

Tell him, tell him, tell him, tell him..

(lastly, Dog to Rooster)

TELL HIM!

Rooster hides behind the
Lark

ROOSTER

You tell him!

LARK

Tell him what?

ROOSTER

My all-seeing almighty Lord, King of all
Kings, today, just one offering from the
whole of mankind. It's a record!

RAT

FUTILE! GIVE THEM BETTER PORN!

DOG

GIVE THEM BETTER SPERM!

ROOSTER

Give them better eggs!

DOG

Sperm!

ROOSTER

Egg!

DOG

Sperm!

ROOSTER

Egg!

DOG

Sperm!

ROOSTER

Egg!

DOG

Sperm!

ROOSTER

Egg!

CHORUS (CRESC. FUGUE)

WE ARE FINISHED.

(Unison)

WE ARE HEADED FOR REHAB!

As chorus members gossip the worsening of their placenta withdrawal, the Rooster draws the plummeting graph of the placenta deficit. Unable to get the council's attention, the infuriated Rat pounds the gavel repeatedly. Chorus music stalls on the same beat the Rat lifts and drops his chair on the conference table.

Rooster hurries to calm the Rat.

RAT (BEAT)

PULL YOURSELVES TOGETHER! GET ME SOME MUSIC. I WANT LOTS OF NOTES. RINSE ME WITH DISSONANCE!

Rooster cue Lark with the remote control.

ROOSTER

Lots lots of dissonance. Now!

LARK

(Mechanically)

YES SIR!

LONG LIVE THE RAT!

SIXTY-FIVE DEGREES, SUNNY AS ALWAYS.

CALLING FOR CONSTRUCTION OF REHAB.

ONE FOR EACH JUNKIE LAD.

LALALA...LALALA...BLAH BLAH BLAH...

Gradually, Lark sings like an athlete doing aerobic exercise.

LARK (CONT'D)

BUT WE'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

FOR THE RAT IS OUR SAVIOR.

THE RAT IS ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS FABULOUS.

While Lark cuckoo-clocks on and on, chorus does something (Mo, any ideas?). Rooster and Rat exit the scene while

curtain lowers. They remain on the visible side of the curtain, waiting for Lark to finish.

CURTAIN DOWN

LARK (CONT'D)

HAIL TO THE RAT.

RAT, RAT, LORD RAT!

Rooster signals the orchestra pit that they should stop playing. Lark follows the Rat and singing despite the missing orchestra accompaniment. They move off stage.

LARK (CONT'D OFF STAGE)

(move to off stage, voice gradually distant.)

RAT, RAT, LORD RAT!

LONG LIVE THE RAT...

Lark's singing eventually stops.

END OF SCENE I

30:00 – 35:00

INTERLUDE

Curtain down. Rooster enters in front of the closed curtain, with a megaphone in hand.

ROOSTER

Attention all Zodiac personnel, executive order from Lord Rat. Attention, this is not a drill. The Zodiac Palace has issued a state of emergency decree. Due to long-term low birth rate among humans, council operation is suspended until further notice.

Due to the severity of the smog, the Zodiac Palace has not been able to survey the state and progress of human demise. Any personnel with aviation skills, who also understands the human tongue are encouraged to take leave from your current duties and pay Earth a visit.

I repeat: this is not a drill. Any who can gather information that proves crucial to alleviating the current crisis will be promoted to the Zodiac council, effective immediately.

The Lark pokes her head out of the curtain.

LARK

What is it I hear? Aviation skills?

(She steps out from behind the curtain and flaps her wings.)

The human tongue? I'm from there!

And...do I hear promotion?!

Today is indeed the day!

LIGHTS OUT

END OF INTERLUDE

SCENE II

CURTAIN UP

35:00 – 45:00

THE EARTH. A QUARANTINED HOSPITAL. AFTERNOON OF THE SAME DAY.

In stark contrast to the Heaven, the earth is covered in a toxic smog. All mortals dressed in garbage can liner and Ikea shopping bags. The stage reveals a fenced area with Red Cross logos and doctors in hazmat suits giving very sick people injections. Grim Reaper lines up women and children for final departure.

ROOSTER (PRE-RECORDED)

"This is a public safety announcement:

The Zodiac palace has issued a state of emergency. Due to extreme low birth rate, the human race faces extinction.

Please remember to avoid tobacco, cliff-tops and head-colds. You will receive weekly shipments of breath mints and heterosexual porn.

Please copulate during ovulation. No blow jobs or reach-arounds.

Men: no masturbation.

Women: no clothing.

Act now because no one wants to live without a child."

CHORUS

WHO STANDS BETWEEN HELL AND EARTH?
DEATH DOES.
DEATH IS THE TRUE GOD OF ALL TIME.

WHAT DO WE SAY TO THE TRUE GOD OF ALL TIME?
NOT YET. NOT TODAY.
NOT UNTIL THE EARTH MELTS INTO THE SEA,
THE CLOUDS DRINK THE OCEAN DRY,
AND VENUS FALLS OUT OF THE BLUE SKY!

Lark enters with a crash landing, right in front of the fences.

LARK
(screams)

Awh!!

Lark dusts off but the air is too polluted and stinky. She coughs and pukes uncontrollably.

LARK (CONT'D)
(Puke)

Gak!!

Lark re-composes herself.

The audience soon discovers that the Lark can only whistle like a bird. Music continues to accompany the chorus, despite that the Lark whistles furiously.

LARK (CONT'D)
(Whistle in the approximate contour of words)

Yo! Yoo-hoo!

Lark's whistle caught GRIM REAPER's attention.

GRIM REAPER
(answer with a wolf whistle)
Hey I remember you. I was at the Zodiac party when they flew you up to join the band! Boy you had the best voice of all other larks! We all voted unanimously to grant you immortality. Five thousand years go by easy up there, doesn't it?

LARK
(whistle)

GRIM REAPER
What do humans say about going home? Don't worry. You'll be able to use your lungs soon enough. Takes a few minutes. I mean look at this mess! You still working for that same idiot?

LARK
(whistle)

GRIM REAPER
Now the idiot sends his immigrant worker back to fix his drug supply. Hahaha, now that's original. What do you get out of this?

LARK
(whistle the notes of "promotion" repeatedly)

GRIM REAPER
Is that what he promised you?! And you bought that? Ahahaha...did you go to America for education or something?

LARK
(whistle)

GRIM REAPER
Don't play dumb with me. Look at these mortals! My work is pure courtesy these days. They are relieved to see me. The good people, they pray, they sacrifice, they offer their organs to your idiot boss for thousands of years. What do they get? Babies that are dimwits, missing fingers, some don't even live through a week! The greedy, evil ones gets healthy, strong babies that are also dimwits, and they live to old age. When people needs rain, they get sunshine. When they pray for sunshine, your idiot boss gives them hail. At one point, music was all that's left for the mortals to go on. So they pray for beautiful music, but all of you golden throat got called up to the Heavens. Recently, I sent a memo about this one dimwit who started an "industrial revolution". I warned your boss. Humans have been building things to make more things, hoping "things" will give them some comfort. But it only takes one greedy dimwit to turn "things" into garbage and disease. All the "things" they built only distracted them until the entire earth is covered by mountains of garbage and

disease. It didn't take long. Didn't you guys get my memo?

LARK
(whistle)

GRIM REAPER
Ah, the smog. Excuses, excuses. You folks at the Zodiac department give the y-chromosome a bad reputation, let me tell'ya. How you stick with this jerk for five thousand years is beyond me! Now get out of my way if you're not gonna be helpful.

The last patient has received injection. Chorus members, including the hazmat suit nurses all fall sick and fall to their fetal position. Lark tries to breath deeper but still coughs uncontrollably.

Peasant woman enters with a bad limp. She sings with the kind of soulful music that has not been heard since Prelude. Lark is intensely captivated by the expressive power of this dying human.

THE PEASANT
FOR SALE! BABY SHOES.
FOR SALE! BABY SHOES.
NEVER WORN.

SWEET (IS) A MOTHER'S FACE
IN THE LIGHT OF HER BABY'S VOICE
UNTIL THAT HEARTBEAT IS TAKEN.

Lark is mesmerized and attempts to talk to her. Gradually, Lark picks up her melody with the whistle.

LARK (WHISLE) AND PEASANT (DUET)
FOR SALE! BABY SHEOS.
FOR SALE!

The peasant notices Lark is trying to sing her song, but she sounds like a parrot. Peasant gives her a voice lesson, thus enabling Lark to sing the human tongue.

PEASANT
Fff, Fff, Oh, "For";
Sss, Sss, ale, "For Sale";

LARK

(struggles with consonants, and battles
her old singing habits.)

OH...EH...

PEASANT

(dislikes Lark's singing. She signals that
the melody descends.)

Eww!

ALE, SALE...

LARK

ALE, SSS, SSS, SALE.

PEASANT

FOR SALE!

LARK

OH WALE!

Music continues as the two women act a voice lesson in
silence.

LARK (CONT'D)

FOR SALE!
BABY SHOES!
NEVER WORN!

As soon as the Lark begins to sing the human song in
human tongue, magic starts to happen: smog begins to
lift; the Grim Reaper abandons his scythe and the dying
begins to awake; Trees begin to green and flowers
fiercely sprout out of the earth, pushing through
furniture and rocks on the way.

45:00 – 50:00

LARK & PEASANT & CHORUS

FOR SALE! BABY SHOES.
FOR SALE!

FRAGRANT A LOVER'S TRACE,
IN THE GLEAM OF HER LIPS,
UNTIL THE PULSE IS BROKEN.

EARTH FROZEN,
SKY SHUT,
THE LIPS OF A FADED LIFE,

PALE, GREY, FROSTED
LITTLE ARMS FOREVER FOLDED,
FALLEN.

THE DESERT MOANS.
IT MOANS FOR THE BONES THROWN,
THEY ARE NOW BUT A GRAIN OF SAND.
FOREVER. FORGOTTEN.

Now that humans are experiencing recovery, Lark remains
in her singing character.

LARK (CONT'D)

THE DESERT MOANS.
IT MOANS FOR THE BONES ALONE,
THEY WERE THEN BUT A GRAIN OF SAND.
THEY ARE NOW GRAINS OF MY LAND!

TO HOPE!
BABY SHOES,
TO LOVE!
MAKE BABY SHOES,
TO LIFE!
MAKE REAL MUSIC!

THIS VOICE, IT PLEASES A ROOSTER AND A
DOG.
I AM SMILED UPON BY SNAKE AND HOG.
ENSLAVED TO A RODENT'S AESTHETIC!

THE CLUNK AND THE CLATTER OF DROPPING A
HAMMER,
THE WHEEZE OF THE RAT'S DELUSIONAL
GLAMOUR,
MECHANICAL MEMES OF VACUOUS GRAMMAR,
FRIGID AND STILTED AND STUCK IN A STAMMER!

I AM THE ONE WHO FORGOT.
THIS GOSSAMER VOICE WITH DISTANT MEMORIES
OF REJOICE.
THE SONGS I FORGOT ARE FOOD FOR A LANDFUL
OF CROP.

THAT RAT, THAT MUSICAL MORTICIAN!
IT'S TIME FOR MY OWN COMPOSITION!
MUSIC FULL OF EMOTION!
TO CLAIM ONE TRUE PROMOTION!

The trick is emotion in my composition!
I have the silver bullet!
I'm going back to claim my promotion!

By the end of the Lark's song, the sick humans are no longer suffering, instead, they hug and kiss each other almost as if driven and intoxicated. Soon, all humans kneel by the Lark, shower her with flowers and acknowledge her as their new goddess.

CHORUS

STAY! OUR SAVIOR!
YOU BRING US BEAUTY.
YOU IGNITE LOVE!
BE OUR GODDESS!

LARK

I've been granted immortality.
I have more important things to do.
I have to go!

As Lark departs, the smog begins to return and people begin to cough again.

CURTAIN DOWN

END OF SCENE II

SCENE III

50:00 – 65:00

BACK AT THE HEAVEN. CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE ZODIAC PALACE.
THE SAME AFTERNOON.

The stage reveals the same conference room in meticulous
condition.

LARK
(Off stage)
PLAGUE!

Rushes on stage.

LARK (CONT'D)
A PLAGUE HAS RISEN!

ROOSTER
A plague has risen! Eh, what is a plague?

CHORUS
A PLAGUE IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THESE LAZY
HUMANS RUN OUT OF VIAGARA.
MEN ARE FINISHED.
WE ARE FINISHED.
WHAT NOW?

LARK
(As if performing sex education to high
school kids.)
MEN ARE NOT MATING.
NO ONE IS INTERESTED IN MATING.
NO MATING, NO BABIES!

NO MEN ARE INTERESTED IN MATING.
SOME ARE BUSY DIGGING.
SOME ARE BUSY BURNING.
SOME ARE BUSY DYING.
NO MATING, NO BABIES!
NO BABIES, NO OFFERINGS!

RAT
ENOUGH OF THIS NONSENSE!

ROOSTER
Enough nonsense. Unacceptable!

RAT

WHAT A LAME SPECIES.
DEFEATED BY CRITTERS THAT DON'T EVEN HAVE
A FACE!

ROOSTER

Lame and lazy humans. They stink too!

RAT

COCKROACHES! NOW THAT'S WHERE MY
INVESTMENT IS GOING NEXT.

ROOSTER

Cockroaches! Now that's where...what?
Cockroaches?! No!

CHORUS

ALL HOPE HAS DEPARTED.
WE ARE FINISHED.

RAT

(Pounds the gavel)
PULL YOURSELVES TOGETHER!
COURT ENTERTAINER, DO SOMETHING!

LARK

YES SIR! MAESTRO!
LONG LIVE THE RAT!
SIXTY FIVE DEGREES SUNNY AS ALWAYS.
PLAGUE OR NO PLAGUE...WE'VE GOT NOTHING TO
WORRY ABOUT.
FOR THE RAT IS ALWAYS RIGHT!
PLAGUE OR NO PLAGUE,
PULSE OR NO PULSE,
RIVEN, STRICKEN, FROZEN, BROKEN, TAKEN,
FALLEN, FORGOTTEN!

ALL YOU NEED IS TWO HUMANS WHO MATE WITH
EACH OTHER.
ALL I NEED IS TWO NOTES WHO LOVE EACH
OTHER!

AHEM, ALLOW ME TO PRESENT THE ONE TRUE
CURE FOR THE HUMAN DEMISE,
TO CLAIM ONE TRUE PROMOTION PAYABLE TO
YOURS TRULY.

Maestro, the pink folder!

Conductor finds the pink folder and strikes his music stand with the baton. Soulful human music is heard for the first time in Heaven.

LARK (ARIA)

HEAR, MY VOICE,
SWEET AND IMMORTAL.
THERE, THE HUMANS,
BEREFT AND DYING.
BUT THEIR MUSIC,
SWEETER AND ETERNAL IN MY VOICE!

WHEN MY BREATH REACHED THEIR SKIN,
THE SMOG LIFTED.
WHEN MY MELODY TOUCHED THEIR HEARTS,
THE SORES HEALED.
WHEN MY SONG BREACHED THEIR ILLNESS,
THEY MADE LOVE!

As soon as the Lark begins to sing the human song, Rat and Rooster look at each other, baffled. All other Zodiacs with the exception of the Pig, slowly falls asleep.

LARK (CONT'D)

EARTH IS NOT THE LAND I ONCE KNEW.
WHEN HUMANS NEED RAIN, THEY GET SUN.
WHEN THEY NEED SUN, THEY CATCH HAIL.
THEIR MANY THINGS THINGS THINGS
BECOME GARBAGE, DISEASE.
DEATH HAS BECOME THEIR GENTLEST FRIEND.
PURE COURTESY. RELIEF.

The Dog is so moved by Lark's song that he weeps uncontrollably.

DOG

Wah wah wah, too beautiful! Too touching!
So true!!

65:00 – 70:00

RAT

(Pounds the gavel)
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!
GIVE ME THE BULLET POINTS...WAIT
WHAT IS THAT SMELL?

ROOSTER

What is that smell?

CHORUS SOLO (SHEEP)

I smell an immigrant!

RAT

TOO FEW NOTES!

ROOSTER

Unfashionable!

We didn't hire you for beauty, sweetheart.

RAT

(Approaches Lark and sniffs her)

You are contaminated with human filth!

ROOSTER

You are contaminated with...contaminated?

(sniffs her too)

Ewww! That familiar stink of sensibility,
sentimentality, sentience and poop!

Chorus in shock and put
their noses up.

CHORUS

EWWW!

The Dog walks over to Lark, sniffs her too. He faints.

RAT

You've had quite a day. Let's discuss your
promotion.

You may join the council upon one
condition:

RAT (CONT'D) AND CHORUS

BE A GOOD GIRL AND SING US WHAT WE LIKE!

RAT(CONT'D)

I PAY YOU IMMORTALITY FOR YOU TO PRODUCE
NOTES.

LOTS LOTS LOTS OF NOTES!

ROOSTER

Sentimental music has no place in this
palace!

(to orchestra)
What do you musicians all think?

Orchestra members discuss amongst each other until Rooster presses a button on the enormous remote control aimed at the conductor. The orchestra promptly begins the accompaniment to Lark's routine song, except she is not singing this time. Orchestra re-start the music, Lark still refuse to cooperate.

Rooster moves her pink
chair to the council table.

RAT
DO WE HAVE A DEAL?

ROOSTER
Be our good girl, won't you? Aren't you
afraid of losing immortality?

Having lost her orchestra,
Lark sings a cappella.

LARK
WHERE I'M FROM, DEATH SHARPENS LIFE
FOR FIVE THOUSAND YEARS,
I'VE BEEN SLEEPING.
IMMORTALITY IS A SLEEP,
WHERE I DREAM THAT YOU ARE THE GODS.

Midway through Lark's a cappella song, the concertmaster (violinist) joins her singing by accompanying her.

LARK (CONT'D)
HOW COULD I HAVE ONLY WANTED TO PLEASE
YOU, YOU, YOU, YOU, YOU... YOU TAINTED
CORRUPTED NARCISSISTIC INFANTILE GODDAMN
GODS?!
WHEN I SING FOR YOU,
I'M A CLOWN.
WHEN I SING FOR HUMANS,
THEY CALL ME GODDESS.
I AM CAPITAL-D DIVINE.
A CAPITAL-G GODDESS.
I AM A GODDESS
BUT YOU ARE ALL DEAF!
MY MOMENT HAS ARRIVED: I'M GOING HOME TO
BE A GODDESS!

I'M AWAKE, YOU DIMWITS!
I QUIT!

RAT
WHAT? UNACCEPTABLE!

ROOSTER
Unacceptable! We can't fire you if you
quit!

LARK
I ALREADY QUIT!

ROOSTER
You can't quit! You'll lose immortality!

LARK
WATCH ME!

Lark storms off the stage.

ROOSTER
(cry)
Wah wah wah...come back! Don't make me the
only poultry in the Zodiac!

RAT
(pounds the gavel)
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!
(beat)(sigh)
Ugh, fire the fiddler!

CURTAIN DOWN

END OF SCENE III

POSTLUDE

CURTAIN UP

THE EARTH. LAVISH LANDSCAPE OF A VILLAGE. SOME YEARS LATER.

70:00 – 80:00

The earth is flourishing since Lark's descent, smog lifted, greens and flowers everywhere. The entire cast is dressed in the Gods' sense of fashion, children roaming freely playing a game of slingshot. Grim Reaper has packed a suitcase for his vacation. Peasant Woman is holding a new baby. The placenta jug is at the same position as Prelude. Lark has aged.

CHORUS, LARK AND PEASANT
EAT, DRINK, MAN, WOMAN,
SYMPHONY, SONATA, CONCERTO, OPERA!

OH, LOTS LOTS LOTS OF BABIES!

LARK AND PEASANT
WHERE ONCE WAS A DESERT,
NOW GROWS A GARDEN

A ROSE IN EVERY PLOT,
A SONG IN EVERY EAR.

WE REVEL IN REFRAINS,
GET HIGH ON HYMNS,
CHERISH OUR CHANTS,
ADORE OUR ANTHEMS,
MAKE MERRY MELODIES!

Children slingshot pebbles at each other. The aged Lark catches a pebble in the crossfire. She dies. Chorus member take over her singing part. So no one notices.

CHORUS AND PEASANT
EAT, DRINK, MAN, WOMAN,
SYMPHONY, SONATA, CONCERTO, OPERA!

OH, LOTS LOTS LOTS OF FACES!

Grim Reaper drags the dead Lark off stage. The placenta jug ascends with numerous envelopes clipped to it.

CHORUS AND PEASANT (CONT'D)
RAT! ALMIGHTY RAT!
ALL-CHIMING LORD OF MUSIC!
ALL-SEEING KING OF ALL LANDS!
WE ARE GRATEFUL CHILDREN OF YOUR EMPIRE!
LONG LIVE THE RAT!

LIGHTS OUT

CURTAIN

END OF OPERA