

**Rated R for Rat**

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

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**A Libretto**

by  
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## 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 voice when combined with human music heals humans' ailments. Despite her potential music power, she serves the Rat's court in Heaven, in a cheerleader uniform, repeating Atonal 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	Actor/Tenor	One of the Zodiac gods, the Rat's sidekick. Comical and loyal, he talks with a slight stutter and repeats everything the Rat says. He has a crush on the Lark  The Grim Reaper A.K.A. Death, is an immortal who speaks the human language.
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## SECONDARY CHARACTERS

THE REMAINING TEN ZODIAC GODS*, servants*, 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

\* In Scene I & III  
SOPRANO: Rabbit, Servants;  
ALTO: Ram, Servants  
Tenor: Tiger, Monkey, Pig, Dog;  
Bass: Ox, Dragon, Snake, Horse,

## DURATION

Appr. 80 minutes without intermission

## ORCHESTRA

Chamber Orchestra Version:

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

Orchestra Version:

2222, 4221, 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 SON 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. Rooster combs his hair to greet the Lark.

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 pubic surface...I mean  
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.

(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