Scenario

on a text by S. J. Perelman

for soprano and virtual orchestra

by

Kyle Gann

2003-4
Fade in, exterior grassy knoll, long shot. Above the scene the thundering measures of Von Suppe's "Light Cavalry Overture." Austerlitz? The Plains of Abraham? Vicksburg? The Little Big Horn? Cambrai? Steady on, old son; it is Yorktown. Under a blood-red setting sun yon proud crest is Cornwallis. Blood and 'ouns, proud sirrah, does brush so lightly past an exciseman of the Crown? Lady Rotogravure's powdered shoulders shrank from the highwayman's caress; what, Jermyn, footpads on Hounslow Heath? A certain party in the D.A.'s office will hear of this, you bastard.... Leave go that lady or I'll smear yuh.... Me, whose ancestors scuttled stately India merchantmen of their comfits and silken stuffs and careened their piratical craft in the Dry Tortugas to carouse with bumboat women till the cock crew? Yuh'll buy my booze or I'll give yuh a handful of clouds. Me, whose ancestors rode with Yancey, Jeb Stuart, and Joe Johnston through the dusty bottoms of the Chickamauga? Oceans of love, but not one cent for tribute.... One side, damn your black hide, suh, or Ah'll send one mo' dirty Litvak to the boneyard. It's right up the exhibitor's alley, Mr. Biberman, and you got to hand it to them on a platter steaming hot. I know, Stanley, but let's look at this thing reasonable; we been showing the public Folly Larrabee's drawers two years and they been cooling off. Jeez Crize - it's a hisTORical drama, Mr. Biberman, it'll blow 'em outa the back of the houses, it's the greatest thing in the industry, it's dynamite! Pardon me, officer, is that General Washington? Bless your little heart, mum, and who may yez be, savin' yer prisince? Honest old Brigid the applewoman of Trinity, is it?... Gentlemen, I give you Martha Custis, hetman of the Don Cossacks, her features etched with the fragile beauty of a cameo. And I walked right in on her before she had a chance to pull the god-damned kimono together.... Tired, Roy, I'm tired, I tell you. Tired of the rain, the eternal surge of the breakers on that lagoon, the glitter of the reef in that eternity out there.... Yeh, yeh, so what? We made FOUR pictures like that last year. Oh, my God, Mr. Biberman, give me a chance, it's only a flashback to plant that she's a woman with a past. Sixteen hundred a week I pay you to hand me back the plot of Love's Counterfeiters Selig made in 1912! She's who? She's what? What's the idea her coming here? What's she trying to do, turn a production office into a whorehouse? No, Miss Reznick, tell her to wait, I'll be through in five minutes.... Yep, he's on a tear, those foreign directors are very temperamental, did I ever tell you about the time that Lazlo Nugasi said he'd buy me a brassiere if I let him put it on? Fake it with a transparency of Khyber Pass. Now an overhead shot of the dusty tired column filing into Sidi-bel-Abbes. Shoulder by shoulder they march in the faded blue of the Legion, fun-loving Dick and serious-minded Tom. Buddies, the greatest word in the French language.... Swinging a chair into that mob of lime-juicers in the Mile End Bar in Shanghai. But came a slant-eyed Chinese adventuress, and then? Don't shoot, Butch, for Gossake! Heave 'em into the prison yard, we'll keep the screws out of the cell-block and wilderness were paradise enow. Stow the swag in Cincy, kid, and go on alone, I'm done for.... This is my hunting lodge, we'll stop here and dry your things. But of course it's all right, cara mia, I'm old enough to be your father. Let me go, you beast - MOTHER! What are you doing here? I ask you confidentially, Horowitz, can't we get
that dame to put on some women's clothes, a skirt or something? The fans are getting wise, all those flat-heeled shoes and men's shirts like a lumberjack. Get me Gerber in publicity, he'll dish out some crap about her happy home life.... What, sir, you dare mention Alexandra Petrovna's name in a saloon? The kid takes it big and gives Diane the gloves across the pan socko. The usual satisfaction, I presume? Drawing on his gloves as a thin sneer played across his features. Yes, a martinet and for Chrisakes remember it's not a musical instrument this time. But eet ees madness, Serge! The best swordsman in St. Mary's parish, he well run you through in a tweenkling! Oh, darling, you can't, you can't. Her hair had become undone and he plunged his face into its fragrance, unbuckling his saber and flinging it on the bed beside them.... Shoot it two ways, you can always dub it in the sound track. She shrieks or she don't shriek, what the hell difference does it make? Told me he was going to night school at the Smolny Institute, the cur. And I believed him, thought Pyotr pityingly, surveying her luscious bust with greedy eyes.... Throw him your garter, Lady Aspinwall, throw your slipper, throw your lunch, but for Gaw'd's sake throw something! Parry! Thrust! Touché! Where are they all now, the old familiar faces?... Get Anderson ready with the sleighbells and keep that snow moving. Hit 'em all! Hotter on eighty-four, Joe Devlin! Are we up to speed? Quiet, please, we're turning!... You cut to the back of the Big Fellow, then three lap dissolves of the presses - give 'em that Ufa stuff, then to the street - a newsbody, insert of the front page, the El roaring by - Kerist, it's the gutsiest thing in pictures! Call you back, chief. Never mind the Hays office, this baby is censor-proof! Call you back, chief. We'll heave the telephone through the back door and smack her in the kisser with the grapefruit, they liked it once and they'll love it twice. Call you back, chief. The gat in the mesh-bag. A symbol, get me? Now remember, staccato... A bit tight, my sweet? Marrowforth teetered back and forth on his heels, his sensitive artist's fingers caressing the first edition he loved.... Do I have to work with a lot of pimply grips giving me the bird? Papa's in the doghouse and keep up the tempo of the last scene, you looked crummy in yesterday's dailies. A warm, vivid and human story with just that touch of muff the fans demand.... Ask Hyman Gerber of Waco, he can smell a box-office picture a mile away. In the freezing mists of dawn they gathered by the fuselages of their planes and gripped hands. But Rex Jennings of the shining eyes and the high heart never came back. Jerry got him over Chalons. I tell you it's murder to send a mere boy up there in a crate like that! The god-damned production office on my neck all day. It's midsummer madness, Fiametta! You mustn't! I must! I want you! You want me? But I - I'm just a poor little slavey, and you - why all life's ahead of you! Fame, the love of a good woman, children! And your music, Raoul! Excuse me, miss, are you Fiametta Desplains? I am Yankel Patchouli, a solicitor. Here is my card and a report of my recent urinalysis.

Raoul! Raoul! Come quick! A million dollars! Now you can go to Paris and study your counterpoint! Damn my music, Fiametta, my happiness was in my own back yard all the time and I was, how you say it, one blind fool.... But why are you looking at me in that strange way, Tony? ... Tony! I'm afraid of you! Oh... You utter contemptible despicable CAD.... You didn't know she was the morganatic wife of Prince Rupprecht, did you? That her affairs with men were the talk of Vienna, did you? That - Vanya, is this true?... Oh, mumsey, I want to die. That hooker's gotta lay off that booze, Mr. Metz, once more she comes on the set stinking and I take the next boat back to Buda-Pesth. But in a great tangled garden sits a forlorn tragic-eyed figure; the face a mask of carved ivory, the woman nobody knows - Tilly
Bergstrom. What lies behind her shattered romance with Grant Snavely, idol of American flaps? Turn 'em over, you punks, I'll stay on this set till I get it right. Cheese it, de nippers! The jig is up, long live the jig - ring out the old, ring in the new. For love belongs to everyone, the best things in life are free.

First performance: Martha Herr, October 5, 2012, Bard College

Duration: 17 minutes, 12 seconds
Scenario
for theatrical soprano and virtual orchestra

S. J. Perelman

Kyle Gann
2003-4

Voice

Flute

Trombone

Harp

Synthesizer

Timpani

Electric Bass

 Fade in, ex-te-ri-or gras-sy knoll, long shot.
Above the scene, the thundering measures of Von Suppe's...
"Light Cavalry" Overture.

Auslitz? The plains of Abraham? Vicks-

Scenario
burg? The Little Big Horn? Cambrai?
Steady on, old son; it is Yorktown. Under a

Scenario
blood-red setting sun yon proud crest is Corn-wal-lis. Blood and'ouns, proud sir-rah, dost

Scenario
brush so light-ly past an ex-cise-man of the crown?
Voice

Lady Ro-to-gra-vure's powdered shoulders shrunk

Fl.

Hp.

Vln.

Vla.

Ve.

E. Bass

Scenario
Voice

from the highway-man's care;
what, Jermy, foot pads on Hounslow Heath?

Fl.

Hp.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

\[ q = 100 \]

\[ \frac{9}{8} \]

\[ \frac{9}{8} \]

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\[ \frac{9}{8} \]

Scenario

\[ q = 84 \]

\[ \frac{7}{4} \]

A certain party in the D. A.'s office will hear of this, you bastard.
Leave go that la-dy or I'll smear yuh. Me,

whose an-ces-tors scut-tled state-ly In-di-a mer-chan-t-men of their
com-fits and sil-kenstuffs and ca-reened their pi-ra-ti-cal craft in the

Dry Turkas to ca-rouse with bum-boat wo-men till the cock crew?
Yuh'll buy my booze or I'll give yuh a handful of clouds.

Me, whose ancestors rode with Yan-cey,
Jeb Stuart and Joe Johnston through the dusty bottom of the Chic-ka-mau-ga?

Oceans of love—but not one cent for
tri-bute. One side, damn your blackhide, suh, or Ah'll send one mo'dir-ty Lit-vak to the
bone-yard. It's
right up the exhibit's alley, Mister Biberman, and you got to

hand it to them on a platter steaming hot, I
know, Stanley, but let's look at this thing reasonable; we been showing the public

Folly Larbee's drawers two years and they been cooling off.

Scenario
Jeez Crize - it's a historical drama, Mister

Bi-ber-man, it'll blow 'em out of the back of the houses, it's the greatest thing in the industry, it's dynamite!

Scenario
94
\begin{align*}
\text{Fl.} & \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \\
\text{C Tpt.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Timp.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Dr.} & \quad \vdots
\end{align*}
\begin{align*}
\text{Voice} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{C Tpt.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Timp.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Dr.} & \quad \vdots
\end{align*}
\begin{align*}
\text{Voice} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Tbn.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Dr.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Vla.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Vc.} & \quad \vdots
\end{align*}

97
\begin{align*}
\text{Voice} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{C Tpt.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Timp.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Dr.} & \quad \vdots
\end{align*}

100
\begin{align*}
\text{Voice} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Tbn.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Dr.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Vla.} & \quad \vdots \\
\text{Vc.} & \quad \vdots
\end{align*}

Scenario
Voice

pri-since?  Ho-nest old Bri-gid  the apple wo-man of Tri-in-ty,  is it?

Fl.

mp

Glock.

Dr.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

==

Voice

Gen-tle-men,  I give you Mar-tha Cus-tis,  het-man of the Don Cos-sacks,  her fea-tures etched__

Glock.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Scenario
with the fragile beauty of a cameo. And I walked right

in on her before she had a chance to pull the god-damned kimono together.

Tired, Roy, I'm tired, I tell you.
Tired of the rain, the eternal surge of breakers on that lagoon, the

glitter of the reef on that eternity out there. Yeah, yeah, so what?

Scenario
We made FOUR pictures like that last year. Oh my God, Mister

Bi-ber-man, give me a chance, it's only a flash-back to

Scenario
plant that she's a woman with a past

Sixteen-hundred-a week I pay you

Scenario
130

Voice

to hand me back the plot of Love's Counterfeits Seelig made in

Fl.

Hp.

Glock.

Timp.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

E. Bass

Scenario
nineteen twelve. She's who? She's what? What's the idea her coming here? What's she

Scenario
try-ing to do, turn pro-due-tion of-fice in-to a who-re-house?

No, Miss Rez-nick, tell her to wait, I'll be through in five mi-nutes.

Scenario
Yep, he's on a tear, those foreigners are very temporal, did I ever

Tell you about the time that Lazlo Nugas said he'd buy me a bra-

Scenario
Voice

Fl.

Hp.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Scenario
Fake it with transparency of Khyber Pass. Now an overhead shot of the dusty tired

154
Voice

Ob. d'A.

158
Voice

column filing to Si-di-bel-Abbes. Sholder by sholder they march

Ob. d'A.

Mar.

162
Voice

in the faded blue of the Legion, loving Dick and serious-

Ob. d'A.

Mar.

Dr.
min-ded Tom.  Bud-dies the grea-test word
in the French Language, swinging a chair into that

Scenario
mob of lime juic-ers in the Mile End Bar in Shang-
hai. But came a slant-eyed Chinese adventuress, and then? Don't

But came a slant-eyed Chinese adventuress, and then? Don't

shoot, Butch, for gos-sake! Heave'em in-to the pri-son yard, we'll keep the screws out of the

Scenario
Voice
cell-block and wild-ness

C Tpt.

Tbn.

Hp.

Glock.

Dr.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Scenario
Voice

were paradise e - - - now.

Harm.

A. Gtr.

Timp.

Dr.

Vc.

Scenario
This is my hunting lodge, we'll stop here and dry your things.

But of course it's all right. Cara mi-a, I'm old enough to be your

Scenario
193
Voice
fa-ther. Let me go, you beast
MO- THER!

195
Voice
What are you doing here? I ask you con-fi-den-tial-ly, Ho- ro-witz,

Scenario
can't we get that dame to put on some women's clothes, a skirt or something?

The fans are getting wise, all those flat-heeled shoes and men's shirts like a lumberjack. Get me Gerber in publicity, he'll...
dish out some crap about her happy home life.
What, sir?

Voice
Fl.
Harm.
Glock.
Xyl.
Timp.
Dr.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.

What, sir?

Voice
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vc.
Cb.

What, sir?

Voice
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vc.
Cb.

What, sir?

Voice
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vc.
Cb.

What, sir?

Voice
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vc.
Cb.

What, sir?

Voice
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vc.
Cb.

What, sir?

Voice
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vc.
Cb.

What, sir?

Voice
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vc.
Cb.

What, sir?

Voice
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Vc.
Cb.

What, sir?
kid takes it big and gives Di-ane the gloves ac-ross, the pan soc-ko._ The u-su-al sa-tis-

fac-tion, I pre-sume? Draw-ing on his gloves as a thin sneer played ac-ross his
Voice

Yes, amar-tin-net and for Chri-sakes re-mem-ber it's not a mu-si-cal

Cl.

Xyl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Scenario
in-stru-ment this time...

But eet ees mad-ness, Ser-ge! The best

swords-man in St. Ma-ry's pa-rish, he-weel run youn-throw in at-weenk-ling! Oh,

Scenario
Voice

darling, you can't, you can't.

Her hair had become undone and he plunged his

Fl.

Cl.

Hp.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

face into its fragrance, unbuckling his saber and flinging it on the bed beside them

Scenario
mmm... Shoot it two ways, you can always dub it in the

Scenario
Voice

sound-track. She shrieks or she

Harm.

Tbn.

Glock.

Mar.

Timp.

Dr.

Scenario
don't shriek, what the hell difference does it make? Told me he was going tonight school at the 

Smolny Institute, the cur. And I believed him, thought

Scenario
Pyotr, surveying her luscious bust with greedy eyes.

Throw him your garment, Lady Aspinwall, throw your slipper, throw your...
lunch, but for God's sake, _ throw some- thing!  

Par- ry!  
Thrust!_  
Tou

Scenario
Ritard...

ché!

Where are they all now?

Scenario
Voice

mov-ing.     Hit'em all!     Hot-teroneigh-ty - four,     JoeDev lin!

Glock.

Mar.

Dr.

268

Scenario

271

Voice

Are we up to speed?     Qui-et, please,     we're turn-ing!      You

Glock.

Mar.

Dr.

Vla.

Cb.
cut to the back of the Big Fellow, then three lap dissolves of the
presents
give'em that U fa stuff, then to the street - a news-body insert

Scenario
Voice: of the front page the El roaring by

Fl.: 

Glock.: 

Mar.: 

Dr.: 

Vla.: 

Cb.: 

Scenario
rist!

it's the gut-siest thing in pictures!
Call you back, chief.

Nevermind the Hays office,
this baby is censor-proof!  Call you back, chief.  We'll

Scenario
heave the telephone through the back door and smack her in the kisser - with the

grape - fruit, they liked it once and they'll love it twice.

Call you back, chief.
The gat in the mesh-bag. A symbol, get me?

Scenario
Now re-\-mem-ber, stac-\-ca-to. A bit tight, my sweet?

Scenario
Mar-row-forth tee-tered back and forth on his heels, his sen-si-tive ar-tist's fin-gers ca-

Scenario
res-sing the first e-di-tion he loved. Do I have to work with a lot of 

Scenario
pimp-lygrips
giv-ing me the bird?
Pa-pa'sinthe dog-house and keep up the
tempo of the last scene, you looked crum-my in yes-ter-day's dai-lies.

A warm, vi-vid, and hu-man sto-ry with just that touch of muff the fans de-mand.
Ask Hy-manGer-ber of Wa-co, he can smell a box of-office picture a mile away.
In the freezing mists of dawn they gathered by the fuselages of their...
planes and gripped hands. But Rex Jennings of the
shining eyes and the high heart never came back.
Voice

Jeremy got him over Chalons. I tell you it's murder to send a mere boy up there in a

Fl.

pp

Dr.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Scenario
crate like that. The god-damned production of- fice on my neck all day.
It's mid-summer madness, Fa-met-ta! You musn't! I must! I want you! You want me? But I, I'm just a poor little slave, and
you, why all life's ahead of you! Fame, the love of a good woman,
— children! And your music, Raoul! Ex-cuse me, miss,
Voice: are you Fi-a-met-ta Des-plains? I am Yan-kel Pat-chou-li, a so-li-ci-tor. Here is my card and a re-port of my

Cl. Mar. Dr. Vc.

scenario
Recent urialysis. Raoul! Raoul! Come quick! Arco

Million dollars! Now you can go to Paris and study your counter-point!
Damn my music, Fa-metta, my hap-pi-ness was in my
own back yard all the time and I was how you say it, one blind fool.

Scenario
But why are you looking at me in that strange way, Tony? Tony!

I'm afraid of you! Oh! You utter contemptible de -

Scenario
\( q = 132 \)

Voice, Fl., Cl., Hp., Glock., Xyl., Dr., Vln., Vla., Vc.

Scenario
know she was the mor-ga-natic

wife of Prince Rupprecht, did you?

Scenario
That her affairs with men were the talk of Vi-
Scene 394

Voice

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Scenario
mum-sey I want to die. That hoo-ker's got-ta lay off the booze Mister Metz,
Once more she comes on the set stinking, and I take the next boat back to Budapest.

But in a great tangled garden sits a forlorn tragic-eyed figure, the

\[ \text{Scenario} \]
face a mask of carved iv'ry, the woman nobody
knows Tilly Bergstrom.

What lies behind her.
shattered romance with Grant Snively, idol
of American flaps? Turn'em over, you punks, I'll
stay on this set till I get it right. Cheese it, de nippers! The
jig is up, long live the jig
ring out the old, ring in the new. For

\textbf{Scenario}
love belongs to everyone, the best things in life are free.
Scenario

July 2003 - July 22, 2004
Lewisburg, PA
Red Hook, NY