

HACKNEY
MUSIC
DEVELOPMENT
TRUST

HMDT

ENSURING A
MUSICAL FUTURE

PRESENTS



ON LONDON FIELDS

IT'S HERE
IT'S NOW!

E8

A COMMUNITY OPERA FOR HACKNEY

Music by Matthew King

Words by Alasdair Middleton

THE BOOK



PROLOGUE

1649

A GOLDEN PALACE SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS. ABOVE THE PALACE HANGS A PERFECT HEAVEN. IN THE PALACE A GROUP OF GORGEOUS COURTIER'S BOW AND SMIRK BEFORE A GILDED KING. IN THE DARKNESS, BARELY PERCEPTIBLE, STAND A GROUP OF PEOPLE.

COURTIER'S

The King is Heaven's especial care.
He's King because God put him there.
God likes the King. The King likes God
A velvet glove.

(HANNAH EMERGES FROM THE DARK CROWD)

HANNAH

An Iron rod.
Must lives depend on one man's frown
Because he wears a tinsel crown?
Enthroned upon his people's fear
Does God speak only in his ear?
Will you believe what bishops tell –
If you touched the king then heaven fell.

PEOPLE (EMERGING FROM THE DARKNESS)

But it will won't it?

HANNAH

Will it Hell.
People
Pull down
Royalty
Put on the Armour of God.
Pull down the King in all his Pride.
Heaven's on the people's side.

(THE PEOPLE ATTACK THE PALACE PULLING IT TO PIECES)

PEOPLE

The people are the heroes now
Behemoth's armed with scythe and plough.
The hero is the common man
Mightier than Leviathan.

(THE PALACE IS DESTROYED BY NOW. THE THRONE HAS BECOME A BLOCK. IT STARTS TO SNOW. THE KING, STRIPPED OF HIS GOLD, IS LED TO EXECUTION.)

PEOPLE

The block is thick. The Axe is keen.
The blow was swift. The stroke was clean.

COURTIER'S

He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable scene.

THE KING

Remember.

(THE KING'S HEAD IS CUT OFF)

HANNAH

Reflected in a King's dead eyes
God smiling at us through the skies.
And in the snow like roses lies
The crimson road to Paradise.

HANNAH AND PEOPLE

Farmers of Paradise, lift up your scythes
Angels to our harvest fly

Soil labours in a monstrous birth
Paradise is raised on earth.
The throne's a block, the sword, a crown
All the world's turned upside down.
Reap all that the angels will allow
Heaven's here and Paradise now.
Paradise now.
Paradise Now.

ACT ONE

A FEW YEARS LATER, IN HACKNEY

MEN ARE BUILDING A LARGE HOUSE. WOMEN ARE AT WORK. CHILDREN ARE PLAYING. OLDER PEOPLE ARE WATCHING. IT IS A HAPPY, INDUSTRIOUS SCENE, WATCHED SOURLY FROM A CORNER BY SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY, A PURITAN, AND HIS CRABBY-FACED FEMALE COHORTS, THE COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

CHILDREN

Shake, shake, shake,

DEBORAH

Shake yourselves awake and free,
Round the tree of liberty!
It was your sweat that fed its roots
Now shake and taste its sweetest fruits.

CHILDREN

Shake yourselves awake and free

PEOPLE

Shake the fruits and watch them fall.
Liberty! Liberty! Room for all!

ABEL

From the tree of liberty
Build the house of Unity!
Raise the roof with grace and strength.
Hope is its height and Love its length.

DEBORAH, ABEL, PEOPLE

It's strong, it's deep, it's wide, it's tall!
Raise the roof of Liberty Hall.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Hackney's the suburb that God forgot,
You can't walk the streets without getting shot.
The people are rascals, renegades, rapists;
And I strongly suspect that some are...

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

What? What? What?

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY (SHUDDERING)

Papists!

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

(SHOCKED TO THEIR CORES)

No!



SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Yes.
Oh,
If ever I saw a place that's fit
To be consigned to the lowest pit
Of Hell –
Well –
Hackney's certainly it.

EVERYBODY

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
This is the house we built
Together.
These are the nails,
The nails are dreams,
That hold together
The house we built.
And this is the house we built
Together.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY/COUSINS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH

Mirth and Merriment
Music, Song
Don't they know
That it's all wrong.

PEOPLE

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
These are the hammers,
The hammers are hope,
That strike the nails,
The nails are dreams,
That hold together
The house we built
And this is the house we built
Together.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY/COUSINS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH

Laughter everywhere
You turn.
Don't they know
They're going to burn?

PEOPLE

This is the wood,
The wood is strong,
Bound by the hammers,
The hammers are hope,
That strike the nails,
The nails are dreams,

That hold together
The house we built
And this is the house we built
Together!

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY/COUSINS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH

They dance, they joke.
They sing as well.
They're all going
Straight to hell.

(THE BUILDING WORK STOPS ABEL STANDS BACK)

ABEL

I think it's finished, what about you?

DEBORAH

Yes, I think it's finished too.

ABEL

Carve the date above the door,
So generations yet unborn
May stand before the door and see
We worked, we lived, for Liberty

DEBORAH

Carve the date above the door,
So our baby yet unborn
May see how we, a man, a wife,
Worked to build a better life.

PEOPLE

Carve the date above the door,
So generations yet unborn
May see how, after Civil War,
We strove to bind what had been torn.

MEN

Carve the date.
What is the date?

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY (APPROACHING)

Forget the date. Forget the door.
What's this shoddy building for?

ABEL

In this house
We have the right
To think as we like,
To live as we like,

CHILDREN

To think as we like,
To live as we like,
To eat and to dance and to drink as we like.

PEOPLE

To choose as we like,
To look as we like,
To love and to marry and lose as we like.

PEOPLE

To say as we like,
To laugh as we like,
To stay and to pray and to play as we like.

PEOPLE (VARIOUSLY, ELDERS, CHILDREN, ETC.)

We'll have some friends round for a drink.
We'll have a pray.
We'll have a think.
We'll talk about the good old days
Indulge in funny little ways.
We'll have a party or a ball.
Sometimes we'll do bugger all.
We'll have a cuppa and a bun.
Invent unthought of forms of fun.
We'll try on different pairs of shoes
We'll do exactly as we choose
In the house we built together.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

When news of this gets back to town,
Parliament will pull it down.

CHILDREN

Pull it down? Pull it down?
We'll beat up anyone pulling it down

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

And you kids can forget all the jigs and high jinks you've
got planned.
Here's some good news from Parliament:
Dancing's been banned.

CHILDREN

What?

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Dancing. Banned.

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

And jokes and bingo.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Christmas too.

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

D'you know mince pies are bad for you?

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

And singing.

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

It's official.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Cromwell's made a proclamation:
"Singing is the lowest form of human communication."
So say goodbye to ballads,
Carols,
All that kind of thing.

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

God loves a world where nobody can sing.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

He's banned
Maypoles,
Southend,
Donkeys,
Rock,
And it's prison for anyone caught saying 'Cock'

AN ELDER

What's that he said?

CHILDREN

Cock's been banned.

SOME OLD LADIES

This banning lark's got out of hand.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

He's banned
Loofahs,
Yo-yo's,
The name Pauline,
Tea,
And any sort of feather where a feather shouldn't be.

PEOPLE

Where would you put a feather where a
feather shouldn't be?

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

You should never, ever, ever put a feather on a hat.

PEOPLE

Oh. Is Morris-Dancing banned yet?

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Yes.

PEOPLE

Well, thank God for that!

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

I'll wipe the smirks right of your face
When my soldiers close this place.

ABEL

Your soldiers.

DEBORAH

What do they want here?

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

We have a little business,
A small arrest to make.
I've a warrant for Hannah Trapnel.

PEOPLE

The prophetess.

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

The fake.

ABEL

No.
When she speaks it's like a diamond.

PEOPLE

A meteor.
A spark.

DEBORAH

Like something true and perfect shining through the dark.

CHILDREN

She knows things.
She comforts us.
She sings down the stars.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Well, she can sing her heart out
When she's safely behind bars.



(ENTER HANNAH'S WOMEN)

HANNAH'S WOMEN

Hannah, the prophetess,
The vessel of the Lord,
Condemned to kneel
Before Cromwell's sword.
Hannah, the prophetess,
Silenced, in pain.
Condemned, imprisoned
In Cromwell's chain.

(SOLDIERS DRAG IN HANNAH, CHAINED, IN A CART)

PEOPLE

Bless us Hannah, bless our works!
How sad she looks.
How tired how holy.
All the things she suffers, she suffers for our sake.

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Look at her there, simpering the hypocrite, the fake.

PEOPLE

I've heard her sing and prophecy for hours at a time.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

She made a bleeding racket.

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

And it didn't even rhyme.

PEOPLE

I've heard her sing with tongues of angels and call upon
God's name.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

She's a sad, seditious harpy, her sort are all the same

PEOPLE

She's inspired

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

She's a nutter.

PEOPLE

She's a martyr

SIR BAWNAGAYNE.

She's a witch.



PEOPLE

She's a prophetess.

CHILDREN

She's holy

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

She's a trouble-making bitch.

PEOPLE

Bless us, Hannah, bless our works.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

She's in no position to bless anybody.

ABEL

Speak, Hannah, spark.

HANNAH'S WOMEN

Parliament's hung

A stone on her tongue.

Parliament's silenced

The songs that were sung.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

What they're trying to say's she's forbidden to speak.

She's forbidden to speak

She's been filling your weak

Silly heads for too long with her rhymes.

She's under suspicion

Of Scandal, Sedition

I suspect they're the least of her crimes.

ABEL (MOVING TOWARDS THE CART)

Hannah.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Get back! Soldiers!

(THE SOLDIERS LOOK THREATENING)

DEBORAH

Abel!

(ABEL STEPS BACK)

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

I'd advise you lot to get about your business

To disperse in peace with the minimum of fuss.

ABEL (TO DEBORAH.)

We can't just let them take her like this.

DEBORAH

Wait a moment then seize your chance.

(ABEL HAS AN IDEA. FEIGNING CHEERFULNESS HE JOINS THE MEN FOR A DRINKING SONG)

ABEL

When you've drunk the pub dry

But have no way to pay,

What do you say when the reckoning's to pay?

Say nothing!

PEOPLE

Say nothing!

ABEL

Just softly, quietly slip away.

When you want to go out

But she wants you to stay,

What do you say when you just can't get away?

Say nothing!

PEOPLE

Say nothing!

(QUIETLY, TO A GROUP OF CHILDREN)

DEBORAH

Dance, children, dance.

Show the nice man

How well you dance.

(THE CHILDREN BEGIN TO DANCE)

(SIR BAWNAGAYNE AND THE SOLDIERS ARE PREPARING TO LEAVE, HE SPOTS THE DANCING)

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Are you deaf?

I said dancing's forbidden.

DEBORAH (QUIETLY, TO A GROUP OF ELDERS)

Sing him a song.

I'm sure he'd like that.

One of the old songs.

ELDERS

One of the old songs?

DEBORAH

The special old songs.



(SIR BAWNAGAYNE AND THE COUSINS ARE TRYING TO STOP THE CHILDREN DANCING. ABEL AND SOME MEN SIDLE IDLY TOWARDS HANNAH.)

ELDERS

I met a portly poulterer
With something up his smock
What's that poking out your smocking?
He smiled and said My cock

(SIR BAWNAGAYNE FREEZES. THEN HURRIES TOWARDS THE SOLDIERS THE CHILDREN KEEP DANCING)



SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Arrest those women lock them up
I'm sure they just said.....

SOLDIERS

They said cock.

(SIR BAWNAGAYNE PUSHES THE SOLDIERS TOWARDS THE PEOPLE SINGING)



ELDERS

My cock likes the dark and warm
But it's pecking through my smock.
I wonder, if you wouldn't mind,
Could I stick it up your frock?

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

My ears are burning from the shock
Those people said...

SOLDIERS

They just said cock

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Stop it! Silence! Lock them up!

(SIR BAWNAGAYNE, THE COUSINS AND THE SOLDIERS TRY TO STOP THE SINGING AND DANCING. ABEL AND SOME MEN LIFT HANNAH QUIETLY FROM THE CART.)



ABEL/ SOME MEN

Softly, quietly, slip away.

DEBORAH

Let's have another:
Dance and play.

ELDERS

I met a saucy sailor
As I strolled along the sands
Who was fiddling with something
That he held between his hands.
He said "I've got this massive wrinkle
But it won't come out it's shell;
I've been tugging it all afternoon
D'you want to pull as well?

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Hackney is degenerate!
You people make me sick!

(TO THE COUSINS AND THE SOLDIERS)

Come on let's get out of here.

(HE SEES THE EMPTY CART)

Where's my prophet gone?

CHILDREN

Some angels came along
And took her to their bosom.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

You nasty little liars. You know that isn't so.

COUSINS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

If angels came to Hackney then we'd be the first to know.

CHILDREN

They were entertaining angels,
They just quietly came along,
They didn't blare on trumpets,
They just sang a silly song.

Some angels came from Heaven
And hovered round this place
But you wouldn't know an angel
If it stared you in the face.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY (TO THE SOLDIERS)

Silence!
After her.
Find her or you'll all get the sack.

(TO THE PEOPLE)

As for you degenerates,
Don't worry,
I'll be back

(SIR BAWNAGAYNE, THE COUSINS AND THE SOLDIERS LEAVE,
FOLLOWED BY THE JEERING PEOPLE.)

PEOPLE, CHILDREN, ELDERS

I met a swarthy soldier
Whose uniform was tight.
His helmet was enormous,
So purple and so bright.

O what a splendid helmet!
What makes it glitter so ?
He said, "I spit upon my palms
And rub it to and fro,"

(EXIT SIR BAWNAGAYNE, THE COUSINS, SOLDIERS AND PEOPLE)

(THE STAGE IS EMPTY EXCEPT FOR DEBORAH, ABEL ENTERS)

ABEL

She's safe.
They've gone

DEBORAH

They've gone.
For how long?
They'll be back again soon.
More soldiers.
More guns.

ABEL

Let them come.
We're strong enough to fight them.
Beat them.
Make them run.

DEBORAH

Aren't you tired?

ABEL

We've got to beat them!

DEBORAH

I suppose so.
The date was never carved above the door.

ABEL

I'll do it now.

DEBORAH

No.
It will blunt your knife.

ABEL
So?

DEBORAH
You should keep it sharp.

ABEL
What are you looking at?

DEBORAH
I'm looking at you.
Sometimes you seem like a sailor;
Sailing an alien sea.
Does the map of your heart show an island
That's marked for your baby and me?

ABEL
If sometimes I seem like a sailor
Adrift on an ocean wild;
My ship's always heading for harbour –
My home and my wife and my child.

DEBORAH
Your eyes are fixed upon freedom.
Your hair still smells of the sea.
Does the map of your heart
Hold an island
That's marked for your baby and me?

ABEL
When I feel our baby stirring,
Soft, beneath my hand,
You're the only realm I dream of;
You're my new found land.

DEBORAH AND ABEL
When I feel your hand is harboured
Safely in my hand,
You're the only realm I dream of,
You're my new found land.

(RE-ENTER THE PEOPLE AND HANNAHS WOMEN)

HANNAH'S WOMEN
Gather the people
Tonight.
Let them gather
Tonight on the Downs.
For Hannah will bless.
She'll sing for joy
Of the songs sung in Heaven;

Hannah, the Daughter of Music,
The Prophetess!

PEOPLE
On the Downs
Tonight we'll gather
On London Fields
She'll sing stars down.
She'll smite stones together;
To inflame, to inspire.
The sparks that she scatters
Set all hearts on fire.

DEBORAH
Fire,
Yes she'll fire,
She'll burn the house down.
Her mouthful of matches
Will make enough ashes
To smear on our faces
And cover our hair.

ABEL
But not just us.
Call all the rest;
The Disenchanted,
Dispossessed.
All who fall
Out side the light
Of what the Parliament
Says is right.
Run through the City
Call them all.

EVERYBODY
We'll show them what the people dare
We'll burn the night. We'll tear the air.

Shake yourselves awake and free
Beneath the tree of Unity
It was your sweat that fed its root
And now its branches reach the sky.

DEBORAH
Oh, Abel.
The baby.
The baby moved!

ABEL

He's leaping, love,
He's laughing,
He's dancing for pure joy.
He's strong
And he is longing –
Here –
Listen, boy:
Shake yourself awake and free
Climb the tree of Unity,
You're it's tenderest, greenest shoot:
Safe, between its leaves you'll lie.

EVERYBODY

Shake yourselves awake and free
Dance round the tree of Unity,
Wear its flowers and taste its fruit
Climb its branches to the sky.

END OF ACT ONE



ACT TWO



LATER THAT NIGHT, ON LONDON FIELDS

(ENTER SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY, STEALTHILY)

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

This is the place.
They'll soon be here.
Babbling, blaspheming.
Little knowing that my soldiers have the place surrounded.
I'll let them swill their fill,
then –
Snap!
Carnality confounded.



(ENTER HANNAH, UNSEEN BY SIR SURLY AND UNAWARE OF HIM)

HANNAH

This is the place.
They'll soon be here.
Hungry and eager:
The lives and dreams that hang upon my tongue.
O take this gift away.
Let the prophecies remain unsung.



(ENTER DEBORAH, UNSEEN AND UNAWARE OF HANNAH AND SIR BAWNAGAYNE)

DEBORAH

This is the place.
They'll soon be here.
Inflamed and inspired,
Drinking madness from that holy woman's song.
What I'd give for half her power,
To keep my child and husband safe where they belong.

Let me keep the little that's mine.
Don't sing the song, Hannah.
Don't show them the sign.



HANNAH

Singing words I don't know in a voice that's not mine.
Deaf to the prophecies, blind to the sign.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

My soldiers will snatch them. They'll all be mine.
Be patient a moment till I give the sign.

(EXIT SIR BAWNAGAYNE, UNSEEN. HANNAH MOVES TO LEAVE IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. DEBORAH SEES HER)

DEBORAH

Hannah.

HANNAH

Deborah.

DEBORAH

I.....

HANNAH

I know what you would ask.

I can't.

It isn't in my power.

DEBORAH

I wish I had your power.

HANNAH

And I wish that I had what you have.

(EXIT HANNAH ENTER ABEL)

ABEL

Deborah. Why didn't you wait for me?

What are you doing here, alone?

DEBORAH

I came to see Hannah.

I came to ask Hannah to stop all this.

ABEL

Why?

DEBORAH

Oh don't worry, she won't.

She won't stop.

She'll stir up trouble and danger and strife.

ABEL

Perhaps it's through stirring up trouble and danger

That people are able to build a new life.

How can we build on a broken word?

How can we sleep in a faith that is weak?

When one is imprisoned, then nobody's free.

When one tongue is silenced, then no-one can speak.

DEBORAH

The sailor's fixed his eye on Eden,

Set sail for a foreign land.

And left his wife and baby weeping,

Waving, steadfast on the sand.

(THE PEOPLE ENTER)

PEOPLE

Who held the axe to spark, sharp at the stone?

Who dragged the King by his beard from the throne?

Who laughed when the crown tumbled into the mud?

Who washed the pavements with hot, bright blue blood?

My mother, my Brother, my sister and me!

We did it because we all longed to be free!

ABEL

Who plunders palaces? Who knocks down towers?

Who tells the Parliament power is ours?

Who levels the fences? Who breaks down the wall?

Who doesn't rest till there's freedom for all?

My Mother, my brother, my sister and me!

We do it because we all want to stay free!

DEBORAH

Who wants a decent roof over our head?

Who wants a cradle, an oven, a bed?

Who wants four walls and a chimney, a door?

Who doesn't want to be scared anymore?

Me and my baby! My baby and me!

We thought that that's what it meant to be free!

(HANNAH AND HER WOMEN ENTER)

EVERYBODY EXCEPT DEBORAH.

Who'll feed the hungry, unchain the oppressed?

Who'll comfort the lonely? Who'll give the tired rest?

Who'll shout that Kings are not sent from above?

Who'll shatter the sword? Who will conquer through love?

My Mother, my brother, my sister and me!

We'll do it because we all want to stay free.

PEOPLE

Bless us Hannah. Bless our works!

We've lost ourselves

And it is night.

You're our Voice.

Our Hope.

Our Light.

HANNAH'S WOMEN

Listen,

Your lost children call.

Answer them.

Speak.

HANNAH

Death thickens my tongue.
 I'm forbidden to speak.
 Let the children go hungry.
 I'm tired.
 I'm weak.

PEOPLE

Bless us Hannah. Bless our works.
 We are Cold. Alone.
 Strike stone on stone.
 Speak, Hannah, Spark.
 Blaze and sing.
 We stretch our numb hands
 To the warmth of your words
 Speak to us.
 Why don't you speak to us?
 Why doesn't she speak to us?

ABEL

Look.
 How many of us there are.
 And not just us.
 From town and country pour
 The Disenchanted,
 Dispossessed.
 Look.
 How many of them there are!

(ENTER THE FIFTH-MONARCHISTS)

FIFTH-MONARCHISTS

Soldiers of Heaven, look to the Sky!
 The Kingdom of the Just is nigh!
 Stern Seraphim with icy swords
 Cut free the Beast's restraining cords.

(ENTER THE RANTERS)

RANTERS

Thought is free
 And language too.
 Down with law and words.
 What is Man
 That he should do
 More than beasts and birds?

EVERYBODY

Bless us, Hannah. Bless our works.



HANNAH

They gasp for words
Like greedy babies
Guzzling at my breast.

(ENTER THE LEVELLERS)

LEVELLERS

Tear down the fence.
Plough up the lawn.
The lease is invalid.
The contract is torn.
Tear up the hedge.
Pull down the wall.
Till there's no more property.
Till there's room for all.

(ENTER THE QUAKERS)

QUAKERS

Wake me,
Lord,
Awake,
Awake.
Break
My stubborn heart
O break!
Shake me
To my senses,
Shake.
Talith!
Uperhal!
Alardith!
Varsi!

EVERYBODY

Bless us, Hannah. Bless our works.

HANNAH

A thirsty people
In the desert
Strike the stone
Of my cold breast.

EVERYBODY

Bless us, Hannah. Bless our works.

HANNAH

In the night
The children wandered.
A woman lit

A burning brand.

I.....

People....

Good people.....

FIFTH MONARCHISTS

In the desert
The people thirsted.
A rock was struck
And water sprang

HANNAH

They.....

Not.....

They'll hang.....

FIFTH MONARCHISTS

They lifted up their eyes,
From heaven
A stone was flung
And the stone sang.

HANNAH

I....

No....

Help me. Help me.

Forgive...

EVERYBODY

Wandering,
Lost,
Deserted,
Thirsty.

HANNAH

I can't ...

I can't see.

It.

I can't see it.

EVERYBODY

Spark, Burn, Blaze!
Strike the rock!
Let water spring!
Fling the stone!
Sing stone!
Sing!

HANNAH

Where?

Where?

I can't see it!



Where?
Oh blood!

EVERYBODY
Burn!

HANNAH
Blood!

EVERYBODY
Burn!

HANNAH
Blood!
Blood!
Blood washed away.
Wound healed.
Faded scars.
Look where the balm of the stars eases their grief.
And the blood is forgotten
The wound is forgotten
The scar is forgotten
And the sword is wrought into a plough.
The axe is a tool.
The shield is a pan on the fire filled with innocent broth
And the gun is a toy to scare birds from their fields.
His helmet now is made a hive for bees
And the gibbet a windmill grinding the wheat of their ease.
And their uses of destruction
Are utterly forgotten.
No.
No.
No corpse is tugged from its grave and swung from a tree
No skinny dogs lick from the pavement steaming fresh blood.
No towers fall.
No Black Comets blaze.
But look
Look!
Look where the balm of the stars eases their grief.
Look cities,
Not cities
But fields,
Fields of orient wheat!
Look, fields!
Not fields
But rivers of jubilant gold!
Look rivers!
Not rivers
But music sung in the streets.
And the cities are ours
And the fields are ours
And the rivers are ours



And the music is ours
 And the streets are ours.
 For property
 And the uses of distinction
 Are utterly forgotten.

EVERYONE

Look!
 The night is like a mirror,
 Look!
 There's you, there's me!
 Look!
 In every star, we are!
 Not as I am
 But as I shall be.

HANNAH

Look, it's here.
 It's now.

ELDERS

It's like the stars have washed my eyes,
 I feel fifteen again.
 The soothing waters of the night
 Have washed away the pain.

HANNAH

Not as we are
 But how we shall be.

FIFTH MONARCHISTS

Look!
 The sword descends.
 Look!
 The seas are still.
 The seasons are suspended.
 Time ends.
 Free.

RANTERS

Free of Word
 Of Rule
 Of Law
 Free of Must
 Of Doubt
 Of Sure.
 Free of Right
 Of Crime
 Of Pure.



HANNAH

Look, it's here.
It's now.

CHILDREN

The Stars have lit up their windows;
The sky is one glorious shop;
The currency's pebbles; The night's shelves
Are stacked high with chocolate and pop.

The Dog-Star is snarling at teachers;
The planets have bent all the rules;
And look where a fiery-haired comet
Has burnt all the churches and schools.

LEVELLERS

The World is all before us.
Paradise;
It's iron gates unbarred.
Seraphs break their swords across their knees.
The World is all before us.
Plenty.
Peace.

QUAKERS

Fill me,
Spill me,
Let me flow.
Talith. Upharhal
Alardith Varsi!
Fill me,
Spill me,
Let me flow.

(UNABLE TO CONTAIN THEMSELVES ANY LONGER THE QUAKERS
HURL THEMSELVES INTO A DANCE. EVENTUALLY, EXHAUSTED,
THEY COLLAPSE.)

EVERYONE

Look!
The night is like a mirror,
Look!
There's you, there's me!
Look!
In every star, we are!
Not as I am
But as I shall be.

HANNAH

The stars in their still centres sing.
The night revolves on crystal wheels.
They chime.
Church-bells beyond the stars.
It's now.
It's this.

(THE CLOUDS TURN TO GOLD. THE MOON IS PUT OUT.
THE NIGHT IS DRAWN BACK LIKE A CURTAIN. ANGELS SWING
FROM STARS. A VISION OF THE PEACABLE KINGDOM IS
VOUCHSAFED TO THE PEOPLE.)

HANNAH

The sign.

DEBORAH

The sign

PEOPLE

The sign.

(ENTER SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY AND SOLDIERS)

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

The sign.

(THE VISION VANISHES. CHAOS. SOLDIERS SURROUND HANNAH.
ABEL AND SOME OTHERS SURGE TOWARDS HER)

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Back!

(THE SOLDIERS AIM THEIR GUNS AT THE PEOPLE)

Hannah Trapnel
By order of Parliament
I arrest you for
Most Scandalous sedition.
Take her away.

(THE SOLDIERS LED BY SIR SURLY BEGIN TO LEAD HANNAH
AWAY. ABEL HARANGUES A SMALL KNOT OF MEN)

ABEL

How can we build on a broken word?
How can we sleep in a faith that is weak?
When one is imprisoned, then nobody's free;
When one tongue is silenced, then no-one can speak.
(ABEL AND SOME MEN RUSH TOWARDS HANNAH)



DEBORAH

No.

Abel!

(THE SOLDIERS TURN)

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Fire!

(THE SOLDIERS SHOOT ABEL FALLS)

DEBORAH

Abel!

(DEBORAH RUNS TO ABEL)

ABEL (TO DEBORAH)

How can we live in a body that's broken?
How can we rise if we've never been woken?
What is worth learning that's not everything?
If one tongue is silenced, then no-one can sing.

(HE DIES)

HANNAH

An Angel on a starry throne
Watches us with eyes of stone.
If he weeps remains unknown
But he watches us, alone.

DEBORAH

An angel in another place
Watched a woman filled with fear
Who longed to feel upon her face
The comfort of a single tear.

HANNAH

I dreamt they were lost.
I dreamt it was night.
There was a voice.
I dreamt there was hope.
I dreamt there was light.

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

Take her away.

(THE SOLDIERS MOVE IN AND TAKE HANNAH)

HANNAH (AS SHE IS LED AWAY TO THE PEOPLE.)

Look it's here.
It's now.

(EXIT HANNAH AND THE SOLDIERS)

SIR BAWNAGAYNE SURLY

You brought this on yourselves.
Now go home.
And learn to live quietly.

(EXIT SIR BAWNAGAYNE. THE PEOPLE DRIFT AWAY)

DEBORAH

Abel.

(HER BABY MOVES INSIDE HER)

Oh

Abel, the baby...

Abel.

Abel, he's leaping.

He's leaping, love,

He's laughing,

He's dancing for pure joy.

He's strong

And he is longing,

Here,

Listen boy;

Hush, baby

Don't stir

Don't cry,

There'll come a better time

By and by.

Your Mummy found a small brown nut

She twined it in her hair

She laid it in the cold, cold ground

That it might flourish there.

She watered it with cold salt tears

She warmed it with heart's blood

And soon a tree began to grow

And under it she stood.

Shake down, shake down your fruit on me

Shake down, shake down your leaves.

A woman who is comfortless

Beneath your branches grieves.

She climbed into its branches and

She wrought a cradle there.

She wove it till her fingers bled;

She bound it with her hair.

She put her baby in it and
 She hung it from a bough
 O rock the baby gently, tree
 For you're his daddy now.
 The wind blew high the wind blew low
 A cold wind shrill and keen
 It shook the highest branches
 And it stripped the tree of green.

The wind blew high, the wind blew low,
 The branch began to shake,
 But dreaming of his daddy
 The baby didn't wake.

The wind blew high, the wind blew low,
 The branch began to crack.
 You daddy's gone a-hunting
 And he's never coming back.

Perhaps one day, beneath the branch,
 He'll shout into the tree,
 Come down my wife, come down my child,
 Come down and cuddle me.

Don't wake, don't cry my bonny babe
 For Spring will come again
 And fruit and flowers and leaves and green
 Will grow and flourish then.

O wait a while yet to be born
 For Spring will come again.
 And Hope and Peace and better things
 Will have grown by then.

END OF OPERA

(DURING THE PRECEDING, SLOWLY, EVERYONE HAS
 RETURNED AND APPROACHED DEBORAH CAREFULLY. SLOWLY
 THEY JOIN IN HER SONG.)

Photography: Ken Howard



ON LONDON FIELDS

IT'S HERE
IT'S NOW!

E8

HMDT
TECHNOLOGY LEARNING CENTRE
1, READING LANE
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