

JUDGMENT DAY

An Opera

Words and Music by
Tony Parisi

CAST OF CHARACTERS

THOMAS JUDGE, a skeptic

MADELEINE (MAGGIE) MORNINGSTAR, a believer

BROTHER JOHN, an evangelist

MARSHALL LAW, a politician

PETER, an anarchist

PSI, a rapper

THE ONE, a savior

ANCHORMAN, ANCHORWOMAN, PERFORMERS, ANARCHISTS, SINGERS,
ANGELS, PRIESTS, STAFF, BARD, GOD'S ARMY and THE ARMIES OF THE ONE
CHORUS

OVERTURE

*(Overture ends to the sound of Gabriel's trumpet, playing the notes of the main theme,
establishing the key for THOMAS to begin the opera with If This Goes On...)*

ACT ONE

If This Goes On...

SCENE - *Interior, THOMAS's loft. Night. Lights are low.
(We see the exterior cityscape through the windows and hear, but not see, THOMAS.)*

VOICE OF THOMAS

If this goes on...

*(Lights come up. We see THOMAS seated in a big armchair,
lazily channel-surfing among multiple TV screens showing images of the day's news.)*

THOMAS

If this goes on
I tell you how it will be
If this goes on
I foresee catastrophe
If this goes on
It's the end for you and me
If this goes on
It's the end of history

*(THOMAS puts down the remote, rises from his chair, and addresses the audience.
Images of everyday shock and horror continue to flood the TV screens.)*

Terror in the skies
Politics and lies
Private enterprise
Open up your eyes
Poisoning the well
One way trip to hell
That's no way to live
Something's got to give

*(THOMAS is joined by dancers. They dance, smoothly and rhythmically. THOMAS is
gesturing in mid-air, apparently controlling augmented reality displays of news videos
that the audience can see downstage in mid-air.)*

If this goes on
See man's inhumanity
If this goes on
Coming soon to your TV
If this goes on

Murder is their specialty
If this goes on
Reason is the casualty

Churches make the rules
Statesmen play the fools
Forces of control
Fighting for your soul
Not to be denied
God is on their side
Muslim, Christian, Mormon, Jew
Monkey get in trouble, too

(THOMAS *becomes more agitated, gesturing more wildly.*
DANCERS' *dancing becomes increasingly more frenetic as the song builds to a*
crescendo and climax.)

Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give

If this goes on
I don't know how we'll survive
If this goes on
No one here gets out alive
If this goes on
Ignorance will drive us blind
If this goes on
I think I will lose my mind!

Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give
Something's got to give

If this goes on...

Revelations (I Have Seen)

SCENE - *Interior, New World Church.*
(BROTHER JOHN *is at the lectern, with MAGGIE and the CHORUS in the choir section behind him.*)

BROTHER JOHN

I have seen the answer
To your troubled prayers
I have seen salvation
Riding in the air
I have seen the angels
And the kingdom come
I have seen the glory
Of the coming of the One

MAGGIE

I have seen the glory
Of the coming of the One
I have seen His army
Conquer Babylon
I have seen the anger
And the fearsome light
Let it shine upon us
The whole world let it shine

Let it shine upon us
The glory of the One
May it reign over all
Till evil is undone
When there's peace around us
And the world is one
Then His love surrounds us
And His will be done

(A good old fashioned revival takes place: PARISHIONERS approach the lectern and BROTHER JOHN ministers to them, holding a bible up in one hand and pushing them back with sweeping "HEAL" gestures using the other; some PARISHIONERS stay at their seats and dance wildly, hold snakes, engage in glossolalia etc.)

(BROTHER JOHN then paces frantically around the lectern, and his gestures become grander as he delivers his final revelation:)

BROTHER JOHN

Brothers and sisters I have seen
A Scarlet Woman astride a Great Beast!
Fire, horses, quakes and plagues
And a Lion and a Lamb embrace!
I have seen the breaking
Of the seventh seal

(BROTHER JOHN nearly collapses into a heap at the lectern, looks down. After a short pause, he delivers the last line directly to the audience.)

Very soon, dear children
All will be revealed

Prepare Yourself

SCENE - Exterior, Park. Daytime.

(MAGGIE and her CHURCH GROUP are evangelising to anyone who will pay attention. Some of the group are handing out leaflets; some are carrying instruments like penny whistles, kazoos, hand drums, and tambourines and join the orchestra during the singing of Prepare Yourself.)

MAGGIE

There's a comet in the sky
And Judgment Day is nigh
For the people down below
It's the end of all we know
Spread the word today
The Lord is on the way
There's no need to fear
Salvation's nearly here

Prepare yourself
Got to seize the day
Prepare yourself
Help is on the way
Prepare yourself
Keep an open mind
Prepare yourself
There's so little time

There's a choice you need to make
And a road you ought to take
A world of pain and strife
Or eternal life
Stick with sin and vice
And you will pay the price
Repent and you'll be whole
And God will save your soul

Prepare yourself
Now's the time to learn
Prepare yourself
You've got to turn or burn
Prepare yourself
Every woman, every man
Prepare yourself
It's time to take a stand

CHORUS

God is good; don't scare yourself
Now's the time, prepare yourself
Got to choose, can't spare yourself
Now's the time, prepare yourself

MAGGIE

Like a robber in the night
He'll take us up in flight
And the faithful will depart
In a rapture of the heart
When the journey's done
Tribulation comes
Seven years of woe
And nowhere else to go

Prepare yourself
Best make up your mind
Prepare yourself
Don't be left behind
Prepare yourself
The world is on the brink
Prepare yourself
It's later than you think

Tomorrow

(THOMAS enters, sits at a park bench.)

THOMAS

Shaking my damn head...
That's quite a scam you've got there
Telling people about the future like you know
It's not my jam but I'll say
You people sure know how to put on a good show
Talking 'bout tomorrow
Tomorrow
Tomorrow

(MAGGIE joins THOMAS on the bench. She has worked up a bit of sweat from her exertions and towels off. MAGGIE addresses THOMAS.)

MAGGIE

Tomorrow's just a word
Tomorrow's just another word
And in case you haven't heard
There's a shadow on the world

I'm Maggie

(The two shake hands.)

THOMAS

Hi, I'm Thomas
Nice to meet you

MAGGIE

Nice to meet you
Let me tell you something...

Saved

(MAGGIE gets up, moves to center stage, and occasionally turns to THOMAS as she relates her story.)

MAGGIE

I was lost and so alone
Couldn't find my way back home
Then I made a brand-new start
Took the lord into my heart

Now I'm saved
All my fear is gone and I can go on
I'm saved
Now the world's so bright; I can sleep at night
I'm saved
No more wondering what the day will bring
I'm saved
I've been born anew; maybe you can, too

*(MAGGIE returns to the bench, beckons THOMAS to walk alongside her.
The two go for a stroll.)*

Leave your troubles far behind
Just believe and you will find
Peace of mind
Come with me I'll show you how
It's so easy, soon you'll see
Let's go now

(MAGGIE takes THOMAS's hand and guides him into the New World Church. Various members of the CHURCH GROUP await inside, welcoming THOMAS in a friendly manner bordering on unctuous.)

And you'll be saved
All your sorrows gone then you can move on
You'll be saved
And you'll feel just fine and God's light will shine
Don't you wanna be saved?
Let the Lord make whole your immortal soul
And you'll be saved
All your sins today will be washed away

(THOMAS's manner *is gracious - but clearly having none of it, he backs away.*)

THOMAS

I'm not sure this thing's for me
I don't know what to believe

(THOMAS *moves to center stage, becomes introspective.*)

There's a shadow on the world
There's a shadow over me

(*Instrumental. MAGGIE and members of the CHURCH GROUP variously attempt to soothe THOMAS, show him bible materials, engage in discussion...*)

CHORUS

Shine on
Shine on
Shine on my light
Shine on
Shine on
Shine on tonight
Shine on
Shine on
Shine on my light
Shine on
Shine on
Shine on tonight
Shine on
Shine on
Shine on my love
Shine on
Shine on
Shine on above

THOMAS

Nothing ventured, nothing gained

MAGGIE

-- If you'd only just believe

THOMAS

Nothing left to lose but pain
So much pain

(THOMAS casts a backward glance at MAGGIE and they smile, wave at each other.)

Maybe this one's my best shot

MAGGIE

-- Trust your heart; see where it leads

THOMAS

So religious but so hot
Hell, why not?

Let's be saved
Do you think one girl can change the world?
Let's be saved
Maybe love will win and I can begin
Again
Lord I need some grace to regain my faith
And I'll be saved

(MAGGIE and THOMAS fling the doors open and exit the church. It is now nighttime outside.)

MAGGIE and THOMAS

All the stars shine bright in the world tonight
We're saved

CHORUS

Hallelujah (33x)

(MAGGIE and THOMAS continue to stroll about and converse. Night turns to day, and to night and back to day again. As the song concludes, MAGGIE and THOMAS are seated at a cafe, al fresco, still having an animated conversation and now holding hands, with obvious affection for each other.)

News of the World

SCENE - *Interior, TV news studio.*

(ANCHORMAN and ANCHORWOMAN go through a pre-broadcast prep routine, shuffling papers, checking mics, telling jokes, etc. during intro.)

ANCHORMAN

Hello and good morning
From all the four corners
This is the news of the world
Our team is the greatest
Bringing you the latest
This is the news of the world

In today's headlines
Comet getting nearer
Terrorists and deadly flu
Hurricanes and tempests
Anarchy and protests
We bring the news straight to you

ANCHORWOMAN

And in our top story
Running for old glory
This is his name: Marshall Law
Decorated war man
Wants to be our top man
Leader of all the free world

CUT TO - *Exterior. Political rally in a large arena.*

(MARSHALL LAW is addressing a sizable crowd with a campaign speech.)

MARSHALL LAW

My name is Marshall Law
General Marshal Law
I'm here with you today
I've got something to say
I'll be your president
Serve all the residents
Of this great nation from
Secure locations

(The CROWD cheers. A handful of CIRCUS PERFORMERS appear from side-stage to flank MARSHALL LAW: jugglers, fire dancers, acrobats etc. begin various routines at a moderate pace and energy level.)

The country needs a change
We've got to rearrange
The way we do business
I'm here to bear witness
Safety security
Corporate integrity
This will be our mission
We'll form a commission

(CIRCUS PERFORMERS increase pace and energy level to a fever pitch as the number reaches its climax. Cameramen emerge from side-stage to capture the action, and a literal media circus ensues.)

Harmony, unity
And the economy
These are the things nearest
But what we hold dearest:
Order, order, order!
That's what the people want
I'll give them what they want
Order, order, order!

CROWD

(Chanting wildly and pumping fists in the air)

Order, order, order!

CUT TO - Newsroom.

(ANCHORWOMAN concludes the broadcast.)

ANCHORWOMAN

That's it for the news day
You all have a nice day
Hope you are safe and secure
Watch out for that comet
Stay tuned for more bomb threats
This is the news of the world

Tear it Down

SCENE - *Interior of Transcend, a nightclub in the warehouse district.*

Late into the evening.

(PETER is huddled with fellow ANARCHISTS on a mezzanine overlooking a CROWD of patrons dancing to a thumping beat that steadily grows in volume. The ANARCHISTS appear earnest, while PETER maintains a distanced, superior air.)

ANARCHIST 1

The situation
Gets rapidly worse
Our once great nation
Is under a curse
Capitalism
Won't do it alone
We'd best do something
Or find a new home

PETER

Tear it down
Tear it down
Tear it down
Tear it down

ANARCHIST 2

Surveillance cameras
And searching our homes
Got an opinion?
They're tapping your phone
Ruling the people
Through fear and through strength
Can you believe it?
They go to such lengths

PETER

Tear it down
Tear it down
Tear it down
Tear it down

ANARCHIST 3

I've got teh passwordz
We're hacking their net

ANARCHIST 2

I'm big on social
They'll listen I bet

ANARCHIST 1

I've got connections
With people in power

PETER

Those are all great
But it's well past the hour
Tear it down
Tear it down
Tear it down
Tear it down

*(PETER leaps down to the dance floor, and the CROWD parts to accommodate him as
the ANARCHISTS follow closely behind.)*

The time for talking's over
The meeting is adjourned
It's now or never people
Let's review what we've learned
We have right here guns, bombs, money
Everything we need
We'll put an end to their unbridled evil
And unending greed

A blade, a blunt, a loaded gun, a reason
It's panic, automatic, open season

My name is Peter

CROWD

Peter!

PETER

A simple man with vision
I'm on a humble mission
I'll be your leader

CROWD

Leader!

PETER

So listen to me people
If you want your freedom

The system is unstable
The power structure's weak
It's time to turn the tables
Take down these corporate freaks
They think they can pull strings, run everything
Dangle aid and pensions
They've bought and sold, cajoled us
Exploited all dimensions

A blade, a blunt, a loaded gun, a reason
It's panic, automatic, open season
A blade, a blunt, a loaded gun, a reason
It' panic, automatic, open season

(PETER whips the CROWD into a frenzy. The ANARCHISTS are now wearing Guy Fawkes OCCUPY masks, ANTIFA balaclavas and other radical garb. PETER and the ANARCHISTS lead the CROWD to riot, and all proceed to trash the club.)

Gonna tear it down, tear it down
Gonna tear it down, tear it down
Gonna tear it down, tear it down
Gonna tear it down, tear it down

Order, Order, Order!

(Sirens blare from outside. The music stops.)

VOICE OVER MEGAPHONE

Stay inside!
Don't panic!
It's OK -
Everything is under control...

(MARSHALL LAW storms the club with a police squadron wearing riot gear. The squadron's shields and clubs double as percussion instruments; they play the beat throughout Order! Order! Order!)

MARSHALL LAW

Order, order, order!

We simply must have order!
Surrender now do not resist
Order, order, order!
The people demand order!
Stand down at once I must insist

Lock your doors, go to your homes
Stay inside the lines
Terrorists are in our midst
Can't you see the signs?

Order, order, order!
The way of life is order!
The rule of law will win the day
Order, order, order!
Security and order!
Defy and there'll be hell to pay

Anarchists and activists
Poisoning your minds
Don't believe the malcontents
Everything's just fine

Order, order, order!
Our only hope is order!
All deviance must be destroyed
Order, order, order!
Embrace the new world order
The joy of strength and strength through joy

"War is peace," a wise man said
"Slavery is freedom."
"Ignorance is strength," my friends
If you catch my meaning

Order, order, order!

If This Goes On... (reprise)

SCENE - *Interior, THOMAS's loft. Afternoon.*
(THOMAS and MAGGIE are watching TV footage of PETER and crew's arrest by
MARSHALL LAW. THOMAS is agitated; MAGGIE is trying to be supportive.)

THOMAS

If this goes on
I don't know how we'll survive
If this goes on
No one here gets out alive
If this goes on
Ignorance will drive us blind
If this goes on
I think I will lose my mind...

(THOMAS *moves to center stage.*)

I Want to Believe

Going through life
Day after day
Wondering why
Searching for signs
Something to say
Everything's right

Caught in a downward spiral
Drifting away
Out on my own
Can't find my way

And even in the dark
The truth is never far
I want to believe
The secret's in the stars
And deep in my heart
I want to believe

Nothing is right
Everything's wrong
Most of time
Evil is good
Virtue is vice
Justice a crime

Where have the good ones gone to?
Where is the rage?
Robbers and fools

Guarding the cage

And even in the dark
The truth is never far
I want to believe
The secret's in the stars
And deep in my heart
I want to believe

Even though I'm jaded and tired
I still want to try
We'll never know the meaning of life
But we may find
A reason, a rhyme

Even though I'm jaded and tired
I still want to try
We'll never know the meaning of life
But we may find
That we're just alright

Something you said
Came back to me
Like in a dream:
Follow your heart
Not just your head
See where it leads

Live every waking moment
Like it's the last
Here for the future
Free from the past

And even in the dark
The truth is never far
I want to believe
The secret's in the stars
And deep in my heart
I want to believe

*(THOMAS has collapsed into a heap of despair.
MAGGIE approaches to offer comfort.)*

Tomorrow (reprise)

MAGGIE

Tom
Tommy
Thomas...

I know you're trying so hard
This world can be such an awful place
Just hold on a bit more
Stick with me I know that we can keep the faith
Tomorrow's nearly here
Tomorrow's almost nearly here
If you set aside your fear
There's a man you'll want to hear
Loud and clear...

Simon Says

*SCENE - Exterior, large outdoor arena. Daytime.
(PSI is performing an arena show with a live DJ and backing singer accompaniment.
Images on the video screens above the stage are trippy, inspirational and happy.)*

PSI

It's time
Time to reflect on life
The Last Days we're high
Take a look in the sky - check it out
There's a comet overhead
Pretty soon we may be dead
It's a shadow over you
Tell me what you gonna do?
Makes a person want to know
If there's any place to go
In this life

What say?
Are you gonna find your way?
Got to prepare today

Ready, set, go let's play – for keeps
Better put away your pride
Set your differences aside
Got to make a great escape
Time to lose the nation state
'cause it's all about the world
Sing with me boys and girls
All together now

Simon says, "Give me your money."
Simon says, "Lay down your weapons."
Simon says, "No more fear."

No illusions
No regrets
Revolution
The best one yet

Hey world
You great big lonely world
Come together with your hands
We're gonna meet the man – someone new
He's a different kind of man
Gonna help us understand
Got a message for us all
How to rise above the Fall
Make the world a better place
Gonna save the human race
Let's meet him face to face
And he told me now

Simon says, "Give me your money."
Simon says, "Lay down your weapons."
Simon says, "No more tears."

No illusions
No regrets
Evolution
The best thing yet

Come and join the show

The One

SCENE - *Exterior, park. Twilight. A bright light, presumably the predicted comet, looms large high in the early evening sky.*

1 Vigil

(SINGERS are holding a candlelight vigil.)

SINGERS

There's a light
In the night
Shining bright
Beautiful and white
Comet high
In the sky
Closer by
I don't want to die
Look up!
It's closer every night
Look up!
Maybe tonight's the night

Now we pray
Come what may
Time to pay
Till the end of days
God on high
Hear our cry
Pass us by
We don't want to die
Look up!
An angel in the sky
Look up!
This is the end tonight

2 Annunciation

(There is a sudden loud crash, like thunder, and a bright flash of light. SINGERS are terrified and start screaming. An ANGEL descends from the sky to address them, arms outstretched, smiling and assuring.)

ANGEL 1

Do not fear

I bring you tidings of joy
We are here
To send a message
A wonderful meaning tonight
We come here from above
To bring the word of love

(A PRIEST emerges from the crowd, holding up a large crucifix, confronts the ANGEL.)

PRIEST

What's this here?
Who are these demons of hell?
Don't come near
No need to see them
They're come from the devil himself
You simply must resist
These things do not exist

(A second ANGEL descends from the sky to join the argument, and admonishes the PRIEST, pointing at him and scowling menacingly.)

ANGEL 2

Foolish man!
You are the reason we're here
Priestly clan -
Do not believe them
Their time for deceiving is done
The way, the truth, the light
Is here with you tonight
The light, the truth, the way
Has come to you today
The one the one the one
The one the one the one
The one the one the one
The one the one the one

(There is another loud crash and flash of light. These subside and are followed by brief quiet. Then, apparently out of nowhere, THE ONE emerges. He is dressed simply but sharply, in business casual. He is very well-groomed and exceedingly attractive. The mood shifts from chaotic and anxious to calm and somber.

*THE ONE addresses everyone: SINGERS, PRIEST, ANGELS, and the audience.
He is inclusive and totally captivating.)*

3 Poor Little Planet

THE ONE

Poor little planet
No one is here for your soul
Or for control
We're here to help you
Throw off the shackles of old
War and destruction
Ignorance, pain
Lies and illusion
A world gone insane
I'm here to tell you
Stand up and think for yourself

Hold my hand
Let's come together
Bring peace to the land
Hold my hand

Poor little planet
Children in need and despair
Lonely and scared
Saved by religion
Now it's the cross that you bear
Your tired, your hungry
Your poor and your lame
So many suffering
All in one name
I'm here to tell you
Time to get hold of yourself

Hold my hand
Let's come together
A kingdom of man
Hold my hand

(THE ONE walks among the CROWD, shaking hands, patting backs, hugging, kissing, taking selfies etc.)

My children - come with me
It's a new world, a new day
If you just believe in me

CROWD

He's so beautiful
Our leader, our savior, our One
He's so beautiful
Let's call him King
And pledge him our love

(chanting)

Rex Mundi (16x)

(The house is filled with the sound of thunder. Images of the four horsemen of the apocalypse appear upstage and downstage, on every available surface. The ANGELS begin to ascend to the sky as ANGEL 1 addresses the CROWD.)

4 The Four Horsemen

ANGEL 1

Now it's time
To cleanse the planet of ill
Heed this sign
You who began it
And all those who ran it to ruin
Begone begone begone!
The Ragnarok is on!
And on and on and on
And on and on and on
Amen amen amen
Amen amen amen
Amen amen amen
Amen amen amen

(The music builds to a deafening crescendo, interspersed with sounds of gunfire and bombs, and the lights brighten to near-blinding. The crowd scampers to get away. Some, like the PRIEST, fall, presumably dead. It's the beginning of the end of the world.)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

(There Shall Be) Peace on Earth

SCENE - *The Void. All is white.*

(BROTHER JOHN, SINGERS 1 and 2, and the CHORUS are dressed in all white, smiling beatifically and dancing languidly but joyfully as BROTHER JOHN conducts the group to deliver the hopeful message of (There Shall Be) Peach on Earth. All are in three-quarter view so that one side of their faces is hidden from audience/camera views.)

SINGER 1

Woke up singing
And bells were ringing
Good news bringing
A brand new day
No more sadness
Just joy and gladness
Await all creatures
Alive today

CHORUS

An end to the hate
An end to the war
And we're gonna sing
Like never before

Wake up
The sun is shining
A light is dawning
Upon our world
Look up
The skies are clearing
The clouds are leaving
Forevermore
The wait is over
The time has come
For all the nations
To be as one
The whole world's watching
The great rebirth

And now there shall be
Peace on Earth

(The Void is replaced with background images/video of beautiful, pastoral landscapes.)

SINGER 2

Got a feeling
My senses reeling
Our good thing's growing
We're going strong
No more waiting
Anticipating
I wonder why we took so long?

CHORUS

The spirit of life
Is in us today
We're moving in time
And we've got to say:

Wake up
The sun is shining
A light is dawning
Upon our world
Look up
The skies are clearing
The clouds are leaving
Forevermore
We see the future
With open eyes
The road before us
To paradise
And we will make it
For all we're worth
And now there shall be
Peace on Earth

SINGER 1

That's our story
Of hope and glory
It's just like heaven
A dream come true
Come and join us
Don't disappoint us

The voice is calling
It'll get you, too

(BROTHER JOHN, SINGERS 1 and 2, and the CHORUS turn to face the audience, and then turn to the opposite three-quarter view to reveal that on the other side of their faces there are electrodes, or borg-style cybernetic devices, or perhaps highly stylized tattoos... something that shows they have been augmented or altered with electronics, magic or both-- something not exactly human.)

CHORUS

United in mind
Together at last
And now that it's here
There's no turning back

Wake up
The sun is shining
A light is dawning
Upon our world
Look up
The skies are clearing
The clouds are leaving
Forevermore
The wait is over
The time has come
And like a Phoenix
Will rise the One
A Second Coming
A great rebirth
And now there shall be
Peace on Earth

The Eye in the Sky

SCENE - Exterior, large outdoor arena. Night.

(PSI is performing an arena show with a live DJ. Unlike the upbeat vibe of Simon Says, The Eye in the Sky is decidedly authoritarian. Images on the video screens above the stage are threatening, with symbolism mixing dark occult traditions and conspiracy theory. Q references, etc. An eye in a triangle is the origin point of a massive laser show above.)

PSI

It's total supplication
A universal church
The new administration
For spiritual research
You'll like it in our chapel
A wonder to behold
Our congregation's growing
We want you in the fold

It's total entertainment
A media buffet
A million different channels
To please you every day
You'll like the big selection
We know you can't resist
Our database is growing
We want you on our list

Eye in the sky
Watching the world turn around and around
Eye in the sky
Everything's seen and is heard
Every thought, every word, every sound

It's total information
The eye that sees it all
A web across the nation
Security for all
You might think we're excessive
But it's what they deserve
It's in the public interest
We're only here to serve

It's total devastation
If you don't take the mark
No food, clothing or shelter
We'll leave you in the dark
You've got to join the program
We need to meet our goal
You know we'll stop at nothing:
We want your very soul

Eye in the sky

Watching the world turn around and around
Eye in the sky
Everything's seen and is heard
Every thought, every word, every sound

This is Not the Way

SCENE - *Interior, THOMAS's loft. Night.*

(THOMAS and MAGGIE are watching the live broadcast of PSI's performance of The Eye in the Sky. A chyron on the video screen implies or perhaps makes it explicit that watching the broadcast is mandatory-- or at least highly encouraged. They are both visibly upset.)

THOMAS

I think I might be ill...

This is not the way
Peace was meant to be
This is not the way
They've twisted up our hopes
Into a mockery
Thrown them all away

If this goes on
There'll be nothing left
Just an ugly world
Full of pain of death

I'll never take the mark
The yoke of tyranny
No I'd rather die
The anarchists were right
We have to bring them down
Time to win or die

MAGGIE

No! That's not the way
Don't do it by their rules
You'll play into their hands
And you'll surely lose

This is not the way
Salvation's meant to be
Everything's gone wrong
The preacher turned - sold his soul

A shocking heresy
My whole world is gone

But we must carry on
Not give in to fear
It's all in God's plan
Judgment Day is here

(THOMAS and MAGGIE get up from the couch and proceed to pace and argue.)

THOMAS

Hell no
I won't ever go
No, no
Time to join the show

This is not the way
Things were meant to be
This is not the way
This is not the way
Keep your fantasies
This is not the way

MAGGIE

Tom – no
Please don't ever go
No, no
Stay - I love you so

This is not the way
Things were meant to be
This is not the way
This is not the way
Tommy stay with me
This is not the way

THOMAS

No, no
Got to strike a blow
Bye, Maggs
God – I love you so

(THOMAS exits.)

If the World Should End

(MAGGIE *moves to center stage, and looks offstage for a moment to see if THOMAS will return.*)

MAGGIE

Tom
Tommy
Thomas...

(Spoken)

Men.

(Sung)

If the world should end
What would become of us then - spirit again?
Nevermore to be
Only just women and men?

How are we to know
All that the future can show? Not far to go...
Could we ever say
Now it's the time to let go?

No more fear in our hearts
Love won't tear us apart
Only beauty and splendor remain

If all sanity goes out of our lives
And if humanity has run out of time
Would we try to get by?

If the world should end
Don't be afraid - it's alright
Don't despair, my friend
Someday we'll dance in the light
If the world should end
These were the times of our lives
Till we meet again

I'll be that star in the sky
If the world should end
I'll still be here

Should the stars go out
And all the mountains fall down
Right to the ground
Could we ever see
All that we made for ourselves?

Who are we to say
Whether it's bright or it's gray?
It's just the way
Maybe now we'll see
It's time to call it a day

If our time is up we'd fight for our lives
Wouldn't we? Wouldn't we?
And if we're out of luck we'd pray for a sign
Is this all in our minds?

If the world should end
Don't be afraid - it's alright
Don't despair, my friend
Someday we'll dance in the light
If the world should end
These were the times of our lives
Till we meet again
I'll be that star in the sky
If the world should end
I'll still be here

Tribulation

SCENE - Exterior, park. Dead of night. This is a gloomy, foreboding place; it looks like how one would imagine a public urban park after the collapse of civilization.

(The ANARCHISTS are now fugitives: hiding out in the park, gathered around a barrel fire for warmth. Unlike their urban hipster attire from act one, the group are now clad in threadbare, shabby clothes and fingerless gloves. The first part of Tribulation is performed entirely by the ANARCHISTS onstage with guitars and harmonica, until PETER's entrance.)

ANARCHIST 1

I had a run-in with the One
He got the drop, now I'm on the run
I'm just a rebel, I won't take no mark
I wait till after dark

ANARCHIST 2

I lost an arm—

ANARCHIST 3

—I lost a leg—

ANARCHIST 1

—I lost my job now I've got to beg

ALL

We lost it all, now we're in the cold
Good Lord, save our souls

Tribulation
Got me dead to rights
Tribulation

ANARCHIST 1

Got the blues tonight

ANARCHIST 2

Nowhere to run, no place to hide

ANARCHIST 3

No way to fight, God knows we've tried

ALL

Big brother's watching – his Eye's on you
What you gonna do?

ANARCHIST 1

One is the number of despair
Two are the pain and the cross we bear
Three for the holy trinity
But that's all Greek to me

ALL

Tribulation
There's no turning back
Tribulation
Last train to Iraq

(PETER enters. He is also gaunt, grubby and wearing threadbare attire. His manner has changed from the aloof manner of act one to a fiercely zealous mein.)

PETER

Why all the moaning?
We go through this every day
Your bible told you:
Help is on the way
No more complaining
Time to sing a different tune
Lord only knows
Armageddon's coming soon

So let's be at the ready
The Army of the Lord
One hundred forty-four thousand
Righteous left in all the world

The signs are all around us
The end is surely near
But now more pressing matters:
A spy, a spy is here, I fear

(ANARCHISTS enter, dragging THOMAS, struggling, onstage.)

THOMAS

I'm not a spy you fool
I came to help the cause
But from what I've heard thus far
My trip may be a total loss

(THOMAS shakes off his captors and walks among the group, challenging.)

What kind of army
Sits around and talks all night
What happened to you people?
You used to fight the good fight

A shame it's lame how badly you were beaten
It's tragic you were magic in your season

You need a leader!

(ANARCHISTS *motion to* PETER.)

ANARCHISTS

Peter!

THOMAS

Not some halfwit shaman
Psychotic, psychedelic preacher
What's with this Peter?

ANARCHISTS

Peter!

THOMAS

The power of the One is growing
The time has come to fight, get going!

(THOMAS *begins to exert authority over the group - even PETER is paying attention.*)

No psychobabble people
Nor portents of the end
Just a solid plan of action
Invade, attack, regroup, defend
You have right here guns, bombs and brains
The only things you need
To send the tyrant a clear message
That we're not totally asleep

A brain, a bomb, we'll take them on we'll beat them
Today we know we'll strike a blow for freedom
A brain, a bomb, we'll take them on we'll beat them

Today we know we'll strike a blow for freedom

*(The group takes up arms and gets pumped up to prepare for a fight,
in a short reprise of Tear it Down.)*

Gonna tear it down, tear it down
Gonna tear it down, tear it down
Gonna tear it down, tear it down
Gonna tear it down, tear it down

Order, Order, Order! (reprise)

(MARSHALL LAW ambushes the group with a small squadron in special forces gear.)

MARSHALL LAW

Order, order, order!
We simply must have order!
Surrender now do not resist
Order, order, order!
The people demand order!
This anarchy must not persist

*(The ANARCHISTS try to scurry away. A few are captured, as well as THOMAS.
PETER and several others escape.)*

Make a net, surround the place
Pillage, loot and trample

(To THOMAS)

Let's take this one back to base
He'll make a great example

The Mark of the Beast

SCENE - Interior, interrogation room in The Tower, headquarters of THE ONE's global operation. Time of day unknown. The room, which adjoins THE ONE's command center, is filled with blinking electronics, surgical instruments and all manner of horrible devices.

(BROTHER JOHN, now a minion of THE ONE, is overseeing THOMAS's interrogation. THOMAS is strapped to an upright gurney, connected to cables and intravenous tubes.)

BROTHER JOHN

Welcome citizen
Nice of you to join us here today
First some medicine
Then I'm sure you'll have something to say
You rebels wage a war
You know you cannot win
But still you carry on
Why don't you just give in?
Some information, please
We need to know their plans
Before you sell your soul
You might want to meet the Man

(BROTHER JOHN and one of his assistants wheel THOMAS into THE ONE's command center. It is a massive space. THE ONE is seated at a huge desk in the center. There are various monitors, readouts and video displays upstage. Well-dressed STAFF mill about, issuing orders, checking statuses, and looking at clipboards and computer tablets. BROTHER JOHN leans in and whispers portentously into THOMAS's ear.)

Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark

(THE ONE stands up, walks around the desk, and saunters toward THOMAS. He is dressed impeccably, as in his introductory scene in act one, but subtle things have changed. Instead of exuding quiet confidence and calm, he is now devil-may-care, with a rakish gaze and cavalier manner.)

THE ONE

Hello, Thomas
Sorry that we had to meet this way
I've been watching
Seems to me you've gone so far astray
The wages of your sin
Are death as you must know
They'll cast you from on high
And down to the valley below
I've got a deal for you
A bargain on the whole
You keep your paltry life
I'll take your immortal soul

(Several members of the STAFF abandon their duties and begin to approach THOMAS menacingly from all sides.)

STAFF

Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark

(THE ONE and his STAFF tear away their business attire to reveal bawdy underclothes appropriate for a sex party, and the command center transforms into a theater space. The STAFF writhe suggestively. Several of the video screens display disturbing, violent and pornographic imagery. Everything, from clothing to staging and lighting, is pure red. This is no longer a command center; it's an erotic cabaret somewhere in hell.

And THE ONE's true nature is revealed: he is a demon. But he is not physically hideous; he is still quite attractive. And apparently quite unhinged, as he admonishes THOMAS:)

THE ONE

You can't resist me
You can't deny me
You won't do anything
That might defy me
You can't defeat me
You can't destroy me
You won't do anything
That might annoy me

(The command center returns to a semblance of normalcy: colors and video content return to their previous condition, and the STAFF resume their duties-- though still scantily clad. THE ONE collects himself, puts on a robe, and approaches THOMAS. BROTHER JOHN and the assistant unbind THOMAS, and THE ONE takes his hand and guides him on a tour through the command center.)

Well then, Thomas
Tell me do you like our little show?
I need generals
Good help's hard to find as well you know
The operation's huge
A billion souls or more
A web of tyrannies
That stretch from shore to shore
Why don't you join us?
You'd command a mighty force
Who knows?
Maybe someday

(laughs)

This whole thing will be yours

(The STAFF again turn their attention to THOMAS.)

STAFF

Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark
Gonna take the mark

(The command center once again transforms into a dark, burlesque spectacle. THE ONE doffs his robe, grabs THOMAS forcibly by the neck and shoulders from behind and begins to shake him violently back and forth, pantomiming sodomy.)

THE ONE

You can't resist me
You can't deny me
You won't do anything
That might defy me
You can't defeat me
You can't destroy me
You won't do anything
That might annoy me

(THE ONE releases his hold, and THOMAS recoils.)

THOMAS

I serve no one!
Least of all you
My soul's not for bargain
My spirit is true
I serve no one!
My mind is my own
You want to enslave us?
Then go it alone

(A few of the more brutish members of the STAFF subdue THOMAS. THE ONE has now donned a bowler hat, adopting the guise of a cabaret emcee, and a small ensemble on stage plays a macabre, Klezmer-style reprise of Poor Little Planet as the thugs beat THOMAS mercilessly.)

THE ONE

Poor little Tommy
Things haven't gone very well
Now you're in hell
Who could imagine
Meeting the devil himself?

Your life's in a shambles
Your girlfriend's insane
Your friends all are captured
Cursing your name
I'm here to tell you
There's no one left but yourself

(reaches his hand out to THOMAS)

Hold my hand!
Let's rule together
Bring fear to this land
Hold my hand...

(THOMAS, barely able to move, manages a reply.)

THOMAS

I serve no one!

(THE ONE coils in anger, then regains his composure and resigns himself to the situation. He puts his robe back on and begins to make his rounds with the STAFF. He glances back to BROTHER JOHN, who is strapping THOMAS back into the gurney.)

THE ONE

Majordomo

Take this piece of garbage from my sight

Work him slowly

Though I doubt that he'll survive the night

(THE ONE goes back to his routine: checking in with the STAFF, inspecting the big displays, consulting with assistants. He muses:)

Too bad about the boy

I really thought he'd turn

These rebels and their god

When will they ever learn?

Where has the day gone?

There's so many things to do

Beheadings, tortures

And a genocide or two

The Battle of Armageddon

SCENE - *Exterior. A vast desert. Dawn. Eerily quiet.*

1 God's Army

(GOD'S ARMY has gathered. A small leadership group, including PETER and MAGGIE, are about to prepare the troops with a pep talk and a benediction. The mood is somber. A BARD breaks the silence to chronicle the event in song.)

BARD

On a cold winter day
At the end of the ages
The army of Jehovah
Has gathered here today
In the cradle of man
On the plane of Megiddo
The valley Armageddon
We make our final stand

PETER

With a sword in our hand
And the spirit to guide us
The army of the righteous
Will kill this Antichrist
If it's our time to die
Well the Lord always told us
We will be together
Today in paradise

MAGGIE

May the Lord our God
And his mighty host of angels
Watch over you
And strike down all our foes
God guide your hand
And keep you free from danger
Till the world is safe
And victory is ours

2 The Armies of the One

(THE ARMIES OF THE ONE *are on the march. Led by MARSHALL LAW, and composed of ragtag mercenaries and various undesirables, this group vastly outnumbers GOD'S ARMY.*)

ARMIES OF THE ONE

What are we gonna do today?
Send the rebels home
We're gonna kick some Christian ass
All the way to Rome

MARSHALL LAW

Rout them out, no stone unturned
No one left alive
Kill the rebels where they stand
Everyone must die

ARMIES OF THE ONE

What are we gonna do today?
Send the rebels home
We're gonna kill some Jesus freaks
Chase them back to Rome

MARSHALL LAW

Big rewards for every kill
A bonus for the leader
The One will rule a thousand years
On the grave of Peter

3 The Battle Begins

(*We can see the front lines of both GOD'S ARMY and the ARMIES OF THE ONE on opposite sides of the stage, as the battle is about to begin.*)

GOD'S ARMY

The army of the light
We're not to be denied
We're fighting for the right

And God is on our side
The Lord is in the sky

4 The Battle is Joined

(An ANGEL descends from the sky to join the ARMIES OF THE ONE. This is one of the ANGELS from act one, but now they are dark and demonic.)

ANGEL

Now it's time
Wherein the battle is joined
Heed this sign
You mindless cattle
How are you still prattling on?

The end
The end
The end

The end
The end
The end

The end
The end
The end

The end
The end
The end

(The music builds to a deafening crescendo, and there are myriad sounds and sights of horror and war, as the lights brighten to near-blinding. It's the end of the world. Everyone is killed in battle, including MAGGIE, PETER and all the principals.)

5 The End

(The mayhem subsides; the smoke clears. Enter THOMAS. He has somehow escaped his captors and made it to the battle site. He slowly, silently surveys the dead bodies on the ground and discovers MAGGIE among the fallen. He falls to his knees sobbing and takes MAGGIE's lifeless body into his arms.)

THOMAS

Maggie ... ?

Lord - No!
She's so beautiful
My lover, my other, my one
She's so beautiful...

Judgment Day

(THOMAS's sobbing trails off. Out of the silence we hear the sound of Gabriel's trumpet, playing the notes of the main theme, setting up for THOMAS to end the opera with Judgment Day. THOMAS lays MAGGIE's body gently on the ground and stands up. He ambles toward center stage, in shock and confused, addressing no one in particular. As THOMAS sings, the dead bodies ascend into the air one by one.)

What a battle, what a day
I never thought it'd end this way
All this drama for God's sake
And mass destruction in its wake
Maybe it's just destiny
But it's got the best of me

(addresses the audience)

Last call I'm blown away
We'll meet again on Judgment Day
Cast all your doubt away
The truth comes out on Judgment Day

*FADE TO - The Void. The battlefield background slowly fades to white.
(DANCERS enter and begin slow, deliberate movements - purposeful but not rushed. We are starting to build toward the finale.)*

Tout a holy mystery
Flout the laws of history
Make a puppet, pull the strings
You know we let them do these things
Maybe we weren't strong enough
Memories not long enough
We sure sounded tough

Last call I'm blown away
We'll meet again on Judgment Day
Cast all your doubt away
The truth comes out on Judgment Day

(A bombastic interlude - the money shot for the last big production number. The DANCERS kick into high gear, joined by THOMAS. The stage background fills with videos and images, echoing the montage from If This Goes On... The feel of the dancing is purposeful vs frenetic, as THOMAS has moved from anxious denial at the beginning of the opera to calm acceptance at the end. The montage still has a fair amount of harsh imagery, but it is paced out slowly and intermingled with bland content, more like a typical news day.)

Look at all that we've been through
What's a thinking man to do?
Never question, keep the faith
Or make a cosmic leap of faith
Maybe it's an empty shell
With a word we'd break the spell
Well I'll never tell

Last call I'm blown away
We'll meet again on Judgment Day
Cast all your doubt away
The truth comes out on Judgment Day

*CUT TO - Interior, THOMAS's loft. Daytime.
(THOMAS moves upstage to deliver the final verse. Out his windows, we see a beautiful cityscape against a clear blue sky.)*

Last call I'm blown away
We'll meet again on Judgment Day
Cast all your doubt away
The truth comes out on Judgment Day

(THOMAS exits. The music fades.)

END OF ACT TWO

EPILOG

The New Jerusalem

SCENE - *The Void. Blue sky background, with occasional, beautiful cumulus clouds drifting lazily by.*

CHORUS

Wake up
The sun is shining
A light is dawning
Upon our world
Look up
The skies are clearing
The clouds are leaving
Forever more...

FIN