

NAKED REVOLUTION

A socialist realist opera drawn from
immigrant dreams

libretto by Maita di Niscemi
composed by Dave Soldier
artistic conception by Komar and Melamid



"His wings will grow", Komar & Melamid

1997, this version August 23, 2017

Soloists

tenor	Alexander Ulyanov; Citizen George Washington (George I); King George III's head
soprano	Molly Pitcher; Russian soothsayer; Vera Pavlovna; Isadora Duncan
bass	General George Washington (George II)
countertenor	Vladimir Lenin

Chorus:

3 sopranos	2 solos for Irina, Masha, Russian maidens
2 mezzo	1 solo for Sasha, Russian maiden
2 tenors,	1 solo as slave
2 baritones	1 solo as slave
1 bass	1 solo as slave

sound man with recorded effects as indicated

ORCHESTRA

1 oboe (English horn)
1 clarinet (bs clar.)
2 violins
1 cello
1 double bass
1 acoustic steel string guitar (balalaika if possible), with amplification
1 synthesizer (numbered sounds are for the Kurzweil 2000: requires a cymbalon
or hammer dulcimer sound or a live harpsichord could play that part,
1 piano
1 accordion
1 percussion (snare, rattle, hi-hat, cymbal, tambourine, kick drum, bass drum,
glockenspiel, chimes, 2 tympani)

Additional violins, cellos, and basses are welcome.

One optional conga or bongo player, can be a choir member on stage; or the soundman or conductor can trigger a tape. This is on **16. Hysteria**.

The orchestra should be amplified for most uses. The synthesizer, guitar, and bass will also need their separate amps

Duration of music is about one hour

LIBRETTO

ACT I

New York City 1776

Bowling Green

Clangs (Voiced as in score)

Scrim rises revealing gilded equestrian statue of King George III as it stood on Bowling Green in New York City after 1770 - the King is dressed as a Roman Emperor. Horse and rider are one-third larger than life. They stand on a white marble pedestal 15 feet high behind a 10 foot black wrought iron fence. Molly Pitcher wears a sash reading Don't Tread on Me.

1. Truth, Truth, Truth

Molly, singing like Julie Andrews

It's Truth Truth and Truth
Truth in whose glorious name
All true Sons of Freedom
Now rise to proclaim
It's Truth, it's Truth, Truth forsooth
On this glorious day
All true sons of freedom now rally to
say

Chorus

We hold these truths to be self-evident,
That all men are created equal
That they are endowed by their creator
with certain unalienable rights
among these are life liberty and the
pursuit of happiness

spot on piano

Molly, draping herself on the piano

It's Truth Truth and Truth
Truth in whose glorious name
All true Sons of Freedom
Now rise to proclaim
It's Truth, it's Truth, Truth forsooth
On this glorious day
All true sons of freedom now rally to
say

Chorus

We hold these truths
yes we do.

2. Heave ho boys

Molly & Sons of Liberty:

Heave ho boys
pull your back in it fellows and haul
The true rule of riot
is willful destruction of all
The sole rule of warfare
is willful destruction of all
We hold these truths
yes. we. do.

Washington enters stage left, entering like Elvis with women in the chorus in thrall trailing behind him.

3. Washington's entrance

Washington

Why have my militia abandoned their
posts? (*girls sigh*)
Why do my soldiers
riot and boast? (*girls sigh*)
Dismembering statues as if they
were foes? Tell me all.
Is the enemy fled?

Molly

The King's mighty army is spread

Washington

around our supply lines. They'll starve
us.

Molly

But Congress - it's said-

Washington

Lies. *snare roll*
Rumors.

Cue 3A

He touches statue - clang.

Young Lady.
This statue's made out of lead.

snare roll

Molly

And?

snare roll

Washington

And so my friends are bullets.

Clang and snare

Forty thousand bullets,
forty thousand enemy dead.

4. Bullets

Choir and Washington
Washington leads

LORD
Forty thousand bullets.
The King shall give us bullets.
Forty thousand bullets. Forty thousand enemy dead.
Bullets, bullets, bullets.
The King shall give us bullets.
Forty thousand bullets.
Forty thousand enemy dead.

5. I was not my father's eldest son

Lights fade to night as the music portrays the sounds of nightfall,

Head of George III as Roman Emperor appears as the moon high in the stars upstage left.

Three male choir members sing wordlessly as slaves near the piano. The rest of the choir exits.

Sounds of crickets and nightbirds between slave's singing, especially prominent at score cues.

Washington

I was not my father's eldest son.
Left three worthless lots in
Fredricksburg
Ten slaves
only half of Deep Run
my mother proved unkind
and took Perry Farm
that should have been mine

George III

Sanctissima mea uxor Elizabeth
Liza my life
Let me divorce my German queen
and make you my wife

Washington

Today I hold Mount Vernon
and I call Mount Vernon home
and stand possessed in Virginia alone
of twelve thousand seven
hundred thirty-eight acres of my own.

Gentlemen's acres mapped and sown
Not parts of the Dismal Swamp
Nor unlocated frontier claims
or Custis lands in my good wife's name
cultivated farmland stone by stone
Foreclosing the improvident
I have made twelve thousand seven
hundred thirty-eight acres of the old
Dominion my own.

I have done well. I shall do better.
I shall not reply to my
female parent's begging letters.

George III

I have lost my colonies, lost my
colonies. My beloved colonies.
It is you who desert me my lord
not I you.
Do not call again.

Lights out.

ACT II
Moscow, 1917

6. Russian maiden's trio

Lights up on three middle class Russian maidens. The set suggests Moscow, circa 1900.

Irina Why do the dark woods weigh on my soul?

Masha boredom

Sasha sadness

Irina Why is mere living beyond my control?

Masha Hopeless

Sasha Despair

Irina If I were able just once to reach my goal.

Masha Your goal?
Irina Travel
Sasha Without money?
Irina To Paris
Masha Without permission?
Irina To Paris
Masha & Sasha Without money or permission
Irina and then to Rome
Masha(to Irina) You shall never see Paris
Irina I shall never Paris
Masha & Sasha We shall never see Paris
all three We shall never see Rome
We shall sit in our parlors
Sit and despair
Playing Chopin
Pressing flowers
Weaving ribbons in our hair.

Why do the dark woods weigh on my soul?

7. When the devil comes to Moscow

Chorus, dressed as Russian peasants, enters carrying statue of the Czar.

Chorus
Angels and ministers of grace defend us
Angels and ministers of grace defend us

Soothsayer (frightening) When the devil comes to Moscow
on a Wednesday late in May
will his eyes be black or yellow?
will his beard be black or gray??

With a dog's head on each saddle
will the devil's henchmen ride?
ride forth from the separate kingdom?
ride forth at the devil's side

Men Opri chiniki

Women Ivan Grozny

Soothsayer Men of darkness on dark horses
brooms and daggers in their hands
all in black upon black stallions
will the black brooms sweep our land

Music becomes psychotic, Lenin begins to appear on rear stage

Chorus Angels and ministers of grace defend us (*repeat*)

Soothsayer Will the devil's witches whistle?
long loud keening by highest soprano and lowest bass
will they straddle

Soothsayer and women human swine?

Soothsayer riding broomsticks through the stars
flown to drink the devil's wine?

Soothsayer and women when the devil comes to Moscow

Chorus (not in rhythmic unison)
Not tomorrow
Not today
How long will the devil stay?

chorus exits

Chorus (Repeat and fade) Angels and ministers of grace defend us (*repeat until necessary*).

8. And when you see a fire

Set of a romantic version of Russia during a revolution. Vera Pavlovna and Alexander Ulyanov. She is brushing his hair. Distant explosions and snare rolls.

Vera

And when you see a fire
threatening your home
in night's darkest hour
the hour after midnight
the hour before dawn.
Run bravely to it through the forest.
No raging fire can prevail
against the coming dawn of freedom.
The people's will shall be unveiled.

Alexander

Among the Russian people
at any given time
Some men, perhaps a dozen
will answer for the nation
will answer with their lives
No power on earth can terrify us
No raging fire can prevail
against the coming dawn of freedom
The people's will shall be unveiled.

Vera & Alexander

Believe in the coming dawn of freedom.
Believe in the people's will
Believe in love and courage.
Dear friend, we're not alone.
Dear friend, we're not alone.
Dear friend, we're not afraid.

BLACKOUT.

Lights up on Lenin seated downstage right in the pose of his portrait in the Smolny Institute October 27, 1917. Alternate: Lenin (Alexander) limbs ladder and gives speech from balcony. As the speech progresses they are joined by the chorus dressed as workers, sailors, peasants, etc. Church bells, revolutionary posters, mob sounds Starts with quiet mob sounds that build.

9. Lenin at Smolny Institute

*Lenin and Alexander's ghost (rising to address his audience)
(when Lenin sings here, two voices emerge- Lenin and Alexander's ghost*

The Tsar himself recalled the touching
frankness of my brother.
Alexander did not beg or betray
or excuse himself in anyway.
Caught with a bomb in a book
He accused no one but took his time in
court to praise the people's will.
A martyr to the people's will. My
brother was hanged. My brother a
martyr at the age of twenty-one.

A body dressed like Alexander is revealed hanging.

Choir

Brother Illich

Lenin with Alexander

Comrades, martyrdom has never been
my way.

I survived assassins, exile, hunger and
despair. I have survived, we have
survived, we shall prevail
and see our vile oppressors destroyed.

*Lenin gives speech in Russian.
Use supertitles in English?
Choir sings "ooh" behind him.*

Choir members, spoken (subset)

Batushka, we are your children
Tell us what to do.

Lenin (with building anger)

Shoot the traitors
Shoot them all.
Scatter them like the dust they are.
Let the garbage heap of history
turn the corpses of our enemies
to compost to enrich our Revolution's
crops.

(The following spoken lines could be in Russian .)

Running dogs. Lackeys.
Why should they see another dawn?
Who dares say the naked revolution
should not prevail?
Who dares? Do you?

mob yells

No never. Comrade. We're
yours. Forever. All power to the
Supreme Soviet. All power to Comrade
Lenin.

*They disassemble the horse during instrumental music. Lenin assumes his typical salute
that he will use again at the end of the piece.*

Lenin & Mob

Shoot the traitors
Shoot them all.
Scatter them like the dust they are.
Let the garbage heap of history
turn the corpses of our enemies
to compost to enrich our Revolution's
crops.
THE WATERS OF REVOLUTION ARE
DRAWN FROM VILLAGE WELLS!

Majestic instrumental interlude (The Factory Worker and the Collective Farm Girl) with recorded mob sounds and recording of the real Lenin.

Act III
Washington Square, New York, 1989

10. Remember

In the Washington Square Arch, a statue of 1792 civilian George Washington faces a statue of 1776 military George Washington. The statues come alive and sing.

George I (civilian, the tenor)
dreamily Remember

George II (military, the bass baritone)
(impatiently) of course I remember

George I
The apples
possible clattering vision of teeth
sounds of cars or car crashes

George II
The forests (*he steps down from niche*)
the trees

George I & II huge oaks

George II unblighted chestnuts
fern fronds and leaves

George I
Poplars marking property
and the winter of 1753, remember?

George II
Of course I remember.

George I
What was that Indian's name?
Kustaloga? Shingiss? Jeskakaka?

George II
No, no the one who said the French had killed
boiled and eaten his father.

George I
Of course, let me think
just the thing
Half King.

George II

That's right, Half King.
A strong man.
Always singing.

George I

Always sleeping.
Always drunk in the deepest woods.

George II

In the deepest snow,

George I & II

Half King

George II

half beast
he would have murdered us all had he dared
felled us like oxen in the snow
murdered us all
murdered us there

George I & II

Where the Allegheny
and the Monongahela Rivers
join the frozen Ohio
Well I know
Half King would have drunk our blood
had he dared.
Drunk our blood in the snow.

11. *Lenin's entrance*

Enter Lenin stage right with his accordionist dressed as he was when he crossed Petrograd disguised as a laborer in 1918.

12. *I still remember*

Someone rides by on a ridiculous bicycle – it is Marcel Duchamp.

pause

*Lenin
(to the accordionist)*

I still remember
on grassy afternoons
I have lain on hay I never raked
Eaten bread I never baked
And dreamed in honeyed sunlight.

Dreamed young dreams
on perfumed afternoons
birch trees lime trees hollyhocks
mignonette fresh peas for tea
and colored kites flying high high high
above the meadow
above the clearing
high in the sunset sky.

George I The forest.

George II The meadows.

George I The clearing.

together The sky.

An on-stage trio of street musician including Lenin's accordionist, solo violin, and the orchestra's guitarist preferably on balalaika, perform a gypsy interlude.

Chorus (like Red Army chorus)

I still remember
on grassy afternoons
I have lain on hay I never raked
Eaten bread I never baked
And dreamed in honeyed sunlight.

George I The forest.

George II The meadows.

George I The clearing.

together The sky.

13. *Lenin and Washingtons' trio*

Lenin Perhaps I'm the fool.
Because while listening to Beethoven
I forgot to be cruel.

George I (to George II) Beethoven?

George II Beethoven?

Lenin The Appassionata to be precise
is such strange music
it makes me want to be kind
I cannot be weak, no leader can.

comrades
shoot them!

beloved
revered throughout the land
and more and more and more and more.

Help me

14. *Oh no*

George 1 & II start sketching out a dance to the strains of the Appassionata,

Banner: Republic of Greenwich Village.

Isadora lit on a swing behind the scrim.

Violins intro truth truth truth

Lenin Oh, no.

Isadora I greet you in the sacred name of beauty.

Lenin Not again.

15. *Sing of nature*

Isadora (cooly, always centered on Lenin)

Sing of nature
Sing of numbers
Sing of sunflowers turning in time
one two three
see the petals on lilies
the petals on lilies
five on each buttercup
eight dressed delphiniums
thirteen marigolds
twenty-one asters
thirty-four daisies
fifty-five daisies

dances with accordionist, looks at Lenin

sing of petals
sing of daisies
next flowering number
eighty-nine

sing of nature
sing of numbers
sing of sunflowers
turning in, turning in time
and all the florets

in all the sunflowers
thirty-four clockwise *to George I*
fifty-five counter *to George II*
onward through nature
beyond eighty-nine

That's right, think about it
want to know more
the next circle of florets
one forty-four.

circles triumphantly to Lenin

Lenin (spoken, Russian)

That woman!! Get rid of her.
Tell Podvowsky I will not see her!! I don't care how
many orphans she's found for her school.

Isadora:

On Sparrow Hill in Moscow
Five hundred little girls
greet the nation's newfound way
wave red scarves in the sunlight
raise their garlands in unison
to bless the coming day.

Lenin (spoken. Russian)

she's crazy, etc.

Isadora (sung)

And anybody's child
shall know the story of this dawn
shall know the glory that is born
of art and truth and beauty
shall know the grandeur of the hope
that makes man free.

16. Hysteria

Washingtons dance a minuet to the Appassionata.

Tape or conga/bongo begins at score cue.

George Washingtons

State your business.

Isadora

Here I stand today
and here we promise to forgive
all debts we owe to sorrow shall cease
the world shall know peace.

Chorus of Georges

*Komar and Melamid have made George masks using the face on the dollar bill that the
chorus can brandish*

Who why where what
do you think you're doing?
Who why where what
do you think we are

Isadora

and anybody's child
shall know the story of this dawn
shall know the glory that is born
of art and truth and beauty
shall know the grandeur of the hope
that makes man free.

Chorus of Georges

This is our country.
Our world, our century.
We're taking it back!

George George George George
George George George George

Chorus of Georges grows more and more frenetic. Lenin tries to cut in to dance but is rebuffed.

At waltz cue, drums stop and Isadora and Marcel dance off together, and the Georges waltz. Maybe some of the chorus too.

Chorus sings la, la, la.

Lenin attempts to leave with only his trusty accordionist following. He hails at a cab with his trademark salute. This can be coupled by the Komar & Melamid painting of Lenin hailing a cab at a McDonalds.

Lenin yells Taxi!

Lights out.

Clang from the introduction.

Lights on and bows.