

## COFFEE ANYONE?

*Libretto: Rob Hoare*

*Music: Joerg Schippa*

### *Overture and Time Simultaneous Action*

*(enter Father and Lisa - from opposite sides of the stage)*

*Lisa is wearing a winter coat and rummaging through everything in sight looking for something. The father is moving around the kitchen, opening cupboards, tidying up - because they are "there" in different time frames they are unaware of each other and make contradictory actions - ab lib. comic.*

*(both exit at opposites sides of the stage - lights to black)*

*(lights on - enter Lisa, She is wearing blue jeans and an armless top and listening to an MP3 player. She is swaying back and forth singing the same phrase over and over again as she begins to search through the draws and cupboards)*

*Lisa: (singing)*

Anything for the money  
If it rains or it's bright and sunny  
All I really need is some money

*(Band stops playing - Enter middled aged man)*

*(He is wearing a bathrobe and house shoes and carrying a jacket that he throws over one of the chairs.)*

*Father: (surprised)*

Oh Lisa, my dear,  
Why uh, how long have you been here?

*(Lisa doesn't hear or see him and continues to sing.)*

*Father: (continues)*

It must be late or is it early?  
How long have you been here?

*Lisa: (a little sarcastic, Lisa spins around as she takes the headphones off)*

Oh! Did my singing wake you?

Father: *(apologetically)*  
Oh no, I wasn't listening at all  
Would you like a hot coffee or perhaps tea?

*(aside to the audience)*

There's nothing quite better if you ask me

*(to Lisa)*

Out late last night?

Lisa: *(not paying attention)*  
No, no, I'm alright . . .  
Uh yes, I guess, if that's what you want to call it.

*(Father starts making coffee, carefully measuring each spoonful he puts in the coffee machine in an almost ritual fashion)*

Father:  
To what do I owe this honor?  
Haven't heard from you for some time  
Now I'm not quite sure, just when you last left  
But don't bother asking, I've been getting on fine

Lisa: *(rap)*  
It's all about you and never about me  
But of course you don't remember  
How could that be?  
I'd be surprised  
Like totally hypnotized  
Locked up in here everyday  
Watching the wallpaper peel off and turn grey  
You never knew, but I was watching you

*(Lisa sings. During the song the Father wanders around the kitchen, cleaning up and he starts pouring two coffees)*

## **SONG 1: This Town**

*(Lisa sings)*

This town,  
This street  
And there's no place to retreat  
What joy, what bliss  
Life is one big hit and miss

It's like some white bread little snack  
With a dozen pubs to wash it back  
And they chase some tired scheme  
Work all day to buy a dream  
You expect me to follow that?  
Having kids and getting fat!

This town,  
This street  
And there's no place to retreat  
What joy, what bliss  
Life is one big hit and miss

(Band sustains a heavy chord - Father stops cleaning up to add)

Father:  
You probably should get married . . .

Lisa: (sarcastically spoken)  
Or you can leave the planet . . .  
At least temporarily . . .

(Lisa sings)

I watched, I learned  
Now I tell lies at each turn  
No more, no less  
For the end they save the best

There you are pregnant and alone  
While some bureaucrat throws you a bone

Left to watch a fading dream  
Slaving away like some machine  
Waiting still and perfectly  
'Til you're home all drunk at three!

(Song ends)

## SCENE II

Father: (*lights a cigarette*)  
Oh heavens, don't go opening up that can of worms!  
I don't have a problem any more, why I'm as clean as can be  
I only drink coffee and occasionally tea

(*pause*)

Ah well, you're here now!  
That's what matters  
*(cheerfully)* What's past is best forgotten  
So what have you been up too?  
*(an uncomfortable pause, excited)*  
Things have changed around here you know.  
Taking every day, one by one as they go  
They're the rules to live by now  
And they show me how  
What do you think about joining me tonight?

Lisa: *(interrupting, dryly)*  
Whatever for? I don't have a problem!  
Whatever should I do there? . . .  
*(changing her tone)*  
I'm fine really . . . couldn't be better

Father: *(rap)*  
Oh Lisa, my dear,  
I'm just trying to be supportive of you  
There are plenty your age  
Who are going there too  
Well naturally at first,  
It's no piece of cake  
But it gets easy as pie  
Make no mistake  
*(pause - trying to start up a conversation)*  
A young fellow was by to see you.  
And he walked right on in  
Didn't say his name . . . *(pauses thinking back)*  
But he looked terribly thin  
We drank up a coffee *(pauses)*  
Or maybe it was two  
He said, he'd just dropped by  
And he needed to talk with you

Lisa: *(shocked and slowly pushing her coffee aside)*  
Oh Daddy, stop making a fuss  
There's no problem. No problems at all.  
*(quickly adding)*  
Uh, do you remember when I sang for the music school?

Father: *(slowly, reminiscing)*  
Ah yes, yes I surely do  
Right up in the first row  
We were so proud of you too  
Just like an angel you sang . . .  
The whole evening through  
For weeks people would stop me in the street

And they would ask about you  
You have it from your mother  
Now **she** could sing like no other!  
*(pausing)*  
Why did you ever stop?  
Such a gift is not to be cast aside  
I did what I could, I tried and I tried . . .  
And it was well worth it,  
Of course, we knew what was best for you  
I saved up for you every week  
At least I gave you that . . .

Lisa:  
*(interrupting and stepping up close to him and lowering her voice)*  
Actually, uh, I wanted to talk to you about that.  
I'd like to take singing lessons again.

Father: *(joyous)*  
That's wonderful my dear, but  
how much will you need?

Lisa: *(coyly)*  
Not much.

Father:  
How much!?

Lisa: *(lightly, in a singing tone)*  
Not much . . .

Father: *(firmly)*  
Not too damn much comes from not much. How much?

Lisa:  
Whatever it's worth to you!

Father: *(growing suspicious)*  
Now, now, you could be more clear  
I'm not wealthy or rich  
But I do love you my dear  
I wish I could help but  
There's something else behind this I fear

## **SONG 2: How Much**

*(Lisa sings )*

If I ask myself  
Where's this love all coming from

Maybe I should ask  
If next week it's snowing some

My friends and I know better  
Who cares about the weather!  
On my friends I can rely  
They keep me all warm inside

How much you got  
In your pocket dearest father?  
We should maybe  
Go next week and see a movie

Do you see yourself  
Each time your thinking of me?  
Now you have the chance  
Tell me, what's it gonna be?

*(song ends)*

*(Lisa sits hard in one of the chairs, motionless with her head in her hands. The father walks up to the audience, all action on stage freezes)*

### **SCENE III**

Father: *(pausing, changing his tone)*  
Speaking of which . . .

*(rap with band)*

Who was that strange young man?  
I think I've seen him 'round before.  
Could it be he was expecting  
That she'd greet him at the door?  
I'm thinkin' about Doc Roberts, Tim Leary, Kid Charlemagne  
Half of you folks out there never even heard their names  
Why you don't even know what I'm talking about

You call it smack, or crack either way  
It's one more monkey on your back  
You listen to rappers, hackers and all those other back slackers  
It's all a joke, more coke, it's one big party, MTV smarty  
So I'm calling their game, there's no patent on pain  
Out in the rain, wake up and smell the coffee, girl,

I'm not playing the martyr  
Here's one more tip for a starter  
Weasel dust and jive, I mean you're like barely alive  
One mo' rusty pin, slide the point of it in

Cause the more you're taking, the less you have  
And the more you have, the more you're taking  
You don't buy it Lisa, it buys you  
You don't take it, but it takes to you

Nevertheless Lisa  
You think there's some limit, like an edge to excess  
Look down, look down, look long down  
That candy coated road that you follow  
Deep down need is your heart and it is all empty and hollow

*(Father turns away from the audience and Lisa begins  
to impatiently bounce her leg up and down)*

Lisa: *(hesitating)*  
Oh Daddy, that's so lame . . . so how much can you give me? . . . .

*(Lisa's cell phone rings)*

Lisa: *(agitated, fumbling with the phone)*  
Shit!  
Yes hello *(pause)*  
No not now! *(pause)*  
Later!  
No problem. No problem! *(pause)*  
Of course. Later!

*(she ends the call and places the phone on the table).*

Father:  
Whoever was that?  
Calling at this hour.

*(Lisa ignores him, thinking and looking around the  
kitchen. The father taking a long drink from his coffee)*

By the way, Lisa,  
Do you find the milk's gone sour?

### **SONG 3 Coffee Will Set Me Free**

*(Lisa sings)*

With coffee and cake you can go really far  
You won't lose your license when driving a car  
Rare and exotic, latte frappuccino  
Coffee is cult for that get up and go

Coffee, oh coffee  
Won't you help me  
Coffee, oh coffee  
Please set me free

Touching my lips like a kiss  
Oh so sweet I can't resist  
Coffee, oh coffee  
Won't you help me

At first it was damned as the devil's own brew  
It conquered the Muslims and then Europe too  
We love the caffeine and the sugar we take  
Who cares if it's poison it keeps you awake

Coffee, oh coffee  
Won't you help me  
Coffee, oh coffee  
Please set me free  
Touching my lips like a kiss  
Oh so sweet I can't resist  
Coffee, oh coffee  
Please set me free

*(song ends)*

#### **SCENE IV**

Father: *(disappointed)*  
You don't drink coffee?  
Not even tea?  
As precious as gold, it's pure ecstasy  
You let it grow cold, you waste it that way  
You think I don't hear what you're trying to say?  
Why the money you want, you'd beg, borrow or steal  
Some folks actually work for their next meal!

Lisa: *(sarcastically)*  
Work!? Are you serious?  
I have better things to do *(pausing)*  
I may even go dancing later.  
*(provoking him and repeating rhythmically)*  
Don't you like my evening look?

*(Lisa spreads her arms to the ceiling in a provocative gesture)*

Father:  
I'm not blind, nor am I deaf,  
You're the only problem I've left  
But there's trouble, I see . . .

*(fading as he walks off stage)*

Lisa, how can you do this to me?

*(exit father)*

Lisa: *(rap: with band)*  
Well there's no problem!? Like go look in the mirror!  
I sold all I had just to get outta here

*(whispering, turning to audience)*

He never used to notice  
Like a bug on the floor  
His legs were kick, kick kickin' in the air  
And he would even beg me to get him some more  
Well nows my chance, it's my turn

*(looking around the room)*

It's so plain and the coast is clear  
These days it may be coffee  
But he's still swimmin' in beer  
There's no problem,  
No problem at all - to rip off some more . . .

*(Lisa laughs. She quickly starts searching through the jacket on the chair. She pulls out a wallet and begins going through it just as her father calls out from off stage.)*

Father: *(shouting from the next room)*  
What was that?

Lisa:  
Not much!

*(She quickly puts the wallet back in the jacket and rushes over to her chair - enter Father)*

#### **SONG 4 S.O.S. (Song/Rap duet)**

Lisa: (sings)  
Is it just success?  
Measuring all things I guess

Send a message, calling S.O.S.

Father: (rap)

Listen up!

There's one thing I've know for sure  
There's no answer, add water, magic cure  
You've got to dig down and find out why  
Girl you spend all your time just getting high  
It's always them or some other guy  
Give me the blame it's all the same  
You think I don't know what you're going through  
I've made mistakes  
Wake up and smell the coffee girl  
Life is full of rotten breaks

Lisa: (sings)

Too late to confess  
Had enough of all your stress  
Send a message, crying S.O.S.

Father: (rap)

Yo' you look here  
And check this out, there's plenty you kids all miss  
The third degree, which you dismiss  
No more than homegrown teenage prejudice  
You can't see beyond the playground fence  
Caught within pure ignorance  
The cafe spoon, a red balloon  
Darkness as the bell tolls noon  
Time passes and soon you'll know  
There's no good name for dying

Father & Lisa: (together)

S.O.S.  
Same old shit  
S.O.S.  
Same old story  
If you ask me  
It's the same more or less  
Calling S.O.S.  
Save yourselves

Lisa: (sings)

Is it just excess?  
Longing you suppress, I guess  
Send a message, whisper S.O.S.

Father: (rap)

Pour another coffee

Get rid of your inner tension, cause  
There's a couple of things I forgot to mention  
You act like I can save your little ass  
*(in a high voice, sarcastically)*  
"Dearie me daddy you're so crass!"  
Want to hear about your mother?  
Or how about you're half-brother?  
One party after another  
Met her on the couch with some other  
Turn on, tune in, drop out  
Wha' did you think?  
That's what it was always about

Father & Lisa: (together)  
S.O.S.  
Same old shit  
S.O.S.  
Same old story  
If you ask me  
It's the same more or less  
Calling S.O.S.  
Save yourselves

*(song ends)*

Father: What the fuck was that?  
I wish you would join me tonight  
We really must talk,  
Later go see a movie  
Or even watch the neighbours fight . . .  
Well, what do you say?

*(mimicking Superman)*

Up, up and away . . .

Lisa: *(sarcastically)*  
I don't think so, I'm really busy with my career and all . . .  
Besides I don't see why it makes any difference what I do.

Father: *(moaning, self pitying)*  
I failed you once, I'll not fail you twice  
I'm not like that funny old man,

*(with the melody from Santa Claus is Coming to Town)*

"Were you naughty or nice?"  
Come to the meeting with me tonight!

Lisa:  
Un-fucking-believable . . . and now your tripping on coffee!

*(Father braces himself to sit at the table)*

Father:  
You think you know everything.  
But you don't have a clue  
I was out there struggling  
You can't just leave me alone here too . . .

*(Lisa looks her Father straight in the eyes for the first time.)*

Lisa:  
What the are you going on about anyways?  
You're ruining my song . . .  
This is my big chance . . .  
Look at all the people out there!  
MTV is probably watching!  
You know, the big time,  
Overtures! curtain lights!  
You don't know anything about that  
Now you just sit here and drink one lousy coffee after another.  
It's as thick as mud for God's sake!  
And you still wonder why we all left!?

*(Lisa's phone rings again, politely like a telephone receptionist)*

Just a minute . . .

*(Her father sits down. He grabs his left arm and holds it to his chest. He starts to sway in his chair and then braces himself to stand up. He slowly falls into the chair. Seeing him helpless in the chair, she goes to his jacket and removes the money. She hurries towards the door, putting on her coat as she leaves. Lights dim. Father remains sitting in the chair. A short musical interlude follows and as the music ends the daughter is standing once again in the doorway looking in at her father)*

*(Slow fade to black - curtain)*