

Life with a UR?-code

Opera in One Act
for Four Singers and Accompaniment

Libretto by Franz K. Custos
Music by Eduard de Boer

LIBRETTO

Cast:

Ticket Controller; **Woman**; Clone I; OBEIOR

Wife of a Couple; **Old Lady**; Doctor Pia; Department Store Employee 1; **Yun-66**

Husband of a Couple; Waiter; Reverend Canon; Department Store Employee 2;

Clone I; **Café Owner**

Composer; Professor Myoh; Pickpocket; Department Store Employee 3; **Steven**; **Baritone**

Street Musician, playing Accordion or Bayan

Pianist*

Role

ad libitum: A man and a woman entering the theatre during the Prologue
and coming out of it during the Epilogue

Soprano

Mezzo-Soprano

Tenor

Baritone

Mute Role

Mute

Mute Roles

*) Can be the Keyboard player from the orchestra.

opus 33
MUSIC

Before the performance. *Outside the theatre*

A shabbily dressed accordionist-street musician, with a bowl in front of him for tips, plays music from the performance to come.

1. Prologue. No Entrance *(Before the drop curtain)*

S M S T Bar.

As the (main) curtain rises, the street musician who had been playing outside is revealed, sitting and playing in the left corner. Towards the right is the entrance to a theatre. A ticket controller (S) is standing in front of it. (Ad libitum: A man and a woman enter, walk up to the ticket controller, show their tickets, have their UR?-codes scanned and then walk on into the theatre.)

A couple(MS, T) enters and walks up to the ticket controller.

HUSBAND

Good evening. Here are our tickets.

TICKET CONTROLLER

Thank you, sir. Can I also see your UR?-codes, please?

HUSBAND

Of course you can, dear girl. *(Takes out his mobile phone. To his wife:)* Can I have your mobile phone, too, my dear?

WIFE

Here you are, dear. *(Gives him her smartphone.)*

HUSBAND

Thank you, love. *(to the ticket controller:)* Here you are.

The ticket controller scans both smartphone screens.

TICKET CONTROLLER

Thank you. I wish you a pleasant evening.

WIFE

I hope so. The show's title is 'Life with a UR?-code', so it's about this wonderful remedy against the killer virus that has been threatening our planet for so long.

The street musician takes a break.

Duet: Let All Worries Be

HUSBAND

(spoken) I just hope that the show will be entertaining. 'Cause:

(sung) Stage shows and music are meant to entertain.

A theatre performance should by all means abstain

From everything profound or challenging for the brain.

And if it doesn't meet this requirement, there's reason to complain.

If it doesn't meet this requirement, there's reason to complain.

WIFE

I like to watch romantic plays as well,

Like tales about a prince and a yearning demoiselle,

With tears and sighs and kisses and 'all's well that ends well'.

(To her husband:) But this isn't your cup of tea, my love,

I know you, I can tell.

BOTH

Those are just details. Because we do agree

That theatre is not a realm for deep philosophy.

As long as we can just relax and loosen up, you see,

HUSBAND

(aside) How repelling.

(aside) That's swell...

Yes, you know me well.

We will enjoy to be entertained and let all worries be.

Let all worries be!

Merrily dancing, the couple goes into the theatre. The street musician resumes his playing. Enter the composer (Bar.). For a while, he listens appreciatively to the street musician. He gives him a tip and then he goes to the ticket controller.

COMPOSER

Good evening.

TICKET CONTROLLER

Good evening, sir. May I see your ticket, please?

COMPOSER

I don't need one. I am the composer of the music for this show.

TICKET CONTROLLER

Why, are you the composer! How exciting to meet you! And today is the premiere! I imagine it must be so exciting for you!

COMPOSER

Indeed it is. I feel a bit nervous. Especially during a premiere, so many unexpected things can happen. A premiere is something I never get used to.

TICKET CONTROLLER

I hope the performance will be perfect and I am sure that the audience will love your music! *(suddenly formal)*

Can I please scan your QR-code, sir?

COMPOSER *(spoken, somewhat timidly)*

Well, that's the thing... I don't have one, you see?

Duet: Upset

TICKET CONTROLLER

You do not have one? Oh no!

COMPOSER

I do not want one. Please listen to me.

Listen, I need to get in, because

I am the composer, see?

I do not care for the applause.

I just hope for a show without flaws,

So why on earth do you oppose me?

TICKET CONTROLLER

You cannot get in, even though

You are the composer, see?

We all have to obey the law.

I, too, have to follow the law,

And even you, the composer.¹

Both make gestures that illustrate their frustration, at times look at each other, then turn away, etc.

BOTH

Now what am I to do?

I/He cannot get in

Because of this new rule.

This makes me feel upset in

The extreme!

Shattering my/his dream!

It makes me want to scream!

(Both cry out of frustration) A-ah!

COMPOSER

Listen, this is the premiere!

TICKET CONTROLLER

I'm really sorry, sir,

¹ The composer of this opera has had a concert with his works canceled and was not allowed to attend several concerts where compositions of his were on the program, among which a concert in the *Muziekgebouw* of Eindhoven, all because he did not have a QR code.

I just want to be there!
I want to witness and to hear!
I want to be there, I want to be near!
So can you just show some complacency?

But I do not dare,
I do not dare to let you in and let you hear
Your own music at this premiere.
I am so very sorry.

BOTH
I feel upset in the extreme!
I just want to scream!
(*Both cry out of frustration*) A-ah!
I just want to scream! Ah!

COMPOSER (*spoken, angrily*)
Well, in that case, I will wait outside until the performance is over.

TICKET CONTROLLER (*spoken, timidly*)
I'm very sorry, sir. I really am.....

The street musician starts playing again.

COMPOSER (*calming down as he realizes it's no use to vent his anger at the ticket controller*)
Oh well.... okay, I don't really blame you, dear girl.

He goes up to the street musician.

Hello there, dear colleague. How are you, my friend? Do you mind if I keep you company for a while?

The street musician makes a welcoming gesture. The lights go out.

2. Overture

3. Scene I. The Old Lady and the Waiter

MS T

The drop curtain rises to reveal the interior of a café. Enter an old lady (MS) with two bags full of groceries. She walks to a table nearby, puts down the bags, and sits down.

OLD LADY
My oh my, these bags sure weigh a lot.
My oh my, I feel I've aged somewhat.
I'm glad I'm sitting, finally,
To relax for a little while.
I'll have a tasty cup of tea
And a piece of apple pie.
I'll have a tasty cup of tea
And a piece of apple pie.

Enter a waiter (T).

WAITER
Good afternoon, madam. How can I help you?

OLD LADY
Hello, young man. I would like a cup of tea and a piece of apple pie.

WAITER
Your wish is my command, lady. May I please scan your UR?-code?

OLD LADY
Excuse me, young man, what did you say?

WAITER

Do you have a UR?-code, madam?

OLD LADY

A 'You-Are' code? What is that?

WAITER

It should be on your mobile, ma'am.

OLD LADY

A mobile? What's that, young man?

WAITER

A phone, madam.

OLD LADY

A phone? Do I have to bring it here? It's on the dresser at home, I never take it with me.

WAITER

Then maybe you have a paper code? You can also print it, you know.

OLD LADY

No, I do not have a 'paper code' either. Print it? How can I do that?

WAITER

Why, with your PC and your printer, of course.

OLD LADY

I don't have any of those, young man. I do have a portable radio at home, will that do?

WAITER

But, dear lady, I am obliged to scan your UR?-code, or I will have to send you away.

OLD LADY

What? Send me away? Why?

WAITER

Lady dear, allow me to explain

That there's a law we all have to obey:

One needs to submit a UR?-code

To gain entrance in a café.

And if you cannot show this code,

I will have to send you away.

If you cannot show this code,

I will have to send you away.

I am very sorry, madam, but I need to ask you to leave. I hope you will understand.

The old lady is silent for a moment and then says:

OLD LADY

Oh dear, I fear I don't quite understand.

(shocked) Is it war again then?

(spoken:) It was the same during the war, with ration cards, but I don't have any.

(sung:) Where can I get some, young man?

WAITER

Oh, dear lady... What am I to do? What am I to do?

Suddenly, the waiter turns on his heels and leaves, leaving the old lady in a state of bewilderment.

OLD LADY

My oh my, now what am I to do?

Do I have to leave? Can it be true?

I'm glad I'm sitting, finally,

To relax for a little while,

But if I cannot have some tea

And a piece of apple pie,

I might as well let all things be
And tell this place goodbye. (*Standing up with the intention to leave.*)
I might as well let all things be
And tell this place goodbye.

The waiter returns, with a cup of tea and a piece of apple pie.

WAITER

This is on the house madam. I humbly thank you for our conversation.

As the waiter puts the tray on the table, the old woman clasps her hands with relief and joy. Curtain

4. Scene II. Song of Praise (*Before the drop curtain*)

S T Bar.

Enter professor Myoh (Bar.) and doctor Pia (MS), from the left. They are having a scientific dispute.

PROFESSOR MYOH (*spoken*)

But *Scientific American* has explained why the flu disappeared, at the time!

DOCTOR PIA (*spoken*)

You apparently missed the CDC's latest article [about the return of the flu!]² (*She stops when professor Myoh interrupts her by starting to sing.*)

PROFESSOR MYOH (*condescendingly*)

Dear doctor Pia,
Please do not be a
Killjoy!
Please, doctor Pia,
Really, can't you see a
Good reason for joy?
During one whole year, we conquered the flu!
It had all but ceased to exist.³
And all that time, it didn't break through!
This is pure fact that can't be dismissed!
So, dear doctor Pia,
Please do not be a
Killjoy!
Please, doctor Pia,
Really, can't you see a
Good reason for joy?
DOCTOR PIA (*angrily*)
Honorable colleague,
Please stop this folly,
Right now!
Please, worthy colleague,
Really, by golly,
Don't be so high-brow!
During this whole year, the virus went rogue,
As you know only too well!

² Cf. this video from 2023 **3 years later they admit it was the flu [all] along**: <https://rumble.com/v2j2wm2-3-years-later-they-admit-it-was-the-flu-along..html>

³ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/flu-has-disappeared-worldwide-during-the-covid-pandemic1/>. A similar scientific article, that appeared in the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* on the front page, prompted the composer of this piece to cancel his subscription.

And now the flu is back⁴, that's no joke!
Now the whole world is feeling unwell!
So, honorable colleague,
Please stop this folly!
Right now!
Please, worthy colleague,
Really, by golly,
Really, by golly,
Don't be so high-brow!
PROFESSOR MYOH
Doctor Pia,
Why can't you be a
Bit less negative,
And a bit more positive!

He invites her to a little scientific dance, which she grudgingly accepts.

PROFESSOR MYOH
You are right, dear confrere,
We all can see that,
Clearly.
DOCTOR PIA (*starting to calm down*)
Of course I am.
I'm glad you see that,
Really.
PROFESSOR MYOH
Moreover, it's clear
What we've arrived at,
Almost, nearly!
DOCTOR PIA
What do you mean?
PROFESSOR MYOH
We have been able to conquer it once,
So we can do it again!
DOCTOR PIA
Oh, there you go again...
PROFESSOR MYOH
At last, science has found the key
To achieve now what we could do then!
DOCTOR PIA
Are you kidding me?
There we go again...
PROFESSOR MYOH
So, dear doctor Pia,
Please don't be such a
Killjoy!
Please, doctor Pia,
Really, can't you see a
Good reason for joy?

⁴ <https://www.shorenewsnetwork.com/2022/01/17/return-of-the-flu/> & <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/2021-2022/flu-activity-increasing-late.htm>

DOCTOR PIA

No, I don't intend to be a

Killjoy,

But I do not see a,

No, I cannot see a

Really good reason for joy!

What we need to return to is strict mandates, only this time even stricter and more consistent than before!⁵ (*spoken, with ever growing enthusiasm*) We just have to make people wear masks all the time and impose perpetual social distancing, curfews and lockdowns, and the flu will be gone forever!

DOCTOR PIA

To make place for deadly viruses forever? Then what's the gain?

Meanwhile, enter Reverend Canon (T), also from the left.

PROFESSOR MYOH

My dear colleague, of course not! Please use your academic brain! To combat such viruses, we simply need more vaccines! More and more vaccines! The virus has proven to be very difficult to combat, but science will win, as always, in the long run! So, this is what we must do! Can't you see that? It's so obvious! It's no more than scientific logic!

DOCTOR PIA

I don't know. Maybe you're right. I have to grant you that there's lots of scientific statistics that confirm your optimism.⁶

REVEREND CANON

Good day to you both. I happened to overhear what you were discussing. May I introduce myself? I am reverend Canon.

PROFESSOR MYOH

How do you do? I am professor Myoh.

DOCTOR PIA

Pia, doctor. Nice to meet you.

PROFESSOR PIA

Nice to meet you. We were just discussing the reason behind the disappearance of the flu, last year.

REVEREND CANON

Do your scientific views

Leave room for the Lord,

Who will do just as He chooses?

Please take that aboard.

Yahweh gives and Yahweh takes.

He made disappear the flu,

Then He made it reawake.

Let's give Him His due!

Let's not forget to give Him His due!

PROFESSOR MYOH & DOCTOR PIA

Esteemed man of God,

You express religious lore

As't behooves you.

We, however, have a more

Scientific view.

Maybe, though, we can agree

On the following:

⁵ <https://www.spiegel.de/wissenschaft/medizin/omikron-und-die-corona-pandemie-karl-lauterbach-warnt-vor-killer-variante-im-herbst-a-e1f3fea5-c147-4a4f-a882-a538afa52b8a>

⁶ GatesNotes, the blog of Bill Gates: A guide to number games. How to Lie With Statistics is a great introduction to a crucial topic.: <https://www.gatesnotes.com/Books/How-to-Lie-with-Statistics>.

A UR?-code for you and me
Is a splendid thing.
It's a safety guarantee,
Which will ultimately bring
Nothing less than liberty!
That's a gorgeous thing!
That is a truly gorgeous thing!
REVEREND CANON
Yes, I think we all agree
On this special topic,
The UR?-code is indeed
Truly philanthropic.
God made you invent vaccines
Through His guidance, that's for sure.
And the code is now a means
Again to feel secure,
Divinely protected and secure.

PROFESSOR MYOH

(spoken) Dear reverend, then let's focus on where we find common ground!

(sung) Hurray for the UR?-code!

REVEREND CANON

Yes indeed!

ALL THREE

Hurray for the UR?-code!

Our safe haven, if only we comply.

This is a fact that no-one can deny!

PROFESSOR MYOH & DOCTOR PIA

Science deserves to be praised sky-high!

REVEREND CANON

God deserves to be praised sky-high!

ALL THREE

Be it God or Science

We owe Him/it compliance.

God or academics

Will conquer pandemics

And end hysterics.

Nothing can be so horribly bad

As a killer virus augmented.

And therefore:

Whether through God or through Science, we're glad

That the UR?-code has been invented.

Be it God or Science

We owe Him/it compliance

With body and soul.

God or academics,

Will conquer pandemics

And end all hysterics,

For once and for all!

Hurray!

They walk on and exeunt at the right.

5. Scene III. Jab Regret⁷

S M S T Bar.

The curtain rises again, this time to reveal the interior of a large department store. Its entrance is at the right corner and at the center is an overview map of the store. Somewhere at the right of the stage is a door to the toilets. A pickpocket (Bar.), masked in accordance with the early 21th century 'new normal' prescriptions, is standing in a corner at the left, attentively watching the store's entrance.

PICKPOCKET

I hope I'll have my usual luck. This place often is a guarantee for a good catch. Some people have their most valuable possessions sticking out of their pockets.

Meanwhile, a woman (S) enters the department store. She looks around, sees the overview map and walks towards it.

Ah, I see there's something in her right jacket pocket. I'll take my chance.

He walks up to her and bumps into her quasi by accident, simultaneously putting his hand into her pocket without her noticing.

WOMAN

Ow! Watch out where you're going!

PICKPOCKET

I'm so sorry, madam. I was immersed in thoughts. Please forgive me.

WOMAN

Humph. Please be more careful in the future!

PICKPOCKET

I will, milady. Please excuse me. *Bows for her and exits.*

The pickpocket walks on, towards the entrance. While the woman starts examining the overview map, he takes a furtive look at his catch and discovers that he has captured a mobile phone.

(aside) Oh, well. I had hoped for a wallet, preferably with some credit cards, but anyway, this is better than nothing.

Exit and changes to department store employee 3.

Aria: Jab Regret

WOMAN

(spoken) Ah, there they are! Over there!

(sung) Since I got my booster shot, my life has markedly changed.

Since then, I can't control my bladder as well as before.⁸

To prevent an 'urge hazard', I now need to explore

Where I should go when in need. Well, now that's been arranged.

For there they are! The toilets, over there!

My refuge in moments of a sudden urge.

Should I feel a sudden strain, then I am now prepared.

I will quickly go there and then I'll reemerge

As reborn and free from care.

⁷ Based on a true story. In Dutch, the title would be *Prikspijt*. In The Netherlands, this was the word of the year 2021, according to the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*: <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2021/12/21/prikspijt-is-woord-van-het-jaar-2021-a4071626>.

⁸ See for instance *Urinary Frequency as a Possibly Overlooked Symptom in COVID-19 Patients* (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32475747/>).

Jab regret, jab regret,
I feel such jab regret!
Jab regret, jab regret,
I feel greatly upset.
Three times I have been vaccinated,
And I feel contaminated.
I feel a constant threat.
Jab regret, jab regret.

Now I've got three minutes, all in all, to reach my goal,
When bladder pressure all of a sudden comes to the fore.
I may have some three minutes. Maybe less, hardly more.
If it takes more time than that, well, then I lose control.
How strange it is: although I had three jabs,
I still got infected, I still fell ill.
And now my skin is covered with rashes, sores and scabs.⁹
I want it to stop! I've really had my fill!
If only I had not had those jabs!

Jab regret, jab regret,
I feel such jab regret!
Jab regret, jab regret,
I feel greatly upset.
Three times I've been vaccinated
And I feel contaminated.
I feel a constant threat.
Jab regret, jab regret.

Quartet: No, We Cannot Let You Go

Suddenly, she feels 'the urge'.

My God! I have to go!

She rushes toward the toilet door. But all of a sudden, department store employee 1 (MS) enters from nowhere and blocks her way.

DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEE 1

Before to go to our toilet, madam, can I please check your UR?-code?

WOMAN

O yes, of course. *She puts her hand into her jacket pocket, to find out that her mobile phone isn't in there.*

Where is it? She searches in other pockets.

Oh my God! I can't find it!

As she starts panicking, department store employee 2 (T) quickly enters and joins employee 1

DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEE 2 (to department store employee 1:)

Is there a problem?

DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEE 1

This lady wants to go to the toilet, but she cannot show a UR?-code.

WOMAN

It isn't that I want to go! I need to go! Urgently!

⁹ See for instance <https://toppicturesconsultancy.blogspot.com/2021/06/moderna-vaccine-rash-covid-arm.html>.

DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEE 2 (*to department store employee 1:*)

The rules are clear. Without a UR?-code, she cannot be allowed to go to our toilets. We have to do all we can to prevent the virus from spreading.

The woman tries to go past the employees, but is restrained by them. A struggle ensues.

WOMAN

But I really have to go! I need to go! I just have to go! I just need to go! Please let me go!

DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEES 1 & 2

No, you cannot go!

No, we are not allowed to let you go!

Department store employee 3 (Bar.) quickly enters and joins employees 1 and 2.

DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEE 3

(to department store employees 1 & 2:) Is this lady causing trouble?

Do you need my help?

(to the woman:) Lady, it's no use to struggle.

Please stop screaming! Please stop yelping!

Please stop screaming! Stop your yelping!

WOMAN

Please! I need to go!

Urgently!

Please! I need to go!

Please let me go!

I really need to go!

Urgently!

DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEES 2 & 3

No, we cannot let you go,

Though you claim it is urgent.

We have to obey the law.

We, too, need to obey the law.

WOMAN

Please let me go!

Please let me go!

I urgently need to go!

DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEES 2 & 3

So, please stop being insurgent!

WOMAN (*yelling*) Please let me go. I need to go! (*etc.*)

DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEES 2 & 3 (*shouting*) No, we are not allowed to let you go! (*etc.*)

WOMAN

But it seems I've lost my phone!

I may have lost it on the road!

Otherwise, I could have shown you

That I do have a UR?-code!

I do have a UR?-code!

I implore you, let me go!

DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEES 1, 2 & 3

No, lady!

No, no, you cannot go!

No, lady!

We cannot let you go! No!

WOMAN

Listen, since my booster shot
I can't hold it in!
I may lose it on the spot!
Please don't cause such chagrin!
Please, please, please, let me go!
DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEES 1, 2 & 3
No, you can't go!
No, you can't go!
No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no,
You can't go!

And then it's too late....

WOMAN

Oh no!

Crying, the woman leaves.

DEPARTMENT STORE EMPLOYEES 1, 2 & 3
No, we could not let her go,
Though she may have had a high need.
We all have to obey the law.
We, too, need to follow the law.
Breaking rules! No indeed!
No indeed!

Curtain.

6. Rigid Interlude

7. **Scene IV. Brave New World Order**¹⁰ *After a story by George van Houts S, MS T, Bar. The curtain rises. Time of action: an imaginary future. In a shabby-looking living room, a poorly-clad young man (Bar) is sitting at a rough wooden table on a rough wooden chair, with a laptop in front of him. He has been waiting for some time and is clearly tense. He has a coughing fit. Another fit of coughing. Then a PING sounds and a friendly AI face (MS) appears on the laptop screen. The young man feels the inside of his left wrist for a moment, takes a deep breath and presses the ENTER key.*

YUN-66 *friendly, but with an ever-so-slightly robotic voice*

Hello-Steven.

STEVEN *nervously*

Hello.

YUN-66

I-am-Yun-66,-your-AI-personal-counsellor-of-the-month. Apologies-for-the-delay.

STEVEN

Oh yes.... eh, no problem.

¹⁰ George Bush Sr. New World Order Live Speech Sept 11 1991: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byxeOG_pZ1o. New World Order Australia announces its FIRST FULL DAY in Operation (July 2021): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoqsXibX5w>; Joe Biden talks about 'new world order' in Business Roundtable address (March 2022): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z5VtVARMag>; 'Are we ready for a New World Order?' Beginning of the opening speech of the World Government Summit 2022: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTtDzH2A1tM>; etc. etc.

YUN-66 (*sempre simile*)

I'm glad to see you, Steven. How are you?

STEVEN *swallows*

Oh, fine. Fine.

YUN-66

Before we continue I need to verify you. Can you please look straight into the camera and not smile? *Steven does so.* Yes, that's good. Now please confirm our contact on your smartphone.

Two large computer screens slowly descend on either side of the stage, with the faces of two human clones (S, T). Together with Yun-66, they watch while Steven, having another coughing fit, takes out his smartphone and holds it against the inside of his left wrist.

YUN-66

All right. Now let me get your file.

A text file appears on the screen over the face. The text scrolls down to a certain point.

I see on your chip that you downloaded the update from two days ago. After... some... delay...

CLONES 1 & 2 (*with robotic voices*)

After... some... delay...

STEVEN *nervously*

It didn't work at first but after a reset it did, after a reset it did!

YUN-66

Fine! Well done, Steven. So we are up to date. I see you also had your fortieth booster lately. Very good.

STEVEN

These boosters make me feel a bit nauseous, Yun-66. These boosters make me feel a bit nauseous. I must admit that I'm worried about this. I admit that I'm worried about this. I am worried, so terribly worried, so terribly worried.

YUN-66

Please stop worrying, Steven.

CLONES 1 & 2

Stop worrying!

YUN-66

Worrying is very bad for your health. There is no need for that.

CLONES 1 & 2

There is no need for that.

CLONES 1 & 2

There is no need for that.

YUN-66 & CLONES 1 & 2

We have *everything* under control.

The text scrolls further down.

Just one question. I see here a digital-financial transaction with human citizen J.C. Tamper, on Tuesday the twenty-fourth, at eleven fourteen. It concerns unpatented and unenhanced seeds.

STEVEN

(*alarmed*) How do you know that! I mean, that's just because it's a hobby of mine! A few carrot plants for my window-sill! It's not that bad, is it?

YUN-66

You know, Steven, that this is against the global sustainable development goals?

CLONES 1 & 2

It is against the global sustainable development goals.

YUN-66 & CLONES 1 & 2

We really cannot allow this!

STEVEN *timidly*

Excuse me, but I don't quite understand. Aren't seeds that reproduce themselves sustainable?

YUN-66

You don't need to understand it, dear Steven.

CLONES 1 & 2

You don't need to understand it.

YUN-66 & CLONES 1 & 2

Our patented and enhanced seeds can also be reproduced. But then by us. So there's no difference there. And we do have to take one global line, otherwise before you know it we will have another terrible pandemic, like the Kjojonavirus from all those years ago, or all the even more devastating ones that came next and that *really* got your attention,¹¹ like the Moronic variant¹², the Donkeypox virus¹³ and the War-purge pandemic¹⁴ You wouldn't want that on your conscience, would you?

STEVEN *panicky*

No, of course not, of course not!

YUN-66

Well, you are all humans and they sometimes make mistakes. To correct you error,..

YUN-66 & CLONES 1 & 2

...you will need to submit the seeds to your local authority, at the latest tomorrow morning at six o six.

YUN-66

And to remind you not to do something like that again, I will convert your bonus into a malus of ten digi-units. Only this month and the next. Just as a reminder. And I'll earmark your wallet so you can't buy anything from Mr. Tamper anymore. Just in case you forget what we discussed. Handy, isn't it?

CLONES 1 & 2

Handy, isn't it?

STEVEN *spoken*

O. I'm just very tight at the moment. I'm also behind on my CO² fine.

YUN-66

Yes, I can see that. You know what? I'll give you an extra week. Everyone is tight these days.

STEVEN

Oh, that's really nice of you. Thank you!

YUN-66

You're welcome. Will you give me an extra star later? Ha-ha. Just kidding.

STEVEN

Oh yes, of course. Really nice of you. I'm really tight, you know, really tight.

Yun-66 is silent for a moment. Then she continues:

YUN-66

And.... is there anything else that I should know, Steven? Even little things, things that might seem unimportant? Does Monique still talk about politics, for example?

STEVEN *chokes up. He has another coughing fit.*

(spoken) Sorry. *His coughing sounds worrying. (sung)* She really does her best. She now washes elderly people in the evenings to boost her social credit score. After two months of digi-unit-block because of that one tweet, she's now in dire straits. She's doing her utmost. But the other day.... *(spoken)* oh no, nothing.

YUN-66 & CLONES 1 & 2

The other day, Steven, what was it the other day? We have a 25 digi-unit bonus ready for you. What was it?

What was it? Did Monique say or do anything that we would like to know?

STEVEN *feeling himself getting nauseous*

The other day... the other day... she said that enhanced seeds are unnatural... and unhealthy.

¹¹ Bill Gates (smirking): "We'll have to prepare for the next one... That I'll say *will* get attention this Time ": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8f27ta1uu0>.

¹² <https://globeecho.com/news/europe/germany/corona-pandemic-lauterbach-warns-of-new-virus-variants/>

¹³ <https://www.nbcnews.com/now/video/monkeypox-virus-spreads-around-world-141006917933>

¹⁴ <https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2023/02/14/default-calendar/who-urgent-marburg-meeting>

But she didn't mean it like that!

YUN-66

Did she say that...

YUN-66 & CLONES 1 & 2

Thank you, Steven! You'll get an extra bonus of twenty-five digi-units for this!¹⁵

STEVEN

She didn't mean it like that! She didn't mean it! She didn't really mean it!

YUN-66 & CLONES 1 & 2

You're making us very happy with this! We are working on a new world! We are working on a brave new world, with a new mentality! With a new mentality!

STEVEN

Will she get a penalty for this? Will she get a penalty for this?

STEVEN

Yun-66? She won't, will she? She won't, will she? Please tell me she won't! She really didn't mean it like that!

YUN-66 & CLONES 1 & 2

That isn't up to us, Steven. You know that. That would be impure. That's up to her own counsellor.

STEVEN

She really didn't! She didn't mean it like that! She really didn't! She really didn't! Okay, okay.

YUN-66 & CLONES 1 & 2

Please do calm down! Calm down, please! Calm down.

The computer screens with the faces of the human clones go up, out of view.

STEVEN

I'm calming down. I am calming down. I am calm.

YUN-66 & CLONES 1 & 2

Please calm down. Calm down.

YUN-66

Very good. That's it for today, Steven. You are doing very well. Your track record is great. Don't forget your CO² fine, though. I'll give you a week's grace, but then I'm really going to withhold it. Goodbye.

STEVEN

Goodbye.

YUN-66

Will you think of an extra star for me?

STEVEN

Yes, of course I will. Thank you very much. Bye.

The image of Yun-66 on the screen disappears. Steven's smartphone rings. The screen reads, 'Your counsellor Yun-66 is waiting for her review. What did you think of her?' The tiny light on the inside of his wrist flashes. He has another fit of coughing.

8. Interlude: Group Behavior. Song on a text by Franz Kafka¹⁶ before the drop curtain

As the drop curtain descends, a grand piano is brought onstage, enter a pianist, and the Baritone gets up, puts on a jacket and takes on the pose of a Lieder singer.

BARITONE

»Am I not the helmsman here?« I cried.

I had been standing at the helm in the dark night,

and now a man had come

¹⁵ Cf. 'Snitches Get Rewards': Garcetti Encourages Community To Report Businesses Violating Safer At Home: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06Fyg4maLWg>.

¹⁶ Based on his short story Der Steuermann (The Helmsman): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Helmsman.

and he wanted to push me aside.
And since I would not yield,
he put his foot on my chest
and slowly pushed me down,
while I was still clinging to the hub of the helm,
wrenching it fully around in falling.
But the man seized it
and pulled it back in place.
Me, though, he pushed away.
I soon collected myself,
went to the hatch leading to the mess quarters
and cried: »Comrades! Companions! Come, quickly!
A stranger has pushed me away from the helm!«
Slowly they came,
Coming up from the ship's ladder.
»Am I the helmsman here?« I asked.
They nodded, but eyes they had only for the stranger.
In a semicircle they stood around him,
and when he commanded: »Do not disturb me«,
they gathered, nodded at me,
and withdrew down the ship's ladder.
(spoken) What kind of people are these?
Do they ever think,
or do they just shuffle pointlessly across the earth?

9. Scene V. Conscience¹⁷

S T

The curtain rises to reveal the interior of another café. The café owner (T) is busy cleaning¹⁸. He is humming and whistling to the music coming out of his stereo. On the right, the entrance door to the café is visible.

CAFÉ OWNER

Na na na (etc.) *There is knocking at the door.*

(shouting) We are closed!

OBEIOR (S) (from behind the door)

I am an Officially Baptized Enforcer Indeed Of Regulations, sir, and I have been ordered to talk to you about your behavior!

CAFÉ OWNER (startled)

Oh! You are an OBEIOR! One moment! I'll open the door!

While fumbling in her pockets for her keys, he quickly goes to the stereo and turns it off. Then he unlocks and opens the door. Enter OBEIOR.

OBEIOR

Yes, sir! I am an *officially appointed* OBEIOR and I have been told that you allow people in your café who do not have a UR?-code! You will agree that this cannot be permitted, sir!

CAFÉ OWNER

Dear OBEIOR, I tried to do as ordained,

But it was all in vain.

Please let me explain.

¹⁷ Based on a true story, as related to the composer of this composition by the café owner who experienced this.

¹⁸ He might for instance be mopping up the water spilled at the end of Scene III...

Duet: I Tried, I Really, Really Tried

CAFÉ OWNER

I tried, I really, really tried,
But I couldn't do it.
It made me feel distressed inside,
So I totally blew it.
I just couldn't go through with it,
I just couldn't go through.
Could you?

OBEIOR

I'm sure you didn't really try,
But you have to do it!
You really need to try.
You simply have to do it.
You just have to do it!
You have to do it!

The OBEIOR is taken aback by this sudden question.

I just can't find it in my heart
To implement the UR?-code.
If I would do so, from the start
My heart would overflow
With feelings of regret,
That I would not be able to forget.
Running a café is all about hospitality,
Being welcoming, with open arms.
No, it's true! That's the proper mentality.
That gives being in a café its charm.
No, I just can't find it in my heart
To be part
Of a system that is causing harm.

You'll have to find it in your heart
To implement the UR?-code.
You'll need to find it in your heart
To implement the UR?-code.

There's no place for regret.

Not for just everyone, though...

Dear OBEIOR,

I tried and tried, time after time,
But I couldn't do it.
I felt so awfully bad inside,
That I totally blew it.
I just couldn't go through with it,
I just couldn't go through.
Could you?

Could you please try one more time?
Surely you can do it.
Just one more try.
I'm certain you can do it.
Just try to go through with it...

Once again, the OBEIOR is taken aback by this question.

I just can't find it in my heart
To implement the UR?-code.
If I would do so, from the start
My heart would overflow
With feelings of regret,
That I would not be able to forget.

But sir, it's the law...

We have to obey the law...

The choice to take or reject a test doesn't need restraints.
Our prime minister himself has said:
'It's no use if you have no complaints.'¹⁹
So I rather preserve my health instead.
Oh, how I tried, but all in vain.
It's so insane,

What? Did he?
Did he really?

¹⁹ Mark Rutte: PCR test geen nut zonder klachten! Covid-19 corona. (Mark Rutte: PCR test pointless without complaints: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/ZRhMm-9sZmA>.)

WIFE

(sung) Yes, it was not bad. It could have been more romantic, though...

The street musician starts playing again.

HUSBAND

(sung) ... and I liked the part where the blessings of the UR?-code were deservedly praised. But the show also contained some degree of criticism toward this code. I didn't particularly like that.

WIFE

Yes, that was kind of weird. The UR?-code is such a good way to combat the life-threatening killer virus, isn't it?

Enter the ticket controller(S) from the Prologue. She runs up to the composer.

Trio: Upset – Reprise

TICKET CONTROLLER

Hello, mister composer, are you still here?

I thought your music was really beautiful!

You should have been there!

I'm so sorry I couldn't let you in.

But I had to stick to the rules, like we all have to.

HUSBAND & WIFE *(surprised)*

What, are you the composer of the music?

And you were not allowed inside?

You were not allowed to listen to your own music?

Ah! But that's bad!

Listen! You could have found a way to obtain a UR?-code.

Or just a forgery instead.

You have so many ideas in your head.

HUSBAND

You could have taken such a road!

WIFE

You should have taken such a road!

WIFE *(to the ticket controller:)*

You should have let him in, you know.

BOTH

A UR?-code is nice and all that,

But this is going too far!

This isn't okay!

This is bizarre!

(to the composer:) You could have found a way!

You are so creative!

HUSBAND

You could have found a way!

WIFE

You should have found a way!

Finale: A System That I Do Not Want To Exist

COMPOSER

I agree this isn't okay,

and sure, I could have found a way.

(spoken) But

(sung) I do not want to participate

In a system that I do not want to exist,
A system that we should not cooperate with.
Refusing to feed it is my way to resist.
No, I do not want to participate
In a system that I do not want to exist,
A system that we should not cooperate with.
Refusing to feed it is my way to resist.
And that is why I chose to insist
On getting in without a UR?code.
That's why I chose to persist:
I wanted to adhere to that road.
THE OTHERS (*pondering the composer's words*)
You do not want to participate...
In a system that you do not want to exist?

HUSBAND (*spoken*)

That's a deep thought...

COMPOSER

(*spoken:*) It's true. Because

(*sung:*) It's a system that we should not tolerate,
A system we ought to resist.

It turned out I could not get in,
No matter how hard I tried,

(*to the ticket controller:*) There was no way that I could win...

TICKET CONTROLLER (*spoken*)

Oh, I'm so sorry, Mr. composer.

COMPOSER

spoken: It's all right, dear girl.

(*sung:*) ...So I chose to wait outside.

I went to a nearby fellow musician

And I asked his permission

To be in the company

Of his harmony,

His blissful harmony.

(*spoken, to the street musician, beckoning him:*) Please come over here, my friend.

The street musician takes his bowl from the ground and walks up to the composer. The ticket controller and the couple leave, in order to change and return as the woman, the old lady and the café owner.

COMPOSER

I will keep choosing to insist

On living without a UR?code.

I will continue to persist.

I choose to stick to my road.

I do not want to participate

In a system that I do not want to exist.

It's a system that we should not tolerate.

Refusing to feed it is my way to resist.

Enter the old lady from scene I, the woman from scene III and the café owner from scene V.

CAFÉ OWNER

We have a tendency to forget

that we were created for Joy.

Let's honor our lives without regret.

Life is intended to enjoy!
WOMAN & OLD LADY
We have a tendency to forget
That we were created to love,
To cherish our lives without regret,
To soar high in the sky above!

ALL FOUR
Let's rejoice
With elevated voices
In our freedom of choice!

O Sacred One, please free our minds!
Assist us in being courageous!
That we may smile, love and be kind,
And please make our smiling contagious.
Please make our loving contagious!²⁰

11. **First Bows and Final Song**

ALL FOUR²¹
We do not want to participate
In a system that we do not want to exist,
A system that we should not cooperate with.
Refusing to feed it is our way to resist.
And that is why we choose to insist
On living without a UR?code.
We will continue to persist.
We choose to adhere to this road.

In doing so, we are anticipating
COMPOSER
The making of a world
CAFÉ OWNER
The creating of a world
OLD LADY & WOMAN
The shaping of a world

ALL FOUR
In which we can lovingly coexist.

After the performance. (*Outside the theatre*)

The accordionist-street musician, with a bowl in front of him for tips, plays music from the performance.

²⁰ Inspired by the poem *Created for Joy* by Hafiz, a Sufi poet who lived in the 1300's:
<https://creatingmiracles.wordpress.com/2021/04/25/created-for-joy/>.

²¹ *) If desired, the man and the woman from the Prologue and the Epilogue can join in this song.