

Life with a UR?-code

Opera in One Act
for Four Singers and Accompaniment

Libretto by Franz K. Custos
Music by Eduard de Boer

SCENARIO

Cast:

Ticket Controller; Woman ; Clone I; OBEIOR	Soprano
Wife of a Couple; Old Lady ; Doctor Pia; Department Store Employee 1; Yun-66	Mezzo-Soprano
Husband of a Couple; Waiter; Reverend Canon; Department Store Employee 2; Clone I; Café Owner	Tenor
Composer ; Professor Myoh; Pickpocket; Department Store Employee 3; Steven ; Baritone	Baritone
Street Musician, playing Accordion or Bayan	Mute Role
Pianist*	Mute Role
<i>ad libitum</i> : A man and a woman entering the theatre during the Prologue and coming out of it during the Epilogue	Mute Roles

*) Can be the Keyboard player from the orchestra.

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.

No. 1 Prologue. No Entrance

Before the drop curtain. In front of the entrance to the theatre

S M S T Bar.

As the (main) curtain rises, the same street musician is revealed, sitting and playing in the left corner. A couple (S, Bar.) arrives at the box office, both have their UR?-codes scanned and are allowed to continue. Then the composer of the music for the performance (T) enters on stage. He listens to the street musician, gives him a tip and goes to the entrance. The ticket controller (S) asks for his ticket, but he explains he doesn't need one, since he is the composer of the music. The ticket controller is thrilled and an engaged conversation follows. Finally, she asks for his the composer's UR?-code. 'I don't have one. I am the composer of the music. This is the premiere'. 'I'm terribly sorry, sir, really, but without a UR?-code I cannot let you in. Rules are rules and we have to follow them.'¹



Both are upset: the composer that he is not allowed to listen to his own music and the ticket controller that she is not allowed to let the composer in. Finally, the composer decides to wait outside until the performance is over. He goes up to the street musician. The lights go out.

No. 2. Overture

No. 3. Scene I. The Old Lady And The Waiter

In a café

MS T

As the drop curtain rises, an old woman (MS) enters with two bags full of groceries. She puts them down at a table and sits down, somewhat fatigued. 'I am treating myself to a cup of coffee with a piece of apple pie.' A waiter enters. 'May I see your UR?-code, ma'am' 'Excuse me, my hearing is not so good anymore, young man, it's the age, you know.' 'Do you have a QR code, madam?' 'UR?-code? What's that?' 'It should be on your mobile, ma'am.' 'A mobile? What's that, young man?' 'A phone, ma'am.' 'A phone? Do I have to bring it here?' 'It's on the dresser at home, I never take it with me.'

'Then maybe you have a paper code, you also can print it, you know.' 'No, I don't have one. Print it? How can I do that?' 'With your PC and your printer.' 'I don't have any of those, young man. I do have a portable radio at home, will that do?' 'But I am obliged to scan your QR code, madam, otherwise I will have to send you away.'

¹ The composer of this opera had a concert with music of his on the program cancelled 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, because he did not have a QR code.

The waiter goes on to explain that there is a general rule now that people without a UR?-code are not allowed in cafés and restaurants. ‘So, I am very sorry, but you will have to leave, ma’am, I hope you will understand.’ The old woman is silent for a moment and then says: ‘Is it war again then? It was the same during the war, with ration cards, but I don’t have any, where can I get some, young man?’

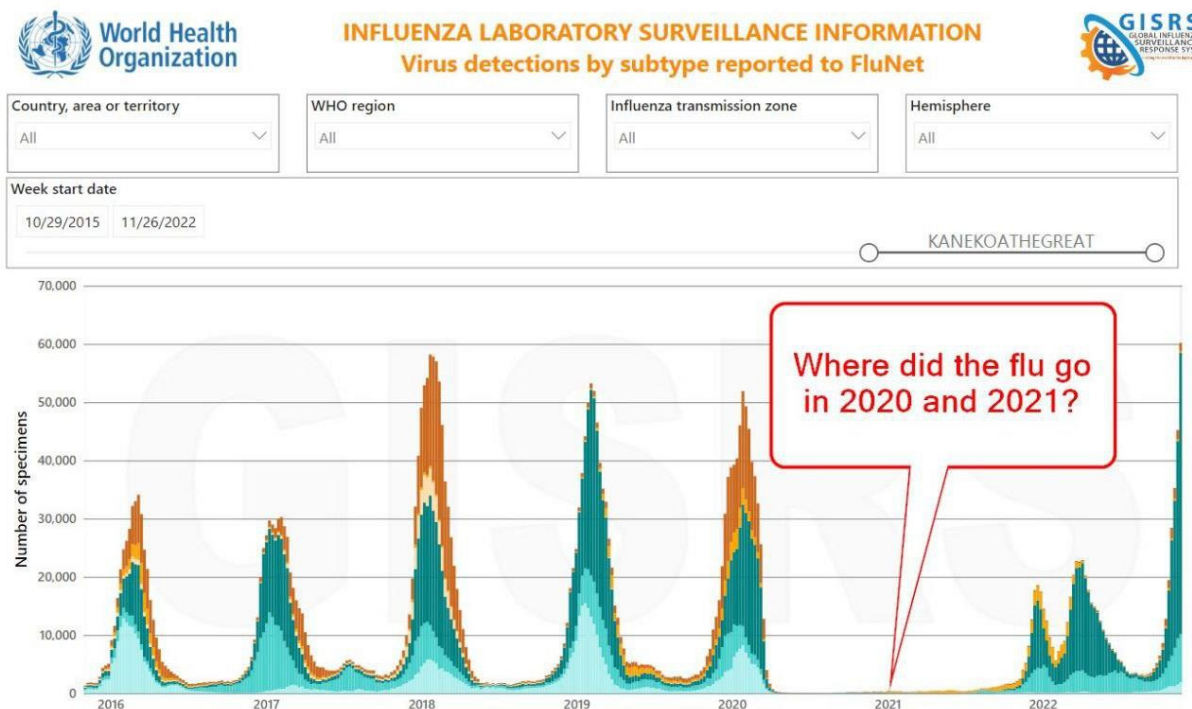
In a state of confusion, the waiter leaves, but only to return a little later, with a cup of coffee and a piece of apple pie. This is on the house madam. I humbly thank you for our conversation.’ Curtain

No. 4. Scene II. Hymn of Praise

Before the drop curtain. Somewhere on a street

MS T Bar.

Enter Professor Myoh (Bar.) and Doctor Pia (MS), having a scientific dispute about the disappearance of the flu. Professor Myoh rather charmingly-condescendingly waves away any misgivings that Doctor Pia has about the fact that the flu later ‘returned with a vengeance’.² ‘We scientists have conquered it once, so we can do it again’, he affirms. We just need to enforce rules like social distancing, lockdowns, curfews and mask wearing, even stricter than before. And as far as the dangerous virus is concerned, we just have to continue vaccinating people Science will conquer also there, in the long run, as it always does!



Enter Reverend Canon. He asks the scientists if their scientific views leave room for the Lord. They don’t, but, even so, the three of them soon find common ground, implicating that God and Science aren’t very different, after all. And so they end the scene with a Hymn of Praise:

*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!*

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>

No. 5. Scene III. Jab Regret³

In a large department store

S MS T Bar.

The curtain rises again. A woman (S) enters. A pickpocket (Bar.) notices her, sees that she has something in her right jacket pocket and decides to take his chance. He walks up to her and bumps into her quasi by accident, putting his hand into her pocket without her noticing. 'Watch out where you're going!' 'I'm sorry, ma'am.' The woman walks on, the pickpocket discovers that he has captured a mobile phone. He had hoped for a wallet, but this is better than nothing. He leaves.

The woman immediately goes to a map of the shop to see where the toilets are. Because, she sings, since she got her latest booster, the control over her bladder has deteriorated significantly.⁴ When she feels the urge, she now has about two to three minutes to reach a toilet. This has greatly affected her life and she now regrets having been vaccinated so many times. All the more so because the vaccines did not prevent her from becoming infected with 'the virus' and being very ill for quite a while.⁴

Then, all of a sudden, she has to go. She runs to the toilet nearby, but just as she's about to enter, a department store employee (MS) blocks her way and asks for her QR code, 'to prevent the virus from spreading'. 'Oh yes, of course, just a moment.' But then it turns out she's lost her mobile! She doesn't understand and begs the staff member to let her go to the toilet, tries to explain the situation to him, but no, she says we all have to stick to the rules. When the woman begins to panic, two more department store employees (T Bar.) come to the aid of their colleague. And then it's too late. Crying, the woman leaves. Curtain.

No. 6. Rigid Interlude

No. 7. Scene IV. Brave New World Order⁵ *After a story by George van Houts*

S, MS T, Bar.

A shabby-looking living room in an imaginary future

Poorly-clad, Steven (Bar) is sitting at a rough wooden table on a rough wooden chair, with a laptop in front of him. Every now and then he has a coughing fit. Then a PING sounds and a friendly AI face (MS) appears on the laptop screen. Steven feels the inside of his left wrist and presses the ENTER key. The AI face introduces herself as Yun-66, his AI personal counsellor of the month. Two more computer screens descend, with the faces of two clones. After a verification process, involving Stevens chip implant, Yun-66 inquires whether he is up to date with the latest updates and boosters, and then confronts him about an unauthorized financial transaction, involving 'unpatented and unenhanced seeds', a deed for which he will have to be fined. Panicking, Steven lets slip that his partner Monique has said that such seeds are unnatural and unhealthy. He immediately regrets this, adding that she didn't mean it like that. But it's too late: Yun-66 and the clones are overjoyed and reward him for his accidental snitching with a three months bonus of twenty-five digi-tokens.⁶ On top of this, Yun-66 gives him a week's grace for his CO2 fine and quasi jokingly asks for an extra star when he will review their conversation; which he anxiously promises her. When she and the clones have left, Steven's smartphone rings and the small 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.

³ Based on a true story. In Dutch, the title would be *Prikspijt*. The 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>.

⁴ See for instance *Urinary Frequency as a Possibly Overlooked Symptom in COVID-19 Patients* (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32475747/>).

⁵ 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.

⁶ Cf. 'Snitches Get Rewards': Garcetti Encourages Community To Report Businesses Violating Safer At Home: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06Fyg4maLWg>.

No. 8. Interlude: Group Behavior. Song on a text by Franz Kafka⁷ before the drop curtain

As the drop curtain descends, the Baritone gets up, and sing a song on a text by Franz Kafka about the danger of group behavior.

No. 9. Scene V. Conscience⁸

In a café

S T

The café owner (T) is cleaning his café. There is a knock at the door (S). We are closed! The knocking continues. The café owner goes to the door, says again 'We are closed', but receives as an answer: I am an Officially Baptized Enforcer Indeed Of Regulations, Sir, and I have been ordered to talk to you about your behavior! Startled, the café owner opens the door. Oh, you are a OBEIOR? Yes Sir, and I understand that you allow people into your café who don't have a UR?-code. You will understand that this is not allowed, Sir. The café owner answers with a deeply-felt aria: 'I tried, I really tried, several times, but I just couldn't do it. After all, whether or not you get vaccinated or tested should always be a completely free choice. The prime minister himself has said: 'it's no use if you have no complaints'⁹. Running a café is all about hospitality, isn't it? In principle, everyone should be welcome. How would you feel if you yourself would have to stop people at the entrance, only because their ideas and subsequent choices aren't in agreement with what our governments orders us to do or not to do? I simply can't find it in my heart to implement such a draconian rule. If I would do so, I'm sure I would feel guilt and regret for the rest my life.' The OBEIOR is impressed. At first, she sputters a bit but she goes more and more silent, because she doesn't know what to say. In the end, she just listens. Then, she respectfully bows for the café owner and leaves.

No. 10. Epilogue. A System That We Should Not Tolerate

Before the drop curtain. In front of the entrance to the theatre.

S MS T Bar

The composer (T) is waiting outside, next to the street musician from the Prologue, who is still playing. Almost all the theatre-goers have already left. The couple from the Prologue (MS, Bar.) are (among) the last to leave the theatre. The composer goes up to them and asks how the performance was. 'Well, the music was rather nice, but the theme of the performance was weird. It contained some outright criticism of the UR?-code, but I must say that this code is such a good way of combating the life-threatening virus.' Then the ticket controller from the Prologue (S) appears. She recognizes the composer and goes up to him. 'Hello, Mr. Composer, I thought your music was really beautiful! You should have been there!, I am so sorry that I couldn't let you in.' The couple reacts in surprise: 'What, are you the composer of the music? And you were not allowed inside? You were not allowed to listen to your own music? But that's bad! Couldn't you have made sure that you had a UR?-code, somehow? A forgery if necessary, I'm sure you could have found a way. You should have found a way!' 'Sure, I could have done that,' the composer replies, 'but I do not want to participate in a system that I don't want to exist. That's why I tried to enter without a UR?-code, and when that didn't work, I waited outside with this nice accordion player.' He beckons the street musician, who comes over to the group. Together the foursome sing a final quartet, with the accordionist playing along. Towards the end of the Finale, the ticket controller and the couple leave, to return as the woman from Scene III, the old lady from Scene I and the café owner from scene IV.

No. 11. First Bows and Final Song

After the performance.

Outside the theatre

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

⁷ Based on his short story *Der Steuermann* (The helmsman): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Helmsman.

⁸ Based on a true story, as related to the composer of this opera by the café owner who experienced this.

⁹ 'It's no use if you don't have any complaints'. Mark Rutte during press conference 5 February 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVcnEEv-wq4>.