

Dreamsinger – ACT I, Scenes 1-3

Scene 1

(Out of the darkness, a giant screen shows a panorama through the eyes of one who is taking off into the night sky. In the distance, but growing ever louder, we hear Native drumming. Underneath, bass, electric guitar and drums start to swell. The call of a hawk. As JOHN TONEY, unseen, starts to sing, the audience feels as if it is wheeling and turning in ever larger concentric circles around the glittering and gleaming city lights below and then off towards the moonlit horizon, the rivers and the mountains).

Song 1: I Long to be Free

John:

1. Flying up above the city,
Silver wings of light,
Nothing stands in my way.
Bird of prey is soaring with me
In the moonlight
I can see a thousand miles away.

2. The people on the ground below
Seem so very small.
Their words get lost on the breeze.
How could they feel, how could they know?
They can't hear the call
Of my soul crying to be free.

(Refrain) I long to be free
I desire to see.
Please let me be
The one I truly am.

3. They can put me in their prisons,
Put my feet in chains,
Close the walls to the light of day.
Still I'll know a greater freedom
Time and time again;
They can't take who I am away.

Refrain

(Bridge) I'm flying, I'm flying.
Golden Hawk spirit, show me the way.

4. Flying up above the city,

Silver wings of light,
I can see a thousand miles away.

Refrain out

As the music fades, the lights come up dimly to reveal JOHN, a handsome young Native man, alone in a prison cell. We hear a pounding outside.

Prison Guard: O.K. Shut up in there. It's time to go to sleep.

Prisoner: *(Down the hall)* Hey, ease up, Charlie! He sounds pretty good.

Prison Guard: Look, he can sing all he wants in his dreams!

Prisoner: Hey, he's only got another week in here. Then we'll be stuck listening to you!

Prison Guard: *(Laughing)* Lucky guys!
(He starts singing [not well]):

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.

(As JOHN starts to drift off into sleep, the last line, "Life is but a dream" echoes again and again inside his head. Now JOHN is reliving the traumatic moment which led to his incarceration: he's with one of his band mates, TROY. TROY and JOHN are out behind a bar that they're playing at, having a beer and a toke, and discussing the gig.)

Troy: Hey, man, they loved us! Did you see that babe who was digging my bass playing? She was dancing up close to the stage all night long. And that low-cut number – ooooo....

John: How couldn't I notice? You missed a chord change three times that set! Remember, Troy, when you're on stage, you can't be planning your moves for the end of the night! It's about the music, man...

(TROY jumps up on all, starts doing an over-the-top air guitar solo, jumping all over the place.)

Troy: Yeah man, it's the music! And the babes!

(Enter POLICEMAN.)

Policeman: You! Don't move! *(Into his radio)* Badge #256. Need immediate backup at Sackville and Water. Drunk and disorderly conduct and drug use! Could turn ugly quick!

Troy: Hey, man! What's your grief?

Policeman: Both of you! Hands against the walls!

Troy: You fuckers; it's always the same – innocent until proven Injun!

John: Troy...

Policeman: Shut the fuck up before I make you!

Troy: Asshole!

(TROY throws his beer bottle towards the cop, who fires in a panic, mortally wounding him.)

John: No-o-o-o-o!

A blinding flash of light, then darkness. A tight spot reveals JOHN, alone, in a great nothingness. Then GOLDEN HAWK, a female in stylized hawk garb, appears. She dances around John in captivating movements. She sings to him.

Song 2: Hall of Dreams

Golden Hawk: Welcome to the hall of dreams
Where nothing is ever as it seems.
What is false and what is true?
Now, John Toney, it's up to you.
What is false and what is true?
Now, John Toney, it's up to you.

Joy, sorrow, pleasure, pain,
Without loss, there is no gain.
You may win or you may lose.
It will be your path to choose.
You may win or you may lose.
It will be your path to choose.

John: You always call to me this way.
I never know what you say.
Golden Hawk, bird of my thought,
Show me what's real and what is not.

Golden Hawk, bird of my thought,
Show me what's real and what is not.

Golden Hawk: Dream, am I? A mere thought??? Does this feel like a dream?
(She slaps him. He winces in pain.)

John: Hey! That hurt!

Golden Hawk: Am I your dream or are you mine? Think about that, Johnny!

John: What the hell is going on?

Golden Hawk: I know, I know. The hell is going on. You have to stop it. But it's worth the price, it is.

John: What's worth what price? I don't get...

Golden Hawk: Everything has a price on it, John.

John: What? The universe is one big Wal-Mart?

Golden Hawk: Don't mock the Creator!
(She slaps him in the face.)

John: Hey, ease up!

Golden Hawk: You know me. Don't play these games. You're the one who called me here.

John: And why did I do that?

Golden Hawk: Because you want to fly, don't you?

(At this point, she reaches out her hand to him and takes him on a journey, where her words materialize before us in a series of cryptic visions. These can be in the form of slide projections, holographic images, shadows on a scrim, dancers, etc. The critical thing is that they progress seamlessly, depicting what she describes. Interwoven in this vision are images of JOHN's past.)

See the circle turning, turning... birth...life...death...the baby's cry, the lover's sigh, the fear in the eye in the one who lies at death's door. Moving to the pounding of the drum...the beating of the heart. It's the rhythm of all life. But who can hear its motion? The ears are deaf.

(Singing) The eyes are blind. The heart is dry.
To be born, you have to die.

To know right from wrong,
Find your dream, find your song.

(A dance sequence begins, involving JOHN, GOLDEN HAWK and the various spirit inhabitants of this world. At the end of the dance, John, who is lifted into the air by the dancers, appears to be flying.)

John: I'm flying! I'm flying!

Fade to black.

Scene 2

(In the big city. We are in the gleaming office towers of Magicvision Inc. JULIA CHAN, senior V.P. of this media giant, sings of the glories of life in the corporate jungle.)

Song 3: Welcome to the City

Chorus: Welcome to the city,
It's the bottom line in the city.
Welcome to the city,
It's a gold mine in the city.

Julia: Climb the corporate ladder, make it to the top,
No time to take it slow.
Slay the competition, I can never stop
Until I'm running this whole show.
In the city, in the city.

Chorus

(Outside the building, JOHN, knapsack on his bag and guitar under his arm, looks up, like a peasant denied access to the castle. He moves on.)

Julia: CDs, T.V and radio,
You gotta grab all your market share.
The common denominator sure is low,
But in love and war, baby, all is fair
In the city, in the city.

(As the song continues over a musical breakdown [drums and bass only], JULIA prances around the office, giving quickfire instructions to her subordinates.)

Julia: *(Talking)* Michael, do you have the sales projections for the next two quarters?

Michael: Yes, Ms. Chan. I have the latest figures here. *(He hands JULIA a brief with the Magicvision logo and colours on the cover.)*

Andy: *(Intercepting JULIA between desks)* Ms. Chan, I need your O.K. on this change that you requested.

Julia: *(Looks it over quickly)* Not bad, Andrew. Tighten up the copy last paragraph and bring it back to me. Understood?

Andy: Yes, Ms. Chan.

Julia: *(At second desk)* Wendy, how soon will I have the profile on that promo deal?

Wendy: They are emailing a draft contract this morning. The market report is almost complete.

Julia: Irene! Mr. Morely will be here any minute. Have you got his coffee ready?

Irene: Yes, Ms. Chan.

Julia: O.K., everybody, show me what you can do!

(Singing resumes)

Julia: Ocean cruises and fancy cars,
At Magicvision, we can sell you dreams.
Wanna make it? Wanna be a star?
In the city, life ain't what it seems
In the city, in the city.

Chorus

As the song draws to an end, with a resounding "Welcome!", RATHAN MORELY, the president of Magicvision Corp., sweeps in. JULIA returns to centre stage, takes the report that WENDY hands to her, waits for RATHAN's approach. Choruses of "Good morning, sir" or "Hello, Mr. Morely" as RATHAN passes each worker. He is gracious, acknowledging all. He comes over to talk with JULIA, as IRENE hands him his coffee and then leaves. They are out of earshot of everybody else.

Rathan: How's my favourite V.P.?

Julia: Hard at it.

Rathan: Have you seen Vanessa yet?

Julia: *(Pause)* No, not this morning. *(Enter VANESSA)* I spoke too soon. There she is.

Rathan: Vanessa, come here! *(VANESSA approaches.)* Look at the time: 9:10! We start here at 9:00. You know that.

Vanessa: Sorry.

Rathan: And why couldn't you just ride to work with me?

Vanessa: Why should I.

Rathan: *(Aside to VANESSA)* Get to work, now O.K., darling. *(Exit VANESSA)*

Julia: *(Cynically)* She's in unusually good humour this morning.

Rathan: Have you put any thought into the Hussein thing? His numbers are way off.

Julia: Not really that surprising. He's been losing momentum as the fallout from 9/11 continues. It's just becoming more obvious now. The backlash to people of Islamic descent shows no signs of diminishing. Those right-wing nutbars from Coyote News keep on dissing him. Although, given Ali's lifestyle, I don't see the problem. That guy hasn't got one religious molecule in his body... On top of all this, I've heard he had a couple of death threats from Islamic fundamentalists. Rathan, maybe we've just ridden this horse a little too long. The combined sales of our other artists are holding steady. We've started a new promo whereby customers can get a free T-shirt with a our multiple MP3 download package, which is dissuading some customers from going the piracy route. It's not like our market share is dropping...

Rathan: Is his latest project going to make any difference?

Julia: Lord knows we're giving it our best shot. I'm pulling out all the stops for his CD release.

Rathan: Well, hey, if the Stones can keep coming back, then anything is possible.

Julia: We do have too many of our eggs in his basket.

Rathan: Anything new caught your attention?

Julia: I'm putting a fire under some of the folks over at A & R. Hopefully, they'll dig up something soon.

Rathan: At least I feel we have a jump on the competition. This arts foundation thing really does help us keep our ears to the ground.

Julia: That's fine, as long as they don't get stuck in the mud.

Rathan: I'm not worried about that. You're up to the task, I would say.
(She smiles. Momentary fade to black, quick segué to next scene.)