

Rasputin

Opera in Two Acts

Music and libretto by Jay Reise

Characters

Rasputin

Iliodor - a monk against Rasputin

Prince Felix Yusupov - chief of the conspirators

Grand Duke Dmitry Pavlovich - a conspirator

Tsar Nicholas II

Tsaritsa Alexandra Feodorovna

Dr. Sokolsky - physician to the royal family and friend of Yusupov

Princess Irina Yusupova - wife of Prince Felix Yusupov

Smerdsky - a thug in the employ of Yusupov

General Zhevadov - a conspirator

Lenin

Messengers, Khylsty (a sect of self-flagellants), revolutionaries, ministers, courtiers etc.

Act I Scene 1

Khlysty (*chorus*) Where is he?

When is he coming?

When he gets here!

When can we begin?

When he tells us!

He said to meet here.

He's late.

He said he'd come!

Where is he?

I want him!

I want him!

I want *him*!

Father Grigory has plenty for all of us!

Shhh!

What's that?

I sense his presence!

His presence!

His presence!

He's coming!
Our leader!
The Holy One!
The Holy One! Rasputin!

Rasputin Devoted souls, I am here!

Khlysty He's here! He has come to us! Our Holy One has come to lead us!

Rasputin Oh my children! I have come from the Mother of God Almighty!

Khlysty God Almighty!

Rasputin I have spoken to Her and She has given me a message from God Almighty! God! Oh God!

Khlysty God! Almighty God!

Rasputin Suffer pain through sin! Suffer sin through pain! For only through suffering pain can you feel the wounds of Christ!

Khlysty Suffer pain! Through sin can you feel the wounds of Christ!

Rasputin Sin! Sin my children! For only in the act of mortal sin can you find the eternal in your souls! Only in the depths of Hell can your souls reach the height of Salvation! Reject the Church of men! Reject the laws of reason! Embrace the Church of God! Grow toward the higher life! Be reborn in the Spirit! Suffer pain! Christ is risen! Suffer sin! Christ is risen!

Khlysty Sin! Sin for Christ! Sin! Feel the pain of Christ! Oh feel the wounds of Christ! Feel his pain! Feel the torment of Jesus! Then can we be saved! Christ is risen!

[The monk Iliodor bursts in.]

Iliodor Blasphemers! Sinners! Heathens!

Rasputin Begone, you man from the Church of men!

Iliodor God will punish your heresy!

Rasputin You don't know the true God!

Iliodor Our God will punish you all!

Rasputin You are the true sinner! All words and Scriptures! All canon and law! You

don't know the pain of suffering, the sins of the flesh!

Iliodor Tsar Nicolas has appointed me, me, me to drive out the Devil from our Russia!

Rasputin Then we must go to Moscow! To save our Holy Russia!

Iliodor Oh, no!

Khlysty To Moscow! To save our Holy Russia!

Rasputin We'll begin a riot! I'll go to the Tsar as a man of God and the people! And only I'll be able to control the mob! I'll conquer in the name of the Holy Spirit! I'll come as a messenger of God! Now let us find grace through sin!

Iliodor God will punish you! An unrepentant sinner!

Khlysty Rasputin!

Rasputin Now sin! Sin! Reach grace through sin! Through sin reach grace! Suffer pain through sin! Through pain find Christ! Suffer pain like Christ! Sin for Christ!

Khlysty Through sin! Through sin reach grace! Suffer pain through sin! Through pain find Christ! Sin for Christ!

Iliodor No! Go home good people! The Lord will still forgive you! Repent! Sinners repent! Stop this orgy! Stop this sin! The Lord will punish you all!

Rasputin If He despises what we do, if He hates who we are, if He rejects our prayers and suffering - let Him than strike me down to the bottom of the earth!

Khlysty Rasputin's our Savior!

Rasputin Such is the will of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

Iliodor An imposter! He's a fake! A devil!

Rasputin Rise, blessed spirits! Give him pain as Christ felt pain!

Iliodor No! Step back! Stay away! Do not listen to the Great Satan!

Rasputin Rise! Oh Christ is risen!

Khlysty Christ is risen!

Scene 2

Dmitri Felix! The chances you take!

Yusupov I love the danger!

Dmitri When did you get back?

Yusupov Early this morning. Have you heard that the Tsar mobilized, than canceled mobilization, and has now reordered it? The Tsar is naïve. He said to my regiment: "I need your lives, but only give them up in cases of extreme urgency". What's that?

Dmitri The riff-raff are getting restless. They've been promised free vodka to join in the toast for a speedy victory.

Yusupov Who is this monk I've been hearing about?

Dmitri Do you mean Rasputin? He calls himself the voice of God and the people.

Yusupov Is he a revolutionary?

Dmitri No, not exactly. But he has tremendous power over the people. He encourages his flock in the ways of the flesh. He claims it's the only road to Salvation.

Yusupov Maybe I've been on the right track myself, after all!

Dmitri They say he can hypnotize a crowd.

Yusupov I just hope he can keep them quiet!

Dmitri Here they come.

Yusupov A thousand blessing and best wishes to your majesties on this day of celebration!

Nicholas We thank you dearest cousins, for joining us in the celebration for the speedy victory! Dmitry Pavlovich! [*Crowd noise.*] See what's going on out there!

Alexandra Nicholas! The fool of Kirov with powers from God, who knew our fate and fortune, said we would vanquish Germany, but only after our own destruction!

Nicholas What the Empress means is that sometimes you lose the battle but win the war!

Dmitri Majesty, a holy man, a starets from Siberia, wishes to deliver greetings from the people!

Rasputin May the spouse of the holy Ghost and the Mother of the Father's Word lead you along the path of Truth! Come Little Father!

[Rasputin awkwardly approaches and kisses the Tsar.]

Nicholas Are you mad?!

Courtiers He kissed the Tsar! He touched the Tsar!

Rasputin Reject not the heartfelt love of your people/ They, like you, are the children of God! In your moments of greatest need - you'll call on us!

Dmitri Majesty! The mob rioted when we ran out of vodka! Order has been restored but many have been killed!

Nicholas Oh! What can we do?

Dmitri Majesty! Announce that you'll send the minister of health!

Nicholas Oh, I'm not sure. Maybe we should go ourselves?

Alexandra What about our guests?

Rasputin No! Go to your people!

Yusupov You are out of place, peasant!

Rasputin God has given me His place!

Dmitri This is a horrible beginning! We're beginning war to end all wars! The people will see this as a horrible omen! A horrible omen! God gave all power to the Tsar! He will lead us!

Nicholas I'm not sure, what to do!

Alexandra Listen to the prophet! From God!

Rasputin Go to the people!

Yusupov Why all this fuss? When can we start dancing?

Alexandra Nicky! You must go out there and quiet that mob! Everyone is watching you! You must do something now or they'll hold it against us forever and ever!

Nicholas But I'm afraid!

Alexandra But you must do something right now! Right now you must go out there as Rasputin has said! Listen to God's messenger! Listen to God's prophet! This prophet of the people! From God! They're watching you and you must act right now!

Nicholas Yes, dear. Yes, you are right. What would your little boy do without you, his best adviser? Send the people our regrets, and tell them that tomorrow we'll come, tomor-

Rasputin We must go to the people now!

Yusupov What kind of madness is this?!

Rasputin Only I can calm them with a message from the Lord!

Yusupov Nonsense!

Nicholas Can he be right? Is he sent from God?

Alexandra Nicky! Listen to him! He has great powers!

Yusupov Arrest him!

Rasputin Stay back you sinners! *[To the Tsar]* Oh come Little Father to your people, your children from God!

Crowd *[From outside]* Little Father! Come to us!

Nicholas I'll go!

Rasputin She who gave birth to God loves Russia! She who gave birth to God loves the Tsar! She who gave birth to Christ loves Russia and her Tsar and her faithful people! It's to her that all must pray! May she cover Holy Russia, her Tsar, and her people with her love, and return our spirits to the throne of God! Go home good people and pray with our Tsar for Holy Russia!

Alexandra He will save us all!

Crowd God, preserve our Russia and her Tsar!

Yusupov He's a fake! I tell you it's a set-up!

Dmitri Felix calm down!

Yusupov We'd better take care of him or we'll all be through!

Dmitri Felix! Take it easy!

Yusupov Yes. You are right. Enough time wasted on the rabble! A toast to victorious Russia, to our Tsar and Tsaritsa!

Courtiers Hail our Russia! Hail our Tsar and Tsaritsa! All hail Russia! Hail Russia! Her victory! Her glory! Her victory in this war! Victory!

Rasputin: Save Holy Russia!

Curtain

Scene 3.

[Nicholas and Alexandra in private quarters with Alexei in a crib.]

Alexandra Nicky!

Nicholas Yes, dear?

Alexandra Nicky!

Nicholas Oh, yes, dear? Sorry, my love!

Alexandra I never knew I could be so happy!

Nicholas Yes, dear! Me too.

Alexandra Thirteen years of waiting and now a boy! Oh, I thought we'd never make it!

Nicholas *[Laughs.]* It wasn't from lack of trying.

Alexandra It was a test. Just as our friend had said.

Nicholas But I thought I had faith.

Alexandra We thought we had faith but Grigory spoke to God!

Nicholas Grigory spoke to God!

Alexandra And now we have baby!

Both The heir to the greatest Empire in the world!

Alexandra Nicky? I'm still troubled by those rumors and prophecies of death to our son!

Nicholas It's just peasant superstition, my dear. Ask Father Grigory. He'll be here in a minute. He'll tell you these peasant tales are just stories for the children.

Alexandra But these are the words of the blessed fool of Kirov! Oh! I am so frightened! You should have heard him! "You have a boy. He'll be your greatest sorrow and your greatest joy! ... *[Growing hysterical.]* Greatest sorrow!"

Nicholas Alex! Stop it! Calm! Father Grigory will be here in a few moments. I'll order him to tell you that this... rubbish is all a lot of peasant nonsense!

Alexandra Come, baby! Come, what's troubling you? So! Do you like my cross? It was a gift from your protector, Father Grigory. Oh gently! Don't pull! Oh! You've pulled it off! Are you hiding it? Where did it go detushka! It must be here... somewhere. There it is! Ohhh, detushka! *[She picks up Alexei. The sheet on his back is bloody.]* You love your mama, matushka! La-la! La-la!

Nicholas God, Alex! *[Points]* Look! No! There!

Alexandra What?! Where?! *[She sees the blood and screams]* Doctor! Help!

Nicholas Doctor! Doctor!

[Doctor Sokolsky rushes in and begins to examine the tsar.]

Nicholas *[Pushes Sokolsky towards Alexei.]* There!

Doctor *[Examining Alexei.]* He's bleeding! He's bleeding!

Alexandra Fool! Do something!

Nicholas Do something! Give him room!

Doctor It won't stop!

Alexandra That's impossible!

Doctor It won't stop! I tell you it won't stop!

[Rasputin suddenly appears in the doorway.]

Rasputin Step back! *He approaches the crying Alexei.* Nanyeh. Nanyeh. There, detuchka. Quiet. Quiet. Coo. Quiet. Yaballah. Quexallah. Nanyeh. Nanyeh coo, detuchka. Coo. Yoo. Yaballah, so. Ippoli. Ipplol-lo.

Doctor The bleeding has stopped!

Alexandra Oh, dear God!

Nicholas What did you do, Holy One?

Rasputin I had faith in the Lord.

Nicholas Faith in the Lord.

Alexandra Christ is risen!

[Gunfire outside]

Nicholas Will they never stop?!

Rasputin They will stop but first they must be heard!

[Grand Duke Dmitry enters quickly.]

Dmitry Sire! The Cossacks have fired into the crowd to prevent them from storming the palace!

Nicholas Oh God! Lets' go!

Rasputin Go, batushka, go! I'll take good care of the Little Mama and child! Your people need you *Rasputin leaves with Dmitry...* And you need them. And you doctor, you're not needed here.

Doctor But it's hemophilia, the blood disease of royalty. Surely you don't attribute-

Rasputin Go!

[Sokolsky stomps out.]

Alexandra No! I knew it! The curse of our family! Baby! Baby's a bleeder! Oh God, a bleeder! Oh dear God! A bleeder! Like my brother Poldie! I knew it would happen! Oh God! Oh what have I done? Nicky! I should never have

married him!

Rasputin Matushka! Matushka

Alexandra It's all my fault! Oh my poor dear Nicky! Oh I loved you! I thought we could escape!

Rasputin Trust in the Lord!

Alexandra He has deserted me!

Rasputin He deserts no one! Calm yourself, matushka. I am here. Things will be better soon!

Alexandra Oh how I prayed for a boy, a son for Russia! Baby was God's gift, His answer to my prayers! But what the Lord gives He takes away!

Rasputin No, mama! Your son is safe in the hands of our Lord. He'll grow strong but only if -

Alexandra If what?

Rasputin Oh matushka! The Holy Mother has spoken to me! Russia is your son! Your son is Russia! As our Russia becomes strong so shall your son regain his strength! We must be strong in our will!

Alexandra We must be strong in our will. We must protect and shield my boy. Oh, Father Grigory! I'm still afraid!

Rasputin Oh I will protect you! The Lord is testing your faith! He has graced you with a son, the next Tsar of Russia, Holy Russia! The precious life of your boy and the life of Holy Russia are intertwined. The one cannot live without the other!

Alexandra Lord have mercy on us!

Rasputin So listen to me! Listen to me and your son will be saved! Do everything I say! Everything!

Alexandra Yes, Holy One!

Rasputin There's still time, mama, still time.

Alexandra Give me your blessing Father Grigory. *[Rasputin makes the sign of the cross.]* Let it guide me always on the sad and dreary path I have yet to follow.

Rasputin Follow me!

[She picks up Alexei and they walk out slowly together.]

Scene 4.

Rasputin They believe in me! Just a poor and lowly peasant! Oh they believe I'll save their son! Such trusting fools! They believe in me, in the scum of the earth! They believe I'll cure their sniveling brat! The bleeding stopped! They think I'm God! They believe I'll save their son! They believe I'll tame the people! They believe I'll talk to the Lord! They believe I'll save this rotten, stinking, putrid Holy Russia!
They believe in me! They believe in me only! Oh! Come to me spirits! Oh come! Possess me here! Let the powers of Ippoli flow, flow into my body! Let this head shape the fate of Russia! Let this hand grip the sword of power! Let this body only give false love! They believe! Now I am their Tsar!

Scene 5

[A cabaret nightclub. Yusupov in drag onstage as "Bébé d'amour".]

Yusupov They call me Bébé d'amour!
Come to your Bébé d'amour!
You have a magic allure
So come on my tour!
I'm your Bébé, your Bébé d'amour.
Come with your Bébé d'amour!
You'll love your Bébé d'amour!
You're feeling wretched pure
And I'm only sure you need
Bébé, your Bébé d'amour!

I want you to hold me
And squeeze me
And take me to Paree,
Sit by me,
And guide me,
And show me all there is to see,
Scold me,
And tease me,
And tell me what this love can be,
All huddle-ly
And cuddle-ly.
Until you befuddle me!
You suit me to a T!

I suit me to a T!
We suit us to a T!

Male chorus *[in drag]*

They call you Bébé d'amour!
I love you Bébé d'amour!
You have a magic allure
So come on my tour!
Little Bébé, oh Bébé d'amour!
Come with your Bébé d'amour!
You'll love your Bébé d'amour!
You have a magic allure
So come on my tour!
Oh Bébé, oh Bébé d'amour!

Yusupov

They call me Bébé d'amour!
Come to your Bébé d'amour!
You have a magic allure
So come on my tour!
I'm your Bébé, your Bébé d'amour.
Come with your Bébé d'amour!
You'll love your Bébé d'amour!
Give up your cares and be free
On this naughty spree! With your little, little
B-é-b-é d'-a-m-o-u-r
- Oh you are, aren't you -?
Bébé, your Bébé d'amour!

[Applause and catcalling from the [offstage]audience. Yusupov curtsies wildly, and then goes off. The scene converts to Yusupov's dressing room. Yusupov and Dmitry come in.]

Yusupov They love me!

Dmitry Bravo! Bravo Bébé d'amour!

[Doctor Sokolsky enters.]

Sokolsky *[Dejected]* 'Evening, Felix.

[The show goes on outside.]

Yusupov Pavel Andrei'ich! You came to see me!

Dmitry If your mother could see you!

Yusupov Or my father!

Dmitry Or your uncle, the Tsar!

Stage Manager *[offstage]* And now, gentlemen, for your viewing and listening pleasure, the Hussar Hussies in "Backside Blues"!

Offstage Audience Boo! Ssss! Bébé! We want Bébé! Bébé d'amour!

Yusupov They love me!

Stage Manager *[To offstage audience]* Gentlemen! Please!

[Offstage audience grows quieter. Doctor Sokolsky enters.]

Doctor My God! It was incredible! Fantastic! He relieved the boy just by singing to him. I could do nothing. I could do nothing!

Yusupov & Dmitry *[spoken]* What happened? What, what's the matter, Papushka? Who? Who?

Yusupov Tell us what happened. What's going on?

Doctor They called me in. The tsarevich was bleeding profusely.

Yusupov Bleeding?

Dmitry What happened, did he fall?

Doctor I couldn't stop it, oh, I couldn't stop it!

Dmitry What was so unusual about this cut?

Doctor The boy's the bleeder, like his uncle Leopold of Prussia! Rasputin stopped the bleeding and then he dismissed me! And she agreed! My Empress! My Tsar! Oh I took care of him as a boy! Oh what will I do? Where will I go? After thirty years! I am disgraced after thirty years! What can I do?

Dmitry Take it easy! There now! It will be all right!

Yusupov Damn! Damn! Damn! That stinking hellhound! How dare he kick us around! He's devoted his life to that family! And now that charlatan, that fake has the nerve to kick him right out on his ass! Damn! I'm gonna do something!

Doctor But what can you do, Felix?

Yusupov Something must be done!

Doctor But dear boy, you can't stick out your neck for me. You cannot risk your position, your standing at court.

Yusupov We're not lost yet old man! I'll go take care of Rasputin!

Doctor No, Felix. It's the shame!

Yusupov No! No! C'm on. Easy come, easy go!

[Doctor Sokolsky takes poison out of his pocket and swallows it.]

Yusupov Pavel!

Dmitry God, Felix!

Yusupov Oh God! Papushka! Talk to me!

Dmitry He's dead.

Yusupov Rasputin!

Dmitry Easy, Felix. Easy!

Yusupov Oh goodbye, dear friend. I loved you like a father! I loved you! My God! Oh God! Such a good and kind soul. I owed you a lot. Whenever there was trouble, or my old men had it in for me, you were there! You were there! Not to mention your introducing me to the finer things in life!

Dmitry We'd better move the body. We can't leave it here.

Offstage audience Bébé d'amour! Encore bébé d'amour!

Yusupov I'll get him! That bastard Rasputin! I'll make him pay!

Dmitry Felix! Control yourself!

[Stage manager enters.]

Stage Manager Encore! Please, encore Bébé d'amour! They're tearing the place apart!

Yusupov Yes! I'm coming! But I swear, that bastard will pay!

I'll get him! I tell you, he won't get away with this!

Dmitry Yes, yes. Get your dress up!

Yusupov He'll destroy us all if he can!

Dmitry Yes! Now go!

Yusupov I'll get him for this!

Dmitry Yes, Felix! We'll talk about it later!

Yusupov He'll pay!

Dmitry Now go!

Yusupov I'll get him!

Dmitry Felix, come! They are waiting for you!

Yusupov These peasants can't come here and push us around! Tell us what to do!

Dmitry Felix! Settle down! Now! Come!

Yusupov How dare he! A peasant! I'll get him! He'll pay!

Dmitry Felix! Stop! Lets go!

Yusupov I'll get the bastard! He'll pay! I'll get him!

Act II

Scene 1

[Rasputin's apartment. The stage is blacked out. Sounds of lovemaking.]

1st Woman Father Grigory!

2nd Woman Come! Let me touch you! There now!

1st Woman O, Father Grigory! Take me!

3rd Woman It's my turn!

Rasputin Don't worry, my little chicks! I'll have all of you!

3rd Woman You feel sooooo good! So much better than my husband!

Rasputin He does not know the spirits of the flash! But I know what you like, my holy beauties!

1st Woman More! More! There! Yes! Give it to me! Please give it to me!

Rasputin There you are, you pampered chick! You like what Father Grigory gives you!

1st Woman Yes! Ohh, that's good!

Rasputin Through the flash, come! Come into the kingdom of God!

Yusupov *[Offstage.]* Open up, Rasputin! C'm on! We know you're in there!

Rasputin Who in the name of God is that?

Yusupov Open up, you stinking muzhik!

[Lights up immediately. Many women in various states of undress. The intruders break down the door. The women run in all directions.]

Yusupov *[Stomps in with several of his associates.]* Now, you lusting pig!

Rasputin *[Shooing the women into the other room.]* Here! Here! In here! Quickly! Now! Now!

[Princess Irina Yusupova enters hurriedly as if catching up with Yusupov.]

Yusupov Irina!

Irina Felix!

Yusupov You! Here?!

Irina *[Kisses him on the mouth and pats his cheek.]* Come home, Felix.

Yusupov *[To one of his men.]* Take her home!

Irina Stay away from that man.

Yusupov I'll deal with you later! *[She leaves.]*

Rasputin What do you want, dogs?!

Yusupov Smerdsky! Teach him a lesson!

Smerdsky With pleasure, Prince!

[The thugs beat Rasputin.]

Rasputin Cowards! Get out! You dare to strike me! Prince! Prince! Call them off!
I'll tell the Empress! She'll have your skin!

Yusupov Enough!

Rasputin Prince, have you come for sport?

Yusupov I've come for a friend you filthy peasant!

Rasputin A friend?

Yusupov Doctor Sokolsky.

Rasputin A quack!

Yusupov How dare you! Doctor Sokolsky's killed himself! Yes, killed himself
because you kicked him out! You dared to kick him out on his ass!

Rasputin He was a fake! He couldn't heal! He had no faith!

Yusupov Who do you think you are?

Rasputin A man of God! Your kind always stick together!

Yusupov Bastard! How dare you! If you know what's good for you, you'll get
yourself on the next train to Siberia! Siberia!

Rasputin But Prince! I have great influence. Together we can save our Holy Russia!
We can be friends, Prince!

Yusupov I'll send you back to your pigpen first!

Rasputin The Tsar trusts me! You must trust me!

Yusupov Trust you?!

Rasputin I'll make you a minister!

Yusupov Don't touch me!

Rasputin I'm stronger, than you think, Prince! Almighty God! Call out the Evil Demon from this soul! Come out!

[Rasputin hypnotizes Yusupov. Blackout.]

Scene 2

[Alexandra and Rasputin.]

Alexandra Oh why must we do this, dear Father Grigory?

Rasputin Papa's wandering, he's wandering away from God.

Alexandra Wandering away from God.

Rasputin It's sad to say but when he makes the sign of the cross, it's only to take us in! We must lead our Russia back to the path of right and truth, but only alone, without Papa!

Alexandra But my poor Nicky! Oh, my Nicky!

Rasputin But your boy, Mama! An Russia! They must be saved!

Alexandra I love him so much!

Rasputin And you're showing your love. You're saving our Russia for him!

Alexandra Can't we do something else?

Rasputin We must govern for him!

Alexandra Oh God!

Rasputin Mama! You are now the Tsar, the true Tsar. The people despise Papa because they know he cannot guide them.

Alexandra But my husband is the Tsar!

Rasputin This great war will end with the second rising of the Lord! You must follow great Catherine, and lead our Russia! Lead our Russia!

Alexandra I cannot!

Rasputin You will! You must! There's only one way to save the life of your son! Papa must step down.

Alexandra Oh no.

Rasputin Alexei will be Tsar and you will be regent.

Alexandra But I love him. Oh I love him.

Rasputin I know. But think of your sick boy. Papa cannot save our Russia anymore. Only you and I and God!

Alexandra And God!

Rasputin Listen to me. Oh, listen to me! God is guiding our Russia! Listen to me! Listen to Him! Listen to God! Papa's condition is worse and worse. We must move quickly! And we need allies. Come! Come! Yusupov will be here soon. Let's go and tend to Papa.

Alexandra Again?!

Rasputin We must! Let us thank God for His wisdom and guidance!

[Rasputin and Alexandra exit. Yusupov, Dmitry, Zhevadov and Smerdsky enter. Ministers enter gradually.]

Yusupov He controls them both. I tell you he must be stopped!

Smerdsky Let me at him, Prince! Let me show him now! After what he did to you and -

Yusupov Enough! Enough!

Zhevadov And now our Tsar takes orders from a madman, in a war to end all wars!

[Gunfire outside.]

Dmitry They're getting closer!

Yusupov This can't go on forever! We must present our complaints to the Tsar.

Dmitry Perhaps we can change his mind.

Smerdsky But what if you cannot? What can we do? Let me at him! Let me at -

Zhevadov What can we do? Oh! Something must be done! Yes! Something must be -

Yusupov Shh! Here he comes! *To Smerdsky Go!*

[Smerdsky slips out. Nicholas, walking like a robot, is led in by Rasputin.]

Yusupov Greetings to your Majesty!

Nicholas God, I'm tired! Let's be quick about your business.

Zhevadov Sire, we've lost Tannenberg at the cost of half a million men. But we have great hope -

Nicholas No! No! The Lord promised us the victory!

Rasputin No! He merely said that Tannenberg would mark a new beginning! A violent storm threatens our Russia! Woe! Endless grief, woe, tears, and suffering! I see a blackened sky! An ocean of blood, blood and tears! Listen to me! Now! Listen! Listen to me! Get out of this war! Oh get out of this war! All of you must follow, follow me! Only I can save our Holy Russia!

Dmitry Ha! *[Pointing to Rasputin.]* We will save her without him!

Yusupov He's a peasant! He mustn't save her!

Rasputin God will save her!

Zhevadov The army will save her!

Dmitry The Tsar must save her!

Rasputin With the help of God!

Yusupov Alone!

Zhevadov With the army!

Rasputin With God!

Zhevadov *[Reading a message.]* Our forces have arrived at Warsaw on time.

Nicholas A miracle!

Zhevadov We outnumber the Germans by half a million men! Victory is ours!

Nicholas A great victory! A great victory! That will stop these forces of revolution!

Rasputin You are the Tsar, God's man for the people! Let not these heathens lead you astray! I speak the words of the Lord! Let us withdraw from this cursed war!

Yusupov *[To the Tsar.]* Can you believe the words of this stinking monk? The answer is here. *Gives papers to Nicholas.* Just look at what they're saying in the newspapers. Here are the filthy cartoons they're printing of your wife and lovely daughters and this lusting -

Alexandra *[Springing out from behind a curtain.]* Lies! All lies!

Rasputin This sodomite will feel the wrath of our Lord!

Alexandra Lies! Lies and slander! How dare you present them to your Tsar!

Nicholas I must do something to find some peace! Father Grigory - perhaps if you go away for a while, until this mess blows o -

Alexandra & Rasputin Do you reject a man from God?

Alexandra He has been sent to save our son!

Rasputin I have been sent to save our Russia!

Nicholas I must!

Alexandra *[To Nicholas.]* How dare you!?

Rasputin You cannot!

Nicholas I am the Tsar!

Alexandra *[Indicating Rasputin.]* You must answer to him.

Rasputin And you answer to God!

Nicholas He must go for a while!

Alexandra Baby! Baby will die without him!

Rasputin Without me our Russia is lost! You will die! Your family will die! Die!

Alexandra Without him me our Russia is lost! We will all die! Die!

Nicholas Yes, Mama, all right. You're my best advisor. You may go now.

Yusupov You'll do nothing?!

Nicholas I am the Tsar and I will do nothing!

[Two messengers enter.]

1st Messenger Warsaw is lost! Forty thousand are dead!

2nd Messenger The southern army's in full retreat!

Dmitry *[Reading.]* Kerensky has called for abdication!

Rasputin Russia is on her knees!

Nicholas To the front! Beat them back! More men! More rifles! More guns!

Yusupov The Tsar has gone mad!

Nicholas Ministers! Tell me your plans! You! You! You! You! Tell me what to do!
A plan! Some kind of plan! Alex! Father Grigory! What should I do?

Rasputin, Alexandra, Ministers Listen to me! Listen to the word of the Lord! To me!
Dismiss Rasputin! Be strong! Be the Tsar!

Rasputin, Alexandra, Ministers Attack! Retreat! More guns! More food for our
soldiers! Attack! More guns! Listen to the prophet! More food for our
soldiers at the front!

Nicholas Mama! I'm confused -

Rasputin Turn to God! Dismiss the lot of them!

Alexandra *[Indicating Rasputin.]* Turn to God! Dismiss the lot of them!

Rasputin, Alexandra, Ministers More guns! More food! More food for our soldiers at
the front! More food for our brave

Nicholas Get out! Out! All of you! You're killing me! Get out! All of you!

[Rasputin indicates to Nicholas that he should sit on the throne.]

Rasputin *[To Yusupov.]* So you see, my dear, only we can control him!

Yusupov *[To his followers.]* We're lost! I tell you we're are lost!

Zhevadov No! No!

Yusupov The Tsar is under his hypnotic power!

Zhevadov But the Tsar is merely ill. It will past.

Yusupov It will not pass! I know! He even hypnotized me once! Even now I can't look at his eyes! *[Confidential.]* First we'll make peace with him. Take him in. He needs the army and the nobility. To strengthen his position. Then we'll strike!

Zhevadov Let us destroy him! To restore our faith in this war!

Dmitry Let us restore our faith in Russia!

Yusupov Let us restore our faith in ourselves! Father Grigory?

Rasputin So, Felix. At least you're ready to turn to God!

Yusupov What's good for Russia is good for us all! The Tsar is our father but he is feeling - poorly.

Rasputin He's chosen by God! Mama can lead us!

Yusupov Impossible!

Rasputin She's the wife of God's chosen on earth! *[Points to the Tsar.]* Look at him! Will you look at him, Felix! The fate of Russia is in my hands!

Nicholas *[Like a child.]* Mama! We must do something right away. This is an autocracy, my family right. I'll dissolve that horrible Duma and restore the autocracy, my honored right by birth and law.

Alexandra Oh dearest Nicky, can't you see? It's all finished, it's done. Father Grigory and I are your best advisors. You're not feeling yourself so don't worry your little head.

Nicholas Oh what would I do without you, dearest mama!

Alexandra We'll take good care of everything, our Russia and you.

Nicholas & Alexandra We are united, bonded forever! And when this life is ended, we'll

meet again! And when this life is ended, we'll meet in the other world for eternity! *[Nicholas collapses.]*

Rasputin He's nothing at all without us! Join us now, Felix! Look at our Russia dying! Only I can save her! The choice is your, my dear!

Alexandra *[To Nicholas.]* Just rest now my dearest. I suffer over you as a mother. Oh my tender, meek child who needs all my guidance and love! You cannot be great Peter or Ivan the Terrible! But our friend and I will save your throne for Baby, forever! So rest now my dearest Nicky. Leave all your fears and cares to me and out friend! Our friend!

Rasputin So you see, the Tsar is dead! *[Points to Alexei who has been brought in by a nurse.]* Long live our Tsar!

Scene 3

[Night. Yusupov Palace. The stage is divided such that a basement room and the room upstairs are both visible. Dmitry, Zhevadov and Smerdsky prepare for Rasputin's arrival.]

Smerdsky It's so strange tonight! The moonlight glistens on St. Isaac's! The river laps under our feet like the tongue of a starving dog on a piece of hanging meat!

Zhevadov Meat? Ha! They're dining on rats in Smolensk! The finest fighting men!

Dmitry Let's finish before they get here. There's not much time.

Smerdsky Blood! More blood!

Zhevadov How long can it go on?

Dmitry Forever. As long as Nicholas is on the throne.

Zhevadov The people won't stop. They march and die! March and die! They'll try to try to march through the Kremlin!

Dmitry They'll succeed if the Empress is made Regent! No! Tonight we'll kill the mad monk and she'll lose all her power!

Smerdsky But don't you think it strange that Rasputin would come here after Felix has been his bitter enemy?

Dmitry Rasputin needs powerful friends. And besides, Felix promised that Irina

would be here to meet him!

Zhevadov He's had his eye on her!

Dmitry And she on him! It's be the talk of the season!

Smerdsky *[Holding up a large cake.]* She'll be the frosting on the cake! *[Produces a small box.]* Crystals of cyanide! I give him ten minutes!

Dmitry Everything's ready. Felix has told the monk that Irina is throwing a party. So let's go upstairs and have a good time!

Zhevadov Here they come. Let's go!

[They go to the room upstairs. Sporadic distant gunfire throughout the scene. Rasputin and Yusupov enter.]

Rasputin So your wife is quite a night owl.

Yusupov Oh yes. She loves a good time.

Rasputin What's that?

Yusupov Oh, Irina's guests are still here. They'll be gone quite soon.

Rasputin A noisy bunch!

Yusupov They're Americans.

Rasputin This is nice. Perhaps I can relax while we make our plans.

Yusupov Please do so, Father Grigory. What can I get you? Some wine? Some cake?

Rasputin No, Little One. Just come and sit by me and we'll talk 'til your wife comes down. Crazy Americans! But they fear God Almighty. Men like me will soon rise up from their heartland!

Yusupov Now what should we do about this mess with our Tsar?

Rasputin It's very simple, my friend. Just get to know me better. Help me. Help me, and I'll give you everything. Bt now let me tell you something. Our very own Empress is a very wise ruler.

Yusupov But the Tsar

Rasputin He was born for children and flowers not to lead our holiest Russia,
Now must we come to his rescue with God's blessing! Now must we come
to the rescue of Holy Russia!

Yusupov Tell me about these rumors of your assassination.

Rasputin Oh, it's nothing. The chief of police is worried. He does what I say 'cause I
appointed him. But he's got the clap, and he's not quite right in the head.

Yusupov But why is he so concerned right now? Who would want to kill you? Now
that I'm out of the running!

Rasputin Lots of people would like to see me go. Except for the Bolsheviks who
think our faith in the Lord will hasten the end of us! But where's your
juicy wife, Little One?

Yusupov She'll be down soon! How clumsy!

Rasputin So nervous tonight!

Yusupov Times are tense! Have some wine. A little cake?

Rasputin No. I don't like cake. Ah! Very good! I love Madeira.

Yusupov It's from my Crimean estate. I'll bet you don't get that in Siberia!

Rasputin No. But I'll bet you've never taken a bath in wine!

Yusupov I'll bet I have! I'm as bad as you!

Rasputin Maybe you have! Yes, maybe you have. But! But - with a woman?!

Yusupov You lusting he-goat! Here. Have some more.

Rasputin Whoa! That's powerful stuff, my dear! Madeira with a kick of vodka! Are
you trying to poison me? You are not trying to poison me...?

Yusupov Of course not.

Rasputin That'd be stupid. You need me.

Yusupov Under my own roof?!

Rasputin You need me!

Yusupov What kind of prince do you take me for?

Rasputin You need me! You need me too much! Much too - Ha! You're a good sport! *[Gasps for breath and holds his stomach.]* Oh! Oh mother of God! Give me strength! *[Recovering.]* Now! Now. Where is she? Princess Irina!

Yusupov Oh no!

Rasputin I'm ready for some action. "Drink to the last drop but don't lose your head, 'cause you don't want to wake up in your own bed!"

Yusupov Damn! Damn! Damn! I'll go up and see what the matter. *[Runs up the stairs.] [To Smerdsky who squeals.]* Damn you! You've botched it up!

Dmitry Felix! Be quite!

Zhevadov What's happening?

Yusupov What did you put in there? He' alive and going strong!

Smerdsky I don't understand! It's cyanide! It's lethal!

Zhevadov It had better be or I'll make you eat it!

Smerdsky Give it some time! Please! Some more time! There's enough to kill ten men!

Yusupov He won't eat the cakes!

Smerdsky Please, some more time! There's enough to kill ten men!

Dmitry & Smerdsky Shh!

Yusupov *[Rushing back down the stairs.]*She'll be down in a moment! She's getting rid of the last of them!

Rasputin It sounds pretty wild up there!

Yusupov These Americans can't hold their vodka! They're all throwing out! Are you certain you won't have a little cake? Irina made them for you.

Rasputin Well, Irina! Maybe just a little one. *[Eats.]* Not bad. Maybe I do like cake!

Yusupov Now, Grigory. If we're to be allies then tell me more of your plans.

Rasputin We've had enough bloodshed! Enough of this war! Enough of this guilt! It must end or we'll all perish! We'll all die! The Tsar opposes this but she

agrees with me! So I'll give the order and they'll do as I say! They'll do as I say! As I say! Then we'll make the Empress regent! Then we'll make her Empress of...

["Bébé d'amour" suddenly sounds very loud from upstairs.]

Yusupov Damn! That music again! The party is still going -

Rasputin *[Jumps up.]* Let's go visit the gypsies! Your wife's not coming. We can talk on the way.

Yusupov No! I'll go find out what's the matter.

Dmitry, Zhevadov & Smerdsky What's happening?

Rasputin Ippoli! Give me strength! I must get home.

Yusupov He's the Devil! Let's kill the bastard! *[Pulls revolvers out of a cabinet and distributes them.]* Here! Here!

Rasputin It can't be poison! I must get home!

Zhevadov A real man does it with his gun!

Yusupov Back me up if I need it! *[Yusupov puts a gun in his pocket and bounds down the stairs.]* Any minute now, Grigory! Oh! Grigory?! The guests are leaving. We must finish our business.

Rasputin The boy's too sick to be Tsar.

Yusupov But the Tsar still lives!

Rasputin His spirit is dead!

Yusupov And you killed it!

Rasputin He was always a child! We tried to help him!

Yusupov We need someone who's strong! Someone who can lead as a noble!

Rasputin The Empress!

Yusupov No! She is a German spy! That German bitch! Never!

Rasputin So you'd disrupt the succession!?

Yusupov You! You have already done that!

Rasputin It's Empress, she'll rule by the will of God!

Yusupov The Grand Duke can be regent!

Rasputin The Empress!

Yusupov Or myself!

Rasputin Only the Empress!

Yusupov No! Never! Never!

Rasputin The new Catherine!

Yusupov *[Rises pistol.]* Die, pig! Reach grace through sin! *[Shoots Rasputin twice.]*

Rasputin Felix!! Nooooo, Satan!! *[Staggers and falls.]*

Yusupov It's done! He's dead! Come down!

Dmitry, Zhevadov & Smerdsky Well done! Bravo, Prince!

Voices of Invisible Spirits Rise! Christ is risen!

Smerdsky The dog is dead!

Zhevadov Done like a soldier, Prince!

Spirits Rise! Rise, as He did rise!

Dmitry *[Tending the body.]* Let's burn these and get the chains.

[Dmitry, Zhevadov & Smerdsky.]

Yusupov Grigory! I'm here, Grigory! I'm here. With your last life breath, sink down and down in dreamless rest! I hate you, bastard! Hate you!

Spirits Rise! Blessed One! Rise! Rise, as He did rise! Rise, Rasputin!

Rasputin Oh-h-h-h-h! You!! Felix!! The revolution has come and you have fired the first shot! You'll all you worthless scum! My people will avenge me! Send you to hell! You'll die, you bastard, you'll die!

Yusupov No! Dmitry! Get back! Dmitry! He's alive! No! Spot! Help! God help!

Smerdsky Oh God he's alive!

Dmitry Get him!

Zhevadov Kill the bastard!

[They struggle with Rasputin. stabbing and beating him.]

Dmitry, Zhevadov & Smerdsky Take this! And this! Die bastard! Go to the Devil!
Take this for Russia! Die traitor!

Rasputin You are damned!

Yusupov *[Falls on Rasputin and beats him ferociously.]* Go back to hell where you came from! I'll have all of you yet!

Dmitry, & Smerdsky *[pulling at Yusupov.]* No! Felix! Prince! Stop!

Zhevadov He's crazy!

Dmitry Let's get him out! Quickly!

[They pick up Rasputin who flails his arms wildly.]

Rasputin Traitors! Bastards! Blackguards! Damn you to hell! Scum! May you burn in hell!

[The conspirators drag him out.]

Epilogue

[Darkness]

Crowd The Messiah is Dead! The Messiah is dead!

[Dark red lights. Lenin address a crowd. Banners with Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. along with the hammer and sickle. During Lenin's speech a tableau of the royal family about to be executed becomes visible. Stage is dark but all figures are discernible and recognizable. In the middle of the speech a firing squad shoots the royal family.]

Lenin *[Shouting; amplified.]* The first revolution and the accompanying counter-revolutionary era defined the whole essence of the imperial monarchy, brought it to the edge, opened all its rottenness, odiousness, all was cynicism and depravity under these imperial bandits, The monstrous

Rasputin led all the atrocities of the Romanov family - establishing pogroms, spilling the blood of Jews, workers, and revolutionaries.

In Russia rights were reserved only for the rich and noble, most especially the worst of them. We must destroy those who told tales in the royal court, who lied and slandered and made up to the tsar and flattered him. This has been stealth rule from people who do not care what laws are being enacted or what officials are being appointed. No country has so many officials as Russia.

We have never refused and cannot renounce terror.

These are historical times when for the success of the revolution, we must light up the accumulated debris and blow up the old institutions.

We must have a glorious Marxist uprising, equal to the greatest work of art. We will organize centers of rebel groups. We will distribute forces and move units to surround our major cities. We will arrest the General Staff and replace the Government. Some of our brave ones will die but will not allow the enemy to prevail.

There is a need for all to participate. Even the prostitutes must be deployed in special detachments in the revolutionary battle. They must return to productive work, and find their place in the public sector.

Only freedom and fairness, with revolutionary enthusiasm produced by the cooperation of the workers and peasant masses in the holding to account and controlling of the rich, the swindlers and hooligans, can defeat the remnants of those damned capitalist societies, the dregs of humanity, hopelessly rotten and dead, this pestiferous plague; a plague inherited from capitalism and left behind by socialism!

*[General shooting and mob chaos which end exactly with the orchestra.
Blackout]*

END OF OPERA