

Empty Orchestra

A LARP by Jeff Stormer

It is a time of turmoil, when oppressive forces tighten their everpresent grip on society. You are the few, the first to stand up and say “no more.” The time has come for action. You know the opposition is strong, and you stand alone at first—but hopefully, if you are successful, people will come, and your oppressors will be dragged into the light. This is your chance. This is your shot. It’s time to rise up, take the stage, and take back the world.

The Mic is a freeform LARP for a group of at least two people, designed to be played at a Karaoke bar. It can be played in a private room, but bar karaoke, surrounded by strangers with unexpected music in the air, is preferred.

At the start of play, when you first arrive at the bar, define the opposition. Draw from the music playing when you walk in, from the décor of the bar, or from your real fears about the world. Each person should add one detail at least.

You play the roles of young idealists, marginalized from society but prepared to take action. Speaking up is a threat, taking direct action a death sentence. But you’ve made your peace.

Order your drinks.

Discuss your plans, but be discrete—people are listening. Each person should settle on at least the first step of a plan.

Once you’ve finalized your plans, grab the KJ’s songbook. Find a song that speaks to you and your plan; a song that captures your rebellion and your fear and your fighting spirit. Add it to the rotation. Tip your KJ.

Wait your turn to sing. Think about what you have to lose. Think about why you have to do this. Be brave.

When your turn comes, take the stage. Do not discuss your plans into the mic, or openly declare your intent—doing so is an easy way to “disappear.” To the crowd, you must appear as just another singer, or else you put them all in danger.

Instead, just sing. Sing your song with every bit of passion and anger and fear inside you.

When one player sings, the others listen and discuss the outcome of the singer’s plan. Take into account crowd response, the choice of music, and the performance—not the tone or notes, but the confidence and passion and bravery it takes to perform. Do not criticize, mock, judge, or negatively comment on singing ability. This is how The Opposition wins.

Every song should net at least some small success—bold action deserves to be rewarded.

At the end of the night, when your throats are sore and your muscles ache, look back on your plans and discuss your results, focusing on your triumphs, and how you made the world better.

Raise a glass to one another. Finish your drinks. Tip your bartender. Go home. Don’t drink and drive.

Begin planning your next outing. There is still work to be done.

Optional: The Crowd

If someone not in your group sings one of the following songs (which is likely to happen), take it as a change in the narrative. Change your plans accordingly.

- **Neil Diamond – Sweet Caroline:** A crowd has gathered. The world has its eyes on you now.
- **Meatloaf – Paradise by the Dashboard Light:** A figure from your past has emerged as a part of the opposition.
- **Journey – Don’t Stop Believin’:** The opposition makes an empty gesture to win the hearts of the people.
- **Spice Girls – Wannabe:** A rival movement has started. They can be friend or foe.
- **Bruce Springsteen – Born in the USA:** The Opposition mobilizes the military. Good people have been lost.
- **Idina Menzel – Let it Go:** The opposition shifts. Say what has become better, and what has become worse.
- **Gloria Gaynor - I Will Survive:** Defiance and resistance is in the air. The world is ripe for revolution.
- **Bon Jovi – Livin’ On a Prayer:** Violence erupts. Rioting. The opposition is eager to respond in kind.
- **John Travolta & Olivia Newton John – Summer Lovin’:** Support wanes, as people give up on summer dreams.
- **Sir Mix-A-Lot – Baby Got Back:** The people have begun to subvert the Opposition.