Starlata, Princess of Mars

Randall Snyder, University of Nebraska - Lincoln
**Starlata, Princess of Mars**  
* a space operetta in one act

**synopsis**
Two Americans attempt the first landing on Mars. After escaping a meteor shower, they crash on the Red Planet and are captured by a hostile band of Children led by Ergo, the Grand Vizier. They are brought to the palace of Starlata, Princess of Mars, the last female of her dying species. After an intensive and humiliating interrogation, Starlata, in order to insure the survival of her race, eventually decides to mate with Ergo. A peace treaty is signed between Earth and Mars and the Earthmen decide to remain on Mars.

**cast (in order of appearance)**

Narrator/Voice of NASA  
Lance Stalworth, former jazz trombonist  
John Dipper, former English Professor  
Ergo, Grand Vizier  
Chorus of Martian Children  
Starlata, Princess of Mars.

**prolog**
the year 2016 - narrator  

**scene one**  
Spaceship Deadalus, 3 months into flight  
"A Bad Idea"  
"More Space"

**scene two**  
Martian Desert  
"This Is The Moment"  
"To Satisfy Our Blessed Queen"  
"Starlata, Jewel of the Universe"

**scene three**  
Palace of Starlata  
"Our DNA Derives From You"  
"How Boring It Is To Be A Queen Of A Dying Planet"  
Dance Sequence: "The Phobos and Deimos Rag"

**scene four**  
"Under The Cold Moons Of Mars"  
"Half The Man"

**scene five**  
"The Russet Hills Of Mars"  
"Martian Love"

**epilog**  
The Daedalus  
"Pact Of Friendship"
instrumentation

Flute/Picc
Bassoon
Reed One: Sop Sax., Cl.
Reed Two: Alto Sx, Cl., Eng. Hn.
Reed Three: Tenor Sax, Cl., Bass Cl.
Bb Trumpet
Horn
Trombone
Percussion
Solo Violin
Solo Viola
Solo Double Bass

duration: One Hour

for
William Shomos
and the
University of Nebraska Opera Department
Starlata
Princess of Mars

Randall Snyder
2003

Prolog

Slow
$\frac{3}{4}$

It is the year Twenty Nine teen

Jaunty
$\frac{4}{4}$

After winning wars against South America Eurasia and the republic of Iceland cloned President

George W Bush the second reacting to pressure from the NSA the NRA the
Luxembourg to subsidize the first manned expedition... earmarked for his next scheduled war with decided on bestowing NASA .02% of funding Luxembourg to subsidize the first manned expedition...

decided on bestowing NASA .02% of funding earmarked for his next scheduled war with because of this limited funding Luxembourg to subsidize the first manned expedition...

NASA had to... well er cut some corners in this historic e-

First by cutting back the size of the space capsule whimsically called Daedalus
due to the fact that virtually all of NASA's pilots had been conscripted to fly U2 reconnaissance missions over Papua New Guinea, a future opponent in the cloned-Security Council's war plan.
living conditions and at best no better than an even chance of staying alive

so it was no surprise that NASA had to dip into the ranks of unemployed musicians and academicians to fill out the hapless crew

i-tinerant jazz trombonist cut his teeth playing countless Elks and

Lions Club gigs before landing a slot with the Robbie Payne Orchestra later played with
"VOM-IT" the first zero gravity house band booked at the International Space Center.

Lance however was fired from his last band, the

"Cal-vert Street Flecked Truffles" when while playing at a Fraternity party he inserted a

Ninth in the final chord of the school's Alma Mater!
thus in violation of the 2001 Edict by the Parents
Music Resource Council prohibiting the use of
unauthorized dissonance in institutional songs

Professor of Philology and Classical Literature
B. A. from Peru State
M. A. Union

College and the P. H. D.
from the University of Nebraska at Grand Island

which is neither Grand nor an island
taught over thirty years at the
University of Nebraska at Ord before being forced into early retirement by the State budget cuts of cloned Gov'ner Jo-hans the Third so now we join our intrepid explorers three months into their projected six month transit to MARS!
Scene One

The Daedalus

"A Bad Idea"

Hey, do you mind!

Watch it!

per-haps this was not such a good i-de-a

bad i-dea per-haps this was not such a good i-de-a

I should have stayed where I be-long

good old sol-id ground in-stead I'm stuck with Doc-tor egg-head!

sol-id ground in-stead I'm stuck with jazz trom-bone-ist!
I have no business being here but what else can I do?

my life's been spent in proper use of verbal craft

now I'm stuck with Jack Kerouac!
reer in jazz plaud-its from "Down Beat" but now I'm stuck in

this lame pad with Pro-fes-sor Dad A bad i-dea a bad i-dea just

ba-sic-ly a poor de-ci-sion we should have stayed on sol-id ground in-

ba-sic-ly a poor de-ci-sion we should have stayed on sol-id ground in-
Stalworth

130

stead of being trapped in outer space!

A Bad Idea

Dipper

130

stead of being trapped in outer space!

A Bad Idea

133

D

Stalworth

Hey do you mind I need more space

137

got to keep my chops up ne-verknow when I’ll get a call for a

Dipper
I suppose like this here Prowse...

...and we got another three months before we land on Mars...so fire away
childhood in his great-aunt's house in the provincial town of Combray.

He remembered a night when Monsieur Swann a family friend had come to dinner. Marcel was sent to bed where he lay unhappy until he heard Monsieur Swann leave and his mother come upstairs to comfort him.

Far out, I can't believe how exciting this is! Look, you asked me to read this!
Phone Rings......

now who could that be?

back to Proust...... several years

.. when Marcel bit into the Madeleine and...

you get it this time

we need our space!

More Space"
We need more space  more room to grow  more turf to do our thing

send us more space  just a little more space  please there's not even room to sing

no-where to play  no-thing to do

no place to hide  just cramped here in-
we're as tight as a drum just packed to the gills!

side and have had our fill just packed to the gills!

left my sides all at home John Coltrane Bird and

there's no place for my books P. K. Dick Thomas Pynchon

T. S. Monk we're just packed in too tight! We need more space

just a whole lot more room it's too crowded in here!

just a whole lot more room it's too crowded in here!
Meteor Shower

Phone Rings.......

Daedalus, we have a slight prob....
our op cit screen indication a situation number nine, number nine, number nine, developing

...our op cit screen indication a situation number nine, developing

Roger, implement op code Z12, do you copy?

What! here gim-me that

What! what do you suggest?
code Z12 on your onboard laptop, do you copy, over? Roger niner, turn on computer, over

what are you talking about?

O K NA-SA  talk me through this

(laughter is heard in the background)

it's the little button in the back

I got it

...ah I can't... er... find the power switch!

now click the Apple icon top left

log on where it says "Log On", over

now what?
write in the password you were given at the start of the mission, over

we forgot it

it's asking for a password

we forgot it

(more laughter)

Roger niner, hold please...

OK our cyberboys have created a new password: JERK

that's J as in "Jasmine", E as in "enema", R as in Raunchy, and K as in "Knuckleheads"

you don't have to get sarcastic!
we copy...click "NO"...then....

now it's asking if I want six months free AOL.

a meteor must have damaged the phone antenna!

hold on! I'll try to steer this thing manually it can't be that hard just like

driving a car

Interlude
Scene 2
Martian Desert

Stalworth

Portentous $\mathbf{d} = 72$

Hey check it out!

Dipper

"One small step... for the Na-tion-al Rif-le As-socia-tion"

Bird Lives!

Stalworth

Lighten up a little, I'm hip to the scene

Dipper

one large leap... for...

Must you treat everything with levity!
This is an historic moment in the 3 million year evolution of our species... and besides, you know we have to say this!
The time has come our finest hour
our destiny

lies at hand within our grasp
the moment we've waited for

Australopithecus three million years and counting since our relatives evolved from the ape man

and they descended from the trees

Hand our	Homo Habilis and
I guess all the terraforming worked after all.

What?

I can't take this helmet any more! hmm...smells good to me

What are you doing! the atmosphere of Mars is 90% CO2

I guess all the terraforming worked after all

Terraforming:
creating an Earth-like atmosphere on Mars—beginning in Twenty-O-Three—N.A.S.A.

with the help of Tony Soprano began shipping garbage from Newark to Mars

I thought I... heard... laughter

I think you've been hitting the Prewst a little too hard

Portentous 72
Children

Ergo

Stalworth

Dipper

it came from somewhere around here...

there it is again! from over there

we've been drugged

my trom-bone they can't get my ax!
quickly...constrain them before the soporific effects of the aphrodisiac wears off!
tie 'em up!

bounty for our precious noble queen

threaten our exalted queen
tie them tight don't miss a thing and guard them with your life for difficult as it may be they represent the final hope for Mars so
we must bring them safe and sound to satisfy our blessed queen
To the Palace, our
Mother awaits us!

Starlata, our mother jewel of the universe she is our hope for sal-

vation our princess Starlata queen of the planets she represents

last chance for Mars quickly don't tarry let's bind up our quarry and hurry on home-ward to
Children

show her our boot-y

rit.

p

mf

fp

Children

Star - la - ta mo - ther Queen of our hearts she is our hope for sal - va - tion our

f

Children

prin - cess Star - la - ta she re - pre - sents the last chance for Mars

Children

she's our on - ly hope

accel.

ff

p

ff
NASA: a...yeah...Roger nine...do you copy...over?

What is your sitcom...over?

Hee hee hee!
Scene 3

Palace of Starlata

Ergo

Far out...dig these digs!

I'm wondering how they learned to speak such excellent English...

...say....mind telling us how you learned our language?

In your Earth year Nineteen Forty

Pastorale \( \text{\textit{moderate}} \)

Four... Ahoon a prominent Martian acoustician and piano tuner performs

Fec ted a radio telescope that could intercept your primitive broadcasts

Ergo

Stalworth

Dipper

Far out...dig these digs!

I'm wondering how they learned to speak such excellent English...

...say....mind telling us how you learned our language?
Ergo

it was then a relatively simple matter for our linguists to deconstruct your elementary

Dipper

syntax

I find this very interesting you see back home I'm a...

N

America has declared war on New Zealand

Stalworth

so what's the latest news from Earth?
All rise for our sublime majesty, Starlata, Princess of Mars!

A Little Faster

How boring it is to be a queen a queen of a dying race
no-thing to do but fix my face

wait as my off-springs fade in-to mem-o-ry

dis-mal it can be all day with no

plan just to-tal-ly bland
all play and no work

this queen feel like a jerk

Slower

makes
Ergo, most esteemed Grand Vizier, who are these...interesting creatures?

two Earthlings, sent, no doubt, to subjugate our fair planet

You mean “subjugate”, not “conjugate”, conjugate means to...

No, let him speak. We must learn more about their culture

hmmm...so these are the famous astronauts, prime specimens of Earth's manhood

And you, you don't look like an Emeritus Professor

Silence! You will speak only when permitted!

allow me to introduce myself... a

Actually we're not really astronauts... I'm Dr. John Dipper, Professor Emeritus of Philology and Classical Literature
Swing Tempo \( \frac{\text{d}}{=132} \)

Stalworth

477

1. one two and you know what to do
2. I'm Lance Stalworth
3. jazz trombonist and am

Stalworth

473

1. at liberty
2. for any and all musical occasions
3. can read fake
4. play anything

Stalworth

465

1. keys
2. from trad to swing
3. bop hard bop and cool
4. third stream
5. fusion and avant garde

Stalworth

469

1. and well versed
What's he talking about?

He's a jazz musician

in alternate slide positions

Jazz is a type of improvised American music characterized by syncopated dance rhythms and

Can You demonstrate some of this...Jazz?
"The Phobos and Deimos Rag"

Children

One Two One Two

foot stomp

Starlata

Enough of these pleasantries, Ergo:
reveal to our guests, the true nature of our intentions towards them.
Alas, we are a dying race

Gin-nung some ten thousand of your Earth years ago our planet began drying up

In spite of pro-di-gious ef-forts our mag-nificent ca-

Nal sys-tem once the en-vy of the mil-ky way slowly evap-o-ra-ted
Pardon me, Ergo, but...what is a "thoat"?

every schoolboy knows what a thoat is, or was

STOAT: a thoat is a Martian horse that stood ten feet tall and with
four legs underneath had a broad flat tail larger at the tip than the root and was a dark slate color with

let's get on with it!

as a result of the change in our atmosphere

harmful ultraviolet rays began breaking through the ozone layer irradiating our
Children

Ergo

DNA causing harmful mutations eventually creating a race of noxious deformed dwarfs.

Faster $\frac{d}{dt}$

Grave $\frac{d}{dt}$

now just a minute!

only a selected few of the aristocracy living in underground vaults escaped the ravages of the radiation thus preserving our original
only in the last few years as a result of the terraforming by your planet.

has the atmosphere become sufficiently restored to allow daily activity on the surface.

but all that remains of our once proud race you see before you now.

you don't mean...?
Our Divine Empress and I, her humble Grand Vizier are the last of our kind...as a result of the effects of the radiation, our elite male population...have become...

I'm really sorry to hear about this... but...I don't see how we...

Ergo, would you please get on with it... we don't have all day! We must get to the vaults before sunset!

Impassioned

oh!

im-po-tent!

sor-ry to hear 'bout that bro
Scene 4

The Palace

Tomorrow, one of you earthlings will be chosen, to insure the survival of our species... by mating with Starlata, Princess of Mars! Now quickly, the sun is setting, to the vaults!

I still fail to see how we can be of any assistance.
Dialogue  Bright  \( \text{-} \text{rez} \)

Stalworth

first you will be tested on your intellectual acumen in mathematics

Ergo

answer the following: how much is nine plus seven? you have ten seconds to complete your
Physics: 

the volume of an ideal gas is directly proportional to its absolute temperature and inversely proportional to its absolute pressure.
Now contestants, we move to the Humanities: English Literature:
this will be a two-part question:
now wait a minute!
in George Eliot's Middle-march identify both the idela-
is-tic wo-man who traps her-self in a doomed marriage and the am-bi-tious doc-tor

be-trayed by his wife's ego-tism and his own inner weakness

now you, big boy

Now the moment we've all been waiting for... Drop your pants!

But my Queen, is this really necessary?

What! Why... this is absurd!
"Under the Cold Moons of Mars"

Forlorn \( \frac{d}{Q} \) 80

quasi recitative

\( \frac{p}{\text{ Day in day out I sit and med i tate}} \)

what cruel fate has set me

here a lone without love under the cold moons of Mars

\( \frac{pp < \text{mf}}{\text{ A Tempo}} \)

at night I lay awake and ruminate cold orbs surround me in the void

my life seems hope less ly a drift in space sad and lost under the moons of
now drop 'em!

I've seen enough
tomorrow I will render my imperial decision

take them back to the vaults...
be sure they are fed with the choicest
thoat steaks and finest wine

Exit Music

Once
"Half The Man"

Pensive

long ago when I was young a lusty man was bred with the desire to

serve my queen my duty seemed at hand but ultraviolet gamma rays turned

blissful dreams to saddest woe

if only I was half the man I used to know
Scene 5

The Palace

Festive \( \frac{\text{d}}{=32} \)

Children

56

709

the difficult hour of reckoning.....

that will decide the fate of our race... is at hand

All sit, for the singing...

Of our National Anthem:

End

Children

56

709

from

End

the difficult hour of reckoning.....

that will decide the fate of our race... is at hand

All sit, for the singing...

Of our National Anthem:
"The Russet Hills of Mars"

Thar-sis to E-ly-si-um the Rus-set hills of Mars O-lym-pus Mons and all be-low the Rus-set hills of Mars

Syr-tis Ma-jor Ar-gy-re Val-les Ma-r-i-na-is

Hel-las Chry-se Ox-us too We praise and love Star-

la-ta's realm The Rus-set hills of Mars
Starlata  

Star-lata  Em-press of Mars  Queen of the U-ni-verse  have you reached a de-ci-sion?

of course I have!  do you think I'd be in this get-up if I did-n'Y?  we have no time to

lose for our race lies near the pre-ci-pice of ex-tin-cion  the coup-ling must be done for the

sake of fu-ture gen-er-a-tions  for the fu-ture of our be-loved Mars
I wish there was some other way I wish we could go back to the way it was before before the transforming before the global climactic conditions caused by the greenhouse effect.

ah Ego faithful servant and friend we can never go back only forward to a
Now's the time

Ergo

this is a hard day for me

Stalworth

look kind-a peek-ed

how 'bout a lit-tle taste?

Dipper

he means "piqued"

Children

well... yes... a mod-est li-ba-tion might help
Starlata

Dipper

Ergo

789

the choice has been made the envelope please and the winner is...

Faster

my-be-

Ergo

loved Empress!

Dipper

quick! now's the time let's make a dash for it!
most e-steemed Grand Vi-zi-er but your ex-

tiental la-ter

well what is it can't you see I'm bu-sy

"Martian Love"
Starlata

Ergo

825

Passionate  \( \frac{d}{=84} \)

819

Starlata

and so con venient best for our pla net to pros per If I'd wander

Ergo

love you I love you best for our pla net to pros per

823

Starlata

far to a dis tant star ne ver

Ergo

if you wan dered far ne ver ne ver
private
never could I find
anywhere in time

fine and pure
a love so close

Martian love so fair

so fair

Waltz 3/4

so fair
Epilog
The Daedalus

Dialogue

Ergo
In the name of Starlata, Princess of Mars
I command you to lay down your strange and unusual weapon

Stalworth
what's he talking about....

Dipper
I sincerely hope you're right

rit.

Stalworth
all I brought along was a Swiss Army Knife
Oh No! Nobody touches my ax!

Dipper
he mean's your trombone
he think's it's a strange and unusual weapon
Incisive \( \text{\textit{e} = 220} \)

Fight Sequence

Stalworth

Dipper

a\textendash ma\textendash zing! they seem ne\textendash ver to have seen or heard a trom\textendash bone be\textendash fore

take that...
What in the name of holy Phobos is going on? What's a "trombone"?

The Earthlings have a strange and unusual weapon that frightens us with terrible glissandoes.

Fools that's not a strange and unusual weapon, it's a "trombone"!

a once popular now obsolete brass instrument with a cupped mouthpiece consisting of a long cylindrical tube bent twice upon itself and ending in a bell.

\[ \text{Pastorale} \quad \# = 84 \]

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slide is move-a-ble and by it the player can con-rol the length of the vi-brat-ing

col-umn and thus pro-duce a-ny pitch with-in the com-pass of the in-stru-ment

It became classified as an obscene instrument by the Parent's Music Resource Center

and banned in 2008 by the Secretary of Morals, cloned Tipper Gore III
We now admit that only through the terraforming initiated by your scientists have we been able to return to the surface and...apparently lead normal lives. We are prepared to offer an alliance. Ergo...the pact of interstellar friendship:

"Pact of Friendship"

We the people of Mars in a spirit of interplanetary good-will do
Ergo

here-by offer our friendship to the people of Earth and grant unlimited trade and cultural access to

Children

friendship

hearts now beat as one

Ergo

all regions of our planet

it is hoped that our

Children

strife must end

now tranquility

Ergo

Universities with approval of our respective Executive Committees will create a new cur-
Ergo

962

at our flag-ship in-sti-tu-tion the U-ni-ver-si-ty of Mars lo-ca-ted in the beau-ti-ful cra-ter at O-ma-

Children
Children

ha ha ha ha

Ergo

ha-ha-ha

to you Lance Stal-warth the po-si-tion of Pro-fes-sor of Jazz Stud-ies

ha ha ha ha

mf

with some ap-pied trom-bone on the side you will be re-spon-si-ble for work-ing with our rhythm sec-tions

some of which are pret-ty lame

and to you John Dipper a spe-cial ap-

point-ment in the Classics and Phil-o-lo-gy De-part-ment where you'll lead sem-in-ars in
Beat terminology and the novels of George Elliot and so on be-

half of the Chancellor the Provost the athletic Director and the Ombudsman our heartiest con-

Let us now raise our voices in a song of reconciliation:

gratulations!
Let Peace be upon us Peace in the Universe

Stalworth

Life our joy an

Stalworth

Peace in the Universe

Dipper

Live the union of
Starlata

Earth and Mars in stead of fo-cus-ing on dif-f(e)ren-ces be-tween us ac-cen-tu-ate the com-mon hu-

Children

man-i-ty a-mong us

Ergo

man-i-ty a-mong us

Stalworth

man-i-ty a-mong us

Dipper

man-i-ty a-mong us
Let us move now into a new age a new dawn of love and affection

Peace now reigns peace in the Universe forever and ever
Phone Rings........

voice of NASA:

Dialogue

...do you copy...over?