

**The Jazz Opera**

**MAX CAT**

**Winnie Warbler *chiffchaff***

Lyric Tale

in one Act and 12 Scenes

Libretto by S Again, based on the book MAX CAT #3 v 1

MAX CAT Winnie Warbler *chiffchaff*, lyrical spiritual critical, was first published in March 2001. A second printing followed, subtitled *Tree tops in song*. MAX CAT Winnie Warbler *chiffchaff*, her story, Pt. II, was published in February 2002. The 2nd volume completed the series of 4 MAX CAT books. The Jazz opera of MAX CAT book #3 v 1 was begun in the summer of 2002, and completed in February 2004.

## CHARACTERS

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Max Cat <i>at large</i>	<i>tenor</i>
Winnie Warbler 4 1/4" <i>chiffchaff</i>	<i>soprano</i>
human <i>friend</i>	<i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Nightingale <i>jailbird wannabe</i>	<i>contralto</i>
Mechanical nightingale	
Narrator	<i>baritone</i>

*The action takes place in the Empire. The time is now.*

## ACT ONE

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*Introduction*

human

MAX CAT

Winnie Warbler

human

Nightingale

human

THE CAST *(in order of appearance)*

GLUE *presents*

Max Cat.

*chiffchaff.*

Black snow tree.

*lament no.*

The Winnie Warbler Well Ward, ah yes.  
www.winnie.

**Scene One. Flash Forward.** *Winnie's Ward hidden in the thick of the black snow tree, visible only to Max and human. Winnie recalls how she lost her singer's count in the Travel Song, and dropped into Max's life.*

*Winnie sings the pinks, although her song ends with boo coo blues.*

*No.1 Aria*

**Winnie**

loco lotion travel song

rub coo

bur oo c oo

c oo c ock

cockcoo

rub bur

ooc coo

rub boo

rub ub

rubrub

boo coo

coo boo

**Narrator**

When summer comes to an end each day draws a longer shade.

**Winnie**

It was a starry night. Air fluffs my feathers with gleams of light. I wanted to swoop. I guess though I was getting pooped. Somehow or other when I wanted to regroup with my sisters & brothers, I lost count, couldn't mount & fell to earth. Except a leafy limb snagged my wing & caught me.

*Max recites an answer poem.*

**Max**

"A heart subdued,

Yet poignant sadness

Is so deeply felt:

A snipe flies over the marsh

As autumn dusk descends."

*Max and Winnie engage in conversation.*

**Winnie**

Did you make it up?

**Max**

No. Another cat.

**Winnie**

*hoo-eed hoo-eed.* No blacks no whites. Do you know any snipes?

**Max**

Don't know that I do. Til tomorrow, *vale gal.*

*Quartet. (In order Winnie, Max, human, Nightingale)*

lyrical

spiritical

critical

lament no

*Max and Winnie carry on.*

**Max**

I'm listening.

**Narrator**

As the warbler continues her story.

**Winnie**

When I was grounded, you found me. I never got close to a cat. You carried me in your teeth without chewing to the human who made a splint for my battered wing. While I heal you come everyday to my place & give me hope to live & sing. Quite a shock to break a wing, separate from my mate, siblings, flock.

**Max**

Max is astounded. *(sound effect)*

**Scene Two. Centerfold.** *Desert. Round midnight. Feral Max tiger on scent of female, prowl for grub, fills his senses.*

**Max**

Sniff, snort, snore, fart, claw, scratch, whistle.

*It grows darker. Sound travels great distances. Winnie falls through stars. Max watches. Narrator observes.*

**Winnie**

boo coo  
coo boo

**Narrator**

Max watches Winnie's nosedive with helpless intensity.

**Scene Three. Meds.** *Consultation. Nightingale, human, Max, review Winnie's charts.*

*Trio and Duet.*

**Nightingale** *(Stark, sudden)*

HMO All sources are irrational in that man cannot control them. R.V.

**Winnie**

*(lamely) chiffchaff*

**human**

*(ardently)* Try our MRI. Max rescue initiative for the assured. "Cut slack. Take flak."

**Max**

listenincord, sound

**human**

vectoroscope, bevel

**Winnie**

aviadiogram, ground *(sound effect)*

*Doctor patient duet.*

**Max** *(sly, playful)*

What amazes me...

**Narrator**

interjects Max,

**Max**

Is your outlook.

**Winnie** *(Interprets her charts show-biz read)*

You're a quick study of my results.

**Max**

There's 1 blindspot I see off the record on your blippograph.

**Winnie**

Shall I flip on the beside?

**Max**

Won't help. I think it's the gauze.

**Winnie**

You were saying, Max?

**Max**

You amaze me. You never say 'I shouldda or oughta or otherwise.' You pull it together each day with our any ways.

**Winnie**

Is it how cats get along?

**Max**

Cats are free players.

**Narrator**

Max ponders.

**Max**

I am any way.

*Pause.*

**Scene Four. 1st day.** Dawn breaks. Winnie wakes from a restless night. Max stirs. She's thrilled. At the Narrator's last word the day is lit.

**Narrator**

Max orderly on Winnie watch doesn't sleep much tumbling over,

**Max**

'Where's she come from?'

**Narrator**

Winnie unknowing

**Winnie**

'wherever this is I am'

**Narrator**

doesn't sleep either. Unobserved night slacks, dawn cracks. Max tiptoes to the base of the black snow tree (*human. black snow tree*) so he can see way up. Winnie hears him. In the dim of her perch she sings softly.

*Galliard.*

**Winnie**

Computing # Dreams The FROGS Galliard a light air in honor of anything (*She sings her feelings of 'wherever this is I am'.*)

The clocks are set in water; No flights on wind suspended. Sound holds change's hand.

**Narrator**

picks upsteam

**Winnie**

*(She imagines dancing & sings to her partner a couplet.)*

Eyes act. All dance the sun's/Golden cup uP uP uP ! ! !

**human** (*Interlocutory*)

Max responds.

*limbo. State between oblivion/prison.*

*Torch Song. Max croons his up/down emotions.*

**Max**

The Vertical Limbo Recitative for wavey grasses

If I New, but I don't.

But would you?

Maybe not.

**Winnie** (*Adroitly changes subject, chins up.*)

How sound carries here.

**Narrator**

Winnie peaks her beak between 2 bars.

**Max** (*dis-concert*)

Oh her.

**Narrator**

Max looks complicitous.

**Max**

Soon's the Emperor turns in, a guard loops her tape.

**Mechanical nightingale**

loop

**Max**

Once you know though you can tune out.

Nightingale (*Persists. Anxious to avoid confusion.*)

*Triplet*

lament no lament no lament no *Repeat.*

*Flip-flop* **Scene Five.**

**Winnie**

wide eyed confides

**Narrator**

Winnie's bewildered so Max goes on.

**Max** (*Comes nearer.*)

Cats can sleep in daylight, anytime, day, night, between. We choose exclusive seclusive spots with our own glyphs, sniffs and used-to-noise.

**Narrator**

Winnie solicitous.

**Winnie**

Perhaps I'm too quick to judge a neighbor. I'm so well cared for here by you and human. What banged her up?

**Max** (*Higher.*)

Station, vying for power.



**Winnie**

Who was her rival?

**Max** (*heat*)

The live bird.

**Winnie**

Oh.

**human** (*Intimates.*)

No time to glum one chick's bum trip.

**Narrator**

He springs between a rock and a stump. Recover yourself. Blows a clarion to raise carrion.

*Clarion.*

**Max** (*Elevated.*)

An Ode to a Stet Ho Scope by Anon

thump thump

thump thump

**Narrator** (*Closing in. Menace.*)

Come in on the chorus.

**Winnie** (*Recovers.*)

*(lightly)* I'm a soloist.

**Narrator**

Max scowls. He disguises his disappointment by moving elsewhere.

**Max**

What am I a bird order warder? She's a pinhead, a birdbrain. Skip it.

*Exit in haste.*

**Narrator**

Scowl *profundo*.

**Scene Six. Bridge.** *Aria, Hum, Rhumba, Quartet.*

**Nightingale** *(Sympathetic)*

Switch.

**Winnie**

*Chaffchiff*

**Narrator**

For her part Winnie refrains showing emotion, notices his pinhole irises and, fast as she can with banded wing, scuttles to the topmost rafter. There she prepares. She listens to her heart thump.

**Max**

*thump thump*

*The roof Winnie wants is the sky.*

**Winnie**

SENZA TETTO *molto forte*

To return your favor with a warble *(Ornament.)*

**Narrator**

Two new friends part. They need an interregnum.

**Max** *(Argue away.)*

A tiger's not a tiger, varrumm, if he's tame.

I see how birds try cats patience. Maybe I'll go fishing. Later mediator.

**Winnie**

Relax Max.

**Narrator**

She sums up her place. Tomorrow she'll arrange the furniture.

**Winnie**

Spiritical

**Max**

rough

**Nightingale**

gentle

**human**

gum

**Scene Seven. Reversal.** *Quartet. Except for human, voices at a distance. The Nightingale singing off-stage gradually comes nearer. One way and another all players express second opinion.*

**human**

2nd O pinion

**Max**

Shakes his head at the sted of Winnie's bed.

**Winnie**

Climbs with bandied wing to tower of her bower, feeling powerless and out of touch.

**Nightingale**

Am I sounding like a bird?

**human**

Bar code.

**Nightingale**

How would I know?

**human**

Now why?

**Nightingale** *(Comes nearer.)*

Am I sounding like a bird? How would I know?

**Scene Eight. Pagoda Pollo [Chicken House]** *Aria a capella*

*Rocky hills, rock strewn slopes. Set in this upland plateau the Empire Women's Prison enclosed by walls of rock. A palatial facade with green porcelain tile gateway, convoluted roof of jasper glistening in late afternoon heat. False splendor in a wild and lonely place. Rain trickles. Winnie fusses in her Ward as tumbling cindery clouds close around her.*

**Narrator** *(Sober.)*

Pagoda Pollo. Nightingale's prison. Butt Off. Winnie, before retiring, She listens for Max. No sound. Gloomy fog bound. On one leg she prays.

**Winnie** *(The basics.)*

Brumey bower. Not too roomy. Oh what if I develop the croop in this coop [rheum room]? The seed's a crude prepared mix. I'll exist on suet.

*Prayer. [ornithology]*

Holy orni tog

Thick pluvial fog

drown the nightingale

upside down

AMAX

## **Max**

*Silence will not sink her. She hears the March rondo of Senza tetto. Her tears turn to sparks of fire.  
hymn [to the Nightingale]*

inno alla tua cattiva salute

**human** *(translation)*

wishing you bad health and alot of it

*Darkness falls on the prison wall. Cell-block Serenade [Nightingale] Sunset at lock down.*

## **Mechanical nightingale**

Loop

**Scene Nine. Max's dream.** *Epic recitative.*

**Narrator**

Sleep tight. Max finds a night spot to crawl in to unknot day's care, but fog creeps in on rhino hooves, rain seeps through the roof, forbidden fruits drop on dew, sleep reprovcs.

**Winnie**

'Sweet, taste me, me.' A huge Winnie the size of a shadow sits with a clipboard clipping her billboard. 'Serious delirium. Grounded. AMPUTATE!' 'Whoever heard a cat working for-hire,' asks the bird. 'Cats aspire higher.' MAX scratches over turds. Trade places.

**Max** (*Wants to run away.*)

Sun strew patch, gold dust of falling stars. A bird falls at MAX'S feet. He looks up. Is it a star? Are others falling? A broken piece. New words he's never heard repeat *sibling flock mate*. The black snow tree-top stacked with wet leaves of abandoned squirrel nests catches fire. 'Sound alarm.' No sound comes through mist. Fog logs, (*Nightingale. Reenforce.*) 'Enter dark waking.' Only his own mew. D.E.W.

*Goose & duck whistles.*

**human**

Woosnoozy. Go easy. He shifts. Human bends over him. Not you? Dues pay, due up. Doowop. I can wile, asleep. Stop tossing. You're caught. It's gold brick at your feet. Let me sleep. Tight as timpanum. Why bring it up? Look for medicines and wishfills in songs, and let's start again.

*Higher gear.*

**Winnie**

"Did you say pig, or fig?"

**human**

Did you say ham or meatball?

**Max**

I don't recall.

**human**

Did you say red onions or smoke rings?

**Winnie**

Which brings up,

**Max**

Why're grilling me?

*(sound effect)*

**human**

Someone has to keep track of time.

**Max**

Cats don't.

**Winnie**

Come to,

**human**

that's true.

**Max**

H E L P Help.

**Narrator** (*Daylight fills the spot.*)

Human pokes him.

**Scene Ten. Moving Company.** *Max and human head to Winnie's Well Ward. Explicit tension.*

**human**

Moving company.

**Winnie**

Blue ether.

**Max**

WORLD WITHOUT WINNIE smudge smudge.

**Narrator**

Max travels alongside human hill to hill, Max and human, the pair, stride up one down another. Human slows up, loaded with the pack of antiseptic pills pellets seed packs bandaids, slows down Max's brain. Human adjusts load, puffs.

**Human**

Not like you not to sleep.

**Max**

I'm not like you. I'm a cat.

**human**

Why argue, Max?

**Narrator**

Max weighs what's on his mind.

**Max** (*Impatiently to himself.*)

Can't confide in human. That's suicide. Not to chew a bird, not that crazy to chew human's fat. (*the finger*) In your hat boss.

(*Winnie's aviadiogram, ground sound effect*)

**Scene Eleven. Stop.** *Change of pitch. Max and human discuss life's subtleties. Traveler's Song/Spiritual.*

**Nightingale** (*Nights our toes are cold unless we have a friend.*)

Foot warmers.

**human**

Tell ya why I ask.

**Narrator**

Human breaks in.

**human**

I slept like an underground railroad, stranded on a sand bar, ice floes of iron ties bound to sea, surrounded by big dog bouncers with a chain gang entertained by billous dew drops slamming doors off hinges.

**Narrator**

Rain falls. Clouds burst their trousers. They break for it. Sit tight. Wait it out. Human sits aside Max.

**Max**

I'm conflicted.

**Narrator**

Max surprises himself.

**human**

Who isn't?

**Narrator**

Human answers in kind.

**Max**

You believe you have a subtle body?

**human**

Do I look like take-out?

**Max**

Search me, too.

**Narrator**

Max keeps up.

**Max**

Maybe I'm a sell-out.

**human**

Because you save one bird?

**Narrator** *(Rain stops.)*

Fast forward.

**Max**

Are we industrial?

**human**

Today we are.

**Narrator**

Upgrade human sings.

**human** *(Hums music, followed by own lyrics.)*

O let me shine, let me shine like a morning star.

Sly fur, guide yonder. Holler holler sky.

O let me shine, let me shine like a morning star.

**Narrator**

Hay seed straw foot. They step along.

**Max**

You think slaves sing that?

**Narrator**

Max speculates, skips downgrade.

**human**

That song comes down along way. Lifts our burden.

**Narrator** *(In the valley.)*

Max sits on his hunkers.

**Max**

Here we are.



**Scene Twelve. Finale.** *Rainbow. The play is over. The actors assemble for their calls. Max at the head.*

**Max**

lem yel

**Winnie**

ice blue indigo

**Nightingale**

daf yel

**human**

hooker olive

**Nightingale**

Sunset

**human**

madder carmine

**Max**

Max wonders

**Winnie**

when Winnie continues her story.

**Max and Winnie**

Il come.