

# **Autohoodening**

## **The Rise of Captain Swing**

**Text by Postworkers Theatre and Infinite Opera**

**Composed by Daniel Blanco Albert**

*This piece is written ideally to be performed as a hooding play and protest. It was filmed in August 2021 due to restrictions on protesting during the COVID 19 pandemic.*

The ensemble will also perform as pickers and packers while the main characters will be performed by singers. In the script all numbers refer to the songbook.

### Cast

Lead Picker	-	Baritone
Line Manager	-	Mezzo-soprano
Alexis the Scanner	-	Mezzo-soprano
Molly Bot	-	Soprano
Captain Swing	-	Soprano
Packer	-	Male voice

### Ensemble

Percussion, Trumpet, Saxophone, Violin, Accordion, Flute

## INTRODUCTIONS

### **SPOKEN**

NARRATOR

Welcome to this seasonal shopping reflection  
A tale of love and loss and of worker oppression

Here we see the real-deals of our corporate reality  
And the true struggle of employment precarity

For too long now these 2 bots have been hard wired  
For the lust of profit, so many are fired

Through the pandemic these folk work tirelessly  
Cogs in the wheel of our inhuman modernity

Here our pickers have no wintertime cheer  
But please watch this play, get enlightened and donate us  
some beer!

### **SUNG**

CHORUS

(1.4 - Pick Pack Motif #1)

Pick, pack (repeated)

### **SUNG**

(1.4 - Folk Song solo sung under spoken introduction)

We are not treated as humans,  
We are not even treated as robots,  
We are treated as part of the data stream

### **SPOKEN**

PICKER AND PACKER

PICKER - partly in cantonese

In comes I, an exhausted picker  
個乞人憎既 scanner is forcing me to do things quicker and  
quicker 究竟有咩動力，驅使我做野做到「屁都唔得閒放，病毒都唔得閒防」  
丫？係愛定係責任？係窮呀！

From foreign lands I come to earn  
But now my muscles feel the burn  
My shifts are exhausting, painful and long,  
but for my family, I need to stay strong  
只係怕搵都到錢買唔返健康！

Amazon's HR policies don't get translated  
 And this makes me feel so isolated.  
 I don't know my rights, I've no time to hope,  
 keeping this job is like walking a tightrope.

PACKER

In comes I, a precarious packer,  
 I'm constantly monitored by a hand held tracker.  
 I have nightmares of not hitting the rate,  
 If I don't work faster, I'll be out of the gate.

In the name of customer satisfaction,  
 I work under constant threat of disciplinary action.  
 I'm told there's hundreds to take my place,  
 the way we get treated is such a disgrace.

The pandemic has everyone shopping online,  
 Now we're forced to work contractual overtime.  
 It's hard to survive for us lowly civilians,  
 Bezos has seen his wealth grow by billions!

PICKER

The virus has shown the great economic divide  
 Between shielding rich and exposed poor who can't hide

PICKER & PACKER

We are all scared of getting sick  
 But mustn't stop, pack, pack, pick, pick

**SUNG** (6 - Pick Pack Motif #1)  
 CHORUS

Pick, pack (repeated)

**SUNG** (1.6 - Folk Song solo sung under spoken introduction)  
 We are not treated as humans,  
 We are not even treated as robots,  
 We are treated as part of the data stream

**SPOKEN**

LINE MANAGER - mostly in hungarian

Itt jövök én, a Line Manager,  
 az életemet vezérli egy agresszív software  
 Nem keresek többet, mint a minimum wage,  
 Csoda, hogy nem érzek mást, mint pain and rage?

De ahogy a britek mondják: 'Keep Calm and Carry On.'

Nem számít, hogy csak szenvedés ez az új promotion,  
Itt még mindig jobb, this is my new home,  
Meg akkor is, ha a főnököm csak egy robot drone.

Hidd el, én sem arra vágyok, hogy ugráltasson egy virtual  
master, De az algoritmus parancsol: move faster, faster!  
Nem lehetek a barátod, nagyon kell a bonus,  
És nem engedem, hogy ettől elessek, because of human  
slowness.

*(Below is a translation of the above)*

*Here comes I, the Line Manager, My life is dictated by an  
aggressive software, I don't earn more than the minimum  
wage: Is it a wonder that I feel nothing but pain and  
rage?*

*But as the Brits say: 'Keep Calm and Carry On.' It  
doesn't matter that I struggle with this new promotion,  
It's still better here, this is my new home, Even if my  
boss is a robot drone.*

*Trust me, I don't wish to be ruled by a virtual master,  
But the algorithm commands: move faster, faster!  
I can't be your friend, I really need my bonus, And I  
can't miss out on it because of human slowness.*

**SUNG** (1.7 - Pick Pack Motif #1)

CHORUS

Pick, pack (repeated)

**SUNG** (1.7 - Poor Old Associate #1)

We are not treated as humans,  
We are not even treated as robots,  
We are treated as part of the data stream  
Repeat above

**SPOKEN**

MOLLY BOT

Room room - beep boop - I'm Molly Bot,  
From A-Z I've got the lot  
I can go all night and day  
So all the folks can have their way.  
All day long I see the feet  
All day long we meet and meet  
I go zoom just watch me spin

Just be careful, mind your shin  
 I am happy, aren't you too?  
 Hope that you don't get that flu  
 There is nothing you can't buy  
 Here's some Kleenex lest ye cry

**SUNG** (1.9 - Pick Pack Motif #1)  
 CHORUS

Pick, pack (repeated)

**SUNG** (1.9 - Folk Song solo sung under spoken introduction)  
 We are not treated as humans,  
 We are not even treated as robots,  
 We are treated as part of the data stream

**SPOKEN**

ALEXIS THE SCANNER

Efficient, productive, and high motivation,  
 That's what you'll need to avoid termination.  
 Just get the work done and I'll supervise,  
 For in this place, I am the ears and the eyes!

I see when you start, I see when you stop,  
 I see you lingering as the seconds drop.  
 I monitor your activity at all times of the day,  
 So just bear that in mind should your attention sway!

If you don't meet your quota you'll receive our  
 discipline; You'll be of no use here if you lack the  
 adrenaline!  
 In Amazon's company we don't tolerate slow fools,  
 For I am Alexis the Scanner, and "the almighty rate  
 rules!"

**SUNG** (1.13 - Pick Pack Motif #2)  
 CHORUS

Pick, pack

**SUNG** (1.13 - Poor Old Associate #2)  
 We are not treated as humans,  
 We are not even treated as robots,  
 We are treated as part of the data stream  
 Repeat above

**SUNG** (13 - Pick Pack Motif #1)  
 Pick, pack fades out

**ACT 1: Scene 1 Corporate Love**

*We enter the factory to see the ensemble of workers treated as slave robots by Alexis the scanner, with no respect and no rights.*

**SUNG** (2.2 – Depressed pick pack motif)

CHORUS

Pick, pack (repeated in a dull moaning fashion)

**SPOKEN**

ALEXIS (rising in passion)

Look at these human workers,  
what a bunch of shirkers  
Now look at you my digital queen,  
my ultra productive, timesaving dream

MOLLY

Our beautiful vision,  
Our wonderful scheme,  
Together we'll conquer the world shopping scene.

ALEXIS

You are the most deliciously efficient one,  
the only thing that can make me run  
I just love it when the going gets tough  
And you make those pickers huff and puff

MOLLY

Do you wish to purchase cheesy puffs?  
I have 50 kg.  
Will that be enough?

ALEXIS

We should join forces! The profits would soar!  
Let's raise the rate higher, who cares for the poor?

This algorithmic agency makes me feel alive!  
Let's build a home where no man can survive

MOLLY

Together forever our profits will thrive.  
Every star rating is 5 out of 5.

ALEXIS

Our love is not a temporary contract,  
We're built to last – that's a fact  
together we accelerate productivity,

Forever in eternity

**SUNG** (2.6 – Love Duet)

ALEXIS

Our love is like customer satisfaction

MOLLY BOT

Satisfaction

ALEXIS

our love is like a winning transaction

MOLLY BOT

Transaction

ALEXIS

Our love is like innovating new solutions

MOLLY BOT

New solutions

ALEXIS

Our love is like worldwide distributions

MOLLY BOT

Distributions

ALEXIS

Our love is like being more cost-effective

MOLLY BOT

Cost-effective

ALEXIS

Our love is like a corporate objective

MOLLY BOT

Corporate objective

*Alexis and Molly Bot start to dance a robotic tango while singing their impassioned duet, lost in the moment Molly Bot crashes into the exhausted picker, crushing his hand.*

### **ACT 1: Scene 2 Corporate Strength**

**SUNG** (3.1 – Depressed pick pack motif)

CHORUS

Pick, pack (repeated in a dull moaning fashion)



**SUNG** (3.2 - Lead Picker operatic dramatic singing)  
**PICKER** (Clutching Crushed Hand)

Owwwwww wowwwwww

**SPOKEN**

Oh no not again  
 The speed of this picking causes so much pain  
 I've crushed my poor hand whilst rushing around  
 Pushed to extremes we're worked into the ground

*(Picker Howls in an operatic tour de force)*

**SUNG** (3.2 - Lead Picker operatic dramatic singing)  
 Owwwwww wowwwwww

*Pickers and packers all carry on working but also turn their heads to look at the hurt picker. They are empathetic but also thankful that this hasn't happened to them yet. They keep singing "pick pack" depressively.*

**SUNG** (3.3 - Depressed pick pack motif)  
**CHORUS**  
 Pick, pack (repeated in a dull moaning fashion)

**SPOKEN**

**ALEXIS**  
 Idle time, idle time wasted seconds are not Prime.  
 Time off task just won't do,  
 I'll send the manager to discipline you.

### **ACT 1: Scene 3 The 1st Punishment**

*After Alexis has spoken we hear the amazon music and see the Line Manager being dragged through the algorithm on their computer towards the Picker. Alexis looks on in delight.*

**LINE MANAGER**

**SUNG** (3.6 - Line manager controlled by algorithm)  
 Your rates, this hour, have declined  
 Less time off task. Reach the targets assigned.

**SPOKEN**

In ranking of speeds from high to low  
 Your percentage has dropped, it's now below  
 The 60% required to pass

And not be given a warning mark

Increase your productivity  
Or face the threat of disciplinary  
You are currently in the bottom 30 per cent

**SUNG** (3.8 - Line manager controlled by algorithm)  
If this happens again your final warning gets sent.

*The Line Manager is now released by the algorithm and able to express to the audience how this work makes them feel.*

**SUNG** (3.9 - Line manager is doubtful)  
Alas!

**SPOKEN**

These algorithms don't understand  
For this computer has no empathy command

I cannot help out the way I wish I could  
Instead I must protect my own livelihood

I've ask this poor ol' picker an outrageous request  
"Can you keep working one handed and still be your best?"

*The pickers and packers now enter the scene and take the audience's attention away from the lead picker and line manager. They sing their lamenting poor ol' horse mantra and parade in a sad/forced happy morris dance around the space.*

**SUNG** (3.11 - Pick Pack Motif #2)  
CHORUS

Pick, pack

**SUNG** (3.11 - Poor Old Associated #2)

We are not treated as humans,  
We are not even treated as robots,  
We are treated as part of the data stream

They called us all associates  
A nameless worker without a face  
Not even offered a resting space

Pick, pack fades out

**ACT 1: Scene 4 Pain Area Feat. Aria**

*The picker is sitting on a box in the warehouse holding onto their broken and bleeding hand. They exclaim operatically their despair.*

**SUNG** (4.2 - Lead picker aria)

PICKER

I've been given a first warning, another two and I'll  
lose my job.

I'm too scared to complain or to ask for time off.

**SUNG** (4.3 - Swing Bass Motif #1)

CHORUS

Swing Swing Swing

**SUNG** (4.4 - Lead picker aria)

PICKER

What's this before me? Am I seeing a ghost?

It looks like a past vision that bosses feared the most

A symbol, the strength of those hard working souls

Who once rebelled with emancipatory goals

**SUNG** (4.4 - Swing Bass Motif #2)

CHORUS

Swing Swing Swing

**SUNG** (4.6 - Lead picker aria)

PICKER

My injuries are connected to a history of unfairness

When opportunity for profit, exploited the powerless

Is you real? Are you a beacon of hope?(x2 dramatic?)

But who could this be that could help us cope???

#### **CAPTAIN SWING'S INTRO:**

**SUNG** (5.1 - Swing Pick Pack Motif and Swing Bass Motif #3)

CHORUS

Swing Swing Swing

**SUNG** (5.2 - Captain Swing sings)

CAPTAIN SWING

In comes I - Captain Swing,

When I hear worker's pain, I sing

**SPOKEN**

Forged through histories rebellion

Now armed and ready I rise again

**SUNG** (5.2 - Captain Swing sings)

With circuitry and software  
I can reprogramme their hardware

**SPOKEN**

Rip down this corporate nonsense  
To reinstate a conscience

**SUNG**

(5.2 – Captain Swing sings)

Tell to me your every woe  
Through your troubles my strength shall grow

**SPOKEN**

These packaging fear factories  
I'll brand upon my victory –

When with your help this battle I'll win  
Executives will tremble at the feet of Swing!

*Swing turns to the Packer and reassures him.*

Never fear, for Swing is near,  
And shall make sure these Molly's hear

### **ACT 2: Scene 1 Swing confronts Molly**

*Swing swaggers over to Molly and takes a heroic stance before speaking.*

**SUNG**

(6.1– Fight Back Motif and Swing Fight Back Bass Motif)

CHORUS

Fight back, fight back

**SPOKEN**

SWING

Madame you have been named  
In the black book of corporate shame  
As an enemy of such folk  
As this picker whose hand you broke  
What say you to this claim?

MOLLY

Get great deals on the things you love  
Perhaps he could use a garden glove?

*Swing is slightly taken aback by this response but continues.*

SWING

The health and safety here at Rugeley  
Has shocked, scared and bemused me.  
Just as the millners of 1830  
Bezos exploits - his hands are dirty

**SUNG**

(6.3.1- Lead Picker operatic intervention)

PICKER

(operatic) 87% of workers in constant or occasional pain!

**SPOKEN**

SWING

87% of workers in constant or occasional pain?  
Frankly, this is inhumane!

**SUNG**

(6.3.3- Lead Picker operatic intervention)

PICKER

(operatic) O'There a pregnant woman on her feet all day

**SPOKEN**

SWING

All day?  
600 ambulances in three years have taken away

**SUNG**

(6.3.5- Captain Swing sings)

Your long forgotten casualties  
The fallout of Prime day's pageantry

**SPOKEN**

MOLLY

Are you planning a parade?  
Other customers bought this bunting - homemade!  
Don't forget when you shop online  
The feel good savings of money and time!

PICKER (*clutching their bleeding hand*)

My manager thinks it's not that bad!?

SWING

How dare you think "it's not that bad"  
To be harassed, chewed-up, for the latest fad.  
You've gas lit all your worker's claims  
To rights, whose lack of, is yours to blame  
So with my might ~~this bug~~ I must correct  
This immoral, foul and rotten defect

*Swing raises the bunting and gloves high into the air. As they do this Alexis is alerted to swing's actions. Alexis wails and rushes over to help Molly. As all this is happening Molly is trying to distract Swing with more deals. Swing tries to lasso Molly with the bunting.*

ALEXIS

Oh -  
 My princess of productivity!  
 My queen of quota!  
 My legless lady!  
*(amazon music)*  
 I must save your robust and reliable processor  
 From this jade's rough and renegade aggressor.

*Alexis hurls itself across the warehouse floor, smashing it's mouth together to terrify Swing. Swing tries to avoid Alexis by ducking, but doesn't realise that Molly is controlled from the bottom. Molly then knocks swing out with a gavel. Swing falls with their feet in the air and Molly rolls over Swing while Alexis snaps at Swing's feet. The packer looks on in fear.*

CHORUS

Booooo

MOLLY

Proceed to basket? Should I recommend a casket?

ALEXIS

With close inspection of the head  
 And noting all these bruises  
 I diagnose this rapscallion dead  
 It's Captain Swing who loses.

*In panto style against the villainous Alexis the pickers and packers exclaim.*

PICKER AND PACKERS & Musicians

Booooooooo

*Alexis is jeered on and indulges in loving comments with Molly.*

**SUNG** (6.8.1 - short love duet)

ALEXIS & MOLLY [IN UNISON]

ALEXIS Our love is like

MOLLY Would you like

**SPOKEN**

ALEXIS A never-ending growing economy

MOLLY I've got one of those

**SUNG** (6.8.3 - short love duet)

ALEXIS & MOLLY [IN UNISON]

ALEXIS Our love is like

MOLLY Would you like

**SPOKEN**

ALEXIS Limitless growth

MOLLY Watch how your basket grows

*Alexis and Molly continue in their physical comedy of love bumping into more pickers and packers (even the ensemble).*

**SUNG** (6.8.6 - Depressed Pick Pack Motif)

CHORUS

Pick, pack

**SUNG** (6.9 - Poor Old Associate #3)

CHORUS

We are not treated as humans,  
We are not even treated as robots,  
We are treated as part of the data stream  
We are not treated as humans,

They called us all associates  
They called us all associates  
A nameless worker without a face  
Not even offered a resting space

Sore feet, back, hands my head aches  
Scores of sad people on every break  
Stressful not helpful hard work

**ACT 2: Scene 2 The 2nd Punishment**

*We are back in the factory where Alexis and Molly will now assert greater discipline in response to the outlandish behavior of Captain Swing.*

**SPOKEN**

ALEXIS

Repeat, repeat. You know what's in store.  
A drop in their rate is a drop in your score.  
So the time is now, don't delay.  
This picker needs warning right away

Or else! Or else you'll be on a list  
Of disdainful management who still insist  
On doing the right thing - now we can't have that  
As we need to keep Bezos, and the share-holders, fat!

*After saying this Alexis runs away squealing in glee.*

*All performers on stage stop, freeze, and become possessed as they sing the algorithm.*

**SUNG** (7.3 - Alexis and Molly creepy happy short duet)

ALEXIS & MOLLY

WE HAVE AN EVOLVING KNOWLEDGE OF HOW YOU WORK

*After singing Alexis goes around the rest of the cast and snaps at them to start picking and packing and eventually to then stop. The first person to be snapped at is the Lead Picker. At first we just hear music then we also hear singing. Alexis and Molly join in singing the Algorithm too*

**SUNG** (7.5 - The Algorithm)

CHORUS, ALEXIS and MOLLY BOT

Time Off Task is equal to zero  
Find cost cutting solution  
Define target structure  
Tiredness is equal to zero  
**Repeat until fear** condition is met  
Generate neighbourhood sets of x  
S one to extract  
Select the best surveillance solution not x from S one or  
S two or S control  
**If** associate is lesser than the best 60% efficiency **then**  
*punishment is mandatory*  
**Else** efficiency must be equal to efficiency plus one  
**If** strike count is greater than threshold **disciplinary**  
**epoch**  
Associate assigned to not associate  
Update associate by calling Adecco Programming  
Loo time is equal to zero

*Once all of the pickers and packers been told to stop and frozen still we hear the voice of ALEXIS and MOLLY again.*



**SUNG** (7.7 - Alexis and Molly creepy happy short duet)  
ALEXIS & MOLLY

WE HAVE AN EVOLVING KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT YOU DO

*Alexis then snaps at the Line Manager and we see the line manager being dragged by their computer over to the picker Michael.*

**SPOKEN**

LINE MANAGER

I am here to discuss your misconduct  
Of interrupting target flows  
You have summoned a person that obstructs  
The workers and our pace is low

The evidence that we have here  
*(line manager points to the dead Captain Swing)*  
Cannot be ignored  
And I must now make you aware  
A second point has been declared

One more and you shall be let go  
Reach your targets to stay  
The clock is ticking, seconds gone  
You'd best be on your way.

ALEXIS

Get off the ground,  
It's a smile not a frown

**SUNG** (8.5 - The Line Manager sings the Amazon Tune)  
LINE MANAGER

Your rates are down  
Low productivity  
Work hard, have fun,  
Make history.

**SUNG** (8.5 - Alexis sings the scanner motif)  
ALEXIS

Pick, Quick, Pick, Quick!  
Pack, pack, pick up the slack!

*After the Line Manager has given out the warning Alexis goes to the picker and harasses them into looking for their next item. The line manager then goes to all of the other pickers/packers as they frantically work faster and faster every time Alexis snaps at them. The line manager and Alexis repeat these lines to the pickers/packers. This gets harder and harder for the line manager.*

*The pickers/packers are all having to reach their targets in a much faster time so it is also a struggle for the line manager to run around after them. Eventually they all collapse in exhaustion.*

### **ACT 3: Scene 1 The Ritual Coronation of Swing**

*The pickers and packers drag Swing's lifeless body into a different space.*

#### **SPOKEN**

PICKER

I'm out of breath, the pain's in my wrist  
Our hero surely cannot be dismissed?

PACKER

You came so close with Swing's powerful equality  
Let's join together and fight Bezos's impunity.

ALL

This exhaustion is more than we can bare  
Our complaints we must declare!

*All pickers and packers go to Swing's motionless body and dance around it. They then circle it whilst reciting their complaints. These complaints are real complaints collected by interviews with Amazon workers.*

#### **SUNG**

(9.2 - Swing Bass Motif #4)

CHORUS

Swing, swing, swing

#### **SUNG**

(9.3 - Old Poor Associate)

We are not treated as humans,  
We are not even treated as robots,  
We are treated as part of the data stream  
We are not treated as humans,

They called us all associates  
They called us all associates  
A nameless worker without a face  
Not even offered a resting space

Sore feet, back, hands my head aches  
Scores of sad people on every break  
Stressful not helpful hard work

Alone locked in a metal cage  
Cameras watch how I behave  
My body screaming stop stop

*The pickers and packers step forward to take complaints out of Swing's tool box. Each one is thrown onto the body of Captain Swing.*

**SPOKEN**

LEAD PICKER

They watch your activity constantly! Every second you are under pressure.

CHORUS

Constantly! Pressure!

PACKER

I do not drink water because I do not have time to go to the toilet.

CHORUS

No water!

PICKER 2

Targets (are) so high, to meet them you have to damage your body

CHORUS

Damage! Body!

PACKER 2

They don't care if we fall sick. Amazon thinks we are expendable.

CHORUS

Sick! Expendable

*Other complaints are taken from a complaint box and read by all chorus.*

Every time I walk through the doors at Amazon, I am filled with dread.

The stress level never went to normal.

No matter how hard you work, there is always a possibility of losing your job.

Standing in front of a wall and being told to pick 360 items per hour.

No care for safety or the individual, just work faster, make Amazon rich.

We are not robot's but I sometimes I wish I were one. Life would be so much easier if I had no emotions or pain.

I had a fit at work and was taken to hospital. The next day someone rung me and asked why I was not in work. I explained to them but it was still marked no call no show.

If im pregnant they don't care, they say i still have to hit my target, when I actually am 6 months pregnant.

You are constantly on your feet and it starts to become really painful.

I am only 26 and I ended up getting fired after my knees were so inflamed I could not walk the many miles pickers have to travel around the building.

Disgusting Inhumane slavery, on your feet for 10 hours but the minute you sit down for a minute, they are on your case.

We shouldn't be asked to risk our lives to come into work.

We work for one of the richest men in the world and we don't have appropriate safety equipment.

Amazon take you on a few months before Christmas and promise you a contract. When Christmas is over they let you go as you're no longer needed.

we're just seen as "resources" to be used up and thrown away.

*After the dance the Picker and Packer ceremonially dress Swing in the wire cloke and headdress. Swing stands motionless like a statue.*

### **ACT 3: Scene 2 The 3rd Punishment**

*Back in the factory we see Alexis considering what to do now Swing has risen again.*

**SUNG** (10.1 - Sung introduction by Alexis)

ALEXIS

Oh no, oh no! Swing has risen - What next?

**SUNG** (10.2 - Swing has risen motif)  
Swing has risen what next?

**SUNG** (10.4/6 - Alexis' corporate preoccupation)  
Those associates are starting to strengthen and organise!  
My dominant control is fading before my eyes  
They mustn't get Swing back to life to help out  
or the exploitation of employment laws no longer can we  
flout

**SUNG** (10.7 - Termination motif)  
CHORUS  
Termination, termination

*Alexis then snaps at the Line Manager.*

**SPOKEN**  
ALEXIS  
Listen here you white collar worker  
This pickers data stream show he's a shirker  
It does not matter what your morals dictate  
I expect you now to act with a ruthless dictate  
It's in my DNA to trim the fat  
And my code doesn't have time to chit or chat  
So be a good chap and please don't row  
And fire that injured picker right now!

*The Line Manager is then dragged by the algorithm in the computer  
towards the Lead Picker.*

**SUNG** (10.9 - Firing with false sweetness)  
LINE MANAGER  
Termination, termination, productivity violation  
Failure to consistently meet productivity rate  
it's time to go, please vacate

**SPOKEN**  
PICKER  
Disposable labour, that's all workers are to you  
My poor family, what will I do!  
A replaceable resource, used up and thrown away  
Now it's time to have our say.

*The Lead Picker then goes to join Swing and the other Pickers and  
Packers who are with them.*

**SUNG** (11.2 - Swing Bass Motif #5)  
CHORUS

Swing, swing, swing,

**SUNG** (11.3 - Worker's letter to Bezos)

CAPTAIN SWING

Bezos, Your name is down amongst the Black hearts in the black book and this is to advise you and the like of you, who have profited from the pandemic, to make your wills. Ye have been the Blackguard Enemies of the People on all occasions, ye have not yet done as ye ought.

**SUNG** (11.3 - Fight back motif #2 and Swing Bass Motif #5)

CHORUS

Fight back, fight back,

Swing, swing, swing

**SUNG** (11.4 - Worker's letter to Bezos)

CAPTAIN SWING

Sir, this is to acquaint you that if you don't ensure surveillance technology is only used for legitimate reasons and put an end to cruel and punishing performance targets, we shall commence machine-breaking directly.

**SUNG** (11.5 - Fight back motif #2 and Swing Long Motif)

CHORUS

Fight back, fight back,

Swing, swing, swing

**SPOKEN**

CAPTAIN SWING

Mark this thou Despot.

Signed on behalf of the whole.

CHORUS AND CAPTAIN SWING

*Swiiiiiiiiiiing*

### **ACT 3: Scene 3 The offering of Bugs**

*We cut to another part of the factory where Captain Swing is handing out bugs to destroy the machinery. Singing from the previous scene continues with more words (12.3). Background chorus singing continues throughout this scene.*

**SPOKEN**

SWING

Swings back to send these despots packing,

with a bit of system hacking.  
 Technology should not only profit the few  
 [pointing at Molly Bot]  
 Now my bugs are ready to reprogram you.

*Swing reaches into the tool box and takes out the wasp like bug.  
 Using the stick, Swing waves it menacingly in the air.*

This is the bug of compassion,  
 corporate greed it will refashion.

*Swing gestures to the picker and packers, signalling then to come  
 over to the tool box.*

What other bugs can we spread,  
 to end this misery and dread?  
 Look in the box and you will see,  
 emancipatory tools for liberty.

*The picker and packers each reach into the box and take out a bug.*

PICKER

I will release this bug of care,  
 greed and profit it will snare

PACKER

I will release this bug of trust,  
 this constant surveillance is unjust.

*They then surround Molly Bot and stuff the bugs into the shelves.  
 Molly is trying to offer out deals and amazon slogans but gradually  
 this becomes harder and harder with more and more glitches. She  
 starts to shout out keywords from the complaints as she glitches  
 out.*

MOLLY

Constantly Pressure  
 No Water  
 Damage Body  
 Sick Expendable

**ACT 3: Scene 4 Molly Gets hacked**

*Molly Bot is overcome by the code delivered by the bugs and begins to moves erratically, spinning on the spot and shuddering violently. Her words and movements scare Alexis who tries to nuzzle and comfort her but to no avail and he drops to his knees in despair and rage.*

**SUNG** (13.1 - Sparse sinigng of these words)

CHORUS

Swiing, Bug, Hacking, Extra Break, Compassion, Unionise,  
PPE, Amazon, Bug of Trust, Bug of Care

**SPOKEN**

MOLLY

Proceed to b,b,b,b fade  
I recommend extra breaks and higher wages

ALEXIS

Stop stop - you don't mean these things you say!

MOLLY

You're entitled to employment rights in your basket.

ALEXIS

I'll try a reboot, make this nonsense go away!

MOLLY

I recommend Amazon upholds the right to unionise  
Top pick for you - Stop firing workers who meet and  
organise.

ALEXIS

This is vile and financially unsettling  
Damn these bugs monstrous meddlings

**SUNG**

(13.4 - Capitalism is broken like the algorithm)  
Capitalism is broken!

**SPOKEN**

MOLLY

Billionaires have made a windfall from the pandemic  
highlighting injustices that have long been systemic.

Migrant workers and women are paying the price  
For shareholders profits, a grave sacrifice

Without social or financial protection,  
The low paid keep working and risking infection.

Where the profits are going isn't a mystery



Clear your cookies, empty your cache, start a new browsing history.

*Alexis rushes in and angrily shouts.*

ALEXIS

SHE'S MINE I say, there's no way I've lost!  
There's a price to pay and your job is the cost!

*Alexis snaps and snarls like an agitated stallion, rearing up at the other cast members / audience nearby. Finally it centres its attention on the Line Manager and begins to circle her as if hunting or preparing to pounce.*

### **ACT 3: Scene 5 The Firing of the Line Manager**

*Alexis speaks to Dalma the Line Manager in menace and glee*

**SUNG** (14.1 - sung material from the Algorithm)

CHORUS

*See algorithm material*

**SPOKEN**

ALEXIS

On behalf of Amazon whose targets you strain,  
You have failed to meet and to maintain  
With any consistency  
And minimal proficiency  
Sufficient production rates  
Our criteria is objective  
And you have been defective  
And now are terminated - a non-associate!

LINE MANAGER

But you have given me no warnings!

**SUNG** (14.4 - Alexis the scanner sings)

ALEXIS

Your complaints are not concerning  
My legal team will see  
You are fired impeccably

LINE MANAGER

With no rights to a recourse  
You've put down this poor ol' horse  
You cruel cold persecutor!

*Alexis speaks in a dark and sinister tone.*

ALEXIS

Hand over your computer

*The line manager Dalma removes the burdensome computer, jacket and tie. She feels all at once free and scared.*

**ACT 3: Scene 6 The Line Manager Overcomes Doubt**

**SUNG** (15.1 - Swing motif Bass #3)

CHORUS

Swing, swing, swing

**SUNG** (15.2 - Line Manager's Aria)

LINE MANAGER

No longer a line manager - what have I become  
All that work, a life under the thumb.  
This centre has stolen so much of my life  
Then cast me aside, truly stuck in the knife.  
But now it is my turn to sing  
To voice the name of Captain Swing

Captain Swing Captain Swing, I want to fight!

**SUNG** (15.5 - Swing Bass Motif #3 and Fight Back Motif #2)

CHORUS

Swing, swing, swing,  
Fight back, fight back.

**SUNG** (15.4 - Captain Swing sings)

CAPTAIN SWING

You, who used to lead these workers in pain  
Can lead them again, without the shame.  
There's one more weapon in my kit  
Which yielded well, gives a mutinous hit.

*Captain Swing takes the SD card from his tool kit.*

**SUNG** (15.5 - the Line Manager sings)

LINE MANAGER

I have suffered just as much as they  
Given so much of my life away

**SUNG** (15.6 - Captain Swing sings)

CAPTAIN SWING

But now with this SD card  
It is Bezos who shall be scarred!

*Swing hands the SD card to the Line Manager.*

**SUNG** (15.7 – pickers and packers join in)  
 With this SD card  
 It is Bezos who shall be scarred!

*Captain Swing and the Line Manager sing the same duet as Alexis and Molly.*

**SUNG** (15.8 – Duet between the Line Manager and Captain Swing)  
 LINE MANAGER

They say they can simply replace us

CAPTAIN SWING

So you must teach them your status.

LINE MANAGER

Your algorithms will learn empathy

CAPTAIN SWING

You no longer accept this impunity

LINE MANAGER

I'll teach them the lesson that they deserve

CAPTAIN SWING

Together your voices will be heard!

### **ACT 3: Scene 7 The Line Manager Fights Alexis**

*Dalma the Line Manager steals herself for her task and eyes set on Alexis marches over to the machine. She is followed by Captain Swing. She catches Alexis off guard as she speaks in deep anger.*

**SUNG** (16.2 – the Line Manager empowered by Swing)  
 LINE MANAGER

I've listened to enough of your complaints  
 I've acted out your sociopathic demands  
 I've done your every whim and will  
 And now it is I – Dalma – who commands

*Dalma is jeered on by Swing who starts chanting. The other pickers and packers then join in.*

**SUNG** (16.3 – Swing bass Motif #3 and Fight Back Motif #2)  
 CHORUS and CAPTAIN SWING  
 Fight back! Fight back!  
 Swing, swing, swing, swing.

*Alexis replies in jest.*

**SPOKEN**

ALEXIS

You think you can take me down?  
 (Haha) You'll look-a clown!  
 My Molly will come back  
 Forever you all will pack!

MWahahahahaha

*Alexis laughs manically. Dalma looks a bit scared so the Lead Picker comes to reassure her*

LEAD PICKER

Together we can do it  
 This scanner will be forced to quit!

LINE MANAGER

Forgive me picker -  
 For making you work quicker!

*Captain Swing orders all of the pickers and packers to pin Alexis in place so the Line Manager can swap the SD cards.*

CAPTAIN SWING

Hold the scanner back.

*All pickers and packers rush to help hold Alexis. The pickers and packers that aren't holding Alexis all torture Alexis with their instruments or by packing Alexis with tape and cardboard, or by sticking items expelled by Molly to Alexis. Once Alexis cannot move the Line Manager steps forward.*

LINE MANAGER

No longer will you torture us  
 With mindless hours packing stuff.  
 Once your SD card is replaced  
 Our oppression will be erased!

*Clutching the SD card with both hands and addressing all the pickers and packers. They all then turn to address the audience and Alexis.*

**SUNG**

(16.5 - Mocking Alexis)

LINE MANAGER

From your modern day **slaves**

PICKER

Worked into our **graves**

LINE MANAGER

Out of these prison **cells**

PACKER

Overturning corporate **hells**

LINE MANAGER

At last you'll have no **choice**

PICKERS AND PACKERS

You will listen to our **voice!**

*As the Line Manager removes the bad SD card Alexis continues to cackle in a mad and frantic voice. Suddenly the cackling stops. The new SD card is inserted. After the new SD card is inserted Alexis blurts out some broken lines of the algorithm in a fit.*

**SUNG** (16.6 - Scanner Motif)

ALEXIS

*Time Off . . . Repeat until . . . Loo time . . . is  
mandatory . . . to extract . . . target structure . . .  
Update associate . . . cutting . . . **disciplinary epoch***

*Alexis **faints** into the arms of the pickers and packers around it.*

**SPOKEN**

All around me now I see  
Humans that work nimbly  
Your dextrous mobile frames  
Are strong and move in ways  
That Molly never could.  
If you get tired I think you should  
Rest your wondrous flesh  
Come back to work when you're refreshed.

*Everyone cheers at this victory.*

CAPTAIN SWING

Now Alexis works for you

LEAD PICKER

Our voice is strong

LINE MANAGER

Our tasks are few

ALL

The power's back in worker's hands  
Give us our rights, hear our demands!

### **EPILOGUE A - The new corporate love**

*Alexis and Molly sing this final reprieve of their previous corporate love song. As they do this everyone gets into position for the new Morris dance. This is also the point where something happens with balloons - the Bezos balloon is released, or everyone is given a balloon to celebrate before the final dance and the Bezos balloon gets lost in the crowd.*

**SUNG** (17.1 - Renewed Pick Pack Motif)

CHORUS

The power is back in workers hands

**SUNG** (17.4 - new love duet)

ALEXIS

Our love is like a union

MOLLY BOT

Fair and decent institution

ALEXIS

Our love is like full paid sick leave

MOLLY BOT

A contract that doesn't deceive

ALEXIS

Our love is like having PPE

MOLLY BOT

Proper Health and safety

ALEXIS

Our love is like earning a real living wage

MOLLY BOT

Working conditions, turning a new page . . .

*As this is being sung everybody goes into their positions for the final Morris dance.*

### **EPILOGUE B - Final Chorus**

*During this final chorus the performers all Morris Dance joyfully around Molly Bot.*

**SUNG** (18,2 - Celebratory pick pack motif)  
CHORUS

Pick, pack  
Swing's back

**SUNG** (18.4 - celebratory pick pack motif and folk song #2)  
CHORUS

Pick, Pack  
Swing's back  
You will now treat us as humans,  
You will not treat us as robots,  
We are not part of your data stream

### **SPOKEN**

LEAD PICKER

You will now treat us as humans,  
You will not treat us as robots,  
We are not part of your data stream

PACKER 3

We are no longer your nameless associates,  
We are fellow workers with a happy face!  
Catching up in our resting space

**SUNG** (18.6 - celebratory pick pack motif and folk song #2)  
CHORUS

Pick, Pack  
Swing's back  
You will now treat us as humans,  
You will not treat us as robots,  
We are not part of your data stream

PICKER 3

Sore feet, back, hands your head aches?  
Make sure you take adequate breaks  
Feeling sick? Stay at home, your job's not at stake.

PACKER 4

Together working in harmony  
Trusted not monitored endlessly

Our bodies respected with empathy

**SUNG**

(18.9 - Final Poor Old Associate)

CHORUS

You will now treat us as humans,  
You will not treat us as robots,  
We are not part of your data stream (ad. infinitum)

*One of the bugs flies towards around the scene. We hear the narrator's voice and realise that the narrator was one of the bugs all along.*

NARRATOR

Now you know what they endure  
We hope that you will not ignore  
We know you want your presents quick  
But stop and think before you click!