

The Secret Life of Planets: Heavenly Bodies and Earthly Gossip

Text and Music by Annie Gosfield

For Soprano (S) and Bass (B)

VENUS

BASS

Venus rotates so languorously
That one Venutian day lasts an entire earth year
She turns her cheek in retrograde,
A coy evening star fade
And she dreams of the Earth's atmosphere

Venus had a planetary impulse
To change her orbit
And tumble down tumble down tumble down tumble down tumble down down,
down, down
Down to the Earth

Venus shifted her orbit
And tumbled down, tumbled down, down, down, down
Down to the Earth

Venus hit the ground in California
And longed for the skies she had known
And Mercury's warm glow

Venus! had a planetary impulse
She picked up a copy of the Hollywood Star
In search of the local celestial life
Expecting the latest from Planet A to Planet Z
But finding earthly gossip about Elvis 's bisexuality

SOPRANO

Venus, Venus!
Had a planetary impulse
She changed her orbit and drank in the Earth's atmosphere
Venus had interplanetary desires
And she resolved
To make the transition
To the Earth
She tumbled down tumbled down tumbled down tumbled down
Down down down

Tumbled down tumbled down tumbled down
Down down down to the Earth
She tumbled down down down down down down down down down down down
down down down

BASS

Venus had a planetary impulse to change her orbit
And tumble down

TOGETHER

Tumble down tumble down tumble down tumble down tumble down tumble down
Down to the the Earth

EARTH

Bass: How old is Mother Earth?

Soprano: She's four billion years old... and a half

B: Mother Earth, we cherish your wisdom

S: But you don't ever listen

How can you treat the earth this way
And call her your mother?

B: Despite all the garbage we've thrown at her

S: She keeps on spinning

B: Faster than ever

S: You don't even notice

B: I can't really feel it
After everything

S: She still orbits around the sun

B: Carrying everyone

S: And all of our trash

Together: But now she is angry

S: After all of those years when she fed you so well

B: I didn't even thank her

S: Now her house is on fire, and it's hotter than hell

B: How are we gonna eat? what are we gonna drink?

S: How are we gonna live? What the hell did we do?

Long before we humans appeared

B: Mass extinction was old news

A bird in the hand was worth two in the bush

S: But the bush is burning and half the birds are going extinct

B: A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

S: But the trees are dying, and the birds have no place to sing

The world is on fire, and soon we'll all be extinct

Together: The Earth is burning

MARS

SOPRANO

Oo-ooh, oo-ooh, (more wordless singing)

Mars, Can you hear me?

A red disk swimming in a blue sea

Are we the only ones

Or could our sisters be extraterrestrial

Mars, are you watching us

Stoic and silently

Hiding your secret life beneath your icy exterior

IO

BASS

Io, Io,

Europa

Io, Io, Io

Europa Europa

Ganymede Ganymede

Calisto!

Continue ad lib.

JUPITER

SOPRANO

Clouds of dust and gas spin and collapse
For a million years, then a star is born
But Jupiter didn't spark enough heat
And he couldn't swing the pressure
The sun stole his fire
And made off with most of the mass
leaving Jupiter another failed star

When our solar system was young
Jupiter swung like a big wrecking ball
A marauder with a wild orbit
Knocking out chasms of space
Any planet that got in his way
Didn't stand a chance

Jupiter rocked the asteroid belt
Like a cosmic prize fighter
Radiating arrogance and pride
A champion wearing four rings
Made of dust and hidden in darkness

In Jupiter's later fat years
He settled into a regular orbit
Capturing everything
That flew close by him
Asteroids, comets, and space junk
Made a ragtag rotation of seventy nine moons
Asteroids, comets, and space junk
Were swept up in his orbit
And doomed to circle endlessly
They were doomed to circle endlessly
Asteroids comets and space junk
Made a ragtag rotation of seventy nine moons

Clouds of dust and gas spin and collapse
While Jupiter lies about his age
Astronomers say that he arrived first
Our biggest and oldest planet
Throwing his weight around
Like the whole world revolved around him
But old Jupiter was just another failed star

NEPTUNE
(Instrumental)

SATURN

BASS

Shining yellow and gold
With a gleaming halo
Saturn flashes his rings
Spun from ice and debris
Scattering particles
Like smoke from a cigarette
In a crowded room
Behind Saturn's rings

SOPRANO

Twinkling pure and pristine
Saturn hides his dark rings
Littered with rubble and rust
Like a diamond gathering dust, dust
You burn so bright
But you're so far away and so cold
Behind Saturn's rings

BASS

A galaxy of fragile dreams
Bound together by gravity

SOPRANO

Torn apart by human greed
Our celestial body is slipping, slipping away