Scene Breakdown for ***LSD: HUXLEY'S LAST TRIP***

a one-act chamber opera in nine scenes (90 minutes)

Music and Libretto by Anne LeBaron

(with libretto contributions from Gerd Stern and Ed Rosenfeld)

1. Bicycle Day - *Sandoz Laboratory in Basel, Switzerland: Apr. 19, 1943*
Albert Hofmann, a Swiss chemist, discovers and ingests LSD, personified by the LSD Trio. They accompany him on a fateful bicycle ride from his lab to his home. He collapses and cries out for an antidote. His neighbor, Mrs. R, brings milk.

2. The Doors of Perception - *Hollywood Hills home of the Huxleys: May afternoon, 1953*
Dr. Humphrey Osmond, who coined the word 'psychedelic,' gives Aldous mescaline. In a subsequent state of heightened perception, Aldous marvels at the colors of flowers in a vase, the folds in his trousers, the books on his shelf, Gesualdo's music, and notions of time.

3. MK-ULTRA - *CIA Headquarters, McLean, VA: early Dec., 1953*
In 1953, the CIA frames the murder of one of its own, scientist Frank Olson, as an 'accident.' That same year, Allen Dulles and Sid Gottlieb introduce Project MK-ULTRA, a CIA experimentation program utilizing LSD to control minds.

4. Operation Midnight Climax - *A "safe house" in San Francisco used for surveillance, 1955*
George Hunter White, a CIA operative who trained prostitutes to slip their clients a dose of LSD in a cocktail, observes the johns' behavior while perched on a portable toilet facing a two-way mirror. He christened his experiments "Operation Midnight Climax."

5. Double Helix - *Eagle Pub in Cambridge, England: Feb. 28, 1953*
Francis Crick and James Watson celebrate their discovery of DNA at the Eagle Pub in Cambridge. Two men at the bar provide commentary, as the LSD Trio performs the Helix Dance.

6. Three Lunches - *Zurich; Cambridge; New York: Aug. 1961*
Albert and Anita Hofmann meet Aldous and Laura Huxley for lunch at the Hotel Sonnenberg. They compare notes on the effects of psychedelics. The LSD Trio, functioning as servers, whisk Aldous Huxley off to the Harvard Club and introduce him to Timothy Leary. As they consume mushroom soup, the Trio interrupts, escorting Leary to The Plaza Hotel for lunch with Marshall McLuhan.

7. Millbrook / Georgetown - *Hitchcock Estate, Millbrook NY; Art studio, Washington DC:1962*
Having acquired LSD from Timothy Leary, socialite and artist Mary Meyer intends to share it with her friends, the 'Georgetown Ladies,' and with her lover, JFK---all in pursuit of her idealized notion of attaining world peace.

8. The White House - *Washington DC: at night, 1962*
Mary and JFK rendezvous in his bedroom, where she gives him LSD. He hallucinates Jackie Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe, confusing them with Mary Meyer. As he grows anxious about losing control, Mary reassures him, asserting that peace will conquer all.

9. Huxley's Last Trip - *Hollywood Hills home of the Huxleys: Nov. 22, 1963*
Aldous Huxley, on his deathbed, scribbles a note to his wife Laura asking her to inject him with LSD to ease his suffering. While retrieving it, she walks into an adjacent room and is astonished to see his friends glued to the news report on JFK's assassination. Returning to administer LSD to Aldous, she sings him 'into the light.'