

***GAGLIANO ENDGAME CABARET***  
***(celebration and tribute)***

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**(PRESENTED MAY 3, 2010, 7:PM, GLADYS DAVIS THEATRE,  
CREATIVE ARTS CENTER, WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY,  
MORGANTOWN)**

**OPENING REMARKS: JOSHUA WILLIAMSON, CHAIR  
OF THE DIVISION OF THEATRE AND DANCE AND  
BERNIE SCHULTZ,, DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF CREATIVE ARTS**

# ***GAGLIANO***

## ***endgame cabaret script***

***(song lyrics in ALL CAPS)***

***Setting: Grand piano for James Rushin.  
Music Stand and stool for Gagliano.  
Music stands and stools for Ensemble.***

**Lights: General**

**Discovered: Frank G and James R, at the piano**

FRANK GAGLIANO

(After Chair, Dean remarks)

Thank you. Tonight we'll present some bits and pieces, primarily from full plays and musicals of mine that were developed and produced during my 33 year tenure in the Division of Theatre as Benedum Professor of Playwriting. Here are the artists who helped put this evening together and will perform tonight:

(They enter as called and sit)

Audrey Ahern, Melissa Allen, Todd Berkich, Taylor Ferrera, Greg Holt, Greg Jernagan, Ben Levesque, Chasdan Mike, Becky Purcell and Matt Webster.

The music director for the evening is James Rushin, courtesy of the Division of Music. Our stage manager is Matt Laird.

(When everyone is in place, begin the show)

FRANK GAGLIANO

(Continued)

On my drive back and forth from the West Virginia Creative Arts Center to my home in Mt, Lebanon, PA, I often mused on the "*Marianna*" Exit sign on Interstate 79. From those musings I imagined a character and wrote a lyric.

***"MARIANNA: A Round trip fantasy. As told by Harry Grunding."***

(GREG enters and sings: MARIANNA)

HARRY GRUNDING (Greg Holt)

I DROP OFF MY CARGO EACH DAY AND EACH WEEK,  
AND THESE ROUND TRIPS GET HARDER TO TAKE.  
A THOUSAND TIMES I STEP ON THE GAS,  
AND AS MANY TIMES I STEP ON THE BRAKE.  
BUT THERE IS A PLACE ON MY WAY TO AND FRO,  
THAT CAUSES MY HEART TO GLOW.

"MARIANNA."

OH, "MARIANNA."

THERE'S AN EXIT I PASS  
WITH A SIGN IN THE GRASS;  
"MARIANNA."

"MARIANNA."

OH "MARIANNA."

ON MY INTERSTATE RIDE  
I SLOW DOWN  
AND GLIDE PAST MY DREAM.

YOU'RE NOT MERELY JUST A TOWN'S NAME;  
YOU'RE A VISION I NEED  
AND YOU'RE WAITING TO FEED A LOVE I CAN'T TAME. . .  
EVERYDAY WHEN MY JOURNEY IS THROUGH,  
I IMAGINE THE SWEET LOOKS OF YOU.  
IN MY MIND'S EYE I SIGH  
FOR TOMORROW AND MY

HARRY GRUNDING (Greg Holt)

(Continued)

"MARIANNA."

OH, "MARIANNA."

THERE'S AN EXIT I PASS  
WITH A SIGN IN THE GRASS;

"MARIANNA."

"MARIANNA."

OH "MARIANNA."

ON MY INTERSTATE RIDE

I SLOW DOWN

AND GLIDE PAST MY DREAM.

OOOOOOOOH! OOOOOOOOH!

I SIT IN THE DARKNESS ALONE IN MY ROOM,  
AND I LONG FOR THE DAWN TO ARRIVE;  
HOW MANY BEERS WILL I DRINK THROUGH THE NIGHT  
'TILL IT'S MORNING AGAIN AND I DRIVE?  
I'M TIRED AND ACHIN',  
I'M SICK TO THE HEART,  
BUT STILL I CAN'T WAIT TO START.

"MARIANNA."

OH, "MARIANNA."

THERE'S AN EXIT I PASS  
WITH A SIGN IN THE GRASS;

"MARIANNA."

"MARIANNA."

OH "MARIANNA."

ON MY INTERSTATE RIDE

I SLOW DOWN

AND GLIDE PAST MY DREAM.

HARRY GRUNDING (Greg Holt)

(Continued)

AND I KNOW THAT SOON I'LL BREAK THROUGH;  
 IN THE FOG AND THE DAMP  
 I'LL HEAD DOWN THE RAMP  
 THAT LEADS STRAIGHT TO YOU.  
 AND ALTHOUGH YOU MIGHT NEVER LOVE ME,  
 I'LL BE HAPPY IF ONCE I CAN SEE  
 FROM MY VIEW AT THE WHEEL  
 THAT YOU TRULY ARE REAL.

"MARIANNA."

OH, "MARIANNA."

THERE'S AN EXIT I PASS  
 WITH A SIGN IN THE GRASS;  
 "MARIANNA."

"MARIANNA."

OH "MARIANNA."

ON MY INTERSTATE RIDE  
 I SLOW DOWN  
 AND GLIDE PAST MY DREAM.

OOOOOOOOOOO, MARIANNA.

(After applause, Greg goes to seat)

FRANK GAGLIANO

During my first sabbatical, I began writing other pieces for other characters like Harry Grunding who lived in this mythical County I was developing -- and calling, Bodoni County. A former Division of Theatre colleague, Ed Herendeen -- now the Producing Artistic Director of a Contemporary American Theatre Festival in Shepherdstown -- devised a theatre piece for those few lyrics and workshopped them in the VDM -- then called "the classroom theatre." I then added more pieces, bundled them into a full evening's entertainment, called it FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY, and the Division produced it on this Main Stage. The pieces and lyrics at that point were spoken. Ed added an elaborate percussion section, as underscoring for his main stage production. Later, Broadway composer Claibe Richardson set the lyrics to music -- one of which you've just heard -- and Claibe and I continued working on BODONI at the Musical Theatre Conference of the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center (where the musicals NINE and AVENUE Q were first developed). A further BODONI COUNTY workshop followed at New York's Vineyard Theatre (where Edward Albee's

## FRANK GAGLIANO

(Continued)

THREE TALL WOMEN was first produced). Pittsburgh's Pyramid Productions then produced BODONI at The City Theatre's Hamburg Theatre space, directed by Ted Hoover.

*FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY* is a musical revue (of sorts), in which the inhabitants of a mythical American County (most of whom want to get out) step out and talk and sing their angst away. Here's the opening section:

JONATHAN OVERVIEW (Greg Holt)

*PART ONE: "SLOW PAN." FIRST ENTRY: GUSSY TRIES TO GET OUT!*

(Melissa rises, walks in place for a bit,  
Then walks to center music stand)

THAT SOUND YOU HEAR IS THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS—NERVOUS FOOTSTEPS—ON SPIKED HIGH HEELS, TOO SPIKED FOR SUCH A TINY WOMAN. SHE'S WALKING DOWN A DOWNTOWN STREET, CARRYING TWO LARGE VALISES; HEADING FOR THE GREYHOUND, THAT'S GUSSY, ALL GUSSIED UP, GUSSY; PROBABLY THE BEST CLEANING LADY THIS COUNTY HAS EVER SEEN. . .

(Ensemble shuffle feet at their stools)

THOSE OTHER SOUNDS, THEY'RE OTHER FOOTSTEPS, TRYING TO KEEP UP WITH GUSSY. THEY ALL KNOW WHAT SHE'S UP TO, WHERE SHE'S GOING, WHO SHE IS GOING TO--BECAUSE GUSSY WROTE A LETTER TO THE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. . .

(Ensemble stop shuffling)

GUSSY (Melissa Allen)

**To all to "whom" it may concern: Gussy's leavin' this burg forever!**

I'm leavin' my husband, Marvin, an' I ain't even gonna take care of his mother no more neither—buttin' into our lives like she does all'a the time—*an'* livin' under the same stinkin' roof, mind you! An' I'm leavin' all you **cheap-O's**, too; with your **superior** ways and **grand** houses an' apartments an' **Con-DOUGH-Mini-Mums** that break my back; an' I'm leavin' for the man I love—*an' who loves me*— *an'* who ain't doin' me no damned favor! —Mr. Harold Hardy—that's who loves me—Mr. Harold Hardy; the Bob Edens top sausage salesman for this region—who loves me and—yes!—made love to me—on my own special self. —**Well here's Gussy's bulletin, folks!** —On Monday mornin' next, Harold Hardy, **Mr. Bratwurst-Of-The-Year**, will step off one bus—at the downtown Greyhound—and take Gussy onto another bus— one that will take the happy couple **to private parts unknown!** *Unsincerely yours, Gussy.*

(Melissa returns to Ensemble)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW (Greg Holt)

THE SOUNDS YOU HEAR, ARE THE SOUNDS FROM THE PRESS GAZETTE;  
THAT'S THE BUILDING ALL THAT CROWD FOLLOWING ARE NOW PASSING.  
LISTEN OUTSIDE THE BUILDING, SOUNDS OF MEN LOADING PAPERS ONTO  
TRUCKS. INSIDE, IN ONE LITTLE CLOSET SIZED OFFICE, THE SOUND OF ONE  
EMPLOYER, THINKING. . .

(Greg Jernigan walks to center stool)

BARNEY COGLIN (Greg Jernigan)

**Everyday, in every way, I, Barney Coglin, wait for people to croak!** I write obituaries . "Obits?" For the Bodoni County Press Herald Gazette? The perfect job. For me. Because I love dealing with dead people. Because *live* people turn you down—or suffocate you—or make demands; sit at nearby tables in cafeterias, slurping soup at you with frightened eyes that **HATE** you, want **REVENGE** on you *and*—as mother so delicately puts it!—"they eye your crotch for a well-aimed kick in **the Brussels Sprouts.**" But here—well—I have lots of obits started on the El Dispicabilius, Scumbagius, Populiius Bodonius!—who are *still* alive; and it's my job to keep their files updated until they—"buy the farm?"—"eyeball the slugs?"—"suck the Chem Lawn?" So what I do is, I create fantasies! —devise *app-ro-priate*, soul-satisfying *finitos!* for *all of them!* —Here's one I'm working on for Vincent Cromley. "Soooo—Mr. Furniture Store, Commode-Face CEO: you would not take back that defective couch, huh? —Therefore —**tsk tsk**—you'll have to get yours in one of your own ADJUST-O-MATIC beds! —by being BENT to death!—during one of your nightly attempts at auto fellatio!" *AHha!*—*AND* —as my grand finale—I'm taking one of those perfumed insert mailers—the kind you can tear out? —and I'm going to poison *EVERY BODONI COUNTY, TURNED UP, SNIFFING, NOSE—PERMANENTLY!* . . .God, I love this job!

(Greg Jernigan returns to Ensemble)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW (Greg Holt)

THE SOUNDS YOU HEAR ARE THE SOUNDS FROM THE CHURCH BELLS--FROM SAINT ALEXANDER'S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH. OUTSIDE, GUSSY AND HER PILGRIMS, PASS BY; INSIDE, THE SOUND OF FATHER PAULUS IN THE PULPIT--LAUGHING!

(Ben Levesque walks to center)

## GREEK PRIEST (Ben Levesque)

My dear--Faithful--parishioners! How delighted I am, this morning—that you're here. . .after what happened last night! We were hosting a dinner for that group of God's Gay children who had fled the persecution in Red County—when we were attacked! YES! Some strangers—**and** some parishioners, I'm sorry to say—invaded—our dinner, and threatened **God's Gay children and** us—physically. But, as if divinely inspired—Mrs. Pataurus—at the Moussaka tray? —took a spatula of her excellent dish and **slung** it into the face of one of the invaders! And before you knew it—the hot lemon soup, the steaming meatballs, the chicken with oregano, and even the apricot pastries were **FLYING ALL OVER THE PLACE!** And when Mrs. Cotsorilis started advancing on those invaders with her lamb shish kabobs— *still on the skewers!*—well, those cowards retreated! And my soul was given a reprieve. . . .For, I must confess that I have been on the verge of leaving this parish. . . .I have lived and seen many sad things in my many years—but the fear and hate so many of our Bodoni County Christians have for the weekly influx of God's Gay children seeking a haven from persecution —**and** the attack against us last night, because we were ministering to, and comforting, them. . .tested my faith, as it has never *been* tested before. —*But* last night's fight—for the moment, anyway!—has made me *want* to stay. —And so—*just in case!*—I'm asking for many more cook-soldiers for *tonight's* special service and Social. I especially need some young marksman with a slingshot, to man the calamata olives. . . —**Theodore Pakadapalopolis?** —Ahhhh. Bless you.

(Ben returns to Ensemble)

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW (Greg Holt)

THE SOUND YOU HEAR IS THE BUZZ OF THE CITIZENS IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, IN THE CITY HALL BUILDING WHERE GUSSY AND A NOW LARGER GROUP TROOP BY.

(Audrey walks to center stool)

## LUREEN LITTLE (Audrey Ahern)

—so Barney, Barney Sharkey —**and** I, Lureen Little—do want to thank you for hearing us. You see, Barney and I—got to know each other first from the CB's in the trucks. He owns *his* truck, of course; and I own mine. And that's how we got to discover—over our CB's? —that we were in the same boat—well, actually —same "*trucks*"— you know what I mean. And we soon discovered that we—each of us—were hauling chemical wastes and—**Wham!** —at just about the time we got to know each other— . .and I really fell for that nice easy voice of Barney's, and his vocal manners, and the way we liked the same music and stuff—about that same time, everybody stopped letting us dump our cargo—sometimes they wouldn't even let us drive *through* the towns **at all!** —**Until** Bodoni County! We heard you all here were considering putting a waste dump in the County—for the Federal revenues and all? **That's why we're here—to testify in favor of your doing just that.** Because you see—you made it possible for Barney and me to meet—for the first time, **in the physical flesh**—just about ten minutes ago? —outside



## LUREEN LITTLE

(Continued)

in the waiting room? — . . .and I mean to tell you, that in his three-dimensional personal self, Barney's even more of a terrific fella than I had even imagined from his voice alone —with those deep dimples and truly thick neck. **So!** if you do see fit to pass the ordinance, well, that means—selfishly—that Barney and I then could, maybe, settle down—open up a garage. Maybe. Here. Maybe. Become a team—raise a family! —Like most of you, never leave Bodoni County—**God, I hope so!** Cause now—well—Barney and I have finally. . .touched each other. . .kind'a taken joy from each other's. . . —*aura*. If you know what I mean.

(Audrey returns to the Ensemble)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW (Greg Holt)

THE SOUND YOU HEAR —ALONG WITH GUSSY AND HER MARCHING ENTOURAGE—ARE THE SOUNDS OF THE NATIONAL GUARDSMEN, MARCHING INSIDE THE ARMORY, ACROSS FROM THE BUS TERMINAL.

(Dan Evans walks center)

ROGER BROMLEY (Dan Evans)

C'mon, Colonel, isn't there some **way** you can get them to call up the unit? I don't mean you, personally—but **somebody**?! I mean —why the hell have **we** been spared? They do need just about everyone: Right? . . . —Are you kidding? "Afraid I'd lose my life?" **It would save my life!** What a gift! I -- Roger Bromley -- would get away from Charlene—**from my job!** From — . . .What's that, Colonel?? . . .—"Roadside bombs?" Charlene lobs bombs at me all the time! "Snipers?" I don't care about no stinking snipers!—Anyway, nobody snipes like Charlene! "The Desert?" What do you think Bodoni County is? "Skin boils?" Hell, Bodoni County gives me crotch itch, **anal fissures** and pink eye! Please Colonel! Pull some strings! THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE EVER! —**I'd get out!** How else could yours truly, Computer-Nerd-on-weekends, Roger Bromley, **ever** get to do that!?

(Dan walks back to Ensemble)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW (Greg Holt)

THE SOUND YOU HEAR ARE THE THOUGHTS OF THAT WOMAN OVER THERE-- FLORENCE COLDWELL; SITTING IN THE GREYHOUND COFFEE SHOP; HAVING HER USUAL CIGARETTE, OAT BRAN MUFFIN FOR BREAKFAST. ON HER WAY TO WORK; LISTENING TO THE ANNOUNCEMENTS, THE BUS ARRIVALS, THE BUS DEPARTURES.

(Taylor Ferrera walks to center stool)

FLORENCE COLDWELL (Taylor Ferrera)

--tracking Gussy's journey here. . .I, Florence Coldwell, wait for Gussy to pass by the window out in the waiting room and go through the gate. . .so that she can wait for her man to get off one bus to take her with him--on another bus. --god--I hate her--for catching a man who wants her--a salesman, yet. --But I love Gussy, too! For her guts and arrogance and--god!--I almost did something foolish. Nearly went to the bank--the branch near here opens at 8 AM--to withdraw all the life savings--in seventeen, one thousand dollar bills--to purchase a ticket on whatever bus Gussy and Mr. Hardy get on and sit across from them both and--maybe get some pointers on how to begin all over again. --Isn't that insane? --seventeen, one thousand dollar bills!--That's the cushion--Mama's cushion--and if I took it--and I can--the passbook is in both our names--if I took it--just disappeared--well, then--where would Mama be? Back in that low slime-life we left a long time ago--that's where; dumped into some snake pit or other with no loving, close kin--no personal care; That's where. And what about my kids? my students--there in the High School just down the block from here? Ha! Big laugh. This teacher is totally burned out; burned out in class --burned out with Mama. . .burned out with men. Please. . please. . .please. . .

SOMEBODY WRITE A CHECK OUT TO CASH,  
AND BUY ME A TICKET OUT.  
BODONI COUNTY GIVES ME A RASH,  
IF I HAD THE BACKIN',  
THEN I COULD GET PACKIN'!

NOBODY EVER GETS FAR FROM HERE,  
LEASTWAYS, NOT IN THE HEART;  
BUT A TRIP--THAT'LL DO FOR A START;  
JUST A TICKET AND I WILL DEPART. . .

OUT OF THIS TOWN.  
OUT OF THAT JOB.  
FAR FROM THE CONSTANT,  
SELF-PITYING MOAN;  
HELP ME TO RUN,

HELP ME TO FLY  
OH, HELP ME TO GET OUT—  
I CAN'T DO IT ALONE!

LOVE WAS A SALESMAN WHO GOT AWAY,  
SO GET ME A TICKET OUT;  
GET ME A TICKET  
SO'S I CAN SCOUT,  
A NEW PANORAMA;  
SOME GLITTER, SOME GLAMOUR.

FLORENCE COLDWELL (Taylor Ferrera)  
(Continued)

BUSSES ARE LOADIN' OUT IN THE DOCK;  
WISH I COULD HITCH A RIDE.  
SOMETHIN' SAYS DOWN INSIDE  
GET YOUR TICKET TO GO AND HIDE. . .

FIND A NEW TOWN.  
GET A NEW JOB.  
GO GET A FUTURE.  
BURY THE PAST.  
MEET A NEW LOVE:  
ONE THAT CAN GIVE  
THE ULTIMATE "HOW TO"—LIVE  
A NEW LIFE AT LAST!

THEN, LIKE GUSSY,  
I, TOO, WILL STRUT  
OUT OF THIS RUT I'M IN. . .  
MY LIFE WILL HAVE THE CLOUT  
AND I'LL NEVER LACK THE GUTS  
TO EVER NEED A TICKET OUT AGAIN. . .

I'LL FIND A NEW JOB;GET ME A FUTURE. . .  
BURY THE PAST, LIGHTEN THE LOAD;

LEAVE THE DECAY. . .  
SO GET ME A TICKET--HEY. . .  
BUT MAYBE NOT TODAY.

(Taylor walks back to Ensemble)

MARIAN AXELBEAN (Melissa Allen)  
(From seat)

"TO THE BODONI COUNTY DAILY GAZETTE, LETTERS TO THE EDITOR,  
from Marian Axelbean:

"I wanted to share with all my fellow Bodoni County citizens a truly wondrous and magical sight I saw at twilight--not 25 minutes ago!" While walking my dog Misha (poor thing is old; deaf; blind in one eye and limps), we went down to our favorite spot at the bottom of our street, which is a cul-de-sac, with a little park

MARIAN AXELBEAN

(Continued)

and wooded area off to the left. Suddenly, from behind me I heard this running sound--like a large dog or something, and I got concerned--for poor old Misha's sake. When I turned around I saw that it was in fact a deer! A very beautiful large deer! It leaped along as gracious as you please, and made a large circle around us and then leaped off into the wooded area. Well--I've just moved on this block, and a live deer--as far as I know--has never been seen. And somehow it was--well. . .very thrilling and marvelous. And I just wanted you all to know. And I just hope that that deer visits your neighborhood. Because a sight like that makes you feel, well young again. And that there's hope.

Signed. "Wondrous" Marian Axelbean.

HYMEN "HY" COLONIC (Dan Evans)

To "Wondrous" Marian Axelbean:

I'm afraid I saw that wondrous deer, too, wondrous Marian. In our neighborhood, which is called South Park. I say, "afraid," because a lot of kids threw rocks and bottles at it and then one of our hunter friends got his rifle and took a shot at it. The deer got away; but my guess is someone is bound to kill it.

Signed. "Realist" Hymen "Hy" Colonic.

REMO CRAMER (Chasdan Mike)

To "Wondrous" Marian Axelbean.

I hope letter-to-the-editor Hymen "Hy" Colonic is wrong--and that they don't shoot your deer--**but** I wanted to tell you about another "**wondrous**" **sight** yours truly has been seeing. Last week--at the Bodoni County Mall?--while the Bodoni High School Chorus was doing the Hallelujah Chorus at the Christmas Tree lighting?--I noticed--at the Smoke House store?--this very sad and beautiful lady setting up the free samples of summer sausage. And the thing about her was that there were these **holes in the palms of her hands and they were bleeding**. While I was getting my sausage sample, I asked her if her hands hurt and she said, not as much as her heart, which would break if she couldn't get out of the Mall--"this Godforsaken Mall"--that's what she called it. I asked her why she just didn't leave through the doors and she said that she was trapped and needed to wait for the "extraordinary way out." And cried. I looked away--**because** I couldn't stand the pain she was in; then when I turned around again--she was gone.

But I see her all over the Mall--all the time. Sometimes she's a manikin. One time she was sitting behind the wheel of a car--on display, during Car-Dealer week? And once on all the TV screens at the Appliance City store? she was the

## REMO CRAMER

(Continued)

lady catching the lottery balls during the State lottery game. But no matter where she is or what her job is at the moment--her hands are always bleeding.

Most people think I'm weird; so I don't usually tell them about the wondrous things I see. But your letter about the deer made me want to share with you and everyone my meetings with "Our Lady of the Mall;" (that's what I call her). Because I think she's special. And "wondrous," too. Don't you, "Wondrous" Marian?

Signed. "Weird" Remo Cramer.

## JEREMIAH SPITTLE (Ben Levesque)

To "Wondrous" Marian Axelbean, "Weird" Remo Cramer and--ALL AND SUNDRY! --**Great news!** Our Lady of the Mall **got out!** This beautiful deer got into the Mall--and I can only guess that it's the same beautiful deer **you** saw, "Wondrous" Marian; and I saw Our Lady--**hands bleeding all over the place--** get onto the back of that deer--and I--**!!**-- Jeremiah Spittle -- opened the large glass doors for them and they galloped--RIGHT OUT OF THE MALL! And I was so thrilled I wanted to shout and scream and laugh and all; but no one else said anything and I sure as the devil didn't want to make a scene; so I just kept my joy to myself and ran out of that Mall and got into my beat up old Bronco and followed them out into the country--**and got a blowout!**--so I lost 'em. Just my luck! --But wasn't that a sight in a million! Gosh!

Signed: "Contented" Jeremiah Spittle

## FRANK GAGLIANO

In the BODONI COUNTY section called CUL-DE-SAC, friends and acquaintances of Perry Carrington are brought together to try to understand why he killed himself. Of course, the only way for them to understand it is to view the event through their own inner terrors. Here are two excerpts. First: DAVID's take on Perry's suicide--

(Matt Webster walks to center)

## DAVID (Matthew Webster)

Balloons! Perry had red, glow-in-the-dark, balloons all over his room. And some of the balloons are on sticks; some are tied to things--and some are just let go, sucking to the ceiling. And they are in all kinds of shapes--stars, moons, a Mickey Mouse--a dinosaur shape. --. . . Sorry about that; that coughing fit: a touch of Asthma. Anyway, Perry, you know, was shy--like me, David--his "acquaintance"--because he doesn't have many "friends;" and is always kind of morose and everyone says that he was 17 going on 60. . . just like they say about me--even

## DAVID

(Continued)

used to run his hand through his thick hair all the time--the way I do, am doing now. And brilliant, of course! Top of the class! Top grades in the school! EVEN IN THE COUNTY! Math, English, creative writing, dramatics, physics--you name it! --Except gym or sports, of course. --Oh--and music! He especially loves music! Gets lost in music--feels safe in music. . . .had no girlfriends. Always at home--in his room--cracking the books or listening to music. Or creating new programs on his MacIntosh computer--you know, that's the one with the mouse--that you roll around and it makes it easy to do all that programming magic. Called his MacIntosh, " My Mackie." Because Mackie is really his only "friend." And his dad makes him stay in that room. His dad!--the shoe clerk at the J. C. Penney's in the Mall, yells through the door--because he hates having to box his way through "those damned balloons!"--"Strive! Achieve! Excell, excell! You're not going to wind up like me; the only schmuck--the only loser in a family of winners--of professionals!" And Perry has asthma because he feels a great pressure in his chest--in his lungs--and gets more and more depressed --until . . . I fall in love! --with something wonderful!--a beautiful guitar. At a garage sale. Get it for practically nothing. Discover it's a Martin "Dreadnought." With a great bass tone. And the hot shape of it--God!--it has a pinched waist and an ample bottom; and Perry loves ample bottoms--from a distance, of course. And he calls the guitar "Ms. Strummerpet;" sneaks Ms Strummerpet into his balloon room; and now he has two roommates; MacKie and Ms Strummerpet; so easy to tell them apart: because one becomes Perry's brain, and one becomes his heart.

I SIT IN MY ROOM WITH MY MACKIE AND STRUMMERPET,  
FIRST ROLLING MY MOUSE, THEN PLUCKING A STRING.  
ALONE IN MY HOUSE, NOT A HUMAN BEING STIRRING;  
CREATING MY PROGRAMS--A SONG TAKING WING.

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER;  
AND A TUNE EMERGES FROM MY FINGER TIPS.  
AND THE SONG TAKES OVER--  
STRUMS FROM MY SOUL AND LEAPS FROM MY LIPS.  
WHEN NIGHTMARES FRIGHTEN MY DAYS  
AND THERE'S NO ONE AROUND FOR ME TO SCREAM TO,

DAVID

(Continued)

THEN THE SONG TAKES OVER--  
AND GETS ME THROUGH

Then he forgets about his Mackie and lives only with--and gently strokes-- his  
Strummerpet;

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

and he puts on his black light and smokes some dope

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

and he moves in slow motion through the bobbing balloons;

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

and magically makes a melody which he magically works on day after day;

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

and he ignores all his other work and he doesn't go out--never needs to go out to  
all that loneliness again; just works and reworks that melody;

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

and the pressure leaves his chest;

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

and I breath easy now and there's no more pressure about anything  
and I'll never leave or do anything but finish, polish and repolish that melody;

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER--

And that's when his dad --Perry's dad -- **my** dad comes home--**brakes in the  
door--stabs the balloons--explodes them!--grabs the guitar--smashes it!** --  
and says he'll smash any other guitar I bring into the house--forces me into my  
seat--boots up my Mackie and screams: "You can't beat out the Jap kids with a  
goddamned ***guitar!***"

But even without my Strummerpet--without accompaniment--I finish the  
melody--there among the dead balloons:

THEN I DESPAIRED AND WITHDREW,  
AND THE OPTIONS I ONCE HAD  
GOT FEWER THAN FEW;  
THEN THE SONG NO LONGER  
COULD GET ME THROUGH.

And, I guess, that's when Perry killed himself.

(Matt Webster rejoins the Ensemble  
as Melissa Allen moves center)

FRANK

Here's Lori's take on Perry's suicide.

LORI (Melissa Allen)

It was, like, masks?; all those guys had on masks and it was, like, that Lori twat--that's me? that Lori twat?--was asking for it anyway; and she was high because, like, hey! everybody knows Lori's an alcoholic and sees the world through, like, a haze all the time anyway; and wants desperately to be, like, part of the scene and all? -- and, like, Lori always makes herself look older and is older 'cause, like hey!--how many other girls my age have already been raped by an uncle by the age of thirteen, right? --so gratefully--and immediately--Lori accepts the invitation from the college boys; and they all wear masks, 'cause it's a masquerade party--and I wear a mask, too; a Jodie Foster mask and I'm having fun! drinking and being treated like a grownup and all?; and maybe they're going to treat me nice, for once; and this one guy, especially does--and he seems familiar--hard to tell, because he wears a ski mask and comes dressed like a cat burglar--you know, all in black -- tight black shirt and tight black pants and black sneakers--and he seems familiar--his manner--gentle--easy going, basically--nice sense of humor, hard body like this jock guy hero I sort of know about at school--Perry Carrington--except that this guy's voice is lower, more gravelly--something; and anyway, like, I'm already plastered and he dances with me and says, you know, maybe you should leave, go home; and I say, not on your life; especially not, like, when I'm dancing against such a rock-hard chest; and I also say, anyway I'm having fun?--and aren't you that Perryjockguy from my School?--and he post haste turns me over to another guy with a mask who gives me a grownup twirl --weeeeeeeeeeee!--and an even more grown up dip and while we're in the dip he manages to get the tip of his tounge through that litle mask mouth and lick my neck and I feel great; feel these guys really, just, like, want me around because I fit in? So, so what if there are only a couple of girls there like, I guess, me? all in a haze and ready to party? But, but, but somehow you don't really know (you know?); like, whatever you thought it would be like, you realize you were, like, kidding



LORI

(Continued)

yourself and you're scared--and suddenly they're all over you, taking turns, and they keep pushing one of the masked boys on and they go,"Hey, Perry, you're a high school hero/jock and you take the steroids like the coaches want you to; and you got a sports scholarship to come here next year, so look at this like your reward--CLIMB ON!" And, like, maybe I don't hear the name right--through my haze--and maybe they said, like, Jerry or Kerry or Barry or whatever; and this guy, he doesn't seem to want to take part, and they coax him and push him and rag him and shame him and--whomp!--he's all over me, and I hear him crying through the ski mask and the ski mask gets soaked from the tears and smells all woolwetdank and

it's, like, bang! it's, like, shove!

it's like, claw; it's like, maul;

it's like punch and howl

through his tears and all that laughing all around me through the haze and it's

like--God!

--if it was Perry Carrington--maybe that's why he did it. . .killed himself! And who could blame him? . . .after taking part in that.

FRANK

Let's leave BODONI COUNTY on an up-tempo note -- for the moment.

Here's "CARDBOARD CITY ROMP": As told by Tom Anderson; and by some citizens of Bodoni County--AND by the citizens of Cardboard City.

(ENSEMBLE CHEERS)

TOM ANDERSON (Todd Berkich)

(From Ensemble seat)

Wonderful! I see some of you remember me! Well--for those of you who don't--

(He walks to center)

I'm Tom Anderson, former President of the Bodoni County City Council!

ENSEMBLE

Hi, Tom Anderson!--former President of the Bodoni County City Council!

TOM ANDERSON (Todd Berkich)

And I'm here to tell ya'--It's that time of year again! And what time is that?

## ENSEMBLE

"CC" time!

TOM ANDERSON (Todd Berkich)

"CC!." Right! And what does "CC" stand for?

## ENSEMBLE

CARDBOARD CITY!

TOM ANDERSON (Todd Berkich)

**Cardboard City.** Right! --Six years ago, when I was president of the Bodoni County City Council--living the decent life, and able to pay my mortgage like most folks--just around the time that Cardboard City began to grow, become a permanent part of Bodoni County--I had the pleasure of proclaiming the first "CC" Festivities. **Now that I've lost it all and I'm a "CC" resident myself--**it's first resident, you might say--**I was just made "CC" Mayor!** . . .--Thank you, thank you for that generous applause and the cheers--Anyway, your new City Council President, Jimmy Calabrese--has designated me **the first "CC" resident--ever--to kick off the year's "CC" festivities.** So I'm proud to be standing here on the steps of my former home-away-from-home, City Hall, with all of you rarin' to follow me --**and Frankie Finney and his Homeless Band**--down to State Street, my new home. The schools are out! All government agencies and banks are closed! Most businesses have locked their doors--and you're all here! So let's get the drummer to set the marching beat! . . .TERRIFIC! Now the slide trombone. . .WOW--EE! Now the bass. . . OH YEAH! . . .Mix in a hot cornet . . .then sweet clarinet. . .MAAAARVELOUS! Now, everybody--let's march and stomp right down to Cardboard City and let us--**PARTY!!**

CARDBOARD CITY'S ALL SET FOR ITS ANNUAL ROMP;

(AT THE CORNER OF STATE STREET)

AND THIS YEAR FOR A THEME IT'S A DIXIELAND STOMP;

(EVERYBODY IS WELCOME)

FAT JOGGERS ARE JOGGIN' ON DOWN.

BEAN FARMERS ARE HOEIN' TO TOWN;

MISS TRIMBLE IS BUYIN' A GOWN

FOR A CHANCE--TO DO A TWO-STEP DANCE.

CARDBOARD CITY'S ALL SET TO RAMBLE TONIGHT.

(SEE 'EM SCRUBBIN' THE SIDEWALKS)

AND EACH SHACK WILL BE PAINTED SUNSHINE BRIGHT.

LIVE MUSIC IS GONNA BE GRAND

TOM ANDERSON

(Continued)

IT'S FRANKIE FINNEY AND HIS HOMELESS BAND!

CARDBOARD CITY IS HAVIN' ITS ANNUAL ROMP!

STOMP, STOMP, STOMP, STOMP!

STOMP, STOMP, STOMP STOMP!

STOMP, STOMP, STOMP, STOMP!

WO-O, WO-O; --OH DO DA DAY!

FORMER TEACHER, MILLY CALLAS,  
DEMANDS YOU STOMP TO HER SIDEWALK PALACE.  
GRAND OLE LAWYER, LENNY SCHMASSLE,  
INVITES YOU TO STOMP AT HIS CORNER CASTLE.

CARRY FRISBEE AND CONRAD CLOUT,

URGE YOU ALL TO STOMP ON OUT  
AND WARM YOURSELVES AT THE STEAMING GRATES,  
WITH MICKEY KATZ AND SALLY BATES. . . . .

CARDBOARD CITY'S ALL SET FOR ITS ANNUAL ROMP,  
(AND THEY'RE CLOSIN' OFF TRAFFIC)  
CARDBOARD CITY'S ALIVE WITH A DIXIELAND STOMP.  
(YOU CAN ASK ANY LAMPPOST!)

MEAN PEOPLE ARE LOSIN' THEIR FROWN.  
PALE PEOPLE ARE TANNIN' UP BROWN;  
STREET LADIES ARE SHAGGIN' AROUND  
WITH A MIND--TO DO A BUMP AND GRIND!

CARDBOARD CITY'S ALL SET TO RAMBLE TONIGHT--  
(EVEN SHINNIN' UP TRASH CANS)  
DAY-GLO PAINT ON EACH SHACK SO SUNSHINE BRIGHT.

DON'T MISS IT! IT'S GONNA BE GREAT;

TOM ANDERSON AND ENSEMBLE

(Continued)

FUN FOR YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR SISTER KATE--

START JUMPIN'! THERE'S NOTHIN' TO FEAR;  
BRING ALL THE VITTLES, WE'LL SUPPLY THE BEER--

DON'T SWEAT IT! IT'S GONNA BE FINE;  
IF THE BEER DON'T DO IT, THEN WE GOT LOTS'A WINE--  
CARDBOARD CITY--

**CARDBOARD CITY  
IS HAVIN' ITS ANNUAL ROOOOOOOOOMP!!!!!!**

FRANK

Throughout my 33 year tenure here, I also revised extant plays, wrote some new pieces and continued to have professional productions in New York and around the country.

In 1975--the year before I came here, I was on a Guggenheim Fellowship developing my musical *CONGO SQUARE* at the University of Rhode Island. J Ranelli, a New York director, had become Chair at URI Drama, and had brought in an Equity company of five actors to work with students on ten main stage productions that year, including three new musicals. My *CONGO SQUARE* played in Rep with *SCRAMBLED EGGS*, a musical by Bill Finn, who then went on to write the hit *FALSETTOS* and last year's *SPELLING BEE* on Broadway.

I wrote the original book and lyrics for *CONGO SQUARE*. Claibe Richardson wrote the music. Claibe had composed the score for the Broadway musical *THE GRASS HARP*, some years before.

Over these 33 years, Claibe and I then worked and reworked *CONGO SQUARE* and, in the 1990's, I presented a script-in-hand *CONGO SQUARE* workshop at Carnegie Mellon's summer Showcase of New Plays, directed by Daisy Prince, Hal Prince's daughter. I was then the Artistic Director of the CMU summer Showcase of New Plays.

## FRANK

(Continued)

Here's the *CONGO SQUARE* blurb: A trap door flies open, a rifle is thrown up onto the stage and Willy Beau, a young Black Man, wearing an R.O.T.C. uniform and carrying a rifle, climbs up into a dimly-lit space, where cobweb-covered Mardi Gras costumes, floats, elaborate masks and costumed mannequins have been stored for years (A designer's dream). He's pursued by the Mayor, the police, and an angry mob. In a kind of self-induced, frenzied amnesia, Willy Beau retreats into musical fantasy worlds with his mannequin friends; fantasies that involve corruption, madness, the heroism of historical or mythical black characters--and Congo Square, where the slaves would dance to release their joy! A white woman, Delphine, enters, with her own fantasies and, together, the two innocents fall in love.

Here's Willy Beau in a fantasy about a great jazz legend:

WILLY BEAU (Chasdan Mike))

Look. Listen! Man, I gotta join that funeral parade! You can follow me if you like, Ladies. Why, I just hear about a funeral parade shapin' up to progress to the graveyard, other side o' town, an' I close up my tonsorial Parlour, grab my cornet—an' play sad an' low goin' down—that's to show respect for the dead—an' play happy an' snappy comin' back—to show respect an' joy for the livin'—An' see!! —See all those kids standin' on the road with their mouths open?! That's 'cause they never heard such a sound! Right! 'Cause I'm the dude—*they* say—who created the jazz horn—yeah!—an' they are right! It's 1890 an'—

MY NAME IS BUDDY BOLDEN,  
LOOK AT ME GET DOWN.  
I'M THE BARBER THAT ALL THE GAL'S ADORE.  
I HIT THE LOW NOTES; I HIT THE SWEET NOTES.  
I HIT ALL THE NOTES IN BETWEEN.  
BUT THE NOTES I LOVE—THE NOTES I LOVE  
ARE THE NOTES THAT START OUT FROM THE FLOOR!

AN' THEY FLY! AN' THEY FLY!  
THEY HIT SAINT PETER'S GATE—THEY FLY SO HIGH.  
THEY BECOME THE LORD'S FRONT BUZZER  
AS HE LETS YOU THROUGH THE LIGHT.  
AN' THEY HANG UP THERE  
AN' THEY BECOME THE STARS IN THE NIGHT.

## WILLY BEAU

(Continued)

BUT IF BUDDY WAS SO HAPPY,  
 THEN HOW COME HE WENT MAD?  
 'CAUSE HE DID, YOU KNOW,  
 THEY SAY THAT HE WAS, OH SO SAD:

HE WAS BLOWIN' A PARADE  
 AND HIS GOLDEN CHEEKS TURNED RED,  
 AS HE BLEW SO HIGH HE FINALLY BLEW HIS HEAD!

WHY, WHY, WHY?  
 WHY BLOW SO HIGH?  
 WHY GET SO HOT  
 THAT YOUR BRAINS GOT TO FRY?

PLAY IT LOWER, BUDDY BOLDEN.  
 PLEASE DON'T GIVE THAT HORN A SCOLDIN'.  
 AND YOU'LL REACH AN AGE THAT'S GOLDEN. . .  
 BY AND BY.

## FRANK

Here's Willy Beau in drag, as the whorehouse Madam Marie Laveau in this fantasy, And here's Delphine, trying to become a Star. At first she's timid:

## DELPHINE (Taylor Ferrera)

STAR.  
 I'M A STAR.  
 I'M A STAR; IN THE STARRING SPOT.  
 WHERE I STAR OUT MY HEART PLEASING THE CROWDS.  
 OH, HOW THEY LOVE ME--  
 CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF ME;  
 AND KEEP MY HEAD UP IN THE CLOUDS.

STAR.  
 I'M A STAR.  
 LIKE THE BIG NAMES ARE--  
 AND I'M JUST AS HOT!

I'VE KICKED AND I'VE CLAWED  
 AND I'VE LEARNED HOW TO MAKE IT;

NOW THIS IS MY STAGE,

## DELPHINE

(Continued)

JUST YOU TRY AND TAKE IT--  
FROM THIS REAL-LIVE TROOPER;  
THIS GENUINE SUPER--  
STAR.

WILLY BEAU (Chasdan Mike)

NOT LONG AGO  
SHE THOUGHT WHAT PEOPLE SAID SHE WAS--  
SHE WAS.  
WHICHEVER THE WAY THE PROGRAM READ SHE WAS--  
SHE WAS.

BUT I RIPPED UP THAT PRINTOUT  
AND PROGRAMMED HER BETTER;  
GAVE HER STAR POWER--WHAT A STAR SETTER!  
HER STAR IS OUT! SHE'S GOT STAR CLOUT!  
AND EVERYBODY LISTENS BECAUSE--

SHE'S A STAR. . .  
SHE'S A STAR. . .  
SHE'S A STAR  
IN THE STARRING SPOT--

DELPHINE (Taylor Ferrera)

(Now belting it out)

WHERE I STAR OUT MY HEART PLEASING THE CROWD!  
OH, HOW THEY LOVE ME,  
CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF ME,  
AND KEEP MY HEAD UP IN THE CLOUDS!

STAR!  
I'M A STAR!  
LIKE THE BIG NAMES ARE  
AND I'M JUST AS HOT!

I KICKED AND I CLAWED  
AND I LEARNED HOW TO MAKE IT!  
NOW THIS IS MY STAGE,  
JUST YOU TRY TO TAKE IT  
FROM THIS GROOVY AND GLITZY,  
SEQUINED AND TITSY  
STAR!

## DELPHINE

(Speaks)

Willy Beau! I saw it! I saw everything you wanted me to see! For awhile, your unreal Chateau Laveau was real. I was a real star. Real! And by taking part in a dream! Up until now I've only existed in what was real. I was taught to. Expected to. "--Delphine," my daddy used to say to me, "--Delphine, Baby, the DeMaurier's are nobodies. That's the reality of things for us. And as long as you keep looking that reality in the face, no hidden boxing glove will spring out of nowhere and bash you in the eye." . . . That was life to daddy: Booby traps all over the place that he was meant to trip. . . .Well, I loved my clumsy daddy. And believed him. --Still, I questioned him: "But I have dreams, daddy! I have blinking Christmas lights in my toes and four belting calling birds in my throat--and that's reality, too!" "No, it ain't, Delphine baby. Like you say; it's dreams. And dreams ain't real." . . .I loved my daddy and believed him. So, what could I do? --Oh, I went on blinking and belting. . . .A reflex, I guess. . . .And, because I loved to, I suppose. . . .I was sort of in a twilight zone. You know? --Like I was the dreamer looking in on my dream of me blinking and belting. . . .Then, in college, I fell in love with Mr. Musical Comedy! And he laid me. And I thought that now the reality would change with his help. But as tender as he was when he laid me, that's how brutal he was when he talked in that-- "it's good for you" way; --you know, how certain people do when they're being honest with you, and deciding, somehow, that honesty won't hurt as much--or at all--as the lie. Of course, it kills you and you long for the lie. "Dell, honey," he said, "you lack an inner fantasy life; so it follows that what you project is a life without fantasy. Consequently, there is no grandeur; no arrogance. You are smaller than life. You project nothing more than what you are and what you are--must always be--is a chorus girl, blending into a chorus backdrop for the one in front who is larger than life! For the murderous one! the one who wills her fantasy life to be real: --The Star!!!" "You're a pro," I said. "Can't you give me a fantasy life?" "Hell, no, Dell. Nobody can do that. Now, Dell hon, get on your hands and knees. I want to take you doggie fashion." --I laughed at that; although I wanted to cry; but I laughed because I learned never to show how upset I was. But my body showed it anyway. It farted on him. . . .And so it has gone: blinking and belting and farting into the twilight zone. . . .But not anymore! Oh, Willy Beau, you did it! In this wonderful place you released the fantasy in me. No more--tacky!--Chateau Laveau Bar. No more waitress for me! No more doorman for you!

## FRANK

Here's Mayor Anderson confronting Willy Beau's core beliefs.

ANDERSON (Greg Holt)

Think, William. Think. If you waste time with this silly game, you and Ms Hostage here may float secure in a dream, but I'll stay anchored to the ground. So think, think. . .

YOU THINK I'M SCARED TO GO OFF ON YOUR JOURNEY;  
USING YOUR RULES, GETTING TRAPPED IN YOUR LAIR.  
BUT WHEN I GET THROUGH WITH YOU, YOU'LL DISCOVER--  
DESPAIR, DESPAIR.



ANDERSON

(Continued)

YOU THINK BECAUSE YOU CAN PINPOINT CORRUPTION;  
YOU WILL TRANSCEND IT AND FIND WHAT IS FAIR.  
YOU THINK THAT CHOOSING A HERO WILL DO IT.  
YOU'LL FIND THAT THAT HERO IS DESPAIR.

DESPAIR!  
BECAUSE GOODNESS WON'T MEAN A DAMNED THING.  
--BECAUSE EVIL IS ONE OF HIS FRIENDS.  
DESPAIR! WHEN YOU FIND OUT YOU'RE NOT BLAMELESS.  
DESPAIR!  
BECAUSE EVERYTHING ENDS.

YOU THINK THIS WOMAN WILL HELP YOU TO FIND IT.  
BECAUSE IN YOUR DREAMS YOU'RE A BEAUTIFUL PAIR.  
BUT WHEN I GET HER TO CUT OFF YOUR HAIR  
AND YOUR STRENGTH DISAPPEARS,  
ALL ALONE AND QUITE BARE,  
YOU'LL WAIL AND YOU'LL MOAN  
TO THE INDIFFERENT AIR.

THAT'S THE WAY OF THE WORLD!  
THE WAY OF THE WORLD!  
THE WAAAAY OF THE WORLD. . .  
DESPAIR.

FRANK

At one point--deciding to take an assignment with my students --to write a monologue play--I created another tour-de-force piece that took place in Bodoni County: *MY CHEKHOV LIGHT*. I first gave a reading/performance of *MY CHEKHOV LIGHT* on a double bill with Samuel Beckett's, *KRAPP'S LAST TAPE*, performed brilliantly by Professor John Whitty, in the Classroom Theatre. I continued to work on the play and gave reading/performances of *MY CHEKHOV LIGHT* overseas in Ukraine, Beijing, Germany and Amsterdam and in Theatres in New York and Universities around the country. The ETA Hoffmann Theatre in Bamberg, Germany did a full production. This is the CHEKHOV blurb:

*In a University black box theatre, a television star returns to give his alma mater a large donation for a new theatre, and confronts his former mentor—the now embittered, desperate and betrayed lighting designer, Professor Peter Paradise. The following excerpt appears in “THE BEST MEN’S MONOLOGUES For The 21st Century.” Published by Applause Books last year. In this excerpt, Professor Peter Paradise, working on his Chekhov Light extravaganza in a Studio Theatre -- similar to this one -- is talking on the head phones to his former student, who has returned to bodoni county Community College and is in the Stage Managers booth:*

PROFESSOR PETER PARADISE (Frank)

. . . Oh, yes, "the real world!" --one of the constant motifs in your letters to me over the years: "That's the way it is in the real world!"  
 "You've got to survive in 'The Real World'," you'd write.  
 As opposed, I suppose, to this "fake" university world! --Bullplops, Martin!!!  
 BUT LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE "REAL" WORLD:

You have been married  
 two times in ten years  
 in "the real world."

But I have been married  
 three times in that time;  
 so what's new?

In this town some screw without blessing of clergy;  
 others stay married, but still fool around;  
 so what is the difference between your  
 "real world" and mine?

The people you deal with,  
 you wrote, are the slime  
 in your "real world;"  
 but some of the slimiest people I know  
 own this town.

Of course they will sell out their mothers and fathers;  
 then show disgust for a world that's gone bad;  
 so what is the difference between your  
 "real world" and mine?

On the other hand  
 here there's a fine university leading the way,  
 you'll say.  
 With a road going back to the Greeks  
 and a detour through Egypt and Rome;  
 and an exit for Cultures and Races and spiritual light  
 that one certainly mustn't dismiss;

PROFESSOR PETER PARADISE (Frank)  
(Continued)

but what is the use of all that  
when those same roads lead to the abyss?

The work that you do  
is the work that you hate,  
in the "real world."

But now all the plays I direct  
are just history to me.  
In your line they won't touch a new show that's risky;  
I won't touch plays unless footnotes are there.  
So is there a difference between your  
"real world" and mine?

--Hardly.

Sunshine will shine or will never shine--  
people will whine or will never whine--  
Car wheels align or will not align--  
God will or will not reveal a sign--

Lovers will part or will intertwine--  
Sex lives are bound to go in decline--

NO!

There is no difference  
between your "real world"  
and MINE!

—What?!—"Bitter?" Moi? "—Insulting?" Wherever did you get that? —Of course I'm bitter! Of course I'm insulting! I had dreams for you, Martin; hopes for you, Martin. You were one of those rare student actors; with talent and brains! And I knew you were going to make it and you knew you were going to make it and when you made it—you said—you'd pump the "obscene TV bucks" —your phrase, not mine—back into a theatre of substance and language and startling visions; into what I used to call—and in a phrase you would love to hear —what I used to call, "the entertainment that confronts"; and you also said--No!

PROFESSOR PETER PARADISE (Frank)

(Continued)

Promised! — that you would keep your stage talent sharp, even while making your "obscene TV bucks;" and I believed you! because I needed to believe you, because I had stopped making "entertainment that confronts" and so—and, oh, how I do understand the five-and-dime psychology of it all— I needed to believe it from the person I was living through; the son, perhaps? I was depending on, perhaps? to fill out what once had been my vision? Perhaps. Because I could feel that whatever vision--not to mention "energy" I still had, was going, kept going, had gone.

But you did not keep your talent sharp, and you held onto your "obscene TV bucks"—until now! And I know why you've come back to Bodoni County, Martin Starr, neè Starovich—to your alma mater, Martin Starr, neè Starovich. You're here, Martin, to talk about giving the school a large check—a very large check, I'm told; to build a new theatre here—to tear down this space—this very space we're in—my space—my space where we've been programming my Chekhov-Kaleidoscope —tear it down to build a new space, a new theatre—to be called —what?—The Martin Starr Theatre?— Oh! Cheap shot?! You don't have that kind of an ego? Hm. We'll see. And if I'm wrong I'll apologize. But understand! I don't want you to give your obscene bucks to this institution! So that my space can be torn down--and I intend to stop you!!!

IRENE PALAZZO (Becky Purcell)

(From her seat with the Ensemble)

**Vernon. We had danced when we first met; and had Siamesed our cheeks. Remember?—ANYWAY! . . .**

FRANK

I decided to write a companion piece to *MY CHEKHOV LIGHT*. For an actress. *THE FAREWELL CONCERT OF IRENE AND VERNON PALAZZO* was the result. Here's the blurb:

*On a snowy night in Bodoni County, the songwriting team of Music Professor Vernon Palazzo and his lyricist faculty wife Irene attempt to finish their new and final song — and wait for their long-lost daughter Billie to return. Vernon has had a throat operation and can't talk. He plays the piano. Here's an excerpt from Irene's monologue.*

(Becky Purcell walks to center)

IRENE PALAZZO (Becky Purcell)

**Vernon. We had danced when we first met; and had Siamesed our cheeks. Remember?— ANYWAY!—** *What* “quality of our life” has changed? Now? —The bitterness? The regrets?—the pain? — **They** have been our quality of life for ages now! So what's changed? An operation! —A different kind of pain. So what? **IT'S NOT THE END! THEY CAUGHT IT ALL!** —Listen, Vernon— I must tell you—in the hospital— pacing in the waiting room— bivouacking at the coffee machine, all during the operation —dying for a glass of wine—but fighting against it—penance, penance, until you got through it—Yes! I'd get through it all without the wine—penance, penance—without any fortification.—And the torment—your torment, I told myself, was what was excruciating —was what was making me, in veritas, want the vino; . . .but that is **not** what was eating at me—what was at war in me—because, yes!—there *was* something warring inside me, fighting to burst through the pain of the thought I thought was of losing you; **and then** it did burst through and I knew I knew— . . . that part of me **WANTED YOU TO DIE —YES! HOPED YOU WOULD DIE!—UNENCUMBERED! I'D BE UNENCUMBERED THEN—AT LAST! FREE AT LAST. FREE AT LAST. GOOD GOD ALMIGHTY, I'D BE FREE AT LAST! . . .**Free from what? **TO DO—WHAT?**—I'd been free from you before —when you'd go away—to your conventions—to your, whatever—and there was always that first rush—freedom! **FREEDOM!** when at last, at least for a time, I could do— anything, anything.—And you know what I'd do—would *finally* do—would *actually* do?

**—THE SAME THINGS I'D ALWAYS DONE. —The housewife things—along with the bitter reminiscences. Couldn't write a lyric either. Not one. Without you here, noodling away—without you here suggesting the melodies—I couldn't even come up with a title. Not one!**

. . .—And then there was the tearing guilt about my baby, Billie. —and I couldn't sleep because I wanted you—needed you—the heat of you—the smell of you—the sharp stabs of your toenails, and, when you turned, the bruising bangs of your sharp shin. And so if you died, I'd be unencumbered, all right. Forever, all right, that's true. **BUT still I'd be doing the same old things —and drinking myself into my kind of oblivion —. . .**alone. So I prayed for you to make it then. **And you did! And I vowed—it would all change when you got home FROM THE HOSPITAL! I'd work for it to change. . .**and then the good ol' BCI fired you —**US!**—and then I heard that Billie was coming home—**might** come home —and I fell apart and **--NO! YOU WILL NOT GO AHEAD OF ME! LEAVE ME AN UNENCUMBERED LUSH!—AND I WILL NOT LET BILLIE THROUGH THE DOOR! WITH THAT SUICIDE MACHINE!**

FRANK

Here is the song Irene and Vernon Palazzo work on and complete in the course of the play. “IT'S ALRIGHT.” I wrote the lyric; the jazz pianist Bill Young wrote the music.

IRENE PALAZZO (Becky Purcell)

“IT HASN'T BEEN ALL HARMONY,  
THE YEARS WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER;  
OFTEN, 'SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET'  
MIGHT CHANGE TO 'STORMY WEATHER.' ”

“ALL OF THAT GAVE CONTRAST  
TO THE SONGS WE HAD TO MAKE;  
NOW THE MOTIFS HAVE TURNED SOMBER—  
AND THIS ARRANGEMENT IS TOO DISSONANT TO TAKE.

“WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE?  
YOUR RHYTHM IS IN MY BONES.  
CAN THE MUSIC YOU STILL BRING US  
TRANSCOPE OUR SOUR NOTES  
TO SWEETER, GENTLER TONES?

“PERHAPS. . .PERHAPS. . .  
AH, YES, PERHAPS. . .

AS LONG AS YOUR SWEET MUSIC  
NEEDS MY MOURNFUL WORDS,  
IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S ALL RIGHT.  
“IF MY WORDS BRING SAD SAD THOUGHTS  
AND YES, SOME ANGUISH, TOO,  
IT'S ALL RIGHT, IT'S ALL RIGHT.

“YOUR SIMPLE SHIFT TO A MAJOR KEY,  
CAN MAKE ME GRIN. . .CAN MAKE US LAUGH.

“AS LONG AS THERE'S YOUR MELODY TO MELLOW ME;  
IT'S ALL RIGHT, IT'S ALL RIGHT.  
AS LONG AS YOU'RE THE SOMEONE  
TO HEAR MY SAD SAD SONG,  
IT'S ALL RIGHT, IT'S ALL RIGHT. . .

“THE WORLD WILL GET  
OUR BRIGHT DUET  
TO COUNTERPOINT THE NIGHT. . .

IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S ALL RIGHT! . . .

## FRANK

I wrote our last piece, THE TOTAL IMMERSION OF MADELEINE FAVORINI, during my 33 year tenure here. It was immediately picked up by the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV). I directed the first production there, with a cast of three Equity actors. Over the years here I reworked the piece many times, have had some great professional readings of it in many venues. It still awaits it's first major production. This piece has always been one of my personal favorites. Perhaps because, in it, I examine my Italian-American roots or, perhaps perversely, that so many people don't know what to make of it. I do. It's a surreal 3-performer play in which thirty-two year old Madeleine Favorini journeys from dutifulness to rebellion on a gynecological examining table that takes wing.

THE TOTAL IMMERSION OF MADELEINE FAVORINI won the International Ernest Hemingway Writing competition in 1999.

When the play begins Madeleine Favorini, in her slip, has been waiting for her doctor, her feet in the stirrups of a gynecological examining table -- for two weeks! Madeleine is a dutiful woman who, all her life, has denied any rebelliousness in her nature. Today, her exhausted body rebels and the gynecological table -- the play's only prop -- becomes a kind of magic carpet that takes Madeleine through a series of encounters; with her Italian-American family, her philandering former husband -- and out into the realm of Mediterranean mythology, where the goddess Amalia's songs seem to precede painful events, and where Madeleine is kidnapped by a masked Sicilian bandit, El Bandido Grandido (he of the legendary schlong) -- actually a God -- whose mask has been soldered onto his face and, like an earth-bound Flying Dutchman, is doomed to roam the earth until a specific woman--with the initials M.F.-- can give him his "full-out rest." Madeleine Favorini is that woman. Here's Madeleine, close to the end of her odyssey, trying to comfort El Bandido Grandido, right after his companion, La Bandida, has been plunged into the Ravine of Boiling Ooze:

MADELEINE FAVORINI (Audrey Ahern)

O, don't cry. Please don't cry, my Deedo.

(Radiant discovery; great delight)

There. "Deedo." I've found my own name for you. Deedo.

EL BANDIDIO grandido (Greg Jernagan)

La Bandida—gone. So horribly. Mother. Mistress. Friend. Gone.

MADELEINE FAVORINI (Audrey Ahern)

My Deedo. I was your protector when I shot Baron Rathjib. I'll be your mother. I'll be your friend. I'll be your new La Bandida. And I, too, will wipe away the tears from your mask.

EL BANDIDIO

For always?

MADELEINE

For always.

EL BANDIDO

Or only until you get the chance to get to Sicily?

MADELEINE

No, no, not without you. We'll go there together.

EL BANDIDO

O "MF:" Keep whatever Sicily means to you a dream, a distant longing. Keep the Sicilian lemon blossoms in the nostrils of your imagination; not in the teeth of Sicily's real jaw. Because that jaw will chomp on you.

MADELEINE

No. It is my place of roots and ruts and riverdicis, is Sicily.

EL BANDIDO

It is a place that requires rebels and therefore is corrupt; as all places require rebels and as all places are corrupt. I have been there -- to Sicily—have triggered a rebellion there, but many more rebellions are required.

MADELEINE

If rebellion is what my Sicily needs, let me help you rebel there; as I have helped you fight and kill Baron Rathjib; as I have helped you stop your tears; here, in my comfort, in this wonderful "Dungeon of Dazzle."

EL BANDIDO

Comfort, yes, but only a respite; never full-out rest. And full-out rest is what I must have and what only you can give me; only you, MF, can help me to die.

MADELEINE

"Die!?" Is that what your talking about? Dying?

EL BANDIDO

Of course! Dying! "Full-out rest" is just a bullshit phrase to cut the edge. Dying. Dying! . . . Gods I'm so tired.

MADELEINE

But I thought. . . I don't know. I didn't think, I guess.

EL BANDIDO

That's probably because of what you've probably got. It gets in the way of your thinking.



MADELEINE

No, it's because I love you.

(Pause)

There. Like I've given you a name, my Deedo, I've now given us a phrase; a phrase I've never used before, because it had no meaning. And it comes, this phrase, out of your wanting to die and my not wanting to face it. . . .That must be what love is; marrow-deep love, anyway: Not wanting to face your loved-one dying.

EL BANDIDO

(Gently)

Then love must also be its opposite; the need to face that death. For, finally, one of the two will die and one of the two will remain to look on. So facing the unfaceable is also love.

MADELEINE

But you! You can live forever!

EL BANDIDO

But I can't bear to anymore! Help me, "MF!"

MADELEINE

No! No! Anyway—I don't know how to give you what you want!

**FRANK**

**But Madeleine *DOES* find out how to give him his “full-out rest.” By ripping the soldered mask off Deedo’s face. But she refuses to do it:**

MADELEINE

--Listen, Deedo: Before--a journey ago--I felt all sewn up. But becoming all those others has-- . . .yes!--it has cut the thread; opened me up! Totally. Has made me feel one long tunnel; from my pasta pit up to my mouth! Now--*if I want*--I can mount . . .telephone poles. Skyscrapers. Giant Sequoias. Capitol domes. The entire Italian Alps! YES! I recline and my openness is as powerful as a million Hoovers. And a humongous procession can be sucked in. Truck fleets. Giant discarded D.C. 10s. A thousand teenage boys on skateboards. The Boston Marathon. Hundreds of illegal aliens streaming into me, the juice of me. And I suck it all in, yes. . . .yes. . . .Yes! **YES! I, Madeleine Favorini, am now the Vacuum Vagina of the World!** I suck in all the world's debris, redundancies, fads and pain. And when I've anointed them all with my life's fluid, and my belly skin is stretched to transparent— **THEN** I push them all out in one great Lamaze effort; flush them out of me in one cleansing tidal wave. And because they've all been part of me, I can be part of them. But you. . . .Deedo. . . .**you** I'll keep forever--warm behind some secret fold in me, until. . . .until I die. But you won't. Because my death contraction will push you out for you to journey on and on and on.

## FRANK

*But Madeleine **does** give in to Deedo's needs -- releases his tormented spirit. And Madeleine--who has always feared pain and infinity-- finds that she's now--*

## MADELEINE

Alone. . . .But can I be alone? When I can immerse myself in—anyone? — anyplace? . . .Anything. --What's that?! . . .Why, it's bits and pieces of all the words from all the people I've immersed myself in, on my journey! . . .Listen! Now it becomes a chant, a kind of song. And listen to how it rises; seems to want to lift off, rise into another place! And I, I seem to want to rise with them—the words! be one with the words; fly with the words through the fluorocarbons and ozone hole and **not** barf at eternity! . . .Yes! Up! *Up!*

(ENSEMBLE makes ascending sounds)

And now I'm up and I'm moving along; part of a jet stream of words! Millions of words; used words; spent words--**but** still with the power to move! --Of course! Words don't die. Once they're said they start to move out, and I'm told they move out forever! . . .Oh, Deedo, Deedo, somewhere in this stream are the words we spoke when I gave you your name. Maybe I'll catch up with them! speak them again as we move toward-- . . .where?

—Oh! There! There!  
The black edge of time!  
No! No! I still can't face that!  
Deedo, Deedo, I've got to stop!  
I'll become. . . I'll become. . .

—a new constellation! Yes! Constellation "Mouth!"

No! Constellation "**Dragon Mouth!**"

And I station my mouth, my dragon's mouth, at the rim of it all, where nothing but blackness spreads out; stick out in the void my dragon's tongue—made up of the stuff of a billion stars—**and I light up the dark for Madeleine Favorini. . . and for all of those moving words!**

(The whispering wind of words  
crescendos; then suddenly cuts out)

The words move out. And I remain.

(Pause)

Silent.

(Pause)

Too silent?

(Pause)

And is this what infinity looks like? feels like?

Endless. Bottomless. Topless.

(Pause)

Silent.

MADELEINE

(Continued.)

(Pause)

Frightening?

(Pause)

. . .Listen.

(Slowly, she smiles)

(We hear the Voice of Amalia)

The voice of Amalia.

(She listens for a long while.)

MADELEINE

(Continued.)

That means there's pain.

(She smiles)

It's all right then. Yes.

GREG

(Sings)

EVERYTHING ENDS.  
I SEE THAT NOW.  
EVEN THE SUN, THEY SAY,  
WILL BURN OUT,  
JUST GIVE IT TIME.

EVERYTHING ENDS.  
I SEE THE LIE.  
I SEE THAT WATER LILIES DAZZLE,  
THEN LOSE THEIR BOUQUET  
THEN WILT AND THEN DRY.

EVERYTHING GLOWS, EVERYTHING FADES.  
EVERYTHING FLOATS THEN DOWN IT CASCADES.  
EVERYTHING LOVES. EVERYTHING HATES.  
EVERYTHING MOVES THEN EVERYTHING WAITS.

GREG

(Continued)

I TELL YOU--

EVERYONE STARTS!  
 AND FIGHTS LIKE HELL FOR THE TOP!  
 NEVER CONTENT THAT HE'S GOT TO WELCOME  
 WHAT FORTUNE SENDS!

EVERYTHING GRABS AT LIFE!!!

THEN EVERYTHING ENDS.

FRANK

**That was the only goodbye song I ever wrote. From CONGO SQUARE.  
 I'll close with three of my favorite goodbye lyrics from the Great American  
 Songbook. These are goodby songs that, for me, say it all. This first one has  
 music by Leonard Bernstein and words by Comden and Green:**

***"Where has the time all gone to?***

*Haven't done half the things we want to.  
 Oh well. . .we'll catch up some other time.  
 This day was just a token;  
 Too many words are still unspoken.  
 Oh well. . .we'll catch up some other time.*

*"Just as the fun is starting,  
 comes the time for parting.  
 So let's be glad of what we had  
 and what's to come.*

*"There's so much more embracing  
 still to be done, but time is racing. . .  
 Oh well. . .we'll catch up some other time."*

***And this has Words by Sam M. Lewis and Music by J. Fred Coots***

**FRANK****(Continued)**

*“For all we know we may never meet again  
 Before you go make this moment sweet again  
 We won't say "good night" until the last minute  
 I'll hold out my hand and my heart will be in it*

*“For all we know this may only be a dream  
 We come and go like a ripple on a stream  
 So love me tonight; tomorrow was made for some  
 Tomorrow may never come for all we know”*

**And this final one is by my favorite lyricist, Johnny Mercer. The music is by Tony Scibetta.**

*“How do you say “auf wiedersehen”  
 To things you'll never see again?  
 The Wilhelmstrasse in the rain;*

*“The day we ran to catch the train  
 That puffed along the river Seine. . .  
 Remember Paris.*

*“And best of all the Pyrenees;  
 Who could forget such memories.  
 That crazy trip, how typical of us,  
 To miss the bus -- the plane too. . .  
 How do you say auf wiedersehen to these?*

*“The wild times, the small things  
 That popular waltz of the day  
 It ended as all things  
 But when does the music go away?*

FRANK

(Continued)

*“Say au revoir but not goodbye  
I’ve said it till I want to cry  
Perhaps the French could tell us what to do  
I wish I knew, ah Liebchen.  
How do I say auf wiedersehen to you?”*

***One certainly can’t deny that “Everything Ends” -- as the lyric from CONGO SQAURE states. But, there are beginnings, too.***

***So.***

***Here’s to a new beginning. Here’s to all of the wonderful artists who helped make this endgame happen. Here’s to all of my colleagues-- who have been supportive companions throughout this intense ride -- and whose major focus has always been on the welfare of our wonderful students. Here’s to the wonderful students, who have kept me young and always learning.***

***Thank you all for coming. Good luck. And goodbye.***

***(MUSIC; EVERYTHING ENDS)***

**EXCERPTS  
FROM OTHER PLAYS OF MINE  
THAT I WANTED TO USE,  
BUT COULDN'T USE BECAUSE OF TIME  
CONSTRAINTS**

- 1) *IN THE VOODOO PARLOUR OF MARIE LAVEAU***
- 2) *THE PRINCE OF PEASANTMANIA***
- 3) *DANCING WITH JOY***

(full play scripts available for download in *the plays* link,  
and many of the musical excerpts can be found  
in the *audio for musicals* link on my Web site,  
[www.gaglianoriff.com](http://www.gaglianoriff.com))

## FRANK

It is 1900 on the eve of Mardi Gras in New Orleans and, in my play --IN THE VOODOO PARLOUR OF MARIE LAVEAU -- which I call, "An Unsung Voodoo Chamber Opera" -- the powerful, legendary, voodoo priestess Marie Laveau has found some GRIS-GRIS in her voodoo parlour, which means that Marie is cursed and doomed unless she appeases the voodoo gods. Tonight, a former powerful music critic and a desperate opera diva are coming to her for help. Here's Marie's opening speech:

## MARIE LAVEAU

For tonight Marie Laveau will save herself — will rise above her mere "theatrics" — will choose the perfect classic "form" for this violent show she needs to show — for you cruel voodoo gods — so that you'll know I'm one of you. . . .But what form? what? . . . Recall the two desperate people coming here; and the content of their confrontation, Marie Laveau. That will give you the form.

(Pause)

Ahhh, yes. . . .Yes! YES!! An opera! Of course. The "form" of my masterpiece shall be **an opera**; you voodoo gods will soon see why!

(She takes various ornaments from the pole  
and places them on her cloak, hands and arms)

And now I'm ready; ready for my opening — **aria**."

**(AN ANNOUNCEMENT)****ARIA: "A TIME FOR PUNISHMENT"**

*(Drums in and under)*

A time for punishment comes to us all.  
It even came to Christ, the Savior.

But I believe it came to him  
--not because of his behavior--  
(which had been scripted, as you'll recall,  
to save us all from a hellish fall)-- No!

I believe that Christ was nailed  
because the third of him that wrote that script had failed  
to understand  
(as you and I do at a glance)  
that his judgment was a kind of fantasy romance.

Someone's was.



## MARIE LAVEAU

(continued)

For how do you save a land erupting  
 from the carryings on of those who are corrupting?  
 I mean -- of evil unfurled:  
 Corruption being the way of the world.  
 Well, I'll give you the answer free:  
 Instead of *His* being punished,  
*He* should have punished thee and me.

Yes, Christ, above all, in his celestial den,  
 should have known that since corruption is man's regimen,  
 all you can do then,  
 is do the corrupting thing:

GET EVEN!

Yes, "getting even" is what it's all about.  
 That's why the great opera composers had such clout.  
 They knew  
 -- from the gypsy world of "Trovatore;"  
 to Norma, the Druid at Stonehenge  
 —that the only way to beat the corrupted,  
 was to *be* corrupted as well, and get revenge!

(She plucks an elaborate purple head mask  
 from the pole and places the mask over her head.  
 Drums faster. Louder)

**So stage your opera, Marie Laveau!**

"Get even" in it, Marie Laveau.  
 And when your victims, Marie Laveau,  
 begin to snivel and rant and crow;  
 you'll steel your heart, so the Loas will know  
 that your bone-deep cruelty has started to show.

Then my power divine, from above and below,  
 will spark the kettle to blaze and glow;  
 and the gris-gris curse, I'll overthrow,  
 in this year of nineteen 0 and 0 —

IN THE VOODOO PARLOUR OF MARIE LAVEAU!

FRANK

Here are two of the spoken “arias.”

LAVEAU

**Grand aria: “Once the rage was over, I fell into the void of deep despair.”**

CRITIC

Once the rage was over, I fell into the void of deep despair. It was gone. Finished. I was fired from a job I had held for fifteen years, and no one seemed to care. I was forty years old, and fifteen of those forty years, a way of life I depended on, were gone. And what a life! With Angelica on my arm I walked into Antoine’s, and all heads would turn. A fish dish was named after me. That impressed her. I was asked to be Rex in one Mardi Gras parade. Oh, she glowed in that. Artists, they say, would tremble when they turned the pages to see my review of their work. Critics on other papers only lived to get my job. The bastards! And once, when I was held up in traffic, in a rainfall so heavy, you could hardly see, they held the curtain for me. For *me*! Talk about the power of the arts! The opera was Don Giovanni, and that night my power was greater than Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s!

(Pause)

Gone. . .all gone. . .and also the music. . .gone. And that’s the most terrible thing of all. I love great music; understand it; studied all the theories of all the past great minds and saw how great music was shaped — *must* be shaped.

(Pause)

And of the very great I was awed. And I learned to hate what was flawed; to attack what was flawed; to run off the concert stage those who were flawed!

(Pause)

Gone. All gone. Because I was shamed; I felt such shame; could never set foot in a concert hall or opera house again.

(Remembers: It just drops in))

Only once — after I was fired—I did go, yes. And the isolation was intolerable in the midst of that fashionable crowd.

(Pause)

Pain like that shouldn’t be allowed.

(Pause)

I was cut off, alone, miserable. . . .And there were times I wished I could create; take that time of isolation, to find a new start. Order chaos, and make a work of art. I always felt, you see, that, since I couldn’t make music—and it was in the literary tradition that I seemed to belong—that I, at least, could write some verses—verses to be set to song. *But* no matter how I tried, in my despairing way, I couldn’t write those lyrical words; because I soon discovered that I have little . . . or nothing at all. . .to say. . . .So I’d sit all day in my dark study and think about what I had had, and what I had lost. And I was powerless; totally, completely powerless.

(Pause)

And slowly, Angelica . . . Angelica of the coal-black eyes and hair . . . Angelica, of the eggnog-tinted skin . . . slowly, slowly Angelica — daughter of my insane wife — the wife I had to put away . . . Angelica; always proud to drape onto the critic's arm — her stepfather's arm — the powerful arm, the respected arm that parted the sea of awed audience and artists; Angelica, the only one I truly loved, the only human being I'd make myself a mat for her to walk on . . . first backed off, Angelica did. . . then away. . . then out for good. I can't recall the moment when she left; but I recall the moment when I discovered she had left. Because I cried. The only time I ever cried.

(Pause)

But not for long. Because soon the hate began — against *all* artists— against the man who fired me, and the man who took my place. I ate with hate, slept with hate, I walked the streets all night with hate. And everything I did, every move I made, everything I drank or ate turned sour. Night after night. . . day after day. . . hour after hour after hour

(diminuendo)

. . . after hour after hour.

(Pause)

Oh, Marie Laveau . . . please. . . please. . . please, I need Angelica. . . so, please get me back my power.

(Pause. )

#### MARIE LAVEAU

End of the critic's grand aria. Here is the soprano's grand aria.

#### SOPRANO

Since everything I learned about life was through the opera world, and the concert hall, I'll begin my grand aria with -- "*In 'Traviata' I recall.*"

(MUSIC from Verdi's, "*La Traviata*"  
in and held under)

#### SOPRANO

In *Traviata*, I recall, the courtesan Violetta entertains in a room as large as our New Orleans opera stage, where she leads a dissolute life. She has tuberculosis and, on occasion, she coughs on pitch. And when she dies, she expires to the most beautiful tune ever written.

(Music out.  
Marie Laveau hums)

I got to know a whore, from the Basin Street bagnio of Miss Lulu White, who used to cough up blood and put on airs. She entertained the bagnio members in a closet-sized room with no air. She was famous for her "cough" jobs — guaranteeing her customers at least one coughing fit during what I believe they call an act of oral contact. She died

## SOPRANO

(Continued)

when she once spit blood on a member's member and he, in a rage, strangled her to death.

(Shift)

In "Fidelio," I recall, the revolutionary Florestan is chained to a papier machè wall in a dungeon where the evil Pizzaro has put him. He sings of his despair and hunger and weakness with great tenor power while Florestan's lover, Leonora, dressed as a man, has fooled everyone with her disguise and, confronting Pizzaro with a pistol, saves her man.

(Shift)

I heard about a Negress whose black lover plotted a slave insurrection. Another slave sold him out; and the dungeon he was placed in smelled of human urine; and the wall that *he* was hurled against and shackled to, was

jagged, sharp—like stalactites on their sides. His lover also went to save him with a gun; *not* disguised as a man, but staying every inch a woman. And when she was overpowered, she was raped by the guards, white prisoners, and two judges on a tour. *No!* — just one of the judges. The other one — my husband's great grandfather — just stood by as the Negress was repeatedly raped, in front of her shackled lover, to whose bloody belly a hungry rat had been strapped to gnaw into the black man's guts. I'm told the screams the black man made had no discernable pitch.

(Pause)

I sometimes think a rat in me keeps eating all my eggs as they are made. And why should I care? There's a very good chance, in the way of the world, that any son I have will also be shackled to a wall by some fart-mouthed judge. And my fragile world would shatter. Because I'm no Salome, who could look on her son's guts, served up on a porcelain platter. Not yet. And yet I die if I don't have a child — if not pregnant by tomorrow . . . And I don't want to die. . . . There's the thing; *I* don't want to die. . . . What I really want . . . what I wanted all along . . . yes . . . yes! . . . *YES!* What I wanted all along was to keep on living in that opera world of painless pain; where I always knew that once it fell, the curtain would rise again, and I'd get off my death divan and take my bows; pounded by waves of applause, for making death seem so wistful and enchanting. Oh, to be washed and drowned in those tidal waves again. . . . If only I had stuck it out! Too late! Because now I'm stuck in *life*, where whores are strangled and black men tossed against the rocks, and there's real blood, and where this "has-been" soprano is no Leonora, and my husband, the judge, no Pizarro getting caught. *No!* My Pizarro would get away with the murder of me—the murder he wants to try. And *I*, I don't want to die. So it all comes back to that. I'm afraid. Because I don't want to die.

## MARIE LAVEAU

Then you'll help this desperate man? you'll try? Even if your body is racked and bent?

if— SOPRANO

Yes? MARIE LAVEAU

*If he makes me preg nant!* SOPRANO

End of aria. MARIE LAVEAU

FRANK

Here's a brief speech from my Adult Fairytale Extravaganza, THE PRINCE OF PEASANTMANIA:

*INNOCENT (Frank Gagliano)*

*What is there in them that makes them mean and ugly and vicious? —Makes them, in their agony, need to punish each other? Yes: EACH OTHER! The answer's there — there in that daisy chain of pain! Each one the torturer! Each one the victim! Chasing each other with electric prods around the rim of — what . . . —the Cardinal's abyss! How can that be? When it's only for the amusement of the Mainland? —Oh, God; there's the horror! Performing that dance of pain for their sick laughter! —I'm babbling, Glorabella! But the answer is simply . . . I must stay. Because, finally — and I'll never understand this — . . .the ones who chased me, beat me, betrayed me . . . I love them all."*

FRANK

(Continued)

Here's the blurb to THE PRINCE OF PEASANTMANIA: Prince Innocent is summoned to Peasantmania to attend his mother's funeral and, he thinks, to meet, finally, a younger brother he's never met—Rudolph.

His mother had kept Innocent away from the politics of Peasantmania, isolated on the Island of Arcadia, to shield him from corruption. Innocent's first indication that all is not well in Peasantmania is when a woman sneaks into his rooms and paints his throat with her tongue. Then Innocent discovers that his brother Rudolph is some kind of a perverted tyrant who wants the throne. Then there's the laughter that comes from the heavens and quickly goes. And here's the creaking and sudden shift of the ground that keeps you tilted for a few seconds, before the earth rights it's self again.

Then —the Insurrection! And Innocent takes flight through his kingdom, with Rudolf and the Rudolph forces in pursuit. Accompanying, or also pursuing Innocent, are: Glorabella, Innocent's sweet companion from Arcadia—and the wise-mouth, beautiful Sauna, who falls in love with Innocent —and Sauna's ambitious deadly sister Magda — and the despairing Jester, who desires Glorabella —and Pina, the warn-out Seer —and The alcoholic Cardinal, suffering from doubt and existential fatigue —and at times, it seems, the entire populace of Peasantmania are against Prince Innocent and hot on his heels.

Hovering over the chase is a huge eye, hanging above stage "like God's surrealistic yo-yo." —Then, too, there's the unseen Mainland, that seems to control everything — as

FRANK

(Continued)

well as that celestial laughter, constantly mocking the goings on.

Beginning in a Royal palace and fleeing to what he thinks will be the sanctuary of the cellars of the dissolute Cardinal's Cathedral, Innocent escapes to the Jester's quarters, replete with funhouse mirrors, balloons and a giant trampoline, on which Innocent finally makes love to Sauna.

The journey ends in the sewers of Peasantmania, where Innocent confronts his evil brother, Rudolph, in a fight to the finish.

**Told in song, rhyme, hip language, and raunchy and imaginative humor, this wild comedy/drama/extravaganza—first presented at The Milwaukee Repertory Theatre during the Vietnam War—has been rewritten, and resonates more than ever, in this turbulent America, losing its innocence on a global scale.**

Here are some excerpts from The Prince of Peasantmania

(the LAUGHTER is heard  
and the EYE appears)

INNOCENT

Sauna! There's that goddamned laughter again! And that eye! Give me something sharp! Anything --!

SAUNA

Why?

INNOCENT

I want to stab it! Maybe it will stop the laughter. Let go my arm. LET GO!

SAUNA

Forget them! They've always been here! Like the polluted air we breathe!

(INNOCENT breaks loose. runs up  
the ramp. EYE and LAUGHTER out.)

I thought you could take the moment!

INNOCENT

What moment?!

SAUNA

This moment! Here! In the Jester's flat! Can't you relax?! You're safe!

INNOCENT

With that creepy eye and goddamned laughter following me all over the place?!

(CHIMES)

ANNOUNCER

Today's 11:30 P.M. war count of human beings destroyed. Enemy human beings destroyed: 21. Peasantmanian human beings destroyed: 7. Mainland human beings temporarily disabled: 3.

(CHIMES)

INNOCENT

And I suppose that's just been part of the polluted air.

SAUNA

That's right.

INNOCENT

And you don't think about that either. The war.

SAUNA

That's right.

INNOCENT

What kind of people are you that I'm supposed to lead?! Our men are being killed somewhere out there and no one bats an eye! Oh, you'd bat an eye all right if someone close to you was off an dying!



SAUNA

I just remembered. Someone close to me did die in the war. My brother.

INNOCENT

Your brother? And just remembered?

SAUNA

It was a long time ago. Suddenly he was gone. My father was alive then. He went to your mother for help.

INNOCENT

DID SHE HELP?!

SAUNA

How could she? She was only the Queen.

INNOCENT

ONLY the Queen!? You mean she had no power over the Mainland? JUST WHAT IS GOING ON?!

SAUNA

You saw what's going on out there! They're chasing you and they'll catch you if you ever step out! forget about ever getting off Peasantmania. I have. Stay here in this room and I will bring you food and do your laundry and play with you. C'mon! Let us look at ourselves in the crazy mirror. Jester calls it, "The mirror of exorcism." There. It shows us what we really are. All distorted. See? Bloated. See? Or stretched. See? Or squinched. See? It's funny. We're funny. and when we laugh at ourselves, we feel better.

(SINGS)

THIS IS MY FUN HIDEAWAY HERE.  
MY ARCADIA, TOO --

C'MON PRINCE --

INNOCENT

No! This is not your Arcadia!

(Picks up mallet and  
begins pounding mirror)

It's a phony -- rotten -- idiotic -- crazy --

SAUNA

Don't --DON'T SMASH IT!

INNOCENT

Why won't it break?!

(Throws mallet down and  
rips mirror off)

SAUNA

INNOCENT PUT IT BACK! THERE ARE RATS! THEY'LL COME IN HERE.

(THEY both manage to put  
the mirror back. THEY hold the position.

RATS -- OUT)

PINA, THE SEER

(Above)

You see, Sauna: It's all being eaten away.  
Everything he's seen today.

Even this fun hideaway spot;  
Forget it; the whole thing underneath is rot.

So now, Sauna, what do you do?  
You tried to hold on to an illusion.  
And now there's nothing but confusion.

My advice: shuffle your feet,  
and come out tapping with a brand new beat.

SAUNA

(WITH GREAT JOY)

Innocent! Let's take poison!

INNOCENT

What?!

SAUNA

And then; let us make love!

INNOCENT

Sauna, please --

SAUNA

No! Visualize it. We'll set up all the spotlights. Well make them all -- magenta, maybe. And we'll aim them down on the trampoline. And there we'll be. Naked. entwined. Like twisted dough in a magenta oven. And they will come upon us and they will see -- beautiful bodies; relaxed, finally. But -- with smiles on our faces -- No! Not smiles! Sort of, "Up yours" smirks.

INNOCENT

Peasantmania's Heloise and Abelard. And where they bury us, there magenta roses will grow. And the legend on our tombstones will read: "UP yours. They died. . ." relaxed?

(HE grabs SAUNA by the throat  
and pushes her back)

Doing "it?" The great "it?" No thanks, Sauna! I already had "it," from your sandpaper sister! The poison? It wont be some slow-to-sleep sedative that starts to work just after our climax and gently soothes us to our final rest! No! It'll be the kind that burns out our magenta love nest! Entwined!? They'll find us entwined, all right! From clawing at each other to stop the pain! And you know who'll find us first?! The rats!? They'll chew on all that twisted dough! They'll bite out our noses, our mouths, our eyes!

SAUNA

Innocent, please --

(SOUND; RATS OUT)

INNOCENT

(Embracing her now)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Sauna, But death hurts and this place is not Arcadia and all we can do is run and everywhere we run few people will want to make music and why did she protect me from all this? And I WANT NO MORE BULL SHIT!

(Suddenly HE stops.  
Then HE grabs her, claws her,  
kisses her all over.

Lights out below. Lights up above  
JESTER and GLORABELLA)

GLORABELLA

C'mon. —

JESTER

Wait a minute, Glorabella.

GLORABELLA

But we've got to catch up with Inny.

JESTER

Can't you forget him?

GLORABELLA

Why should I?

JESTER

for one thing, he may have forgotten you.

GLORABELLA

Never! Inny's my friend. He'd never--

JESTER

--And I need you!

GLORABELLA

Please don't start that again.

JESTER

I don't mean for ripky-pipky only.

GLORABELLA

Then what do you need me for, if not for ripky-pipiky?

JESTER

I need you to be with me when I disappear.

GLORABELLA

Where are you going?

JESTER

I don't know. But pretty soon there'll be no need of me. Pina will take over. No surprise. I always knew it would happen. I've been hoping for it to happen. I'm tired, Glorabella. Tired of all the tricks. This is what I mean. Years ago, I developed this beautiful magic act. It happened by accident. I was doing the old bit of striking a match

(HE does so)

which, when I asked a woman to blow it out,

(Indicates for GLORABELLA to blow it out. SHE does so.

The match becomes a rose)

The same woman reacted so beautifully that I took her scarf

(HE takes GLORABELLA's scarf)

and turned it into a cane.

(HE does so)

By this time she was completely confused and the audience loved it. So I press in on her by producing a lollipop from behind her ear.

(HE does so)

And from her blouse.

(HE does so. GLORABELLA screams!)

She became hysterical. Turned and bent away from me.

(GLORABELLA does so)

The audience was besides itself. It would have loved me forever if I had produced a lollipop, as it passed my mind to do, from between her two half pumpernickel loaves.

(Indicating GLORABELLA's buttocks)

JESTER

(Continued)

But something came over me. I gently turned her around.

(HE gently turns GLORABELLA to him)

And, with just my swaying hand in front of her face, I mesmerized her. Through art, I meant to exorcise some fear in her. She began to talk.

GLORABELLA

(Mesmerized)

Inny and I played together over the years. We played doctor many times. The last time we played doctor -- during the examination period -- I got a case of what Inny used to call, "the cutes;" and I grabbed his stethoscope. The stethoscope was actually a large bottle top from a large bottle of prune juice that was cold to the touch when it touched the tip of my ripening tomatoes. Inny grabbed for the bottle top stethoscope. But even when I got over "the cutes," and tried to offer the stethoscope to him, he kept grabbing at me, at my tender tomatoes, and behind me, kneading on my two half-loaves of pumpnickel. I told him to stop, but he wouldn't. And I got frightened and began to cry, "stop, stop!" Then he backed off and dug his knuckles into his eyes and rubbed like he was going to rub them back into his brains. And he said, "Suddenly I feel, I feel. But I know so little." I didn't know what he meant then, Now I do. I feel. I feel. And I want him to finish the examination!

(JESTER snaps fingers. GLORABELLA snaps out of it)

JESTER

This was a whole new thing for me, you see. So I threw out all that other stuff. The rose from the match? Here.

(HE shows the trick's mechanism)

The cane from the scarf? Here!

(HE shows the trick's mechanism)

The lollipops? Here.

(HE shows the trick's mechanism)

And then I'd draw them out of themselves. And I'd be whatever I'd have to be to get them to spit out their inside crap. Husband, wife, lover, enemy, friend. Not overly cruel, you understand. I'd always shape the revelations. Extract choices. Keep it all within bounds. I used, in short, art, because I was, after all,

## JESTER

(Continued)

an artist. I don't know what did me in, exactly. My own feeling was that there was honesty in the result and honesty could not be tolerated by the Mainlanders. They stopped the audience from coming to see my act. But Jesting is all I know. So I went back to sheer trickery and the audiences were allowed back to see me. It made me mad. And I took out my rage on the audience. Verbal hostility. That they loved. I rubbed their own shit in their faces! That they loved! The audience got bigger. So what? By being dishonest to myself, I've destroyed any honest creativity in myself. By being dishonest to myself, I destroyed myself. So it's about time I disappear; like most waste -- ffuughssh! -- by myself; right down the crapper. . . .Then I met you. Sweet. Loyal. Pretty. Saying what you mean; meaning what you say. They'll get you for being yourself, Glorabella. Come with me before they do. I'd like you to come with me, wherever I go.

## GLORABELLA

O. I feel a great sadness and gentleness in you know. So I know you mean well. But I'm Inny's companion.

## JESTER

And you want him to finish the examination?

## GLORABELLA

What examination? I don't know what you're --

## JESTER

But Innocent is finishing the examination. Look, Glorabella . . .

(Forces HER to look down.  
SHE hides her face in his shoulder)

Don't you see? It's time for you to disappear, too. C'mon, Glorabella -- ffuughssh -- right down the crapper. With me.

## GLORABELLA

(After a pause)

All right.

(Lights out above. Lights up below)

SAUNA

(Sitting on edge of trampoline.

SINGS:)

UP ABOVE, THE GOLDEN ANGEL  
 CRIES FOR ALL OF HER WOUNDED BRANCHES.  
 BUT THE SADNESS OF THE TINSEL,  
 SILVER TEARS NEVER REACH THE GROUND, OH.

CARDBOARD BELLS KEEP SWAYING ON A STRING,  
 NEVER TO SING. . .NO ONE CAN SING.

ANGEL HEAR, IT CUT MY FINGER;  
 RED DROPS FALL ON THE PLASTIC SNOW, OH.  
 DROP BY DROP, ON BROKEN BRANCHES . . .  
 SEE -- THE TREE. . .IS ME.

INNOCENT

Why so sad, Sauna? It was great! Now I understand. Tired, but relaxed. Sauna, that other time with Magda wasn't good at all. But this -- so worth wanting again and again. Right?

(Pause)

And this trampoline! Superb! Beautiful! And I was in charge all the way. Zap! Zap!

(Pause)

Sauna, what's the matter? Wasn't I any good?

SAUNA

Oh, Innocent: I can't be a wise guy anymore. I love you.

INNOCENT

Sauna, don't . . . the pain . . .

(GLORABELLA and JESTER rush down)

FRANK

And here, from FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY is the complete piece: DANCING WITH JOY.



## OVERVIEW

DANCING WITH JOY. As told by yours truly, JONATHAN OVERVIEW, with the help of EUBIE COPOCOLO, JOY, OLD MATILDA TRIMBLE and the BIKINI POSTER GIRL.

Eubie Capocolo always wears a bow tie. And Eubie Capocolo has the most zits of any 21-year-old that ever lived in Bodoni County. In addition--and Eubie will tell this to anyone who'll listen--

## EUBIE

I was kind of old before one of my testicles descended. But I took shots for that. And it was just a matter of time before my twin jewel stopped playing hide and seek and yo-yoed properly; so I didn't sweat that. And I was neat! Inside and out! Always neat. And bow ties seemed the neatest. I went to Bodoni County Junior College for a year. But nobody there wore a bow tie. So College wasn't for me.

## OVERVIEW

What was for Eubie Capocolo?

## EUBIE

Travel to far off romantic places. Because, in truth, I have a turbulent, romantic soul. Seething. Full of angst-agony; excessive passion; exotic longings--all that. But fat chance I had of realizing my exotic angst-potential in Bodoni County. In Bodoni County I was "that neat nerd"--and in Bodoni County I would always be "that neat nerd." So one day I said to myself: "Eubie, you're waltzing out of this burg."

## OVERVIEW

He meant that metaphorically, of course. For when he did try to dance, Eubie resembled an arthritic duck with a double hernia and an inner ear problem.

## EUBIE

So I pack; check out of the YMCA--and if you don't think living at the Y isn't a zits-enhancer, you don't know our young Christian men! Then I say goodbye to the only person who ever cared for me, Old Matilda Trimble, the head of the orphanage. She cries a little and says,

## MATILDA

Oh, Eubie; life sucks!

## OVERVIEW

Then she straightens her wig, and gives Eubie a new bow tie.

## MATILDA

Here's a new bow tie; special for my Eubie.

## EUBIE

And it is a big one--neat of course--with red dots! Then I walk all the way down to the Trailways and buy a one-way ticket to Corning, New York! Because I love glass; hear they have the best glass; plan to get a job as a Night Watchman at the Corning Glass Museum; and, for the rest of my life, I'll look at my world through the prettiest colors!

## OVERVIEW

But when Eubie gets right up to the bus--

## EUBIE

I put a foot up and I can't put it down! On the step! I keep trying! And falling backwards! And everyone laughs! And says stuff like, "Is that a new nerd dance?" And those in the bus get ticky! Because they want the bus to go!

## OVERVIEW

And those waiting behind Eubie get even tickier and begin to punch him and kick him and pull at his bow tie!

## EUBIE

So I say, **what the hell!** I'll hitch out of town. But when I get to the outskirts **I still can't leave!** Something stops me again; some kind of a wall or something! And I keep throwing myself forward; but I keep **--bouncing! --back!** to the Bodoni County line!

## OVERVIEW

So Eubie gets the message. No escape. Some hidden power does not want Eubie Capocolo to leave Bodoni County. And it's back to old Matilda Trimble, who cries, says it is God's will,

## MATILDA

--and God's will often sucks, Eubie.

## OVERVIEW

Then she straightens out the special bow tie she had given him and let's him stay in an empty basement room of the orphanage.

## EUBIE

What to do?

## OVERVIEW

Agonizes Eubie. Then he sees this ad which says: "Night watchman wanted. Prestigious building. Featuring The Bodoni County Travel Agency. Perfect for someone who wants 'night's cloak' to hide him."

## EUBIE

Just the job for me! So I straightaway apply for the job and get it!

## OVERVIEW

So Eubie night-watches and takes to staring at all the travel posters in the Bodoni County Travel Agency. **--And then one night Joy comes into Eubie Capocolo's life.**

## JOY

You there, sir; with the zits and the bow tie?--kindly let me in.

## EUBIE

She's tapping on the outside window in a friendly and smiley way; and when I see her my yo-yo's really bounce. She's cute and all; but, mostly, I love her because she's neat. She even wears a little bow tie on her prim blouse. I don't worry if she's a terrorist or anything. I just know that I have to find out who she is. So I let her in.

## JOY

My name is Joy. Say,

## OVERVIEW

says Joy, joyously,

## JOY

aren't you that nerd, Eubie!?

## EUBIE

Yes.

## JOY

(joyusly)

I thought so! --Say do you know the Winona Street Witch? Carmelita Strega? Well, she told me about this certain poster. Beach scene. If it has the serial number 262 49 32, it's a poster you can walk into. I've been looking all over town for that poster. Then I saw it here. Just now. As I was passing. God, I hope this is the walk-in poster! Can I switch on lights in here?

## EUBIE

Better not--but you can use my flashlight.

## OVERVIEW

And when Eubie gives her his flashlight, he feels. . . peculiar, somehow; intimate, as Joy fingers his flashlight--and examines the poster.

## EUBIE

Listen, Joy. . .do you think you could love a man with zits? --**and** a neat bow tie?

## JOY

Sure,

## OVERVIEW

says Joy, --who is having a tough time making out the smudged serial number on the poster.

## JOY

As long as he had a turbulent, romantic soul. Seething. Full of angst-agony; excessive passion; exotic longings--all that.

## EUBIE

Why, Joy, that's a verbatim transcript of my own inner assessment of myself!

## JOY

Eubie, can you tell if that's a five or a six?

## EUBIE

A six. Listen, Joy; this is important: . . .Why do you need to walk into the poster?

## JOY

Because I can't get on busses. I keep falling backwards. And I've got to get out of Bodoni County!

## EUBIE

Why, Joy! that's a verbatim transcript of my existential quandary! But, tell me, Joy--and this is really important--does your wanting to leave Bodoni County have anything to do with colored glass?

## JOY

No. It has to do with the blues.--Eubie, I'm a born chanteuse. I sit on pianos and sing the blues. The only place I can chanteuse at in this town is "The Beer Belly." Yucko! There's a customer--every night?--when I'm lost in the smoky lyrics of a blues number?--this joker sucks on my ankle--right through my panty hose! Yucko ditto!--Listen Eubie--I can see your seething soul right through your bloodshot eyes, so I can tell you about it: I once saw this travel poster. Luxury cruiser. Night club aboard it. Gorgeous chanteuse with gorgeous gown; slinky black with a crimson dragon made of crimson sequins; slit

JOY

(Continued)

up the side. Tall gentlemanly gentlemen stand around in tuxedos and sip martinis and champagne and try to keep their erotic thoughts secret--though their eyes, focused on the chanteuse--like yours focused on moi--reveal their simmering smolder. And it's all in glossy color and the chanteuse is caught in the moment of revealing an angst-spasm and--**Oh, look, Eubie!**--That last number is a 32! This is the poster! 262 49 32!

OVERVIEW

And she practically rips off her clothes! down to her delicate see-through undies! And Eubie is speechless! And Joy pulls from an overnight bag--and puts on--a crimson-dragon, black, slit-up-the-side, gown--identical to the one she described.

JOY

Listen, Eubie; Carmelita Strega said there's a graveyard of dead poster scenes on an island called. . ."Despair." My chanteuse poster is in that graveyard; on that island. But to get there you first have to enter a current poster, with this number and--There! Now I'm ready. See you Eubie--and thanks for letting me in here.

OVERVIEW

She is already into the poster and on the beach when Eubie's instinct says,

EUBIE

Joy! Wait! I'm coming, too!

OVERVIEW

**And he dives into the poster after Joy!**

. . . A beach. White white sand. Lots of blue sky. A mountain in the background. A beautiful woman, very tanned with a white bikini and enormous breasts running down the beach; at the water's edge; kicking some blue-green splash about. Waving. Eubie takes Joy's hand and they run in the splash alongside the woman.

JOY

Say, how did you get that great tan?

BIKINI GIRL

Always had it. Always will. It's my poster tan.

EUBIE

You seem so happy and excited. --I know! You're running and waving **to a lover!** down the beach.

BIKINI GIRL

No. There's no lover. I'm just running. And waving. That's what I do. Run. And wave. I'm a poster Bikini girl, with a poster tan, and all I do is run! And wave.

EUBIE

How come there are so few people on this beach!?

BIKINI GIRL

There are always few people on a beach in poster land!

OVERVIEW

Then she's gone. And so is Joy! And Eubie panics!

EUBIE

Joy! Joy! Where are you!?

OVERVIEW

Off poster, Joy shouts,

JOY

Here, Eubie! Off poster!--Turn left at the last palm tree in the foreground!

OVERVIEW

Which Eubie does and--lo!--suddenly everything is black; shiny black! The ground is a shiny black dance floor with silver sparkles flashing in it, and shafts of spot lights that hit and circle the floor. And there is a fanfare and Joy is in a hot shaft of light and opens her arms and says:

JOY

Eubie! I think we're in a limbo area between posters. And I'm sure we're meant to dance here. Yes, Eubie! Let's dance!

EUBIE

But I can't dance!

JOY

You must, Eubie! One must dance in this place. That's clear. But I can't dance by myself, Eubie.

YOURS TRULY

God, Eubie is depressed. But then a wonderful thing happens! Eubie hears from inside his soul the voice of dear friend, Old Matilda Trimble:

OLD MATILDA TRIMBLE

The bow tie, Eubie; the one I gave you?--Rub it!

## OVERVIEW

And Eubie does and --lo!--his shoes grow pointy and tap heavy; and he glides over to Joy, takes her in his arms and --lo! again-- they are Fred and Ginger, Gene and Vera Ellen, Juliette Prowse and anybody! --And first they waltz. Then they do the Peabody. Then it's a seamless transition to all the different ballroom dances that ever were. The Tango. . . . The Rumba. . . .The Samba. . . .The Foxtrot. . . . the Limbo. . .--all of 'em!

## JOY

Poster coming up!

## OVERVIEW

And this time it's a small island full of coconuts. From her overnight bag Joy takes out a little hammer and spike and taps holes in a coconut. Then she takes two straws out of the bag and, like the boy and girl in OUR TOWN they sip coconut juice and make goo goo eyes at each other.

## JOY

I feel a chanteuse inspired blues coming on:

TIDES ROLL IN.

TIDES ROLL OUT.

AND MY LOVE AFFAIRS DO THE SAME.

WHY IS IT THAT NONE OF THEM LAST?

ARE MY LOVERS AT FAULT? OR AM I TO BLAME?

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I KEEP LOOKING FOR THAT FIRST ONE,

ON THE BEACH WHERE I PAID LOVE'S DUES.

PERHAPS I KEEP ON WANTING THE EXTRAORDINARY PLEASURE

OF FIRST-LOVE'S SAND DUNE BLUES.

SAND DUNE BLUES,

FIRST LOVE IN ITS RERUNS.

SAND DUNE BLUES,

HOT SAND ON MY HOT BUNS.

MEMORABLE DAY.

WE WENT ALL THE WAY!

SAND DUNE BLUES;

SAND DUNE BLUES.

SAND DUNE BLUES,

THE GLOW FROM CAMP FIRE'S EMBER.

SAND DUNE BLUES,

THE LOG THAT WAS HIS MEMBER.

MEMORABLE DAY,

WE WENT ALL THE WAY.

JOY

(Continued)

SAND DUNE BLUES.  
SAND DUNE BLUES.

BUT IF IT WAS SUCH A MAJOR EVENT,  
WHY CAN'T I RECALL MY FIRST-LOVE'S FACE?  
PERHAPS MUCH OF THE TIME I WAS SITTING ON IT?  
AH, YES--KNOWING ME, THAT WAS THE CASE.

SAND DUNE BLUES--SWEET PAIN OF FIRST DESIRE!  
SAND DUNE BLUES--GETTING OFF FIVE TIMES  
IN A FIVE-ALARM DESIRE FIRE!  
MEMORABLE DAY.  
MEMORABLE LAY!  
SAND DUNE BLUES.  
SAND DUNE BLUES!

OVERVIEW

And then, of course, they make love. And Eubie's world is a kaleidoscope of colors and colored prisms. Then, when it all settles back to glossy poster color, Joy says,

JOY

Say Eubie, that was really unique--wearing a bow tie through it all! But now it's time to go!

EUBIE

But, I don't want to leave here. Not now. Not ever.

JOY

Ah, that's sweet, Eubie; but, I know what I am and where I belong. And I belong on my chanteuse poster.

Eubie

But I don't know who I am; or where I belong. I don't know my essence.

JOY

I'm all dressed now Eubie and need to high step it off to the Island of "Despair."  
Coming?

OVERVIEW

And Joy tap dances away off the poster; and Eubie follows onto the black dance floor; and they tap on down the great black way.



JOY

Island ahead.

OVERVIEW

And there is nothing on the Island but pole structures that look like crucifixes. And crumpled up old posters all over the ground. And Joy pokes around and miraculously, immediately, finds the chanteuse poster.

JOY

Eubie, help me put it up.

OVERVIEW

And Eubie does. And it is wrinkled and faded; but it is clearly the chanteuse poster.

JOY

Now kiss me goodbye, Eubie.

OVERVIEW

So Eubie kisses Joy and she moves into the poster and--lo!--she slips into the figure of the chanteuse on the piano and she is caught forever, arms shooting over her head, in the high-angst moment of the blues. And Eubie is depressed and his feet start to tap dance away.

EUBIE

To where? Back to Bodoni County?

OVERVIEW

Then--lo!--Eubie hears Old Matilda Trimble's voice saying,

OLD MATILDA TRIMBLE

Look for the stained glass poster, Eubie.

OVERVIEW

And there it is. At his feet. A faded ripped poster of a stained glass window. And it is of the naked god Mercury.

EUBIE

With no zits and the most magnificent yo-yo's that ever were. And there are wings on his heels and a little World War I tin hat on his head and he's dashing through a meteor explosion of reds and blues and greens and magentas and oranges!

OVERVIEW

And Eubie's heart idles like a truck, he's so excited; and, quickly, he puts up the poster facing the chanteuse poster--and suddenly panics:

## EUBIE

Is this what I really want?

## OVERVIEW

Then Eubie hears Old Matilda Trimble's voice:

## OLD MATILDA TRIMBLE

It's either this, Eubie; or return to Zitsville. --No, Eubie! There's no choice! And you know it!

## OVERVIEW

So Eubie climbs into the poster and becomes the wingèd God Mercury! And he appears to be dashing toward the chanteuse poster--and will always appear to be dashing that way! And Eubie is finally happy; for he will now look on his Joy, forever and ever -- there, on the Island of Despair.

## EUBIE AND JOY

SAND DUNE BLUES.

## JOY

ESCAPING FROM THE WORLD'S WOES.

## EUBIE AND JOY

SAND DUNE BLUES.

## EUBIE

THE FREEDOM OF MY YO-YO'S.

## EUBIE AND JOY

NEVER A TEAR, FROM YEAR TO YEAR. . .  
SAND DUNE BLUES! SAND DUNE BLUES!

## OVERVIEW

And so ends our fable.