CREATIVE THESIS REWRITE --- AT LAST, OLYMPUS!

A NEW MUSICAL PRODUCED UNDER NEW PLAYWRIGHTS' THEATRE, JUNE 1-6, 1970

Thesis for the Degree of M. A. MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY MICHAEL DAVID CHAMPAGNE

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By

Michael David Champagne

The purpose of this thesis is to present the final refinement and revision of an original musical, <u>AT LAST. OLYMPUSI</u>, presented under Michigan State's New Playwrights' Theatre during June 1-6, 1970, under the guidance of the Theatre Department.

The following material is the result of an actual production situation in which the author functioned as both director and producer, and the resulting revisions were developed in accordance with the findings and criticisms of the thesis committee.

The script and score presented on the following pages are an indication of the value of total involvement in the theatre experience. Such revision

can be handled only through a complete understanding of the total creative process of theatre which can be gained only through a working situation in which the individual actively participates and coordinates the major facets of theatrical production.

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REWRITE --- AT LAST, OLYMPUS!,

A NEW MUSICAL

PRODUCED UNDER NEW PLAYWRIGHTS' THEATRE,

JUNE 1-6, 1970

BY

Michael David Champagne

A THESIS

Submitted to

Michigan State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Theatre

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INTRODUCTION

The material contained in the following pages represents nine months of active creative production in which the author functioned both as producer and director of the script and score contained in Parts I and II respectively.

Many changes have resulted since the production of AT LAST, OLYMPUS!, and while the script retains the basic goals of the author's intent, its content varies greatly with the script used in production during June 1-6, 1970, under New Playwrights' Theatre at Michigan State University. The score contained in Part II remains unchanged since production; however, the order of presentation of some of the musical numbers has been altered, and, in some cases, the number of verses has been cut down to provide a smoother flow in the continuity of the show. In reading the thesis the reader should consult the script have contained to observe these sequence and lyric changes.

Because AT LAST. OLYMPUS! is a creative thesis involving a live production situation it is impossible to present in written form all of the facets involved in such a production. Furthermore, it was the opinion of the thesis committee that more of the results of

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production could be represented by a revision of the original script than in a presentation of prompt books and author's notes. Therefore it is the purpose of Parts I and II of this thesis to demonstrate the refined and revised script, and the purpose of the introduction is to discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages of author-direction and the total theatre experience.

Originally in writing AT LAST. OLYMPUS! it was my intention simply to create a conventional musical comedy with the intention of learning that writing media and exploring my competence in comic writing. In producing the final script I decided the ideal experience not only from the writer's standpoint but also from the standpoint of theatrical understanding was to produce a workable version of the script and to function as the director in such a production. In this way as a writer I would be faced immediately by any writing flaw detrimental to staging the piece, and as a director I would have to come to grips with whatever limitations of interpretation are implied in the script. However schizophrenic the arrangement might meem it does carry with it immediate confrontation with personal creative limitations and provides an excellent, if somewhat harsh, learning experience for the individual.

Furthermore, and most important, functioning as

producer, director and writer places the individual at the head of every major division of the production, and thus, the responsibility for success or failure rests entirely upon him. Though the burden is indeed weighty, the necessity of learning the functions of all facets of theatrical production teaches one both the problems and possibilities in the interaction between the production departments and the elaborate set of priorities implied by a pressing schedule and the various demands of the contributing artists in all areas of the theatrical project. This total involvement, I have come to believe, is essential to a theatre education and should be a requirement of all serious students of professional theatre.

In staging <u>AT LAST. OLYMPUS!</u> it was possible for me to break the functions of producer, director. and writer into related but separate departments.

Pirst, it is the major responsibility of the producer to "produce" the material to be staged. This means that he must find a new piece of material, promote it, and find the financial backing needed to stage the piece for public entertainment. Implied in his promotion is the attempt to attract the maximum amount of attention to his new material with an eye to securing the largest possible profit from production, and to control the cost of production within comfortable bounds which enables the piece to be staged

adequately but not at the total disregard of the backers whose money makes the entire production possible.

In my own producer situation I was faced with a need to produce a piece of material with only two interested "backers", The New Playwrights' Theatre and myself. New Playwrights' Theatre provided the theatre, basic departmental supplies such as paper and duplicating facilities for scripts, and ten percent royalties for the authors plus a sixty dollar expense account. From my own resources I drew approximately two-hundred fifty dollars to cover further production costs such as materials for costumes and sets, publicity, and recreation for the company artists.

Due to the nature of The New Playwright's

Theatre's grant, it was not possible to charge an
admission higher than fifty cents per person. House
capacity was one-hundred seventy-five, and the gross
receipts over a six-performance run totalled exactly
three-hundred dollars. Actual production costs
discounting company recreation (absorbed in my own
expenses) and royalty fees came to approximately
two-hundred dollars, making a rough profit for the show
of one-hundred dollars.

Since the function of the producer is closely

ralated to the business side of theatre, it can be said that the production was success monetarily.

Hence, my function as producer was efficiently carried out. Given the money and materials available a thirty-three percent profit was realized, healthy by any business standards.

The prime function of the director is to translate the author's work from paper into live action which is coherent and pleasing in some way within the framework set by the playwright. Here self-analysis becomes more subjective and less governed by facts and figures, nor can one depend upon the opinions of critics who are apt to see one's work in the light of opening night before further polishing and refining have been applied. This is particularly important with a new piece of material by a new playwright. How, then, does one attempt to judge one's own direction objectively?

The most important element of the director's function is that he respects the author's work and confines his interpretation within the given framework. By framework I mean those circumstances, basic character types and major themes implied, directly expressed, or possibly extractable from the script to be dealt with. If a director adheres to

the framework of the play, he has satisfied the demands of the author and held the integrity of the play.

Since I fulfilled the functions of both director and author, there can be little discussion of difficulty in fulfilling this element of directorial function. No other director could have been more aware of the author's intentions than I was with this show. There were, however, differences in interpretation between the ideas I held as author with respect to casting some of the characters, and the general blocking of the show did not always coincide with my original mental blocking of the script due to the talent available and the structural demands of the stage to be used respectively. These differences were related to director's license and in no way indicated a conflict between my ideas as writer and my ideas as director.

This still leaves the question of how one adequately judges one's success as director in reference to the rest of the director's function, <u>i.e.</u> artistic merit. First, it is necessary to evaluate the actual production situation to understand the reasons for particular kinds of staging.

"Olympus" was staged at Michigan State's Arena

Theatre located in the basement of the Auditorium Building.

The playing area is a square affording approximately

seven-hundred twenty square feet of playing space and virtually no acoustical aids to eliminate the strong echo from the low ceiling and cement floors.

The talent available was undergraduate primarily from the freshman and sophomore theatre majors. There were various deficiencies in experience with many cast members, particularly in familiarity with music. Much of the director's task in staging a musical comedy under these circumstances is to teach the technical style of the musical as well as the need for precise, clear delivery of lyrics especially with such difficult lyrics.

Furthermore, with respect to the playing area, another major problem involved arranging the blocking to permit clear sight lines in a small space for twenty-two actors, all of whom take stage simultaneously at various points in the show.

In terms of blocking I realized that it would not be possible to play "Olympus" in the round due to the size of the stage and the small rake in the house. To allow a blind side to play against, I changed the arena into a three-quarter thrust by placing the set over one of the audience quarter sections. This afforded more playing space, clearer sight lines, and, yet, preserved the feeling of intimacy which makes "Olympus" far more enjoyable.

Though this tactic was an improvement over the basic theatre setup, it did not provide me with enough depth with which to vary the floor patterns.

Lateral and arch lines sweeping out to the remaining three quarters of the house became repetitious and sometimes wearing. Often the blocking became confused because not enough depth existed between actors in the foreground and those in the back. Choreography was hampered by lack of dimension, and during many of the production numbers insufficient room caused the dancers to bunch and bump into each other. As director it was my responsibility to observe this problem and change the arrangement of the house further to permit sufficient playing room.

Due to the acoustical problem it was not possible to use more than piano and percussion in orchestration. Again this was a serious error in directorial calculation. The lack of additional instrumentation did not present the music in its best light. In addition, the poor acoustics made most of the singing inaudible even against the softly played segments of the score. Since the lyrics of the songs are difficult and involve multiple word puns it was essential for the audience to hear them. Again it was my responsibility to either adjust the acoustics of the house or to stage the show in a different theatre.

With regard to casting the show, while it is true

that the cast was limited in experience, much of the casting leaned more favorably in the direction of acting experience and strength rather than musical knowledge. Casting should have stressed both facets. The result of such casting was that much of the musical value was lost in poor technical delivery of songs.

In spite of these serious errors in directorial judgement, "Olympus" maintained its vitality in performance, became more polished, and actors grew more acquainted with the roles and the possibilities each afforded. In criticism it must be said that the production was flawed from the standpoint of direction, but not sufficiently to totally obliterate the value of the performances and material of the script and score.

The third and most difficult facet of production to discuss is writing. A writer writing about himself is very apt to talk about what he intended instead of what he actually accomplished. In dramaturgy it is the prime function of the playwright to select his topic, in this case the American system of values as opposed to those of the Victorian Era, and develop a script which is logical, coherent, and, one would hope, entertaining, since the prime force of musical comedy is entertainment.

The most serious criticism I could make concerning

the show is that it is "packed." In attempting to learn the art of musical comedy writing and deal with the various elements of comedy dealt with in Bergson's Le Rire. I succumbed to a typical temptation of many young writers, that of trying all elements of comedy within the dontext of a very small period of playing time. With the advent of "Laugh In" and earlier "Hellsapoppin'," this "packed" style of comedy writing has become a form in American Comedy, but in "Olympus" I was attempting to deal with a very established form of writing. The fact that my choice of comic devices became "packed" indicates a basic lack of restraint inherent in my personal writing style. Much of the serious commentary of the satire was lost in "bits" and clowning, and visually the piece became too busy to focus on important stage action or the richness of the satiric lines. Major themes tended to blend into the sheer entertainment of the script and often into themselves which tended to water them down.

Decause of the problems discussed above and particularly because of the flaws in the writing style of the original script of <u>AT LAST. OLYMPUSI</u>, it was decided by the thesis committee that the direction of this thesis should return to the inherent problems in the script and deal with their correction.

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In conclusion it must be said that while

AT LAST. OLYMPUS! was not a complete success artistically,
it cannot be denied that such a total theatre

experience is perhaps the most valuable teaching device

available to the student of professional theatre.

The responsibilities of such a project are great,
and the results artistically may not be optimum,
but the exposure to all the mechanics of production

provides the most comprehensive understanding of
the theatrical medium affordable anywhere.

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AT LAST. OLYMPUS!

ACT I SCENE I

(The scene takesplace in the legendary home of the gods perched remotely on Mount Olympus. U of UC is a stone throne set on angled marble stairs. Just downstage of center is a marble altar stone. At the curtain, a low, sweet, sleepy tune, the MOTIF, is being played on a lyre. ZEUS is asleep on the altar stone. He is sixty-five to seventy, choleric, and snoring loudly. After a moment APHRODITE enters.

She too is fat and sixty-five to seventy. She is out of breath and excited.)

APHRODITE:

ZEUS....ZEUS! ZEUS! WAKE UP!

ZEUS:

(He rolls over.) Wha....huh?

APHRODITE:

Strangers! Some mortals approaching! Wake up!

ZEUS:

Mortals?....Oh, yes, those!....That's nice.

APHRODITE:

....but what are we going to do?

ZEUS:

Do? Nothing

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APHRODITE:

Nothing?

ZEUS:

Yes.... That seems to be the best solution, don't you think?

APHRODITE:

Oh, no you don't!....This is no time to sleep. Get up! (She pushes him off the altar stone.)

ZEUS:

See here! (Recovering his feet.) What do you mean rushing in here like that and....and....de....desleeping the King of the Gods like that? Are you mad?
....!Are...you...are you...

APHRODITE:

Are you finished? This is no time for pomposity!

ZEUS:

Pomposity! Why I ought to...

APHRODITE:

WHATI

ZEUS:

Huh?

APHRODITE:

What?....You ought to what?

ZEUS:

(Flustered) Why....why.....I ought to....show you your place! The insolence of bursting in here.....

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APHRODITE:

Oh, come off it! Insolence my Grecian Urn! And as far as what you ought to.... well, you ought to be thinking of something showy to impress these mortals. They're just outside the gates! Do you realize it's been two-thousand years since mortals have entered this temple? And, if you ask me, we had best be rather impressive if we want to gain their respect.

ZEUS:

I don't want their respect! Those fickle, weak-minded Christians! Who needs them turning to that newcomer....

APHRODITE:

I can't understand this unrelenting hatred you have for mortals all because a handful of them turned to a new God. You know not all mortals are Christians; some of them are other things.

ZEUS:

I refuse to take chances. Mortals or Christians....

they're all alike. I turned my back on them centuries ago,
and I'm not about to go running back to them. HOW CAN

YOU EXPECT ME TO LOWER THE OLYMPIAN DIGNITY BY

ASSOCIATING WITH CHRISTIANS? (Confidentially) Do you know
what they talk of in their temples?.... Brotherhood....

love.....charity.....COMPASSION! What kind of a
religion is that I ask you? It's

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ridiculous! Denies the basic corruption inherent in the beast, man. No I don't want their respect. Those simpering wine sippers! Those....those loose boweled doves!

CHRISTIANITY

ZEUS!

Christianity, pure insanity,
You can't trust people who pray
Those loving Christians and their sweetly
sanctified way.

APHRODITE:

It's so plain to see, you've such vanity
Your logic's led you astray
To hate poor Christians and their sweetly
sanctified way.

ZEUS 8:

Christianity's bound in vanity
Immortality's play.

Those loving Christians and their sweetly sanctified way.

When your conscience is troubled
You'll find your guilt will be doubled
Human nature is filthy and disgusting
expecially in people.

Religion shelters the mystics

And breeds materialistics.

Charity is a virtue that will beggar you

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quickly

(but helps you sleep well.)

Christianity's such profanity

A lie the clever make pay

Those loving Christians and their sweetly sanctified way.

Holy Piety, Virtue,

Words that aim to pervert you.

Christianity!

Christianity offers such a wealth of unthinkable torture.

Inquisition and killing make believers more willing.

Bloody martyrdom teaches of the love and redemption in the Scripture.

Christianity's inhumanity

I guess they're funny that way

Those loving Christians and their sweetly

sanctified way.

Daily fasting and scourging

Tame the flesh when it's urging.

Christianity prompts you with such subtle intellectual reason.

Bear your burden don't stumble

Be proud you're a Christian and humble.

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Love thy neighbor on one day for the rest of the week is open season.

To cure neurotic affliction
Christians have crucifixion
Pain and suffering's such a comfort
When you inherit your error.
Should you slide in regression
You can make your confession
That's when clergymen purge you of
Sins and corruption, Holy Terror!

Christianity, pure insanity

You can't trust people who pray

Those loving Christians and their sweetly

sanctified way, way, way, way, way!

ZEUS:

Who needs them?

APHRODITE:

We do! Listen, Zeus, you can't wallow in the past like this anymore! It's time you faced some things.....

ZEUS:

What do you mean?

APHRODITE:

Really, Zeus! Look around you! Look at this place!

It's a motheaten ruin....and so are we....

ZEUS:

Why I....

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APHRODITE:

Be still and listen! What do you think has happened to us after two-thousand years of vegetating? Haven't you noticed what it's done to us? We're falling apart. There's no one to believe in us any longer, and without someone to believe in us I'm afraid we're more done with the world than you know. Our powers are shamefully low..... Zeus! This may be our last chance! We've got to win these mortals' respect....(Zeus pouts.) All right! Act like an old boob with a diaper rash, but don't be surprised if the rest of us stage a coup d'etat!

ZEUS:

A what!?

APHRODITE:

A coup d'etat, an uprising!

ZEUS:

Oh! For a moment I thought you were stooping to the obscene.

(Enter MERCURY. He is older than the other two. About eighty. He is skinny, arthritic, semi-blind, and partially deaf. He is nearly dead for breath.)

MERCURY:

Zeus!....pant. pant. pant....Zeus!....(He has an attack and goes rigid.)

APHRODITE:

Goodness! (She rushes over to help him to the altar stone.)
You could give me a hand, you know!

ZEUS:

Oh, all right! And you want the mortals' respect!
Who would respect a mess like this!

APHRODITE:

He wouldn't be like this if he had someone to believe in him! And be quiet; he'll hear you!

ZEUS:

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(They set him on the altar stone.)

MERCURY:

Strangers....st....strangers! Mortals are outside the gates! cough. cough.

ZEUS:

It's all right you old

APHRODITE:

Zeusl

ZEUS:

Fellow....I've been told.

MERCURY:

What?....I'm just as good as anyone here! cough, cough.

(He stands, goes rigid, and falls back on the altar stone.)

Just a little out of breath is all. Who said I'm old?

(He looks right at Zeus.) Where's Zeus?

ZEUS:

I'm right here!

APHRODITE:

It's all right. I've told him! ZEUS KNOWS ALREADY!

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MERCURY:

That's rig'(t! I must go and make ready! (He starts off in the wrong direction.)....Aphrodite?....

APHRODITE:

(She turns him in the right direction.) Through there.

MERCURY:

Ah, yes....pant. pant. (To Zeus.) If you see Zeus, you must tell him!....He must be told, ZEUEUEUEUEUEUES! (Exit.)

APHRODITE:

There! Do you see?

(Suddenly without a warning a vast chorus of Graces comes wafting from each end of the stage in the midst of a choral ode straight out of some tragedy. URANIA leads them.)

URANIA:

(As the Graces move back and forth across the stage in a constant strophe and anti-strophe to her narration and nearly trample Zeus.) Hear, gentle people, a tale of the Great Gods above who.....

ZEUS:

(Dodging one of the strophes.) Do be careful!

APHRODITE:

(Also dodging.) I told you so!

ZEUS:

(Stubbornly.) Well, they're not that bad. (He is knocked off his feet.) BY ALL THE IMMORTAL DOVES OF

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ILLYSIUM: (Catching himself.) They are consciencious!

APHRODITE:

(She rushes over and helps him up.) Oh, face up to it!

They're dreadful! They've gotten so stale that they don't

even listen to themselves anymore. Watch....

URANIA:

Pity the plight of two true lovers....

GRACES:

Who pity the plight.

Who pity the plight.

APHRODITE:

(Calling it out like a square dance call.) Two wet pigeons fly at night.

URANIA:

TWO WET PIGEONS FLY AT NIGHT.

GRACES:

Two wet pigeons.

Two wet pigeons.

URANIA:

Ah, yes, gentle people, two wet pigeons fly at ni....

Hm?.....What?....Oh, Aphrodite! I was just practicing

for the mortals! Did you hear the good news? Imagine!

Mortals coming here! I just thought we had best be

ready for them. Arts and letters and all that. Why I....

APHRODITE:

I'm sure it's all very nice, Urania, but I'm afraid it's

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all terribly premature. Zeus isn't going to let them in!

URANIA:

What!

GRACES:

What!

Whati

URANIA:

All right, cut it, girls!....Now what is this about these mortals?

ZEUS:

We are not going to allow Christians in this temple!

URANIA:

(To Aphrodite.) They're Christians?

APHRODITE:

He doesn't know!

URANIA:

You mean he's keeping them out on pure suspicion!

GRACES:

On pure suspicion.

On pure suspicion.

URANIA:

Oh, shut up, girls....

ZEUS:

See here, I seem to recall your vow to forget that mortals

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ever existed after Christianity. In fact, you said you were even considering retracting the art of writing from their knowledge entirely.

URANIA:

Oh....that....Well, when I said forever I didn't know it would take as long as this.

ZEUS :

There you are.

URANIA:

(To Aphrodite.) He's afraid.

ZEUS:

What!

APHRODITE:

Do you think so?

URANIA :

What other reason could there be. How could be hope to impress the mortals as much as us when he's gotten so....so....senile!

ZEUS:

Senile! WHY YOU....

(Enter HERMES. He carries several mildewed scrolls under his arm. He is distracted, absent-minded, and rambling.)

HERMES:

What is all this noise? (He sees Zeus in the midst of his tantrum.)....Oh, old Blood and Thunder is at

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it again is he?

URANIA:

Mortals are on their way here and he won't let them enter the temple.

HERMES:

What? Why that's beyond comprehension, it's....it's past all reason. It's asinine....It's the stupidest thing I ever heard of! My, my, mortals, you say?

ZEUS •

I RULE HERE! I WILL NOT HAVE CHRISTIANS IN THIS TEMPLE! We have been peaceful and content here for two-thousand years....

HERMES ::

Has it been that long? I suppose I do become too engrossed in my reading.....Well, no matter.....As my dear friend, Aristotle, always said, "There is not time, only change."....or was that Plato?

ZEUS!

Am I talking to the pillars? Does no one listen to me?

No one respects my authority any longer!

HERMES:

No....no. It was Aristotle. Oh, my, he was a card!

ZEUS:

I'LL FRY HIS SHADE IN HADES IF YOU DON'T CEASE THIS ENDLESS JABBERING!

HERMES:

No need to shout I'm not deaf! Anger is but an emotion,

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and the true philosopher king is above all that.

That's Plato. He was a mortal, and a good deal more pleasant than you! (To Urania.) How did he ever get anywhere with a temper like that?

URANIA:

He inherited the job.

(Enter MARS in full armor. He is shrunken, skinny and wild with straggly red hair. He drags a huge broadsword behind him.)

MARS:

Yananananiiiiiiiiiiiiiii cough. cough. Where are they?

I'll show them how we meet transgressors! I'll cut

off their heads! I'll break their arms and legs

separately! I'll slice them into tidbits for my dogs.....

ZEUS:

Mars....

MARS:

I'll cut off their toes and make them eat them.....I'll dye their hair red with their own blood.....

ZEUS:

MARS !

MARS:

Bh?....What?....Where are they?

ZEUS:

Where are who?

MARS:

The strangers. Mercury said there were strangers nearby.

URANIA:

Zeus is afraid they are Christians.

GRACES:

Afraid they are Christians! Afraid! Afraid!

ZEUS:

(To Urania.) Will you kindly muzzle these?

URANIA ::

Quiet, girls.....(To Mars.) Zeus isn't going to let the mortals in; he's afraid of them because they might be Christians.

HERMES:

He seems to think we might be corrupted.

MARS:

(Running up to Zeus.) I promise you won't! I'll protect you! If they so much as utter one of their benedictions. I'll cut them in two!

ZEUS 8:

Who's going to help you lift the sword?

MARS:

Oh!....Oh! Did you hear that? Did you....(He bursts into tears and cries on Aphrodite's shoulder.) Oh, it just isn't fair!

APHRODITE:

There, there.....If you're not careful you'll rust.....
Really, Zeus!

(Enter APOLLO and EROS. Apollo plays fervently on his lyre humming softly in a cracked, wheezing, old voice. Eros floats in ahead of him in complete abandon.

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He clutches a wilted rose to his breast and recites his erotic poem in an ecstacy of oblivion.)

EROS:

Oh, my love, my love!

You are all to me.

Ah, my love, my love!

Your lips, your hips

Bach perfect breast

Your wanton eyes that shine!

Ah, my love, my love

You are all to me!

This ear is yours

This soul is yours,

Say all you have is mine!

Ah, my love, my love!

You are all to me!

Neet me in the grassy cove

Or under yonder tree!

But meet me, meet me!

Ah, my love, my love.

Oh, my love, my love.

Oh, my love, my love,

My love!

ZEUS:

I think I should sit down. (He sits on the throne.)

APHRODITE:

(Quietly.) I seem to remember some of the poems you used

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to write for me! (To Eros.) Lovely: Simply lovely:

EROS:

(He rises.) Thank you, Aphrodite. I've got some delicious ideas for these mortals! I was thinking of a nice quiet sit-down orgy for thirty or forty. What do you think? I could wear my purple toga. And perhaps as the evening wears on....one of the women....Well, it's been so long, but some things are easy to remember....

APOLLO:

Cough.

EROS:

Do you think it would presumptuous of me to seduce one of them before dinner?

APHRODITE:

Well, I....

APOLLO:

That's right! Go on and make your plans for the mortals, but try and entertain them without me and my music.

APHRODITE:

Well....Apollo, of course we'll need you....

APOLLO:

Well, you just can't have me or my music! I won't come! No one appreciates me anymore.

URANIA:

(To the other Graces.) Here we go again!

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APOLLO .

Play until your fingers mache, try to bring some cheer into this mausoleum, sing until you can hardly speak.....

APOLLO/URANIA:

.....Wrack your soul for some little shred of artistic inspiration, some little tune to make this world a better place to live in, to lighten the spirit.....

URANIA:

(Alone as Apollo glares at her.).....Give your heart freely to the bourgeois tastes of an inconsiderate mob, and all for what? What? Very nic.....(She suddenly becomes aware of her solo.)

APOLLO:

What are you doing without your plow hitched behind you, you old water ox?

URANIA:

(Sweetly.) I'm enjoying the show, do go on.

APOLLO:

Well, you just try, you just do your strophes and your whatever-you-call-'ems without my music!

URANIA:

Is that what you call it?

APOLLO:

You just see if you can find any better than me....You just see!

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URANIA:

How many minutes do I have?....Anyway, save your tin ear. Zeus isn't going to let them in here.

EROS:

What? Not come! But I was counting on it! Aphrodite, what am I going to do. It's been so long!

APHRODITE:

I expect you'll just have to do without. We all will until Zeus gets over this ridiculous prejudice against Christians!

URANIA:

Hm! You mean fear!

ZEUS:

I FEAR NO MORTAL! (He throws a thunderbolt.)

CHRISTIANITY (REPRISE)

ZEUS:

Christianity, pure insanity
You can't trust people who pray
Those loving Christians and their sweetly
sanctified way.

CHORUS:

It's so plain to see you've such vanity
Your logic's led you astray
To hate poor Christians and their sweetly

sanctified way.

ZEUS:

Christian Doctrin's so pleasing
You'll find it morally squeezing.
Christianity may not broaden but it makes life
seem longer.

Don't worry if you just can't win.

Anything pleasant is pure sin.

There's no question of ethics for there's only a choice of wrong or wronger.

CHORUS :

What you're saying is just inanity

You want it all your own way.

Those loving Christians and their sweetly

sanctified way.

Holy Piety, Wirtue!

ZEUS:

Words that aim to pervert you.

Christianity offers such a wealth of unthinkable torture.

Inquisition and killing make believers more willing.

Bloody martyrdom teaches of the love and redemption in the Scripture.

Christianity, pure insanity
You can't trust people who pray.
Those loving Christians and their sweetly
sanctified way, way, way, way, way!

(Mercury enters leading in the mortals. They are an American family on tour in Greece. Heading the family is ELIAS PEAK, a man of fifty, trim, prosperous, crass, a real go-getter. Next is his wife, PHOEBE, well-dressed, and always wearing a blonde wig. With them are their three children: OSCAR, or rather, E=MC2, as he is known in protest circles, FAUN, a lovely sixteen-year-old girl, and HOMER, a rather fat, freckled little boy of ten, who wears black horn-rimmed glasses. The Gods and Goddesses are so busy arguing that they don't notice the family.)

ELIAS:

(From offstage.) UP! UP! C'mon! We're almost to the top! (Now they enter.) All right, gang, take a breather.

MERCURY:

If you would just wait, I'll try to find Zeus and the others. It can't take long. They're usually about, you know. (He starts out in the direction they have just come, but Elias turns him in the opposite direction.)

Uh...yes...yes....thank you....Zeus....ZEUS!

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FAUN:

This is a funny place for a rest home!

PHOEBE:

It's probably one of those expensive resorts for rich Europeans with American foreign aid to spend.

Elias, I do wish you'd paid that guide! I heard thunder a few minutes ago, I think it's going to rain!

ELIAS:

I didn't make President of Ads Promotion, Inc., by paying a bunch of flunkies to do something I could do myself! I made it to the top by drive, ambition, personality....

E:

And Mom's money.

ELIAS:

And Mom's money.... That'll be enough out of you!
Where's the respect you owe me as your father, you little....

PHOEBE:

Find out if these people have a phone so that we can get someone to take us off this crummy mountain.

ELIAS.

I can take us back!

PHOEBE:

I want to get back to the hotel in time for the late show!

Doris Day's on tonight.

ELIAS:

Where's your sense of culture? Don't you like all these magnificent old ruins and statues....

PHOEBE:

Well, yes....

ELIAS:

Besides I paid \$2,000 for this family to get some culture, and, damn it, I'm going to get my money's worth.

HOMER :

When it comes to culture, the both of you are utter philistines.

PHOEBE :

Thank you, dear. You see! Homer thinks Doris Day is culture too! Now find out if they have a phone, dear.

ELIAS:

(He moves closer to the arguing group of gods.)

Excuse me....Pardon me....HEY!

Suddenly the gods freeze in their tracks. They realize that while they have been arguing the strangers have arrived and entered the temple.)

ELIAS:

Uh....Perdoney-moi, signior, a donde....uh....a
guide? (Pause.) I don't think they understand Greek.

PHOEBE:

Try English. All educated foreigners speak English.

ZEUS:

(He finally recovers himself.) What do you wish here?

ELIAS:

(He is delighted. To Phoebe.) You were right!

(To Zeus.) Well, you see, I'm Elias Peak, Ads Promotion
Co., Inc., Whirlwind, Connecticut. This is my wife,
Phoebe, my daughter, Faun, and my two sons, Oscar and Homer....

B:

My name is E=mc2.

ELIAS:

Don't pay any attention. That's his protest name. Well, we were wondering if we could use....

ZEUS:

How dare you enter the Olympian temple, mortal!

ELIAS:

Well, I'm sorry to disturb you but.....

ZEUS:

Other mortals have died for presumptions far less than this! On your knees and make reverence to this glorious company.

APHRODITE:

Zeus....

ZEUS:

Silence! I'll show these mortals how to respect the Gods of Olympus!

PAUN:

Oh, wow!

ELIAS:

Now, just a damn minute! I don't know who you think you are, but we don't kneel to anybody! Furthermore,
I'm no mortal, I'm an American.

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 (Zeus throws a thunderbolt. The gods freeze in their tracks terrified while the family is completely oblivious.)

ELIAS:

Hey, you were right. It does sound like rain.

ZEUS:

SILENCE UNTIL I GIVE YOU LEAVE TO SPEAK, MORTAL!

HERMES:

Why do you always have to overdo a good thing!

ZEUS:

I know what I'm doing!

ELIAS:

Look, you old nut, all I want to do is use your phone and get out of here!

ZEUS:

SI....

APHRODITE:

SHUT UP!

ZEUS:

(He is flabbergasted.) Aphrodite!

APHRODITE:

It's been two-thousand years, and I'm not about to see you ruining our one chance to regain our stature in the world with cheap histrionics.....Won't you please stay awhile? You are welcome here as our first mortal guests to Olympus for centuries.

PHOEBE:

Blias, what's she talking about?

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APHRODITE:

I am Aphrodite, Goddess of Love. These are the great gods of the past.

ELIAS:

Oh, come on!

MARS:

Oh, we are, truly!

HERMES:

Go ahead, Zeus, show them. Throw another thunderbolt.

ZEUS:

No.

APHRODITE:

Zeus, this is no time to pout: Throw a thunderbolt for the people.

ZEUS:

No.

URANIA:

Hm! He probably can't.

(To prove her wrong Zeus winds up and throws three more booming thunderbolts.)

ELIAS:

Phoebe, did you remember to pack that rain gear?

It sounds like a cloudburst!.....Now if you people would just let us use your phone.

URANIA:

(To Zeus.) So your powers don't need a boost, huh?

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So we don't need mortals? They didn't even flinch!

APHRODITE:

Hermes, you try to convince them. (She pushes him out front.)

HERMES:

Well, I.....It's been so long since my last argument.....

Let's see. I could use a little mathematical logic

on them.....Perhaps Pythagoras.....maybe a little Euclid.....

APHRODITE:

Just talk to them, Hermes.

HERMES:

You mean straight out? Without proofs, illustrations.....
hypotheses? (She nods yes.) Oh?....(He turns to the
family.) Well....

IMAGINE WHAT?

Imagine if you will

A high and windy hill

That looks upon the sea

With dour majesty.

And now the clouds come clinging close

As black as sulphur smoke

The scene is somber and morose,

And there! Up high! In flowing cloak

....Is me!

What am I doing there?....Oh, yes!

....Is he!

He lifts his mighty hand

And sweeps it o're the land.

(He pulls Zeus's arm.) Sorry!

Ten-thousand people bow

And there it comes right now!

What?....Oh, yes, of course....

A golden chariot swoops down

And bears him to the sun.

The stars weave him a silver gown

The sight invokes oblivion!

Imagine, if you will

Such pleasure it could kill!

Uh....

Such pleasure it could fill.

Fill!

The lusty brimming cup.

A feast for love to sup!

A feast!...ha, ha, a FEAST.....That's good!

Each lip a cherry ripe and red

Her neck a honey comb,

Each breast a loaf of fresh baked bread,

Uh....Excuse me, my dear....

Her tail a pleasure dome.

Oh! I am sorry!

She makes each lover's nest Serene and even bles'd.

Each kiss becomes a pray'r

Blown sweetly on the air.

Her beauty was the flaming spark,

It truly did inspire

Brave Paris on his lover's lark.

It lit Troy's fun'ral pyre.

Now that was quite a story! You see.....Huh?....Oh!

Imagine, if you please

The poet's gentle ease.

To fashion diamond rhyme

With meter keeping rhythm,

Rhythm?....With meter keeping....With meter keeping....

The color of the artist's brush

Retells a country scene.

He paints the fields all green and lush....

Ah....He paints the fields all green and lush....

'til he runs out of green!

These sweet and lovely things

Have motivated kings.

Have built great monuments

Inspired accidents.

Uh....that's wrong....m-many great discoveries.....
that's what I mean----yes....

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They've fostered great philosophy
Blevated thought.

Have been the cause of all beauty
O're which mankind has fought.

Imagine, if you can
The puniness of man.
Compared to our proud stance,
Imagine that perchance.
See us bronze in gleaming sunlight
Young and strong and bright,
Walking proud amidst the clouds,
Just imagine, if you might.

We were the noble breed until
Until....until....oh, yes....

The time grew on and on Just imagine if you will.

Where have the centuries all gone? My, my.....
two-thousand years! It doesn't seem possible!

PHOEBE:

Blias, I think they're serious!

APHRODITE:

We are.

MARS:

Yes! Please, you must believe in us!

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ZEUS:

Enough of this pandering! Remember your positions!

Has the dignity of Olympus come to this? (He turns to the family.) Before we deign to talk another moment, we must know....Are you Christians?

E:

Shi-i-i-i-i-t!

ELIAS:

Christians?....Of course not! Well, that is we are, but not exactly....We're Freemartins. See?

ZEUS:

Would you mind repeating that....

ELIAS:

Well, we're Freemartins....We believe in anything.

PHOEBE :

I assure you we're very devout! E is an atheist.

<u>B</u>:

I believe in nothing.

PHOEBE:

Yes, dear, as long as you really believe in it!

APHRODITE:

(To Zeus.) Now are you satisfied?

ZEUS:

I don't know....I mean....

PHOEBE:

Blias, I think we'd better move along. I don't think

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these people are going to help us.... (whispering to the family) and I don't think they're all quite there.

HOMER:

Wait a minute, father. I've been taking all this in, and I believe them.

APHRODITE:

Zeus, did you hear that?

ELIAS:

(To Homer.) What are you talking about?

HOMER:

Well, it's really rather simple. Judging the Ancient Greeks in terms of Anthropological Psychology there was no accounting for the Golden Age of Greece unless you attribute this flowering of the human mind to Divine Inspiration. Furthermore, the Ancient Greeks were incapable of such a vast elemental theology without some foundation in sensory experience.

BLIAS :

You mean these old dingbats are really gods and goddesses?

PHOERE:

Wait 'til I tell the Crawfords we met real gods and goddesses! I must get a picture. Tell them to bunch together, dear. Faun, you and Homer crouch down in front.

APHRODITE:

Oh, Zeus, don't you feel younger already?

(Enter Mercury.)

MERCURY:

Zeus!....ZEUEUEUEUEUEUEUEUEUS!

BLACKOUT.

ACT I SCENE II

(The scene is the same as the first except that now there is a long, low banquet table set downstage. It is covered with trays of melon-like fruit and gold cups. The gods recline stiffly while the family sit Indian-fashion during the feasting. At the rise of the curtain the scene is a bustle of activity with Elias dominating the conversation. Some of the Graces serve under the direction of Urania. They spill wine and drop pieces of fruit constantly.)

ELIAS:

(The general noise dims.) Nice place you've got here. Reminds me of the Museum of Natural History back home.

PHOEBE:

Elias. please!

ELIAS:

Huh?....oh....uh, sure was nice of you to take us in like this. What with night coming on and all.

Can't understand why it doesn't rain though. Could've sworn it sounded like it. Do you get much rainfall up here?

URANIA:

(Snidely.) Not recently!

ELIAS:

Say this isn't bad. What is it?

URANIA:

Ambrosia.

ELIAS:

Oh, yeah? Not bad.

(One of the Graces spills wine on him.)

GRACE ::

Oh, I beg your pardon! Here. (She tries to clean his jacket.)

ELIAS:

(He just sits there.) Think nothing of it!

GRACE:

(She drops some fruit on him while trying to clean off his jacket.) Oh, I am sorry!

ELIAS 8

That's all right! Look, Grace, sweetheart, why don't you go and....serve someone else.

PHOEBE :

Oh, Blias, this melon is simply divine....Oh, divine....
ha, ha! Divine, of course....ha, ha!

ELIAS:

Well, I'm finished. What's the next course?

APHRODITE:

Next course?

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ELIAS:

Yeah, you know. the part that comes after the appetizers, roast or steak of something like that.

APHRODITE:

Well, we never eat flesh.

ELIAS:

Oh, seafood, good! What is it? Maine Lobster?

Ipswich Clams....Louisiana Shrimp?

APHRODITE:

Oh, no! We couldn't bear to eat those poor little creatures! It would be hideous, Ungodly!

PHOEBE:

My dear, you can't mean that you eat just this melon!

APHRODITE:

Well....yes. We've never felt the need of anything else.

PHOEBE:

If you'll pardon me, dear, no wonder you're so....well.
...plump! This must be loaded with calories!
Why, you can almost smell the carbohydrates and fats
just pouring out!

ZEUS:

How dare you? Aphrodite is the epitome of woman!

PHOEBE:

I'm afraid we haven't looked like that for quite some time....Oh, my dear, you really must do something!

ZEUS:

This is outrageous! It's....

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HERMES:

Oh, stop flustering. Listen to what they have to say.

ELIAS:

You see, Zeus, baby, you're behind the times! Youth! that's the key! Look young, be young. That's our motto. "The more the paunch, the less the punch!"

YOUTH

Oh, Youth! That's the key!

Age is not traumatic, it's impossibility!

Each wrinkle's not just aging, it's a very mortal sin.

Now if you're not young at heart, it's time to turn it in,

And if you should survive to a hundred and five,

Look at all they've contrived just to keep you

alive.

Who says the greatest gift of life is wise seniority?

Oh, Youth! That's the prize!

It's not the spirit from within; it's what you advertise.

If your soul is wrinkled and your weight begins to shift,

It's time to think of diets and some spiritual

lift.

Don't you fret if your face looks like fine filigree.

You're quite safe now that they've got plastic surgery.

Maturity is a syndrome any shrink can analyze.

Oh, yeah, now, Youth! It's a must.

Haul your wreck upon its feet and scrape away the rust.

Engage in every heavy sport with zest and youthful will.

You might be dead within a week but age is sure to kill.

Though you long to decline in an old rocking chair.

If you do, you're ignored like you're not even there.

Vigor is our only coin, our purse, in Youth we trust.

All right, now, Youth! That's the key!

It doesn't matter if you're tired if you've got vitality.

Within the card-game they call life, sex-appeal's the trump.

A hormone shot before the match will get you o're the hump.

Just as long as you've got your testosterone,

Then there's not any thought of your being

alone.

Though past the prime there isn't any need to face reality.

Now let's try Youth! I confess!

Eternal youth's a burden, but then so is happiness.

I'd rather be a younger self than a sage, decrepit, wise.

I may be dumb and insincere, but who wants baggy eyes?

I will fight every year with false tooth and nails,

With my eyes on my waist, my feet firmly on scales.

Outside I'll be pure springtime, within an

ancient mess.

PHOEBE:

(To Aphrodite) I have a marvelous set of exercises!

I'll show them to you....And I think a cottage cheese
diet or perhaps on of those low-fat cut-downs.....

Oh, yes, we could trim you down.

APHRODITE:

Well, I don't see why....

PHOEBE:

You do believe in dignity, don't you? In human nobility.uh....and divine nobility?

APHRODITE:

Well, of course!

PHOEBE:

If you're fat, you've got no dignity! You've got no image.

ZEUS:

What are you saying? We <u>are</u> dignity and nobility!

(Phoebe and Elias look at each other and burst out laughing.)

ZEUS:

(He is hardly able to control himself.) Say, you really do have a sense of humor.

PHOEBE:

That's very nice, dear, but I'm serious.

ELIAS:

You see, everybody has an image. That's what gives him his standing in the world. If you want the right image, you've got to work at it. You've got to get with it, stay on it....groove! It doesn't matter what you really are. You can be corrupt, even demonic, but if your image is good, you've got it made. Why, that's the foundation of business.

ZEUS:

What happened to your Christian way? What happened to all that talk of brotherhood and truth?

ELIAS:

That is the Christian way! You don't think we allow religion to interfere with business. Nosiree, separation of church and state, belief and business! We fought for that in....in....well, some of our best wars were based on that principle!

APHRODITE:

(Delighted.) Zeus, they're just as Pagan today as they were two-thousand years ago. Isn't that encouraging!

PHOEBE:

Oh, no, dear! Please! You shouldn't insult a person's religion like that, Pagan!

APHRODITE:

But isn't that the same as

PHOEBE:

Oh, not Freemartin Philosophy as written by our founder, Grace Mentalla Blythedollar, says: "Blessed are those who hold the right image, for they are the encouragers in belief." Now it doesn't matter what you really are, underneath, I mean, but as long as you hold up the right image you're giving someone something to believe in.

ELIAS:

(To Zeus.) She s done wonders with the children in religious education.

APHRODITE:

Does this way work?

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ELIAS:

Work? It's sure fire! Look, you present a happy, successful, intelligent, fulfilled image and people will sell each other just for a nod of approval from you. Promote yourself as the authority on happiness, and success and power are yours forever.

ZEUS:

But suppose no one believes you.

ELIAS:

Don't be silly, everyone will believe you. You just have to believe it yourself. You can't go half-hearted in the image racket. Once you pick your image.... that's it. You've got to follow it through. You do that and there isn't a soul who will dare to dispute with you. They'll grovel to be in your company.

ZEUS:

It sounds dangerous....very serious!

ELIAS:

Isn't anything worthwhile?

HERMES:

Tell us what has happened among you mortals over the past two-thousand years?

PHOEBE:

Well, I haven't kept up too well. It's about all I can do to get through my McCall's. Homer could tell you; he read most of the Harvard Historical Library last

year just before he began intermediate nuclear physics, or some such thing....

HOMER:

Advanced Aerodynamics.

PHOEBE:

Yes, of course, dear. Actually I can't keep up with him. He's one of those child prodigies....We've tried to hold him back, believe me. We even sent him to public school, but he just won't be average. It's very embarrassing!

MARS:

You said you were American. What's that?

(E rises as if in a trance and sings.)

THE COLOR IS

OOOOOOOOOOO, Red, White, Blue, BLACK!

We're black to the core of our souls.

And nothing can quell the flames of our hell.

We're black to the core of our souls!

Black! Black! Black!

We smell of putrid decay.

Our legend is doom and gathering gloom

That only our blood can pay.

Black! Black! Black!

We're sick and so close to death.

And madly we rave as we roll in our grave

Heaving our last stinking breath.

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Black! Black! Black!

Black is the justice of law.

Chaos and sin is the bag we are in

And we act like we ain't got a flaw.

Kill! Kill! Kill!

To protest! It's our right to insist!

That our only true joy, expertise to destroy

Be no longer allowed to persist.

Bleed! Bleed! Bleed!

The infection we sire lives on.

We avow to desist, but the evils resist,

And will until everyone's gone.

Peace! Peace! Peace!

It's a word that can't grow too big.

And I won't end my plea until I'm sure that we Have killed each deplored Fascist pig!

For love! Love! Love!

Is the cure for the world's social ills.

And I'll force down this good in the name brotherhood

'Til the rat-race bends to my will.

(Repeat the first verse.)

(There is an awkward silence.)

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APHRODITE:

Well....

HERMES:

....Yes, indeed....

PHOEBE:

You needn't be embarrassed. Just ignore him. He goes away after awhile.

ELIAS:

He's got a generation gap.

ZEUS:

Generation gap?

ELIAS:

Yes, you know! That's when the older generation feeds, clothes, and supports the younger, and in return the younger generation is kind enough to show us what rotten bastards we all are. I think it's called having ideals, isn't it?

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000000000H, Black!

PHOEBE:

Shut up, dear. Your father is explaining what an ingrate you are.

HERMES:

Oh, yes. I believe Socrates has something to say about that....(He reaches for his scrolls.)

HOMER:

Socrates, who's he?

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HERMES:

Why, Socrates!....Why....Why, he's one of the greatest philosophers who ever lived!

HOMER :

Yes, I know! But who is he?

HERMES:

He's....he's Socrates!....His philosophy represents a life.....a way of life.....

HOMER :

You don't believe all that pseudo-intellectual claptrap do you?

HERMES:

Believe in it? It's a golden....it's.....It's

HOMER :

It's passe! All that nonsense about reality versus ideals! It means nothing to people of today. Ideals don't exist. They're clever inventions of the aristocracy to keep the bourgeoisie striving for a perfection they will never know. Life is not perfectable.

Reality is the only existence. Now time. Anything I do not experience does not exist. The limit of my mind is the himit of my senses. You should read Sartre and Camus....There's a philosophy!

HERMES:

Sartre....Camus? THIS IS MONSTROUS! HOW CAN YOU SAY THESE THINGS?

ELIAS:

We I come to the generation gap!

APHRODITE:

Please, calm yourself!

ZEUS:

Anyone can see you are hardly a philosopher king!

(Hermes is on the verge of a cerebral hemorrhage.)

APHRODITE:

I think we should have some entertainment!

(Without a cue or a care for their duties, the Graces begin their strophe and Urania begins her story.

Apollo nearly kills himself on his lyre getting into place.)

ELIAS: URANIA:

More wine. Behold!

PHOEBE: GRACES:

Do you think you should, Behold!

dear?

Behold!

ELIAS: URANIA:

Are you insinuating that Hear a tale of the Gods

I get high? above

FAUN: Who pity the plight of

She's telling you outright! Two True love....ers.

ELIAS: Pyramus and Thisbe in

Some respect I get from Babylon lived close.

my own family! What was So close one wall formed

it Shakespeare said? How their houses both.

sharper than a serpent's But as it chanced a tiny

tail the tooth of a chink

thankless child! Was for the two a lovers'

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PHOEBE:

(To Faun.) I do hope this won't take long. I want to get back to the hotel!

ELIAS:

We can't get back now!

It's pitch black out!

We'd never find our way!

PHOEBE:

I'll miss the late show!

ELIAS:

Well, you'll just have to.

PHOEBE:

I can't!....couldn't
we try? I'll go myself
and you can stay here.

ELIAS:

I'm not having you wandering around on a mountain;
you might kill yourself,
and the key to our safety
deposit box is in your name
And I'm not letting this
family break up. A
family is sacred. It's
bound by sharing and love!

link

Binding them together fast.

Every morning just as the

last

Shadow of the moon was past.

To the chink would they steal

Exchanging love's vows with zeal!

And so they passed their loving way

.....From day to day.....
Until resolved they thought
to meet

By the Tomb of Ninus by the moon,

And with kisses each other to greet.

So Thisbe went before her Pyramus,

deposit box is in your name. And there a lion raging thus
And I'm not letting this Frightened her away.

family break up. A But by the way she dropped
family is sacred. It's Her veil and Pyramus

strayed

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FAUN: By chance not long after by YECH! the spot PHOEBE: Thinking his love eaten by the beast Oh! ELIAS: Plunged a dagger in his breast What's the matter now? In the way of grief. PHOEBE: I've dropped an earring. Alas! Help me find it. GRACES: ALAS! (They search under ALAS! the table.) URANIA: PHOEBE: Homer, help your father Poor Thisbe came again by the leaf and I. Of the mulberry where HOMER : Pyramus lay, Very well. And took her death that FAUN: bloody way. Is that it? And so the Gods. PHOEBE: The Great, Great Gcds..... Where? GRACES: FAUN: THE GREAT GODS! There. THE GREAT GODS! PHOEBE: URANIA: No, that's your father's In memory today tie-clip.

Allow the mulberry a red

ELIAS:

blood hue

What's that doing down here? To show the world how sorry

PHOEBE:

....They were!

Well, dear, I'm sure I don't

know!

PHOEBE:

Here it is!

(The family arrive back at their places just as the Graces finish their poem.)

PHOEBE :

Oh, splendid! Splendid!

ELIAS:

Fine work! Fine!

PHOEBE:

Did you hear that guitar? Simply marvelous! And my favorite story. Thymus and Frisbe!

ELIAS:

You know, Zeus, baby, I'm surprised it's so quiet around here. I've been doing a little reading, and from the books I've looked at, you people used to be quite the sports. You know....the month long..... parties, and the drinking.....

FAUN:

My father means all those orgies and that free sex.

PHOEBE:

Paun!

FAUN:

Really, mother, I do know what it's all about.

PHOEBE:

I know you do, dear, but you don't have to let everyone else know you know. (To Aphrodite.)

Honestly, it's no fun trying to create the right image when your own children refuse to accept the basic principles of deceit.

ZEUS:

IF YOU THINK WE WERE DEBAUCHED, SLOBBERING HEDONISTS.....

APHRODITE:

You'd be absolutely right.

ZEUS:

Aphrodite!

APHRODITE:

Will you please keep still? I'm not ashamed of it and neither should you be! You see, it's been some time since we've....romped. We've grown tired over the centuries, and now that no one believes in us any longer, I'm afraid we've lost most of our power. I guess you'd say that our image has slipped quite a little!

ELIAS:

Boy, I'll say!

PHOEBE:

Elias, please!

ELIAS:

What'd I do now?

APHRODITE:

I expect that within a century or two we'll.....just disappear. (She looks at the rest who lower their eyes sadly.)

APHRODITE'S MOTIF

The day will come when we are gone,
An antique pantomime.

Pretty players dressed in dawn

Singing songs in rhyme.

Of lovers in the eve of summer

Of days and dreams all gold and green

When cascade kisses silver shimmer

Dance the crimson silken sheen.

Dance the crimson silken sheen.

The day will come when we are gone.

A frieze of crumbled stone

Marble children playing on

Perfect and alone.

Limestained tears amid the laughter Ringing pure against the breeze. And every grain of sand can shatter Timeless statues' flawless ease. Timeless statues' flawless ease.

Our silhouettes are finely drawn

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Black against the darkened stair.

The day will come when we are gone.

No one will know, no one will care.

No one will know, no one will care.

ZEUS:

DISAPPEAR?....DISAPPEAR!....NEVER!

APHRODITE:

I'm afraid we shall whether you wail against it or not, Zeus!

HERMES:

(Sigh.) Oh, well, it was nice, wasn't it....

MARS:

And I was just thinking of all those glorious battles.....

Oh! (He bursts into tears.)

PHOEBE:

Oh, Elias! I can't stand it! Can't we do something for them? There must be something we can do!

ELIAS:

I don't know, Phoebe! Once your image has slipped.....

PHOEBE:

Elias, do something!

ELIAS:

All right! All right! God, you've got lungs of steel!

(ne thinks.) Let's see....yes.....(Looking around.)

Good air....nice view....restful.....Yeah! It's

a natural!

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APHRODITE:

Does that mean we have some chance for an image?

HOMER:

It means that my father's commercial mind smells a profit. Whether it means you have a chance or not depends on what he can get out of it.

ELIAS:

Look! Can't you shut up for once? A man can't even do something nice for someone else without some cynic criticizing.

HOMER:

(He just rattles this out.) Ten-percent of the net plus twenty-percent.

ELIAS:

Twenty-five-percent and it's a deal!....(Caught.) AH!

HOMER:

You see? Philanthropy is not one of father's better fronts. Anyway, take it; it's a good deal for a promoman. I skunked him.

PHOEBE:

Elias, Homer's right, for once be truly Christian; help them first and think about cheating them later. Now what are we going to do for them?

ELIAS:

Well, I was just thinking with the right promotion, my promotion, that is, this place could really catch on

as a resort area, I mean. Nice view, good air, and it's the only place around. We could overcharge and cut service to a ridiculous minimum....maybe a restaurant....yeah, that's good! We'd be a natural for snob appeal!

APHRODITE:

I don't understand. What does all this mean to us? ELIAS:

Look, today without the right image you're nothing.

No image, no status. So we'll give you an image,

young, vibrant....SEXY!

APHRODITE:

OH!

ZEUS:

(He moans.)

ELIAS:

We'll bill this place as the biggest resort since
Miami Beach.DINE WITH THE GODS.....In a matter
of weeks this place will be swarming with thousands of
social conscious libertines anxious to relive the
glorious days of Dirty olâ Greece! It'll be fantastic!

ZEUS:

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WE DON'T WANT THOUSANDS OF MORTALS
HERE!....I will not allow this!

APHRODITE:

Listen, Zeus, this may be our last chance. We can't

outrun time at our age!....Do you want to disappear.....
to melt into the mists of time as if you'd never
existed?

ZEUS:

No....but all those mortals!

APHRODITE:

We can learn to cope with them! Why do you think
we exist? If we have no purpose, we have no life;
it's as simple as that! Our purpose is to rule man.
....(To Elias.) We will rule?

ELIAS:

Aphrodite, sweetheart, we'll have you on top of the world in no time, no time at all....all of you.....
young again, strong.....purposeful.....

HOMER:

And rich.

ELIAS :

Yes....we'll talk about business matters later....

Think of yourselves cavorting about, back in the saddle again, as it were.

YOUTH (REPRISE)

All right, now Youth! That's the key!

It doesn't matter if you're tired if you've got vitality.

Within the card-game they call life, sex-

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appeal's the trump.

A hormone shot before the match will get you o're the hump.

Just as long as you've got your testosterone
Then there's not any thought of your being
alone.

Though past the prime there isn't any need to face reality.

Now let's try Youth! I confess!

Eternal youth's a burden, but then so is happiness.

I'd rather be a younger self than a sage, decrepit, wise.

I may be dumb and insincere, but who wants baggy eyes?

I will fight every year with false tooth and nails

With my eyes on my waist, my feet firmly on scales.

Outside I'll be pure springtime, within an ancient mess.

BLACKOUT

ACT II SCENE I

(The scene is the same as in the first act.

At the rise of the curtain there is no one on stage.

After a very brief moment Phoebe's voice can be heard offstage as she calls out exercises for Aphrodite.)

PHOEBE:

One two, one two, one two, one two, one two, one two, (She and Aphrodite enter. They are both dressed in warm-up clothes. Aphrodite is jogging with great difficulty.) one two, one two, one two....AT EASE! Very good, dear, you've worked up a lovely sweat!

APHRODITE:

Is this absolutely necessary? Fuff. Puff.

PHOEBE:

No, my dear. Not if you don't mind looking like some sway-bosomed earth mother, not if you don't mind lumbering about like some pathetic tub....no, not at all.

APHRODITE:

(She begins to run in place.) one two, one two, one two.....

PHOEBE:

That's right, dear, image....always the image.

that is the most important thing to remember.

APHRODITE:

I am sorry about Zeus' attitude....one two, one two, one two....He just won't get used to you mortals.

I'm afraid he's living in the past. He seems to think that the only way to attain the right image is through the old way....you know, thunderbolts, glowering and sacrificial altars. He just won't learn that to earn the right image sometimes one must....what was it you said?

PHOEBE:

Accept the absurdities of conformity. Oh, don't worry, dear. We can handle him....higher with those legs.

APHRODITE:

Oh, yes....(She tries harder.) Handle him? Ha, that would be the trick of the ages! I've been trying to influence him for eons, and, believe me nothing works.....

Just between the two of us, I even tried a little.....

charm....once!

PHOEBE:

You didn't!

APHRODITE:

Yes....It was so embarrassing....By the time we got around to the pith of the matter we had both forgotten our objectives. It's been longer than I thought!

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PHOEBE:

One two, one two....Oh, my dear, you're so naive! We're not doing all this work for you to waste your new-found sex-appeal on Zeus!

APHRODITE:

No?

PHOEBE:

Why, no, dear! One of the basic principles of having an image for a woman is not to waste it on those who won't appreciate it. It's for the public. No woman tries to charm her husband. What would be the point of that? She's already got him, and any attempt to charm him would only come across in the eyes of the rest of the world as a need for reassurance. No, charm, being in shape is for the sake of politics not vanity. Oh, my dear, if you truly want to influence Zeus, you've got to use tactics; you've got to shake his image up a little. A little faster, dear you're slowing down....

APHRODITE:

Tactics?

PHOEBE:

Certainly! When you want something done by your man you needn't plead or browbeat. You simply indicate you know better by subtly proving to him that he's totally ineffectual....

THE WOMAN'S ROLE

A man is such a delicate thing.

He's such a thing to cherish.

Without a woman's iron wing

The helpless thing would perish.

When he comes home at the end of day

To rest and find content.

That's the time you make your play

And tell him he's incompetent.

Breathe deeply, dear!

Man's penchant to philosophize
Turns him dull and peaceful.
There's nothing left to criticize
He's sickeningly joyful.
Marriage becomes tedium
Totally without
The pleasures of correcting him
The clumsy, overbearing lout.

A little faster, dear, you're slowing down.

A woman needs a man's neglect

For all her plans to flower

To undercut her man's respect

To steal his finest hour.

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After all, she's due her share

She councils and deters.

His best ideas are only fair.

What's his is hers, what's hers is hers.

Who wants a perfect, loving mate
Relaxed and oh, so charming.
Perfection breeds a burning hate.
It's frustrating and alarming.
If you want to keep your man
Shatter him with doubt.
Don't let him do more than you can.
He'll quickly learn to do without.

A woman's role is quite a chore
That can't be overrated.

She drives his wits 'til they are sore,
Yet she seems understated.

She stands behind her man's success.

She helps in every plan.

She saves him from each dreadful mess
'til he forgets that he's a man.

Because(1)

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Because (5)

She loves him.

God, she loves him!

More than he'll ever know.

She loves him deeply

And so completely

She'll never let him go.

APHRODITE:

I think I'm going to die!

PHOEBE:

Oh, go ahead and rest dear.

APHRODITE .

(She lies on the altar stone.) Thank you!

PHOEBE:

Oh, here they both come, our strong, stubborn men!.....

Just watch me, dear!

(Enter Elias followed by Zeus. Elias carries a very long list of items and matters of business to be taken up.)

ELIAS:

Liquor, groceries, advertisements....entertainment.....

Oh, that reminds me. Faun's been working with the

Graces all morning; they're pretty bad, you know.

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ZEUS:

What do you mean? They are the patronesses of art and beauty.

ELIAS:

Yeah, yeah, I know, I know, but look, Zeus, baby, they've been off the boards for a couple of eons. Even the slickest agent in the business couldn't build an image for those girls,....Well, we'll just have to do with them! I suppose until we can get some regular chorus girls in from Vegas. You know, a little boob for the rubes, ha! ha!....Hey! Maybe we can bill them as a novelty strip tease!....Do you think we can coax the old gals to take a little off? (He makes a note of this idea.) I sent Mercury out for the kitchen equipment. How long....

PHOEBE:

Elias....

ELIAS:

....Do you think it ought to take him? I've got another list of stuff.

PHOEBE:

Elias....

ELIAS:

What is it, Phoebe? Can't you see I'm busy?

PHOEBE:

Well, I'm sorry to bother you, dear, but I just thought you might like to know that all this is going to fail.

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ELIAS:

Not right, now sweetheart, I.....What?

PHOEBE :

All this is going to fail. In fact, it's going to disgrace you miserably.

ELIAS:

Fail? Fail? How can you say that? Fail? It won't fail! It can't fail! It's brilliant....Why is it going to fail?

PHOEBE:

Well, dear, you're going about it all the wrong way.

You have no system, no organization, no....no cool.

ELIAS:

Don't be ridiculous. I never have any organization, just red tape. Besides, I've never failed at anything in my life! I....I can't fail! It-it would ruin me! I'd lose my image! Fail? Oh, that's impossible, unheard of! What should I do? Tell me!

PHOEBE:

You'll think of something, dear. You always do;

I have faith in you. (She crosses back to Aphrodite triumphantly.)

ELIAS:

You do? (To Zeus.) Did you hear that? That's my wife talking.... That's what a man needs! Someone to believe in him, to give him courage to fight his way

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through. A man can face anything, even failure, as long as there's someone beside him to believe in him.

With a strong woman beside him, a man can face any disaster. If his friends desert him, she's beside him, helping. If he loses his will to live, she's beside him, helping. If he gives up every vestige of hope, and with the last courage of his being, he puts a bullet in his head, he can die happily, because she's beside him, helping! (He kisses her on the forehead.) Thank you, my dear. (To Zeus.) Now, I was thinking that we could use that big torch outside for a barbecue pit; it's just the right size!

ZEUS:

Not the divine flame of hope!

ELIAS:

Now take it easy! (They exit.)

APHRODITE:

Wasn't that just a bit unkind?

PHOEBE :

Oh, no! He needed that. A little reassurance.

After all, what would he do without me? I remember our wedding...."till death do us part." Well, come along, dear. There's so much to do! One two, one two, one two, one two....(They exit.)

(Immediately the Graces strophe in led by Faun with Apollo following all. The Graces are still in formation

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but they are shaking fitfully, trying to learn the modern dance steps Faun is teaching them. Apollo tries to get in on the action.)

FAUN:

Ladies, ladies, please! We haven't got much time. (She sees Urania and is astonished.) What are you doing?

URANIA:

(She is dancing up a storm.) Why, I'm dancing the way you showed us. How's this? (She tries some bumps and grinds.)

FAUN:

Y-yeah, yeah....that's something like it....keep trying. (To herself.) Why me?

APOLLO:

(To Urania.) Hm! You look like a Harpie in heat!

URANIA:

Watch it, sourtone!

APOLLO:

How could I miss it?

FAUN:

No, no, ladies! I don't think you get the point.

Try to think of this as seduction set to music.

URANIA:

REALLY?

FAUN's

Sure!....Easy!.....Just easy! (She shows them.)

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GRACES / URANIA:

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APOLLO:

Hard! Very, very hard!

FAUN:

(Not hearing him.) No....Look, yourre trying to be graceful.

URANIA:

(She is pleased.) You noticed!

FAUN:

Well, don't.

URANIA:

I don't think I understand.

FAUN:

You can't be graceful and artistic if you want to be a successful entertainer. The public wants to be turned on.

URANIA:

Turned on?

FAUN:

Sure....Think about it.....

SURE TO PLEASE

Shakespeare wrote some charming plays, could polish up a sonnet.

But he knew poised and polished ways could

never get 'em on it!

Now, Cleopatra couldn't miss sweet Antony's vibration.

To captivate her Tony's eye she bared her aspiration.

Threw caution over her left hip.

Invited him on board her ship

And so she entertained him with a little

tit-ilation.

She knew that you should:

Play your part for all it's got.

Keep your material good and hot.

Use your talent with a gentle ease

And you'll be sure,

Yeah, you'll be sure,

And you'll be sure to please.

When cruising up her runway stage a stripper knows the score.

She is there to cultivate, uplift, improve rapport.

She grinds out entertainment cool

As any classic writing school

Just ask the men who watch her strip if

they're uplifted more.

They want her just to:

Play her part for all it's got.

Keep her material good and hot.

Use her talent a gentle ease

And she'll be sure

Yeah, she'll be sure,

And she'll be sure to please.

And on the modern stage you must show them all you've got.

Employ a free and easy tongue "Trippingly o're smut."

Pry loose from inhibition's waste.

Throw off the pall they call good taste.

Art and beauty's just a front for being in a rut.

Verse.

URANIA:

My dear, my dear, my dear, my dear, do you mean that all your entertainment is like that?

FAUN:

Oh, yes, every bit of it. The only thing that really sells is sex! Sex. Sex. Sex.

URANIA:

Cool!

FAUN:

All right, ladies, now try it again, and this time try

to feel the beat.

APOLLO:

You'd better write it down in Braille for them!

URANIA:

Look, you lost chord, why don't you just wrap one of those strings around your....

PAUN:

All right, ladies, you can rest for five minutes.
We'll meet in the courtyard in five minutes.

URANIA:

....and sing all your songs in soprano! You anemic little

APOLLO:

Ha! Ursa Major has a sensitive spot!

FAUN.

All right you two! Can it, or you're out of the show!

APOLLO/URANIA:

Oh, but....

FAUN:

We've lost at least half of our rehearsal time while you two bickered. Business is business.....Either you let me do my job and help you or I'll have you both thrown out on your ears!

APOLLO:

(To Urania.) She'd have better luck if they let you land on your largest target area.

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URANIA:

Ok, girls, take a fiver!....Now you little quarter note!

(She chases him out. Enter Eros carefully plumed in his finest toga.)

EROS:

Cough. Cough. How do you do, my lovely?

FAUN:

Oh. hi.

EROS:

Well.....I see that you've been working very hard.
You must be very tired.

FAUN:

No. I'm fine!

EROS:

Oh....you are!....Well, you it's not good for you to overwork. It tends to dull one the more pleasant business of living.

FAUN

Oh?

EROS:

Certainly. One should never forget the Golden Mean.

Never too much of anything. (To himself.)....Or too

little....Ah, yes, my little temple dove, the Golden

Mean is only one of many philosophical truths you

should both know and practice. I'll wager that there's

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a lot you don't know. Why don't you restawhile in the garden with me and we'll discuss it.....

TANGO EROTIQUE

I know a little place out in the garden
Where we could just go to sit and drift.

I'd listen to how hard I know you've worked then
Perhaps I might give you a little lift.

No thanks, I'm relaxed right here.

Just think of lying underneath a palm tree.

Indulging in each whimsical caprice.

I know that there is much you could learn from me.

Out there we both could have a little peace.

No thanks.

The perfume of sweet smelling grass

Is perfect to rest any....lass.

You might find distraction

From our interaction

How quickly the time would pass.

I'm sorry, but I don't have time.

I'd tell you of the secrets of the ages.

How lyric is the songbird's throbbing throat.

We might discover history's hidden pages.

But first we ought to see that they are wrote.

We'd study up all night until the dawn.

We'd know all things in nature that are true.

I can't think what I'd rather work upon

Than nature with a lovely thing like you.

I'd tutor your greatest arrear.

You'll lean something that's sure, my dear.

We won't put it down

'til we earn reknown

As scholars quite cavalier.

Maybe one of my brothers would be interested.

Some rest would stimulate imagination.

I'm sure that horizontally you'd find

I've got some new ideas about creation

I think will fertilize a youthful mind.

We'll work to cure you of misapprehensions.

Your mental inhibitions to allay.

I feel I can relieve you of your tensions,

And help your moral fiber to defray.

I'll help you more than you can know
As my vehemence starts to grow.

I'll work to impress you
Until you confess you
Can see some improvement show.

I don't think so.

No?

No.

Please don't confuse my rusty adulation.

It's been so long I've had a chance to teach.

I'm certain I could win your admiration

If only you would let me try to reach.

I'm most concerned to be your teaching

fellow.

To help you to conclude apprenticeship.

A master learns to cram when he grows mellow

Before his pedagogics start to slip.

I'd like to regain my position

And prime my declined erudition.

My outline's defined

To withstand the grind.

And be your prepared disquisition.

FAUN:

Brother! You sure are rusty!

EROS:

What?

FAUN:

Well, you're trying to seduce me, but you're so obvious!

EROS:

Oh!....Perish the thought!....I mean....

FAUN:

Don't be embarrassed. I think it's cute! But you're really out of practice. I don't know why you old guys just don't come right out and ask. With all that experience you'd think that would be the most natural approach instead of all the funny deception. If you want a good lay, just ask!

ERUS:

Well.....Could I.....I mean.....Oh, dash it all,
I can't just ask like that. It's all so cold! So
harsh!

FAUN:

Honesty may be harsh as you say, but at least it's not confusing. Anyway, don't worry; I wouldn't dream of it!

ERUS:

But you told me to ask!

FAUN:

That's because I didn't want to inhibit you. I mean, just because you're so dreadfully old doesn't mean you're dead....yet. Not really that is. But don't think you can just prey upon teenage girls like we were all a bunch of Lolitas or something. No, I had an old lover once; what a washout! He'd just get revved up when his motor would konk out.

Oh, he tried to keep me interested, but I just couldn't maintain a relationship on an entirely aesthetic

plane. I think you're cute and all that, but I don't want to embarrass you when it comes down to delivery.

I don't think you could cut it, and that would totally blow your mind being the God of Love and all that. You just cling to your memories like a good boy.....

I've got to get going. I've got to pasture the cows.

Thanks for the offer just the same. You're cute!

ERUS:

Wait!....I didn't get a chance to try to....wait.....

cute!."It doesn't mean you're dead....yet!".....

I think I'd better lie down. I'm not well at all.....

(He wanders off.)

(Enter Homer and Hermes. Hermes is very upset.)

HERMES:

See here! I exist!

HOMER:

How do you know?

HERME 5 :

Well....I know.....You're there and I'm here and.....
and I know!

HOMER:

Without your five senses, you know. Remember Socrates.

HERMES:

Of course without my senses!

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HOMER:

All right! (He sits on the altar stone.) You prove to me you exist. You may not touch me. (He blocks his eyes and ears.)

HERMES:

(A little shaken he tries.) Uh....hello....hello!

Look! I exist! (He snaps his fingers in front of

Homer's face.) Hold on now! I exist!....see....

LOOK AT ME, PLEASE! Pleaeaeaeaeaeaeaeaeaeaeaea All

right! I don't exist, but please look at me!

PLEASE....PLEA....

HOMER:

What's the matter?

HERMES:

Please, please, don't do that any more, I can't bear it!
I felt....

HOMER:

Precisely!

HERMES:

I see it all now. Just don't close yourself off like that again!

HOMER:

You see? You don't exist unless I choose to recognize
You. It's a much more potent philosophy than your
Socrates!

HERMES:

Oh, it's horrible, horrible! How can you live with

such power? It's....inhuman!

HOMER:

On the contrary, it's very human. Our entire society is built upon it. If I wish to be rid of someone, I merely unrecognize him. He may not actually disappear, but if I don't recognize him, he doesn't exist, and that makes me feel better.

HERMES:

How do you people live with everyone disexisting everyone else?

HOMER :

Very comfortably, thank you. We've been doing it for years, and we've arrived at a state of delightful, peaceful non-existence!

HERMES:

(He thinks.) Hm....This is very interesting.....

And all these centuries I've allowed myself to be distracted by petty disputes and inane frolics.

HOMER :

Exactly.

HERMES:

How very interesting! I should like to hear more about yourphilosophy. (They exit.)

(Enter Zeus carrying a large pile of papers.

He is confused. He sits for a moment on the altar

Stone.)

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MARS:

(He enters.) YAAAAAAAIIIIIIIII ZEUS! ZEUS!
ZEUS:

Uh....what is it?

MARS:

Zeus, you've got to help me! Everywhere I go he's right there leering and pointing his finger at me! YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE HIM STOP!

ZEUS:

Stop jabbering like a ninny and tell me. Who is pointing what finger and running after you?

MARS:

The young mortal with the beard. No sooner than he arrived here he began to follow me. Now he's got a sign and he's picketing me! He blames me for all the trouble in the world. He says that after the cabaret is a success, he's going to give my name to the P.B.I., whatever that is, and they'll hunt me down.

I didn't do anything! TELL HIM I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!

I'VE BEEN HERE ALL THIS TIME POLISHING MY ARMOR.

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? THE THINGS HE SAID I DID!

YOU'VE GO TO HELP ME!....OH, HERE HE COMES AGAIN!

(Mars runs away with E crossing the stage in hot Pursuit.)

ELIAS:

(He enters.) Oh! Here you are! Where have you been?

Do you have those reservations for the Moose Convention?

ZEUS:

(Looking through his papers.) I didn't know we were starting a zoo as well....

ELIAS:

No, no. Moose....it's a lodge....Y'know like a club.....All right, they're kind of like a zoo, but their money is good, and as far as I'm concerned all men on expense accounts are created equal.

(Enter Aphrodite in the first stages of makeup and in a dressing gown.)

APHRODITE:

Oh, Zeus, look! Isn't this wonderful!....I'm going to be the hostess!

ZEUS:

What....have you done?

APHRODITE:

Look, it comes off!

ZEUS:

Ahi

APHRODITE:

It's all right. You see? You wear it like a hat. It's called a wig.

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PHOEBE:

Wait until you see her all done! False hair, nails.....
eyelashes. She'll have such a good image! You won't
know her!

ZEUS:

I'm not sure I'll want to.

PHOEBE:

Come along, dear. There's still alot to do! We musn't waste time!

ELIAS:

Yeah, c'mon, Zeus, baby. Let's get a move on.

ZEUS:

Would you both please excuse us for a minute. I'd like to talk to Aphrodite alone....And don't call me baby!

ELIAS:

(As they exit.) Boy, is he getting touchy!

PHOEBE:

Well, dear, sometimes it's tough to adjust to progress in so short a time....(They exit.)

APHRODITE:

Well, dear....(She sits on the altar stone.) what is it?

ZEUS:

Don t call me dear!....I can't abide it! It makes
you sound like that mortal.

APHR ODITE:

All right, d.....Zeus.....What do you want?

ZEUS:

I've been thinking, Aphrodite. Is it all worth it?

APHRODITE:

Is what worth it?

ZEUS:

All this! Rushing around like....like half-crazed mortals!.....Building a confounded image!.....order blanks, tax forms......and here's something called a sanitation certificate!.....Furthermore we're about to be stampeded by a herd of Moose!

APHRODITE :

What?

ZEUS:

It's some kind of society or other.... What does it all mean? I just don't understand....

ZEUS' SOLILOQUY

I just don't understand.

Where have men lost the land?

Is there nothing left to wonder at anymore?

Now the valleys are lost

For the mountains are dust,

And the green earth's become a shadow of

life's lore.

What has happened to time?

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Now it burns me like lime.

There's no moment left to talk to by the shore.

I just don't understand.

It is not as I planned.

Does the dawn become a shricking bird of

prey?

Will the days pass like this

Without night's gentle kiss

Or will they cruelly freeze and sneak

away?

Have we really lost much;

We must feel but not touch.

And love is something easy we can say.

No. I don't understand.

Feeling leaves me like sand,

And what is left resounding is my fear.

Oh, but I must go on

Though the magic is gone

And the glitter of the stars has grown

unclear.

Yes, I must fight to live.

I have something to give.

Can I give it up as if I had never been here?

ZEUS:

I con't know.....Maybe we should fade away.....If we've

• • · · · • • • • • • • served our purpose, why go on?

APHRODITE:

Zeus....do you remember when we were young? Do you remember how sweet every day was filled with purpose and meaning. I don't know that we belong any more any better than you do, but don't you think that we owe ourselves the chance to see. Perhaps we might just have something to give the world even if it's just a memory of what we once knew. I don't want to fade away, not just yet, and I don't want to see you fade....You're still every bit of the godhead you once were....to me anyway....Zeus?

ZEUS:

....I wonder where we are going to lodge all these.....
Moose?

BLACKOUT

ACT II SCENE II

(The scene is the same, but now the temple is transformed into a nightclub. Tacky drapery and plastic flowers are everywhere. At the curtain the scene is a bustle of last minute preparation.)

ELIAS:

WHERE'S MERCURY?

URANIA:

(She and the other Graces are dancing.) C'mon girls, shake! Put some sex in it!....(To Apollo.) Will you try to stay on pitch, you little nit?

APOLLO:

Gladly! You find it and I'll stay on it!

ELIAS:

Let's see....Oh, don't forget to order more liquor before the end of the week. That trek up the mountain is bound to make our guests thirsty.

ZEUS:

Check!....You see?....I said check! (He expects some concession for his performance, but receives none.)

ELIAS:

Does everyone know what they're going to do?

ZEUS:

I-I think so.

ELIAS:

Well, I should hope so! I....we spent a lot of effort to build an image for this place. I don't want this opening spoiled!

URANIA:

Apollo, please! At least keep the same tempo!

APOLLO:

I don't see why, it'd be the only constant in the act!

URANIA:

Shut up, you little tin-ear, and play it right!

ZEUS:

I wish this weren't happening!

ELIAS:

Now that's no attitude!

ZEUS:

Yes it is, it just happens to be a negative one!

ELIAS:

Listen, Zeus, baby.....This is all your thing!

ZEUS:

(He moans.)

ELIAS:

You just stick with it and you've got it made! Why, you'll go straight to the top....BUT you have go to have the right attitude....Success! That's what counts!

WHERE'S MERCURY? (Mercury enters pulling a huge cart of equipment covered over by a tarp.) Well, it's about time! Where in the hell have you been?

MERCURY :

Pant. Pant.

ELIAS:

We've been waiting hours for you! What do you think this is?

MERCURY:

Pant. Pant.

ELIAS:

Oh, Well, did you get everything? The dishwasher, stove, utensils, silverware, extra plates....

MERCURY:

Pant. Pant.

ELIAS :

Good! At least you did that right! Now take that stuff out to the kitchen and get it installed! AND DON'T DILLYDALLY AROUND!

MERCURY :

(In silent appeal to Zeus.) Pant. Pant.

ZEUS ::

I know! I know!

ELIAS:

Well?

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(Mercury teeters out to the kitchen. Aphrodite enters humming the #WOMAN'S ROLE." She floats down to Elias and Zeus then stops and curtsies. She is a fat replica of Phoebe.)

APHRODITE:

la la la la la la de de de de de da da da da.....
How do you like it?

ELIAS:

Well! Don't you look nice!

APHRODITE:

Really?

ELIAS:

As pretty as a full page spread!

APHRODITE:

(To Zeus.) Did you hear that?

ZEUS:

....Y-yes....(Aside to Elias.) Is she finished?

ELIAS:

Of course she is. What's wrong?

ZEUS:

Is that what you call an image?

ELIAS:

Yeah....Something wrong with it?

ZEUS:

Oh, no....no..... I guess not. It's just that she looks exactly like.....

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ELIAS:

Phoebe?

ZEUS:

Yes.

ELIAS:

You're right, but what do you expect in just a few weeks?

Creating an image is hard enough without having to

be original as well!

APHRODITE:

Well, Zeus!.....How do you like me?

· ZBUS:

Well....you....very....

URANIA :

(She just notices her.) Aphrodite! You look absolutely stunning!

ZEUS:

THAT'S IT!

URANIA:

Wait 'til you get a load of our act! (She takes her upstage to the Graces.) Ready, girls?

APOLLO:

Ready? They've been overripe for centuries!

(Enter Mars mopping the floor. He pushes Zeus out of the way.)

MARS:

Excuse me, please....No, over there. I haven't done

this yet.

ZEUS &

MARS! What are you doing?

MARS:

Oh, you mean with this?

ZEUS:

Yes, with that?

MARS:

I've reformed!

ZEUS:

Reformed?

MARS:

Yes, I see it all now.War! Destruction, pillage, slaughter, RAPE, RUIN AND REVENGE! (He bursts into tears.) I can't live with all that on my conscience! Oh, I didn't mean it! Honestly, I never realized! Oh!

ZEUS:

I haven't the slightest idea what you're talking about!

MARS:

It's quite simple really. I've finally decided that the mortal was right! And now I've decided to atone for what I've done by rendering peaceful service throughout the rest of eternity! Don't mind me.....

Just pretend that I never existed. (He bursts into tears again.) I'm happy....very, very HAPPY!

ELIAS:

Hey, you missed a spot.

MARS:

Where?

ELIAS:

Over there That's it.

APHRODITE:

Zeus! You should see what the Graces are doing!

ZEUS:

I don't think I could stand any more surprises!

(Enter Hermes. He is reading intently.)

ELIAS:

Well, it's about time! Hey, why aren't you dressed?

C'mon, shake a leg! Time isn't going to wait for you.

APHRODITE:

(Fluttering over to him.) How do you like it, Hermes.....
Hermes?

ELIAS:

Aphrodite, sweetheart, if you don't mind, business before pleasure.

APHRODITE:

Yes, yes, of course.

ELIAS:

C'mon, boy, let's get going....EROS.....Where's Eros?

APHRODITE:

He was out in the courtyard the last time I saw him.
Urania, how does this look? (She shows Urania a
very elaborate curtsey.)

ELIAS:

Well, someone go out and see if he's ready. Mars, you go.

(Mars exits.)

URANIA:

Is this all right? (She shows him a little improvisation to her routine.)

ELIAS:

Very nice. Very nice, Aphrodite, sweetheart, save it for the public. Don't waste your energy now.

APHRODITE:

Oh, of course. Do you think I'll create a good image for the mortals?

ELIAS:

You'll knock 'em dead!

APOLLO:

All she has to do is wound them. These old vultures can take care of the rest!

URANIA:

If you don't shut up I'll....

(Enter Eros helped by Mars.)

ERUS:

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ELIAS:

What's the matter with you? Why aren't you ready? You're supposed to be the host!

EROS:

I can't go through with it!

ELIAS:

Don't be silly, of course you can.

ERUS:

No, no I can't! I just don't have it in me any more.

ELIAS:

What are you talking about?

ERUS:

I'm a sick, tired old god. I just want to be left by the fire to fade quietly away. Just give me a good book and....an apple.

ELIAS:

I thought you were all excited about all those pretty young virgins that would be coming here.

EROS:

Just the ravings of the very old....Don't you see?

My....image has slipped....quite badly. I could

never....000000H!

ELIAS:

What makes you think you're too old? Only yesterday you were trying to decide whether you should....

EROS:

I know that! But I didn't realize how far gone I am.
I'm cute, but I'm not capable.

ELIAS:

Cute, huh?....Listen, you can't listen to the young about the problems of the old. They'll have you buried by forty! If you want a young image, you've got to think and act young. Don't rush the apple and the good book. C'mon, now, pull yourself together. Remember, what you lack in....shall we say zeal..... you make up for in sheer know-how!

ERUS:

Really?

ELIAS:

Would I con you?....(To the Graces.) Girls, girls!

Don't break anything, remember the show! You back there, show a little more leg. God knows you've got enough!

All right, gang! Gather round. Now I know you've worked hard these past few days, so I won't bore you by going over ground you already know. You've been great! Oh, I know we've run into a few snags here and there, but, by and large, we've come through this thing clean....

JUST BE YOURSELF THE WAY I SHOWED YOU

ELIAS:

Now the doors will open wide

Two-thousand years will sweep aside.

Once more mankind will rush inside

So take your places, grin with pride:

And just be yourselves the way I showed you.

And everything will come off fine.

You've been well-trained in your special value.

Just give 'em a smile and they'll be waitin'

in line.

Your training's been careful and what's so nice is

You can hold your own with no identity crisis.

So just be yourselves the way I showed you.

And nothing can stop you now.

Don't forget your duties; be kind and polite,

And you'll have them eating in the palm of your

hand.

You've got the makings now don't get uptight.
You're the only depot to supply the demand.
We've been so cautious to mold your ego.
No one could see the scars because they're

too small to show.

Now you can be yourselves the way I showed you,
And nothing much could stop you now.

CHORUS:

And you just be yourself the way he showed you,

And everything will come off fine.

You've been well-trained in your special

value

Just give 'em a smile and they'll be waitin' in line.

Our training's been careful and what's so nice is

We can hold our own with no identity crisis.

So just be yourself the way he showed you And nothing can stop us now.

ELIAS:

Just be yourselves. It's no great trouble.

It's nothing much to understand.

Your sincere efforts make profits double.

CHORUS:

And we're the only depot to supply the demand.

ELIAS:

Once you're more clever you'll raise the prices.

CHORUS:

And we can hold our own with no identity crisis.

TOGETHER:

Just be yourself the way I showed you and nothing can stop you now!

CHURUS:

So you just be yourself the way he showed you.

ELIAS:

You've been well-trained in your special value.

CHORUS:

Just give 'em a smile and they'll be waitin' in line.

ELIAS:

Our training's been careful and what's so nice is

CHORUS:

We can hold our own with no identity crisis.

TOGETHER:

So just be yourself the way he showed you And nothing can stop us now.

So you just be yourself the way he showed you

Remember you've got some hidden value.

Just be yourself and

Everything will come off fine!

BLIAS:

OK, gang! Now go to it and win! Remember nothing was ever gained by quitting.

(Enter Phoebe and the family packed and ready to leave.)

Is everything packed?

PHOEBE:

Yes, dear, I took care of everything.

ZEUS:

Where are you going?

ELIAS:

Home.

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ZEUS:

You can't leave now! What'll happen?

BLIAS:

What do you mean? You can't expect us to support you forever. We're not the American Government! After all, we arranged everything for you, put everything together, and all you have to do is run it! Why, you've got the best of Modern Western Cultural Training. We've rebuilt your image. Don't worry, we'll be back every three months to check the books and collect our ten

percent.

ZEUS:

No.

ELIAS:

What do you mean, no? Surely you don't begrudge us our ten percent!

ZEUS:

You are not leaving here like this....baby! You've been telling me how important that confounded image is! Well, I haven't been sleeping! All right! All right! I GIWE IN! I CAPITULATE!....You leave here, and you get nothing!

ELIAS:

WHAT?

ZEUS ::

It's no use putting up a fuss. I checked, and we have no contract giving you anything! According to your own laws you get nothing unless I choose to give it to you!

HOMER:

I'm afraid he's got you, father! (To Zeus.) Congratulations!

ELIAS:

Shut up, you little monster! You don't think you're going to get away with this, do you? I'll have you in court....I'll.....

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ZEUS:

(He throws a tremendous thunderbolt, and, for once, cowers Elias.) SILENCE:....(He is pleased with himself.) Well....that was pretty good! If you wish, I'll give you a discount rate on your reservations in view of your assistance with this project!

ELIAS:

DISCOUNT!....I don't believe it....I've created a monster!

HOMER :

Oh, don't take it so hard, father. You can deduct this whole vacation as a business trip. It'll save you two-thousand dollars.

ELIAS:

(He is stunned.) But.....but.....I don't get anything.....
I built that image.....I-I

PHOEBE:

Homer's right, dear. Be philosophical about all this.

After all you were a tremendous success! Look at all
you've done for them. Think of it as an act of
philanthropy! (To Aphrodite.) Remember, dear, tactics!

APHRODITE:

Oh, yes, tactics!

PHOEBE:

Are you sure you know the way back, dear?

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ELIAS:

Way?.....Way?.....Uh.....yeah, yeah, sure I know the way. I just don't understand what went wrong!

PHOEBE:

Well, come along, dear. We must get back before nightfall.

Bye, all. We'll see you next vacation. I'm sure

once Elias recovers from his nervous breakdown he'll

want to take care of your offer of discount. Well....

gang....Onward. Up! Up! Up!

(The family exits.)

(Suddenly from offstage there is the sound of a dishwasher running amuck.)

MERCURY:

YAAAAAAAAIIIIIIIIII ZEUS! ZEUS! ONE OF THE
MACHINES IS COME ALIVE! ZEUS! ZEUEUEUEUEUEUE! (He runs
across the stage in terror.)

APHRODITE:

Oh, dear!

ZEUS:

It sounds serious. Mars, you'd better go down and quiet that thing!

MARS:

Not me! I've reformed. Remember?

ZEUS:

Well, someone has to go!

APHRODITE:

Maybe it will quiet down if we give it some time, dear.

ZEUS:

Yes, yes. Just to make sure we'll give it a lot of time!

APOLLO:

THAT DOES IT! NO MORE! IF YOU WANT MUSIC YOU CAN

HUM! (He storms out.)

ZEUS:

Urania, what's the matter?

URANIA:

Oh, nothing; I just told him he'd play better if

he made a fist!

ZEUS:

Why did you tell him that?

URANIA:

We don't need him! Right, girls!

GRACES:

RIGHT!

ZEUS:

(He moans.)

ERUS:

Zeus, don't make me go through with it!

ZEUS:

What's the matter with you now?

ERUS:

I m too old for all this!: I just can't any more!

ZEUS:

The mortal told you....

EROS:

I know, but he was just trying to make me feel better!
.....I think I'll go lie down; I'm very tired.

ZEUS:

I think I'm going mad.....Hermes! What are you doing dressed like that? You're supposed to be head waiter. Now hurry up and get dressed. Remember our image!

HERMES:

I don't see you; I don't hear you; you don't exist.

ZEUS:

What? Now see here!....HERMES! Look at me.....
Hermes! HERMEEEEEEEEEES!

APHRODITE:

Zeus....

ZEUS:

Not now Aphrodite! Can't you see I'm trying to get things ready?

APHRODITE:

I just thought you might like to know that all this is going to fail.

ZEUS:

Well, I haven't got time....fail? What do you mean fail?

APHRODITE:

Well, you've got no system, no organization...no cool!

ZEUS :

What do you mean fail? I can't fail. Not after all this! What should I do? Tell me!

APHRODITE:

You'll think of something, dear. I have faith in you.

BLACKOUT

(Curtain call on <u>JUST BE YOURSELF THE WAY I</u>
SHOWED YOU.)

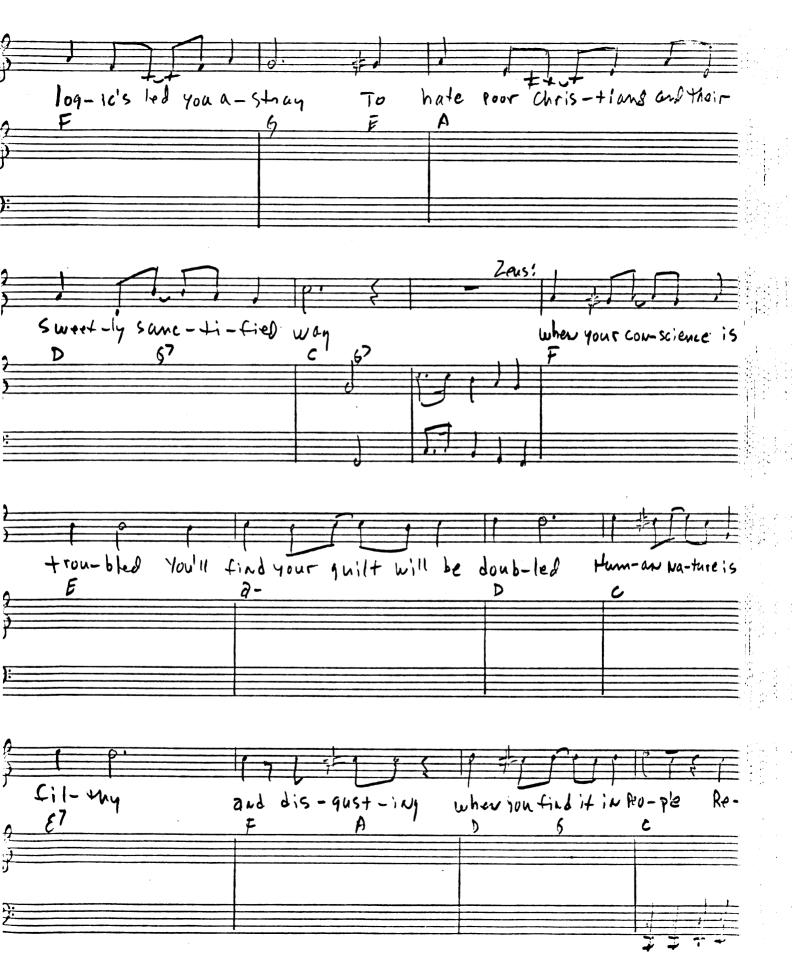




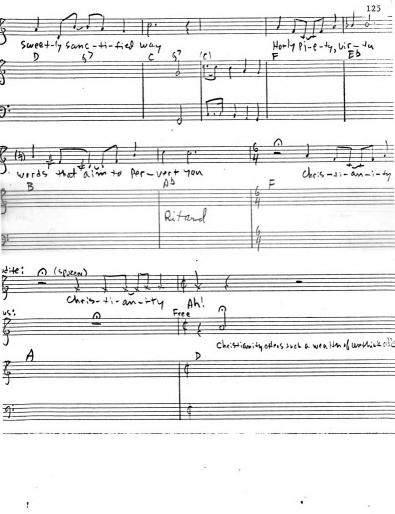


















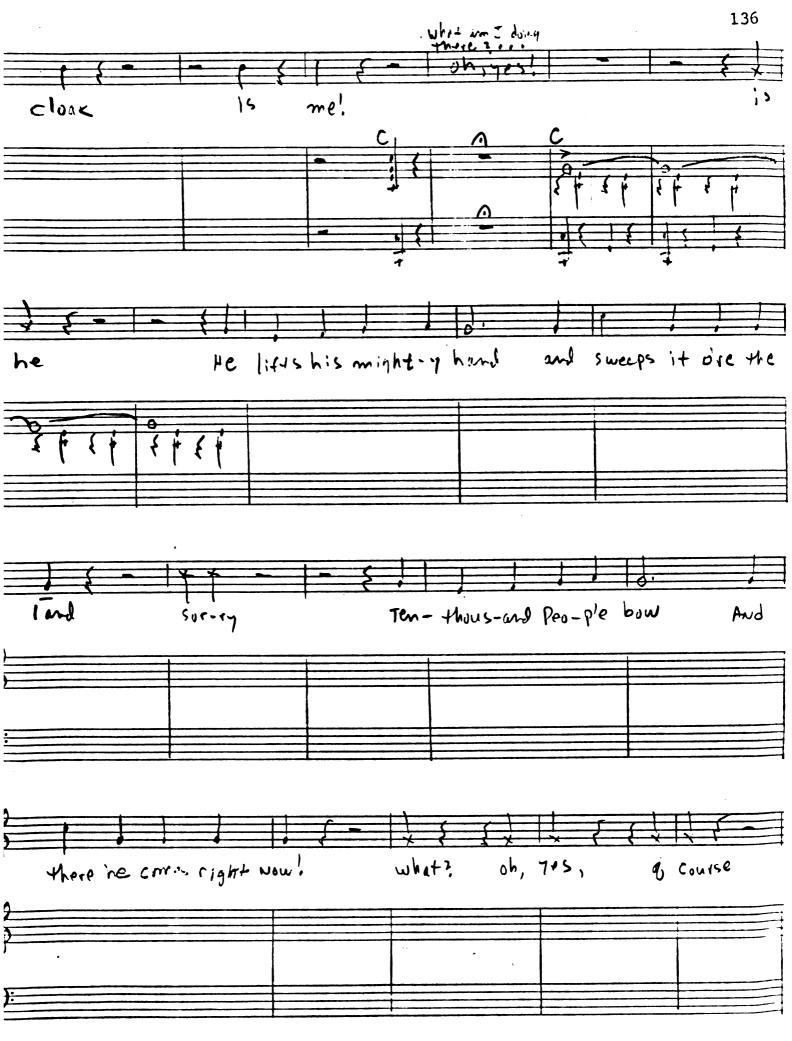
















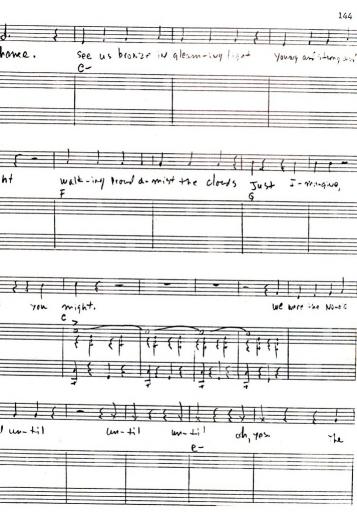










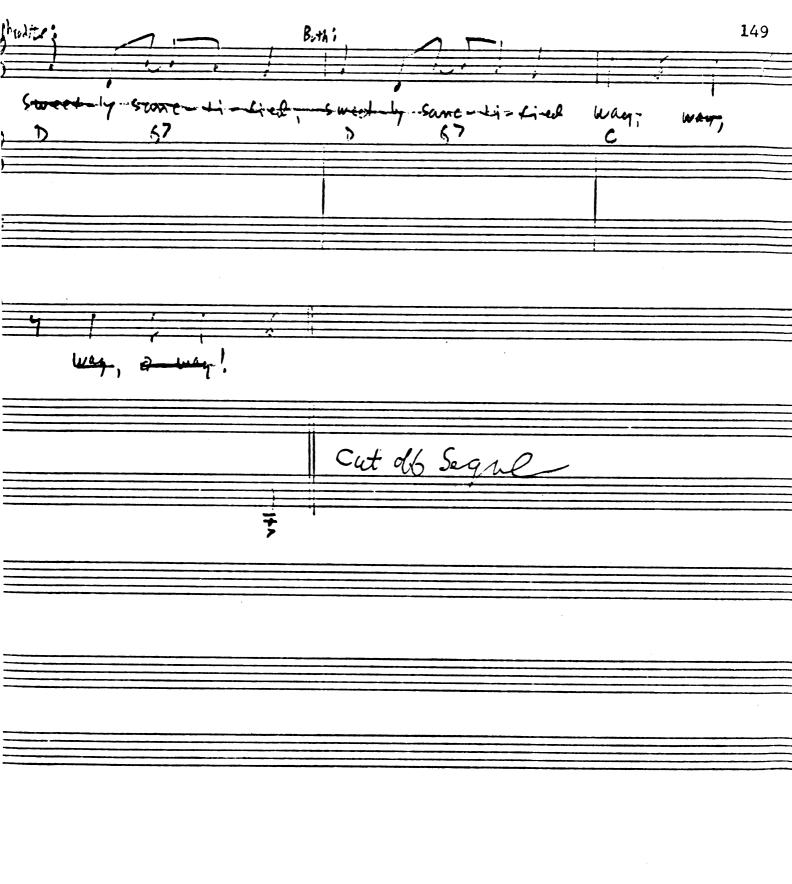












Cue: Curtain (Geografi	
Light motif 2,	ord Elias: "anting good showest, Practical functions, Phoebe!
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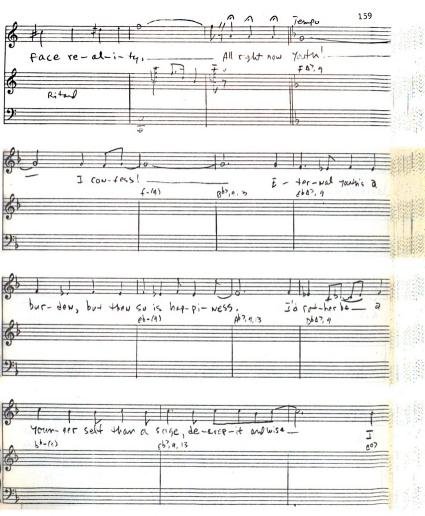


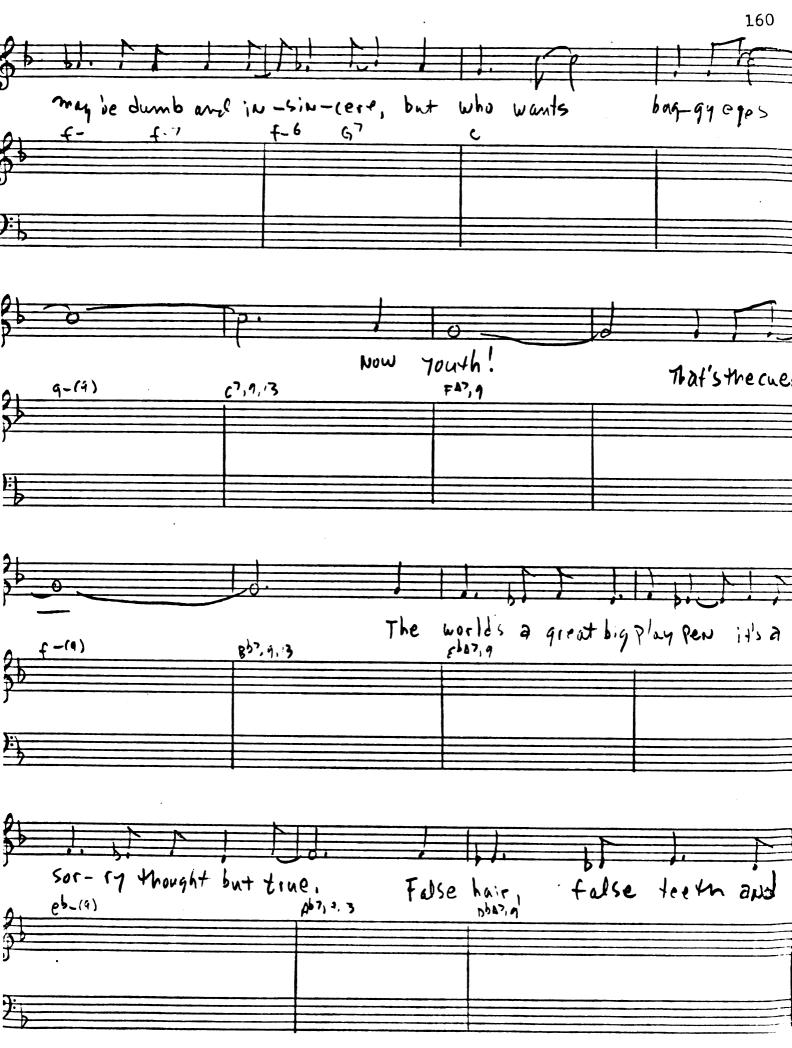






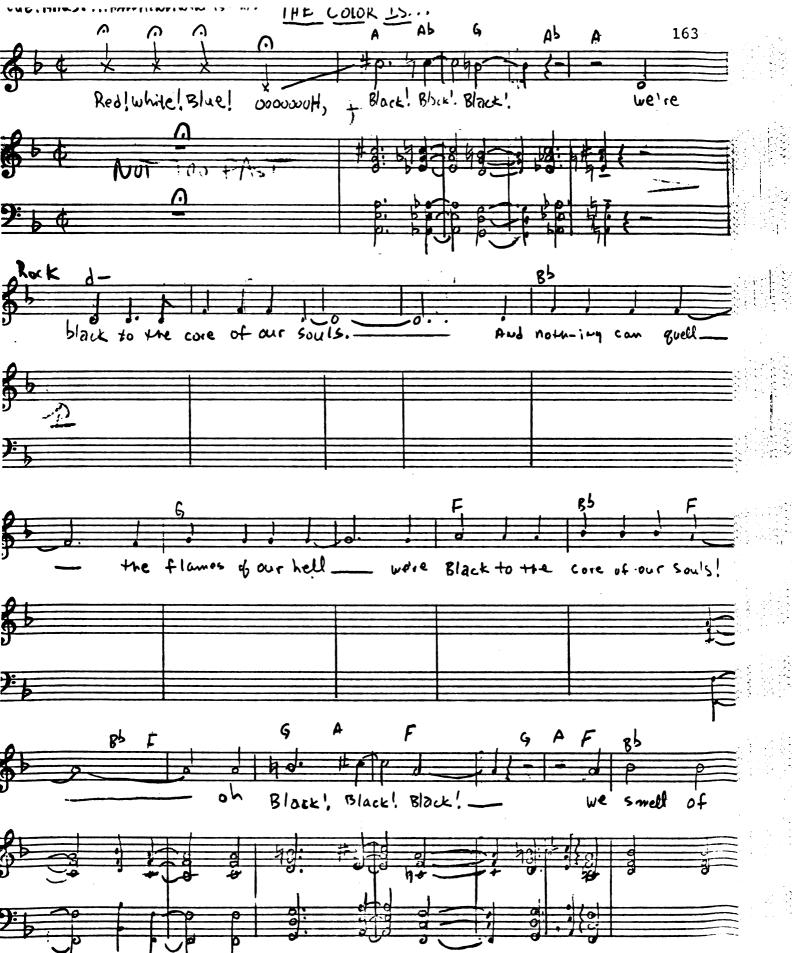


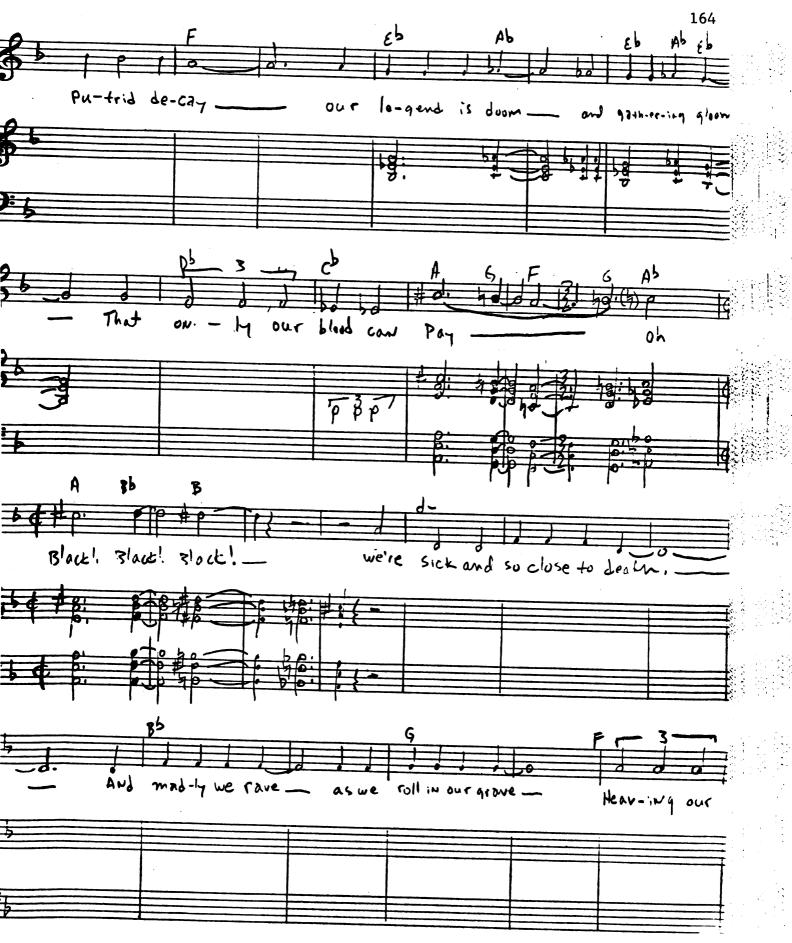




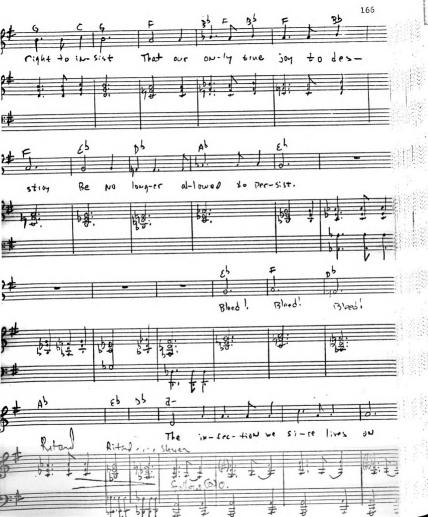
















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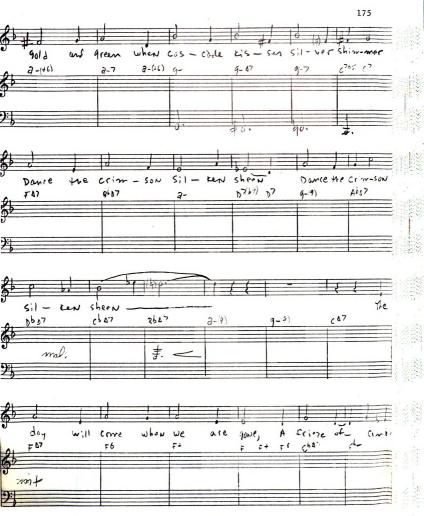






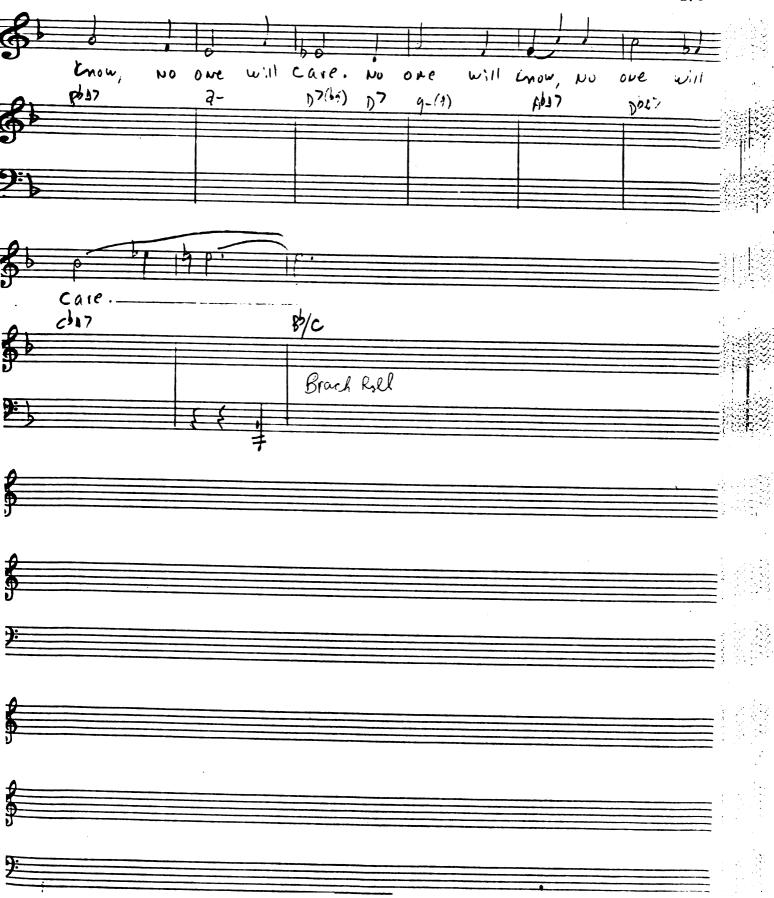
Cue: Aphrodite: "I think we should Fade immal. | (Bring up on Proche: "Here it is" (Continue (REP Throughout)

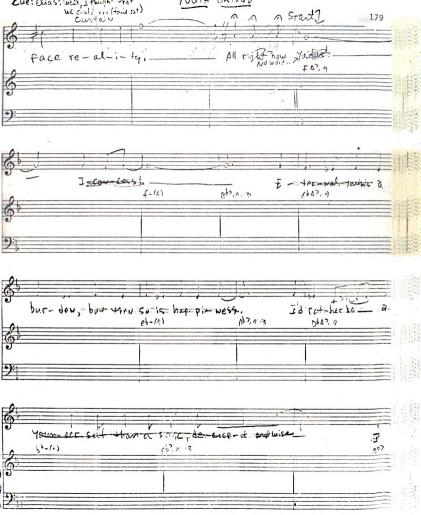








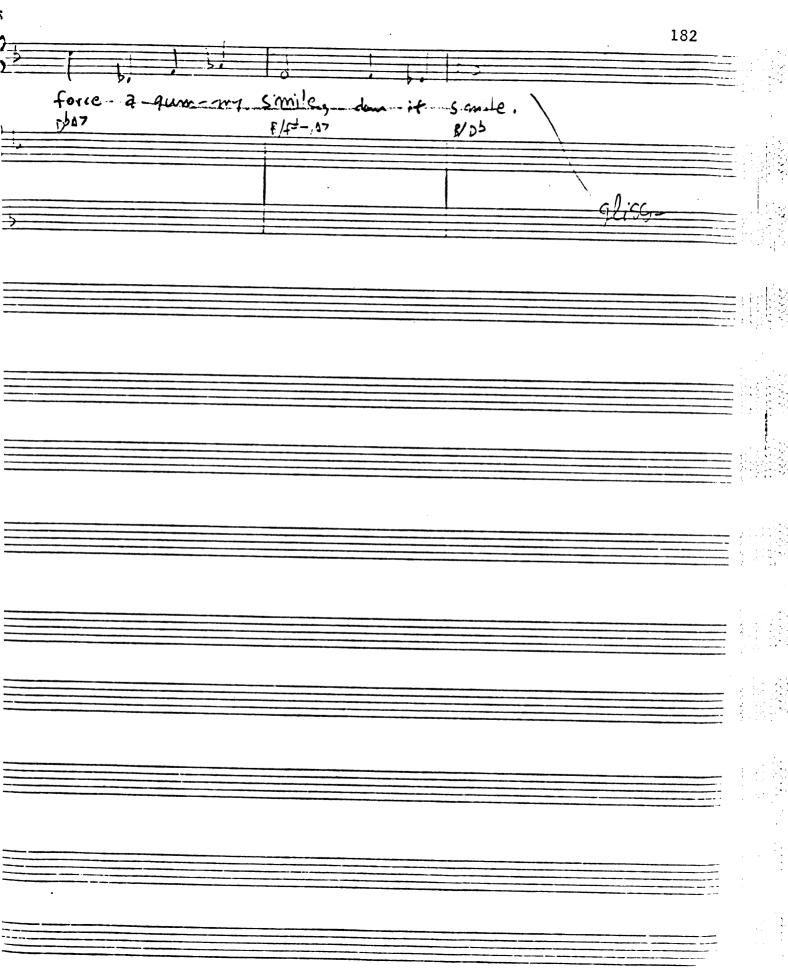


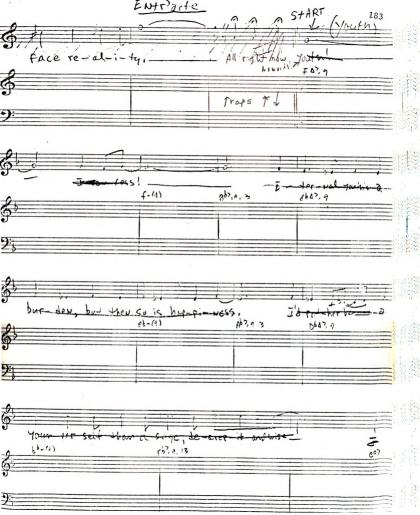


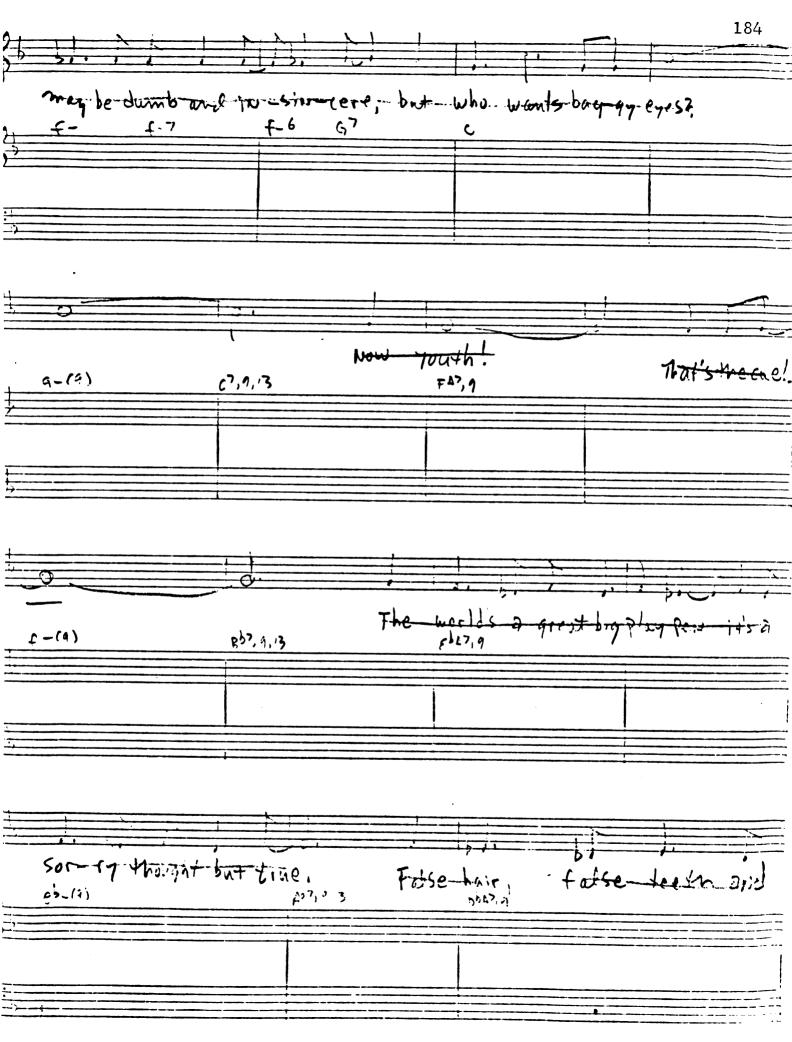
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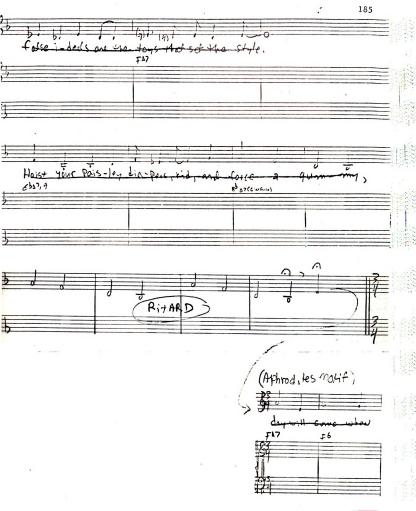










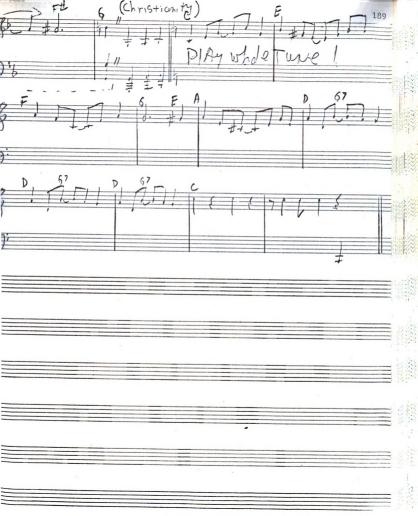




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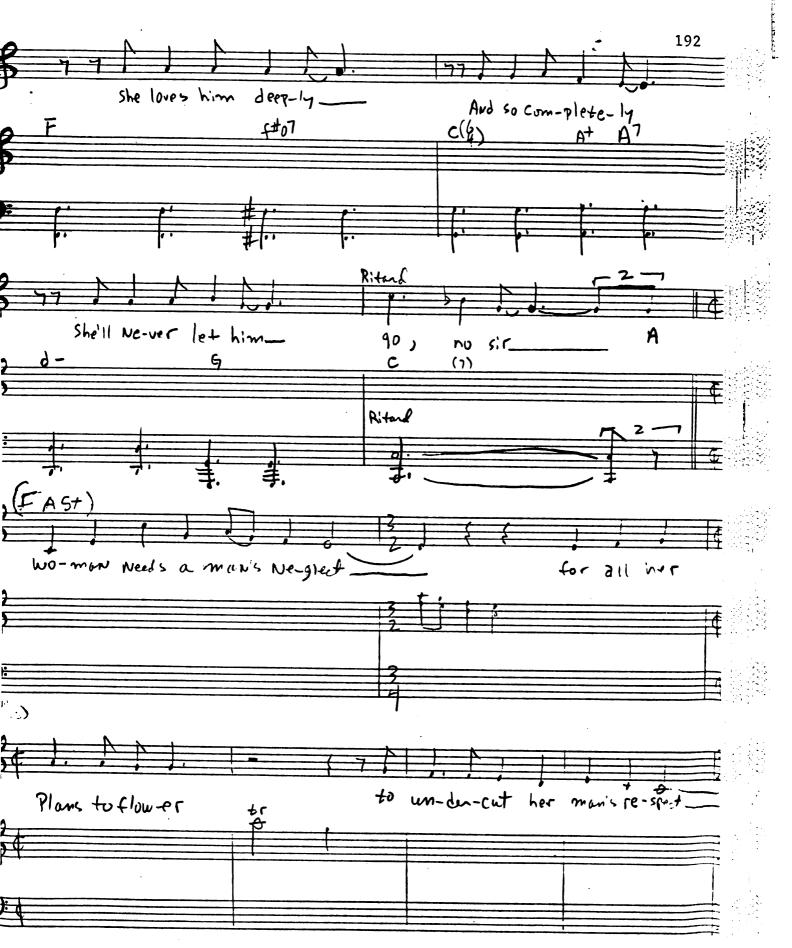




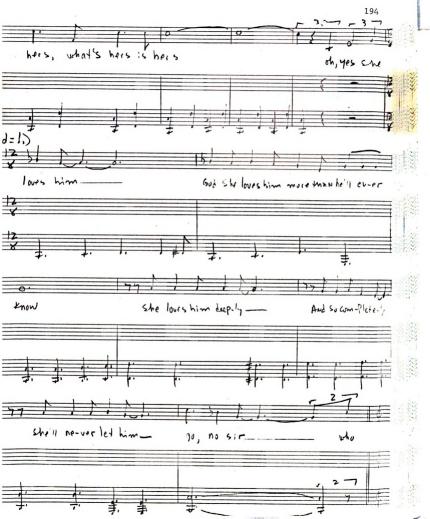




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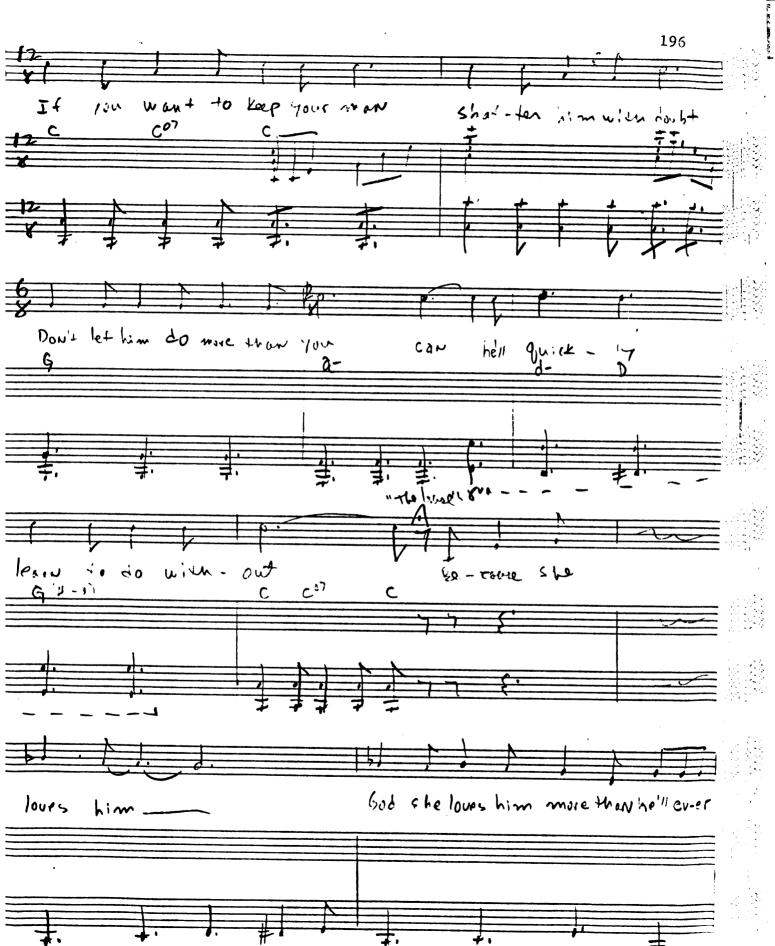


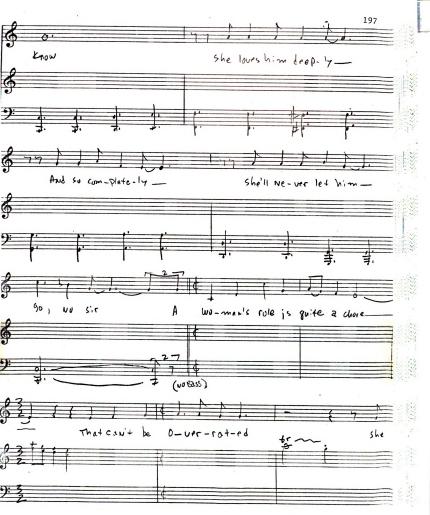


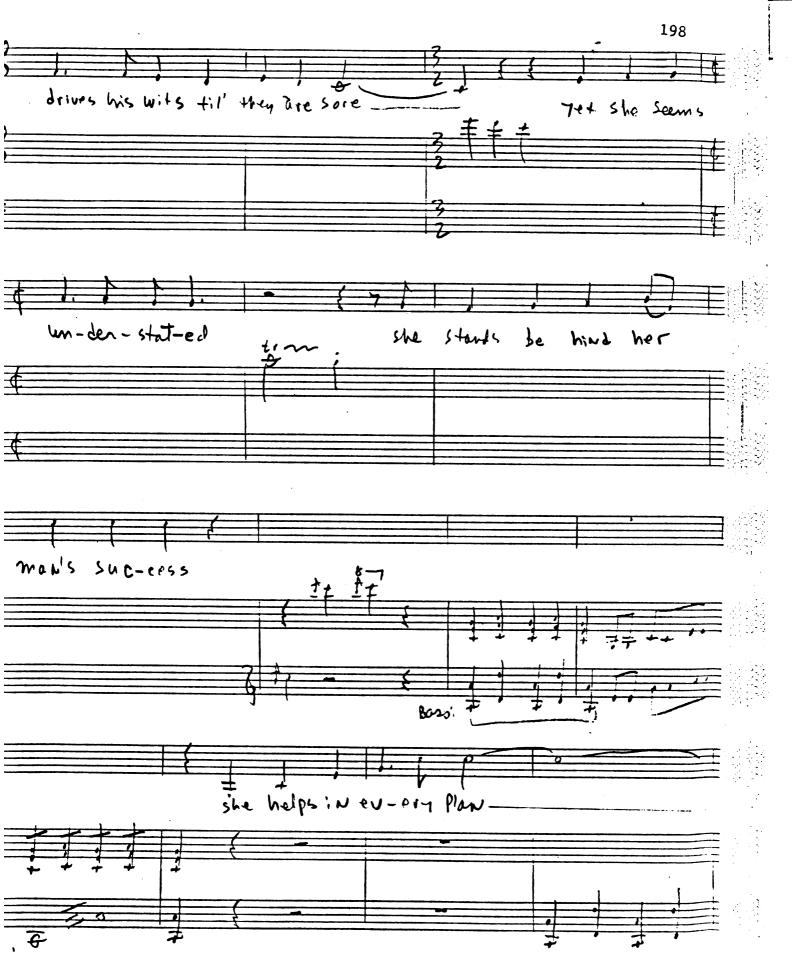




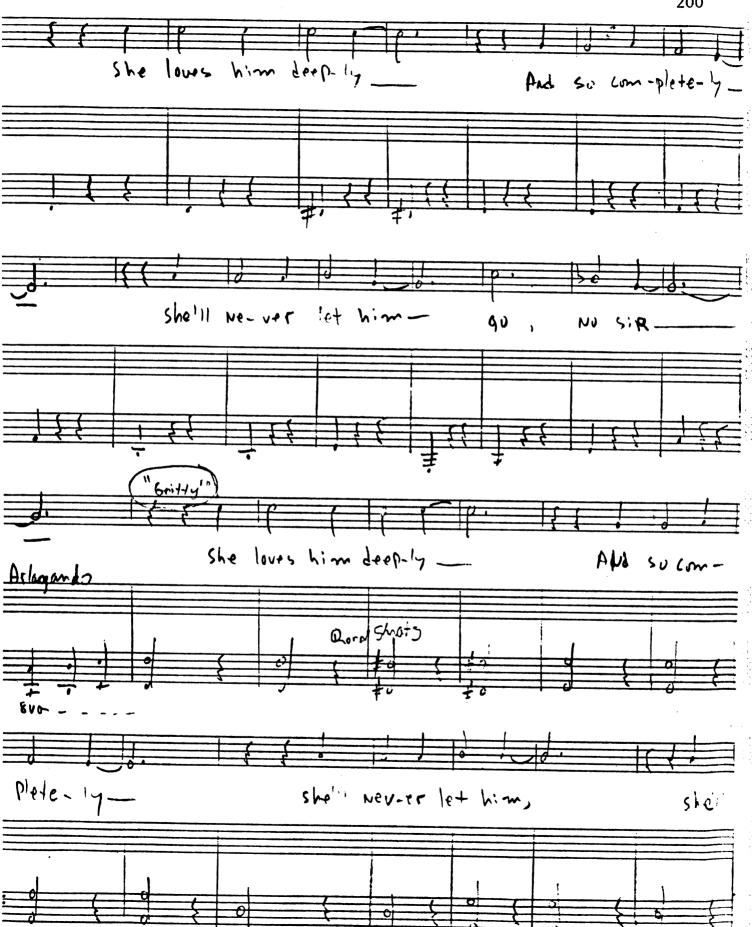
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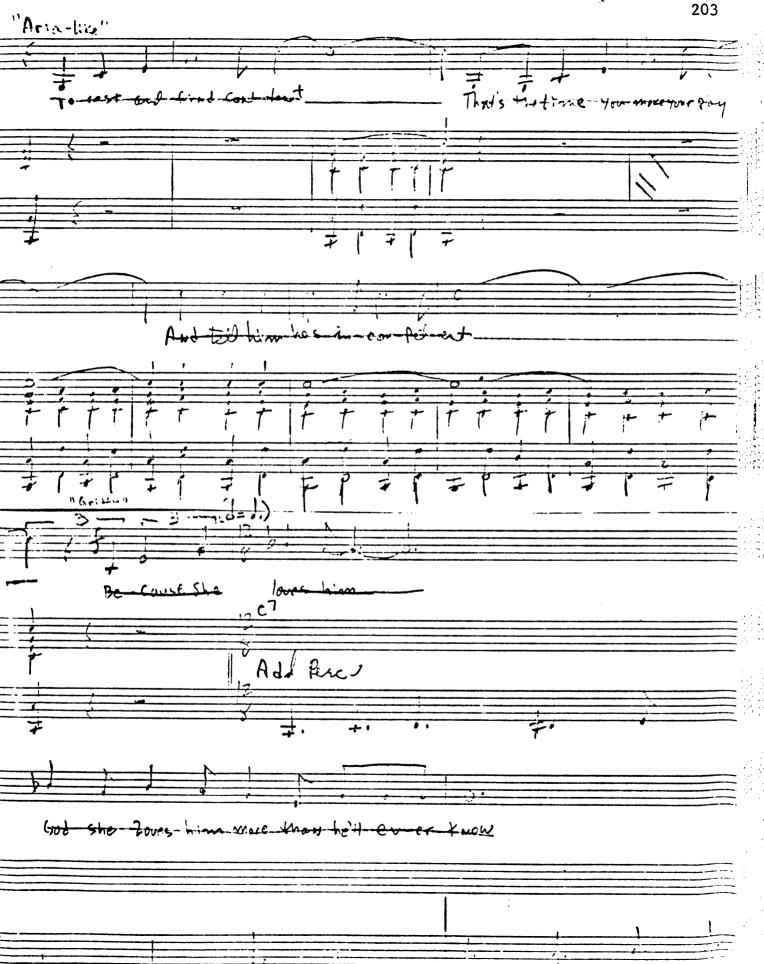




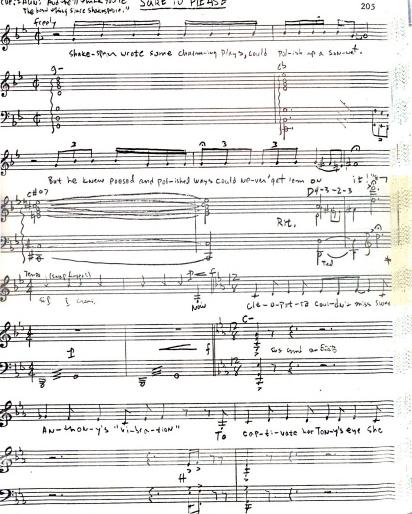


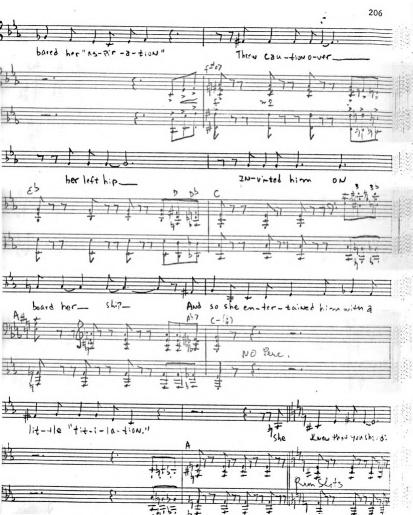


















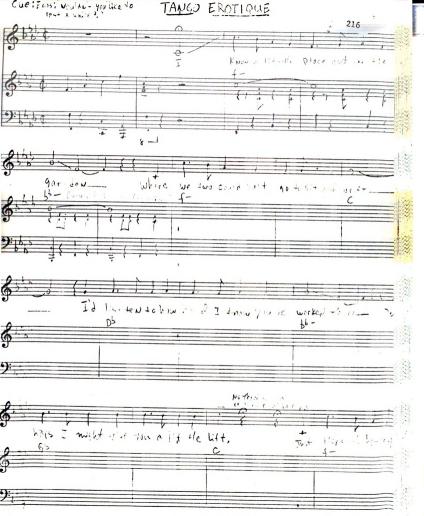








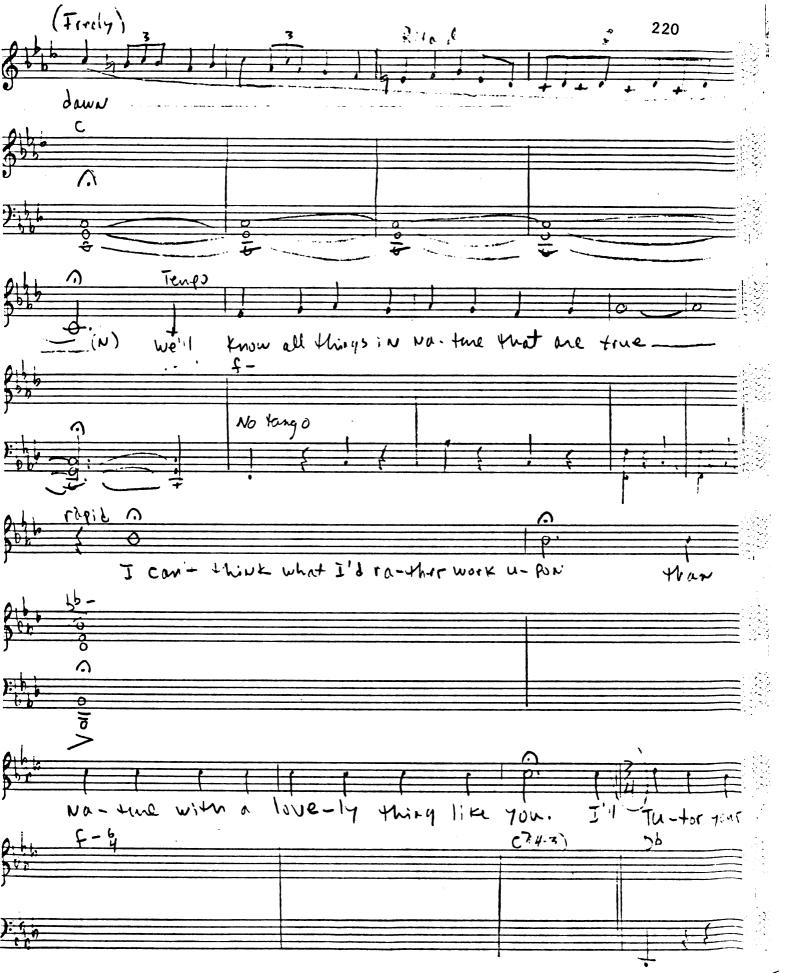
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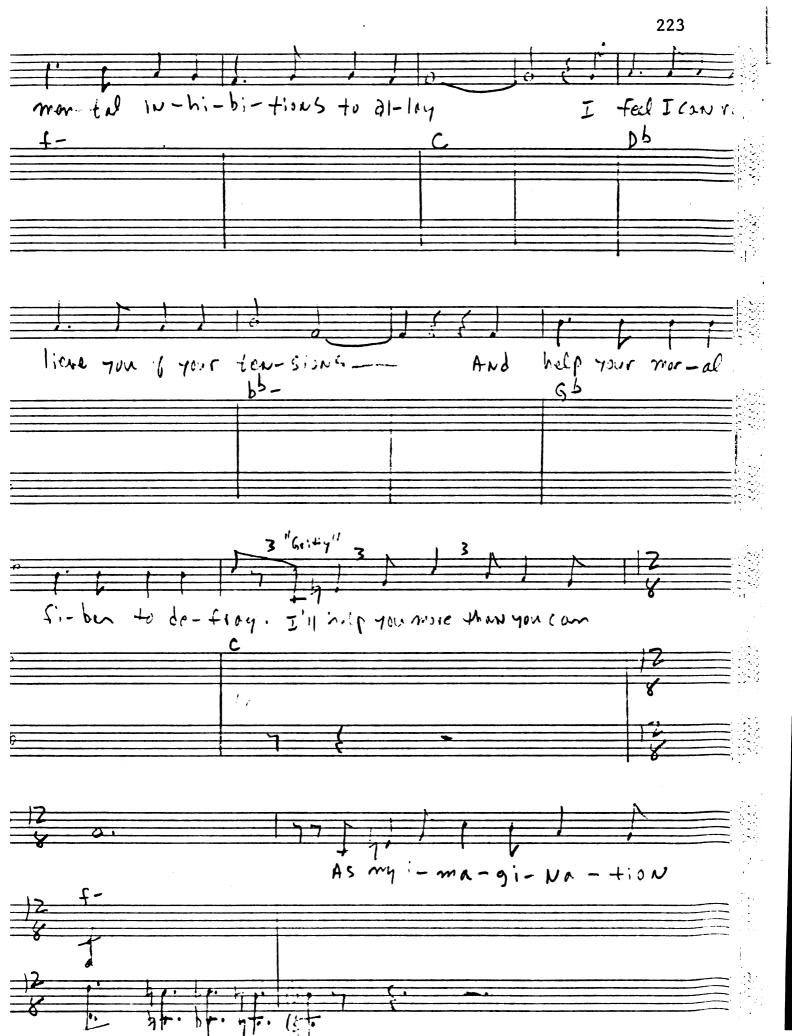




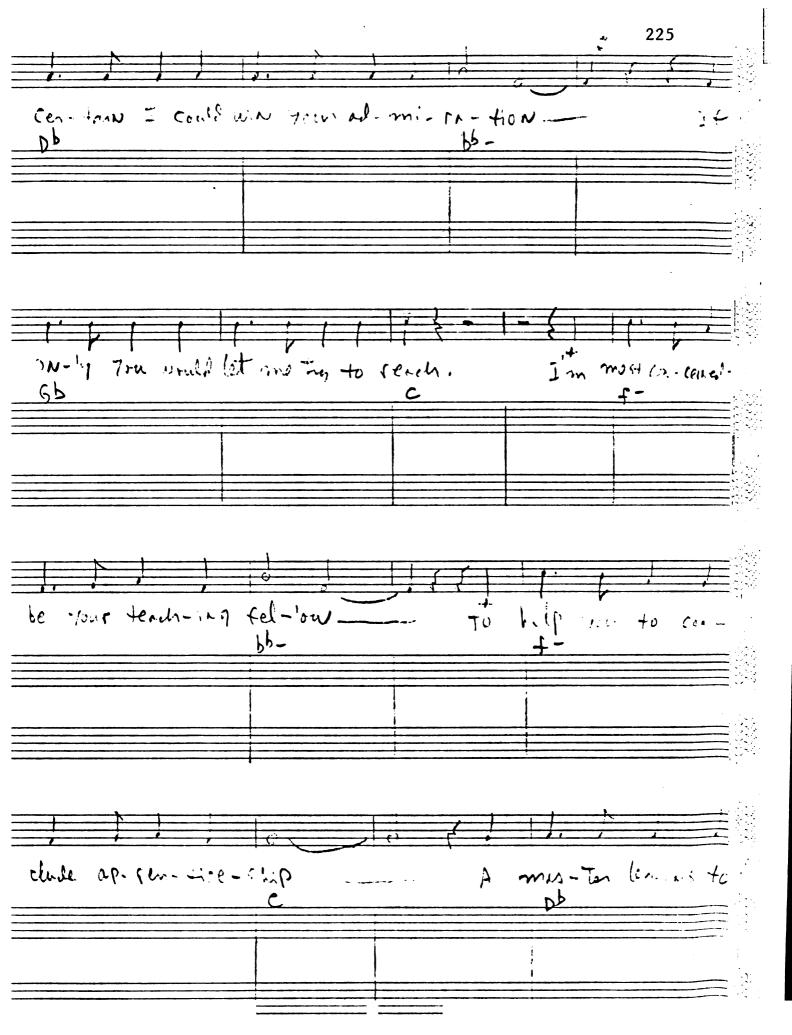




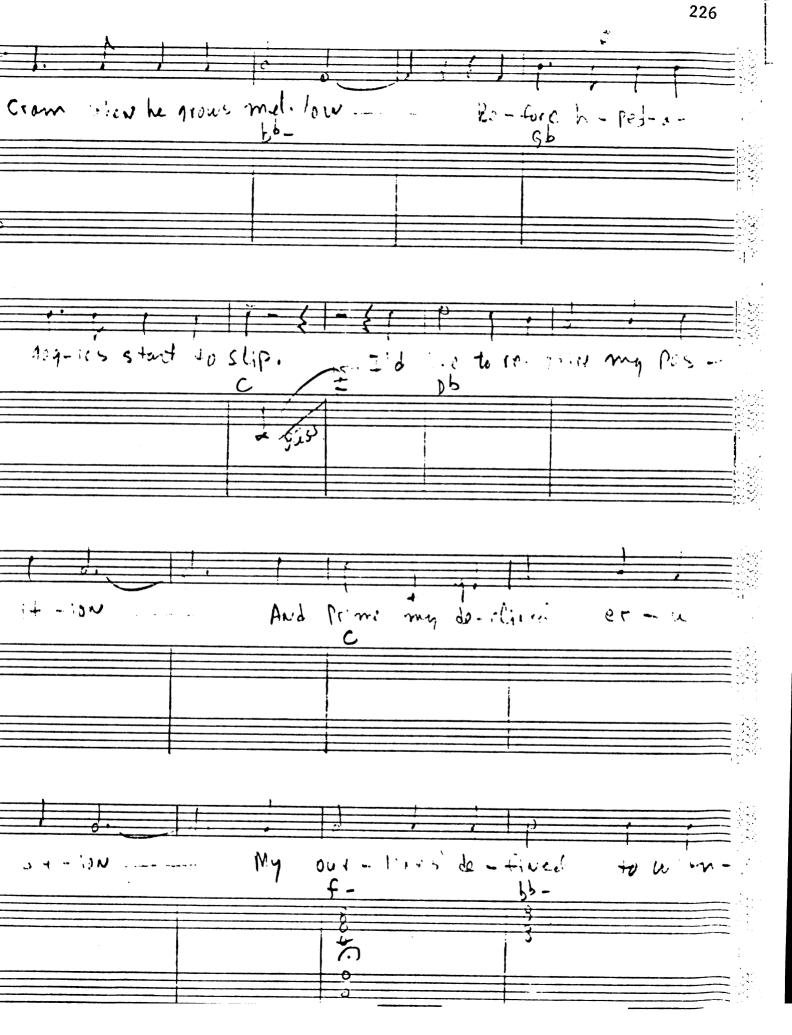








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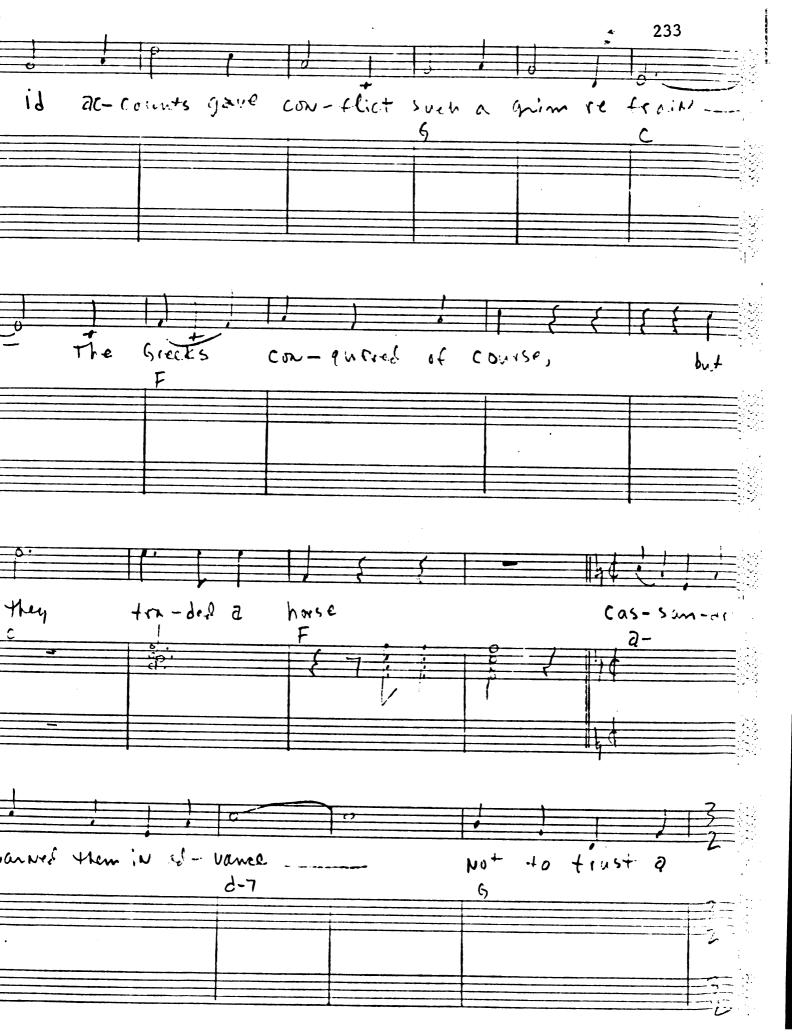






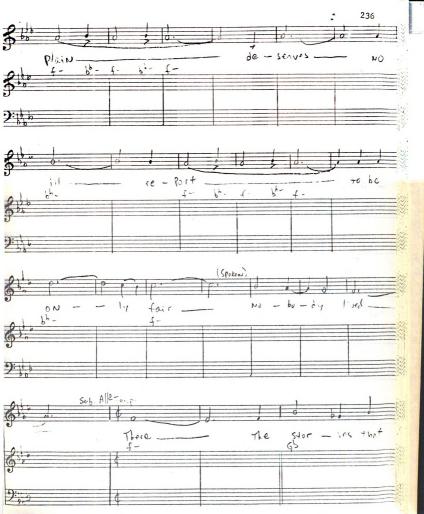
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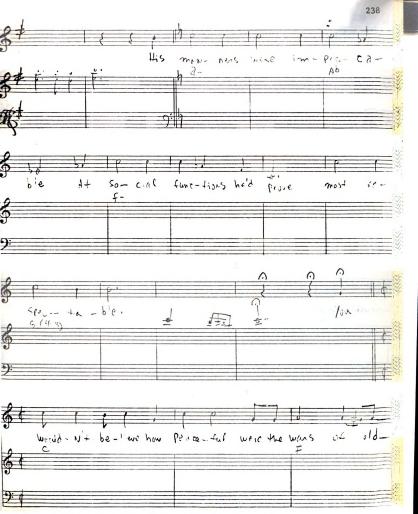




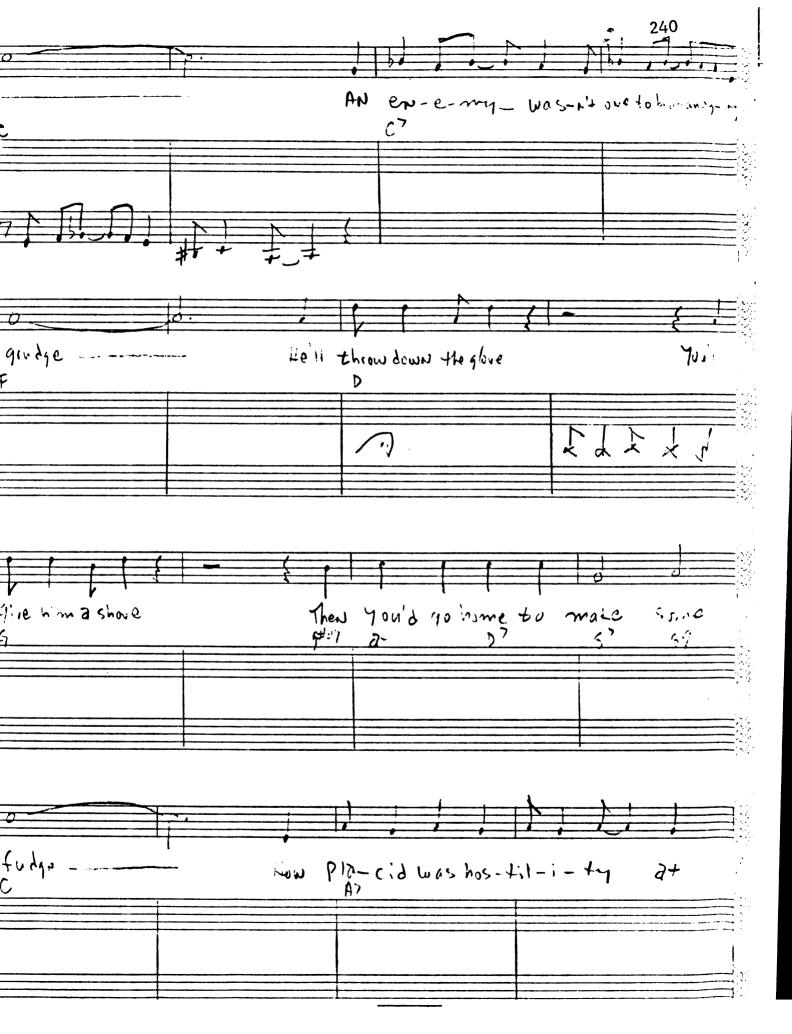






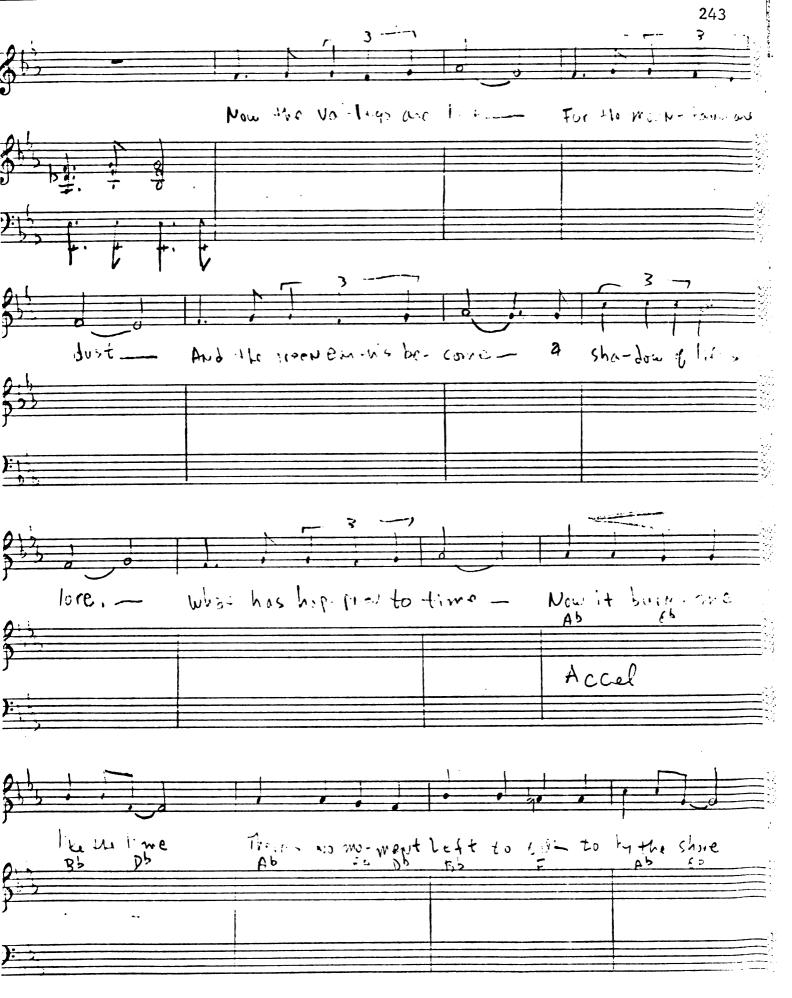


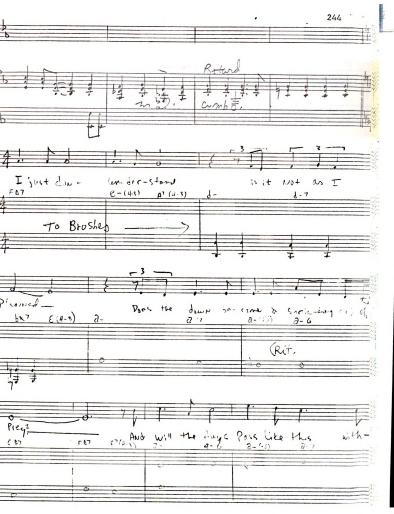












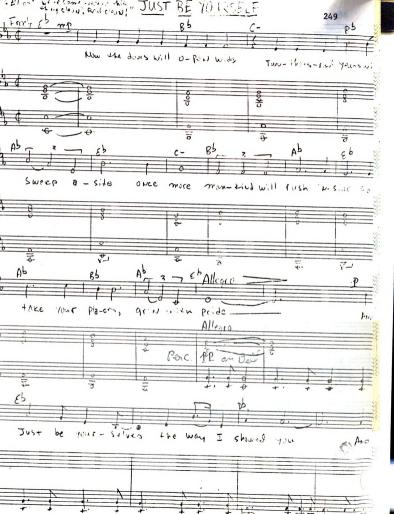




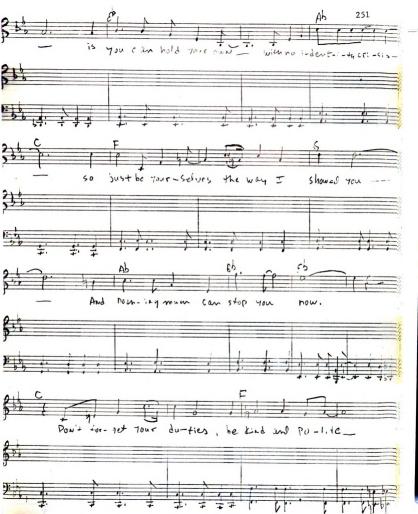


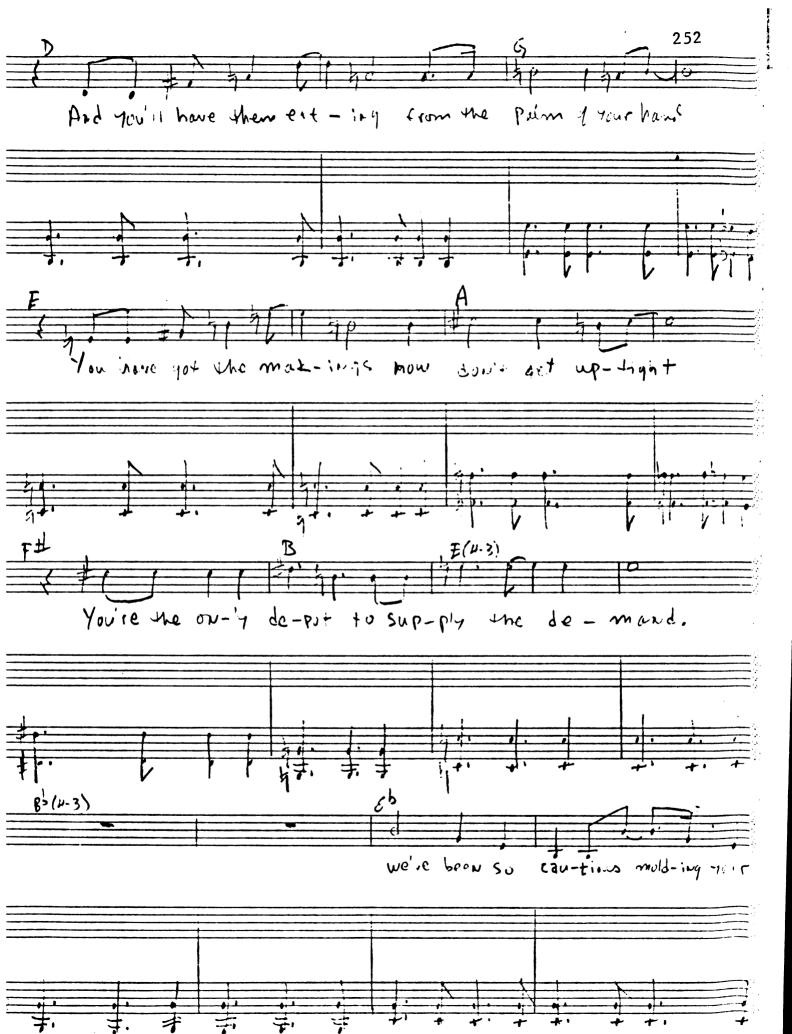
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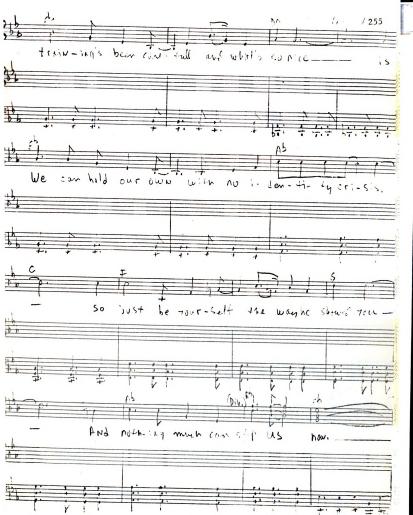




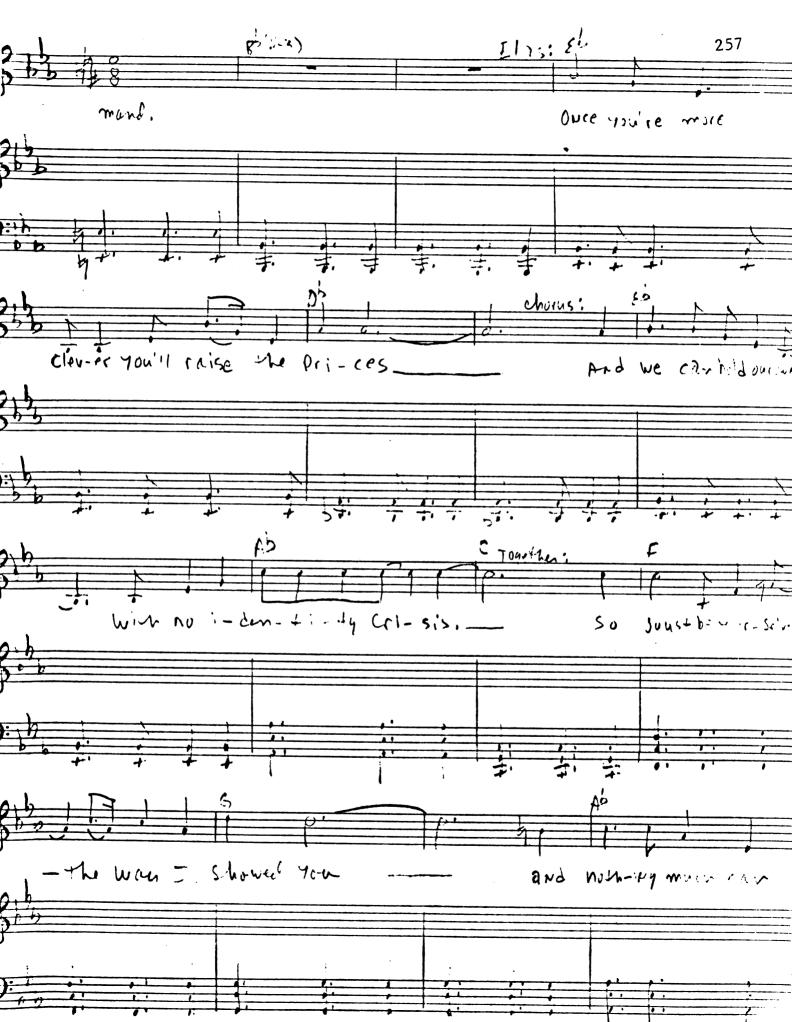






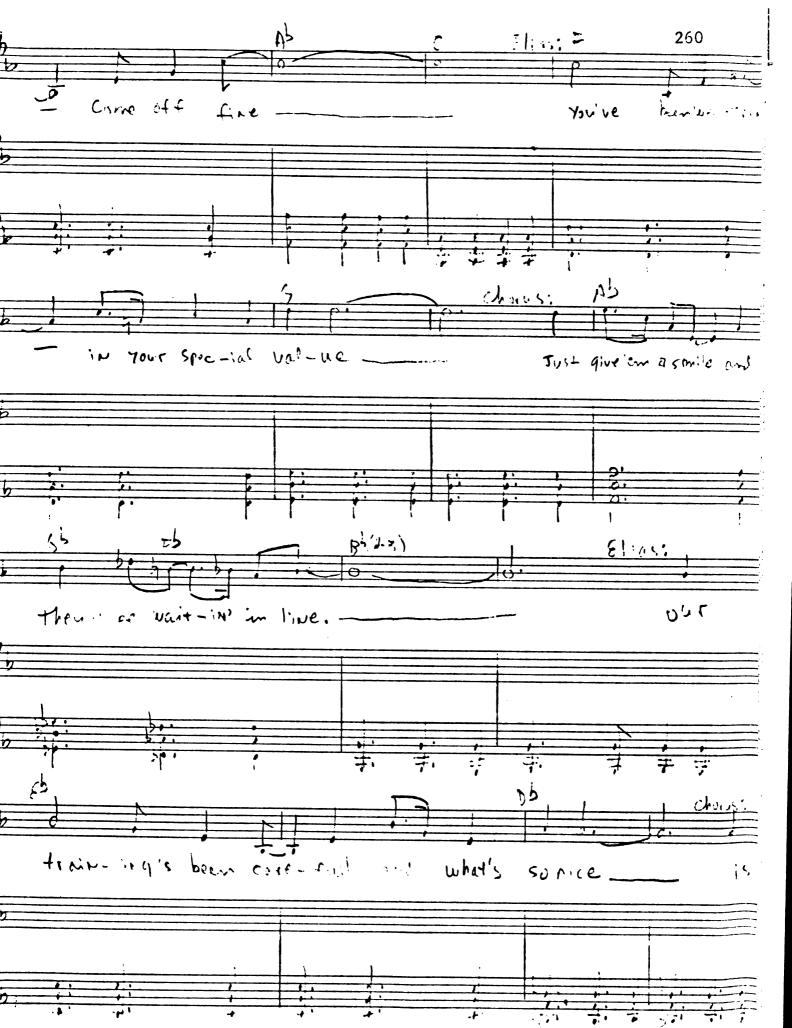


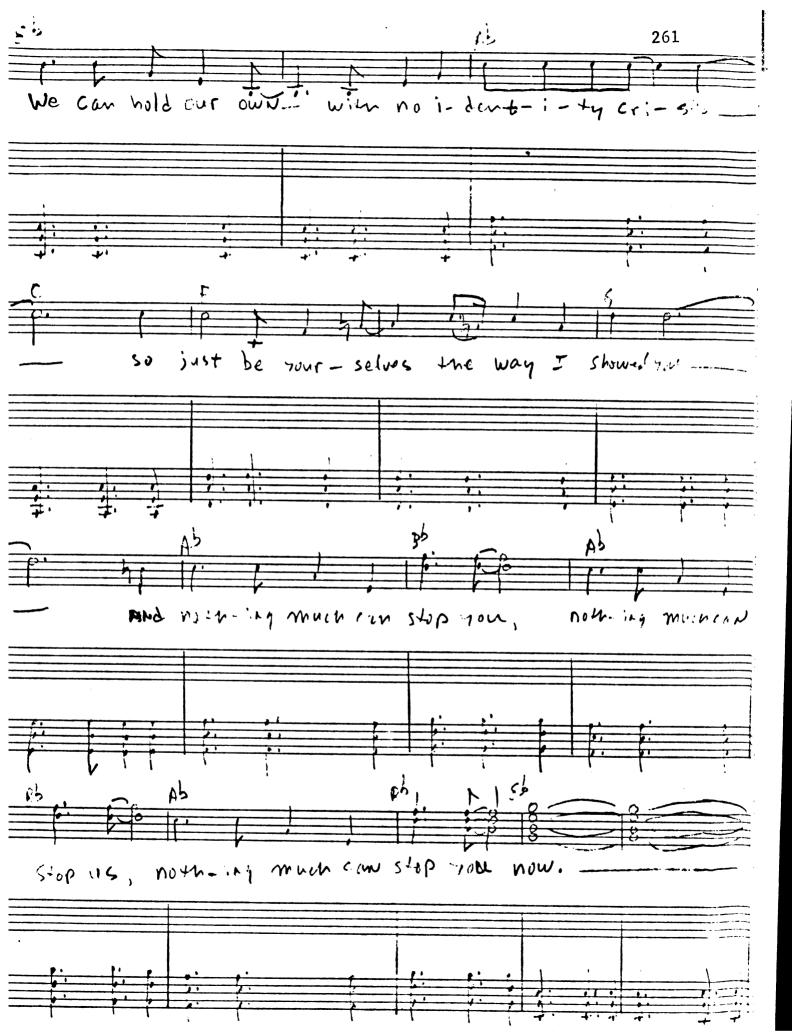


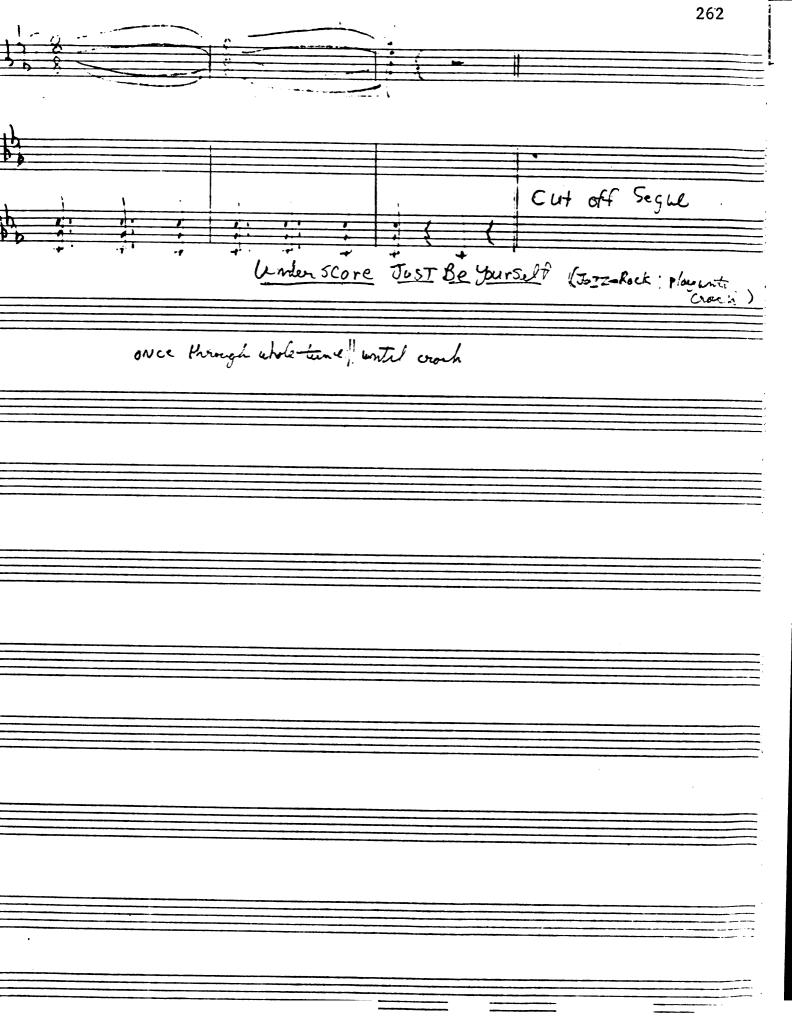












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