

Offenbach

**CARNIVAL IN VENICE
(The Bridge of Sighs)**

English Version by Donald Pippin

CHORUS (*offstage*)

Ah, Venice! City of water!
Venus embraces you, her daughter.
By day, queen of delight!
How your song fills the night.

NARRATOR

The scene is dark and somewhat sinister, the only sound a gentle lapping of water. Beyond a low parapet, we see an occasional gondola glide by, a *very* occasional gondola. On the right looms the palace of Cornarino, Doge of Venice, a gothic structure with a balcony that overlooks the piazza.

As an unidentified chorus fades into the background, two ragged, unsavory-looking figures slink in furtively from around the corner. Who could they be? Desperados, possibly cutthroats who will stop at nothing for some trifling gain? Perhaps two pitiable beggars, at the last extremity. Or is it the Doge of Venice, the most powerful man in the western hemisphere, creeping back to his own palace under cover of night, accompanied by his faithful squire?

BAPTISTE

Home at last! Thank the Lord.
Venice never looked better.
But who could say the same for us?

CORNARINO

My poor wife, ever pining ...
But will she recognize me?
The patch on the eye?
The clothes that don't belong?

BAPTISTE

Let's wake her with a song.

CORNARINO

A soft and gentle sigh ...

BAPTISTE

A barcarole from days gone by.



What in all of Ven-ice is now most rare?

BOTH

What in all of Venice
Is now most rare?
Show me a wife who is faithful
As she is fair.

CORNARINO Lala I tou la la u

BAPTISTE Lala I tou la la u

BOTH In the city of water.

CORNARINO Pardon me, friend, for digressing,
But is it not more than depressing?
Doge that I am to this day,
With barely a rag on my torso,
Home to the wife I adore so,
I come like a wandering stray.

BAPTISTE Far better returning like so
Than resting three fathoms below.

CORNARINO What in all of Venice
Is now most rare?

BAPTISTE Show me a wife who is faithful
As she is fair.

CORNARINO Lala I tou la la u

BAPTISTE Lala I tou la la u

BOTH In the city of water.

NARRATOR They listen for a reply to this Alpine barcarole -- a reply from Catarina, Cornarino's young and ravishingly beautiful wife, who has no doubt been pining during his absence, counting the minutes till his return. No answer? Strange. Cornarino is puzzled, but Baptiste has more urgent matters on his mind, the gravity of their position, the need for caution, the bolt of lightning that may strike any minute ...

CORNARINO Must you remind me? Well, go ahead, I suppose I deserve it.

BAPTISTE I'm merely restating the facts. A: One year ago you were named Doge of Venice.

CORNARINO Ah, too true, too true. An ominous day of glory.

BAPTISTE B: Two months ago, you took command of the navy.

CORNARINO Too true! An ill-fated venture!

BAPTISTE C: You met up with the enemy.

CORNARINO Ah, too true! A disastrous encounter ... They hacked me to pieces, tore me limb from limb.

BAPTISTE Not exactly. Rather, fearing that possibility, Monsieur fled.

CORNARINO I did not flee, Baptiste, not for a moment. Convinced that B my wife was suffering on account of my absence, acutely aware of my responsibility on her behalf, I made a reluctant retreat – swift, but reluctant – leaving to you the honor of keeping me informed on the outcome of the battle.

BAPTISTE And I, recalling that my duty was at your side, soon caught up with you and related the sad news that your navy was demolished, totally destroyed, defeated, devastated, wiped out ...

CORNARINO Yes, yes, I get the idea. Utter catastrophe!

BAPTISTE (*aside*) I should add that this report was conveyed to me by the Secretary of the Fleet, whom I in turn had entrusted with the honor of observing the battle, thus allowing my own judicious retreat. (*aloud*) Which brings us nearly up to date.

CORNARINO Sheer calamity! Ruin! Disgrace! To reenter my own country, I, its glorious ruler, must appear disguised as a beggar.

BAPTISTE A double sacrifice. Monsieur has shaved off his magnificent beard, and I have to bury my clean profile under this modest thistle.

CORNARINO Not to mention these monstrous black bands over our eyes.

BAPTISTE And so, after a trip full of trials and mishaps, whose miseries I can hardly bring myself to recall, we arrive in the dead of night ...

CORNARINO To my own balcony window, where I call to my wife ...

BAPTISTE Who, alas, seems not to recognize the sound of your voice ... Ah, Monsieur knows that I have always had my reservations about this marriage.

CORNARINO Baptiste, you are an idiot. I know my Caterina.

BAPTISTE I also know Caterina.

CORNARINO Come along! The dark is our protection. Through all of our ordeals, I managed to hold on to my key ... Let's go in and surprise her!

NARRATOR Amoroso, oblivious to all, enters, cutting them off.

Cavalier, oh do not grieve;
My state of mind you'd not believe.
I've got a husband overseas,
A tyrant has got me on my knees,
My state of mind you'd not believe.

AMOROSO Open to me your window;
Catarina, reply.

CATARINA Ah, Cavalier, my dear.
Do not grieve.

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE A shocking scene, upon my soul;
I fail to follow what goes on.
She listens to his barcarole,
When clearly she should cry, be gone!

CATARINA Cavalier, my dear, don't die.
Be brave and strong, I'll tell you why.
For if my husband is slain in the war.
We then shall be free to love all the more,
In sweet content, just you and I.

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE She leads him on!

BAPTISTE I've a plan. Just the right locale ...

CORNARINO Plan?

BAPTISTE We give a little shove ... he drops into the canal.

CORNARINO There's nothing wrong with that.

BAPTISTE Come on!

(As they are about to do so, Malatromba enters, cutting them off. He also, with eyes on the balcony, sees nothing else.)

CORNARINO Another yet!

CATARINA Be careful, Amoroso! 'Tis he, the man I hate,
On the prowl day and night.

AMOROSO What matter? I adore you!

CATARINA Flee, my love, before too late!

CORNARINO Alas, not one, but two!
What hope is left, O my brother!

BAPTISTE That both of them eat up the other.

MALATROMBA, after tuning his guitar

Too well you know why
As a suppliant, I
Come kneeling.
Aware of my pain,
Can my goddess remain
Unfeeling?

I've been till late
The tyrant you hate –
Tra la la la tra la la la –
Give me a chance
For love and romance –
Tra la la la tra la la la

Heart set on the goal.
I pursue you with soul
Tormented.
With a kind look from you,
Like a dove, I would coo,
Contented.

Though I have been
A rat now and then –
Tra la la la tra la la la –
One look of love,
I'd coo like a dove –
Tra la la la tra la la la

AMOROSO

Open to me your window;
Catarina, reply.
Light of my heart, be kind, oh
Suffer me not to die.

MALATROMBA

Open to me your window;
Catarina, reply.
Too well you know why
As a suppliant, I
Come kneeling.

CATARINA

Cavalier, my dear.
Do not grieve.
I'm in a state
You'd not believe.

AMOROSO

Night more silent than ever,
The zephyr
Floats my song to the gentle sea.
All alone, ever patient,

I'm stationed
Pining under your balcony.

MALATROMBA What is this I hear?
Ha! My ears deceive me,
For I hear nothing at all.

AMOROSO Yield to my barcarole.

MALATROMBA, CORNARINO & BAPTISTE
Try a sweet barcarole,
Sing a sweet barcarole.

CATARINA Sing me your barcarole, Ah!
Open you'll find my window;
I to your song reply.
Certainly I'll be kind; oh
I would not have you die.
To your song I'll reply.

OTHERS O Catarina! O Catarina! O Catarina!
Come, reply!

MALATROMBA (*to Amoroso*) Well, young man! What a brave lad, to go singing
under balcony windows at night ...

AMOROSO And are you not here for the same purpose?

MALATROMBA Not the same at all.

AMOROSO Happily for me. *En garde!*

MALATROMBA *En garde!* Ha ha ha! A tiny moment, please.
(*aside*) I was well advised to take precautions.

(He signals; three men arrive immediately, disarm Amoroso and carry him off.)

CATARINA An ambush!

CORNARINO One less. Bravo!

BAPTISTE You mean, bravi. Plural.

MALATROMBA When one is a member of the Council of Ten in this
enlightened year, 1321, and when one is in love with the wife
of an absent friend, competition is easily handled.

CATARINA Animal! So this is the way you hope to win me ... to reach the
heart of Catarina on a pathway strewn with bodies.
Loathsome monster!

BAPTISTE (*aside*) **Good girl! Good girl!**

MALATROMBA **I harbor no illusions as to your opinion of me. And if I woo you with a barcarole under your window, it is merely a concession to local color. But I shall stop at nothing. Your coldness is making me increasingly restless. I now have a hostage. In one hour, I shall knock at the door of your lovely olive boudoir. And I might add that the graciousness of your reception will go a long way in determining whether this young man will live or die..**

CATARINA **Despicable! Worse than despicable!** (*she leaves*)

MALATROMBA **Beware, Catarina! Beware! You would not wish to offend Fabian Fabiani Malatromba!**

CORNARINO **Malatromba! My cousin by marriage.**

BAPTISTE **Horrors!**

MALATROMBA **Ha! What was that? Did I hear someone?**

(Cornarino & Baptiste quickly fall to the ground and start to snore)

MALATROMBA **So that's what it was ... two beggars fast asleep. Happy peace of mind! It's the likes of them that sleep soundly at night, calm and serene, on the cold, hard pavement, with only the sky overhead. Whereas I, in my palace of agate and porphyry, in the pride of state, search in vain for a sleep that constantly eludes my careworn eyes. Happy peace of mind! In one hour, Madame ...**
(exit)

CORNARINO **The wretch! Traitor! Scoundrel!**

BAPTISTE **Please, Milord! Not so loud.**

CORNARINO **In my wife's chamber in one hour! Oh, that beast! If he tries to enter my house, he will have me to deal with.**

BAPTISTE **What are you going to do?**

CORNARINO **Listen ...The news of our disaster has not yet been circulated. The search has not started, We have a little time. I'm going to go in first, rescue my wife, flee with her, and ...I don't know what. But I am determined to save my honor. Follow me.**

BAPTISTE **Monsieur, Monsieur, what a ghastly idea!**

CORNARINO

Follow me, I say.

(Once again their attempt to enter is thwarted, this time by the entrance of a worked-up group of citizens, headed by Cascadetto, a police officer.)

ALL

Down with Cornarino!

CASCADETTO

Silence! Silence! Hear the true and unfortunate story of Admiral Cornarino Cornarini – his defeat, his shameful flight, the death sentence decreed by the Council of Ten, and the reward of twenty thousand sequins to the man that kills him and presents to the Council his ring and his spurs. And now, how about listening to a few stanzas that I myself have composed on the subject?

ALL

Yes, yes! The song!

BAPTISTE

For God's sake, let's get out while we still can.

CORNARINO

No, I want to hear the song.

BAPTISTE

Ah, Monsieur. When will you ever learn to be reasonable?

CASCADETTO

Strike up!



Wor-thy Ad-miral Cor-na-ri-ni took his na-vy out to sea.

Oh, he took it, took it, took it, took it.

What a gallant leader, he.

As they pursued the enemy.

Oh, look it, look it, look it, look it.

Never Admiral so admirable,

None to compare!

As he headed out to sea, he cried,

“Let all foes beware!”

Worthy Admiral Cornarini

Strolled the deck with dignity,

So simple, simple, simple, simple.

Not a braver man than he

Until they spied the enemy.

Oh, tremble, tremble, tremble, tremble.

Soon the Admiral so admirably

Sized up the foe.

In a flash he knew that either they

Or he had to go.

Worthy Admiral Cornarini

Now was truly in a bind.
Oh, puzzle, puzzle, puzzle, puzzle.
“If my valor has departed,
Who am I to stay behind?”
So hustle, hustle, hustle, hustle.

It suffices, in a crisis
He knew just what to do,
For of course it’s only right
To wave goodbye to the crew.

Worthy Admiral Cornarini,
When he’s caught will get his due.
We offer, offer, offer, offer
To the lucky fellow who
Can nab the bird that flew the coup
A coffer, coffer, coffer, coffer.

Oh, the Admiral’s market value
Has gone up, so I’m told;
For the man who brings him in
He’s worth his weight now in gold.

ALL Bravo! Bravo!

CASCADETTO Death to Cornarino!

ALL Death to Cornarino!

(At the cry, Cornarino stands up, then falls into the arms of Baptiste.)

CASCADETTO Attention! We have reason to believe that the ex-admiral has reached Venice by now, and is probably lurking in this very neighborhood. It is your duty as a good citizen to turn him in. To give each of you a chance for the reward being offered, I have with me a description and a portrait of Cornarino. The same also for his faithful squire Baptiste, likewise condemn to die.

(Baptiste in turn falls into Cornarino’s arms.)

CASCADETTO The whole package for only ten centimes, including the song.
Ladies, gentlemen, who will buy?

ALL One for me! Over here! For me!

CASCADETTO *(to Cornarino and Baptiste)*
And what about you two over there? You’re not buying today?

BAPTISTE *(low, to Cornarino)* We’re done for

CORNARINO Buy! For heaven's sake, buy! It seems that we are to drink the cup to the bitter dregs.

BAPTISTE (*buying*) Very charming, your little song, sir. Delightful.

CORNARINO And the portrait is an excellent likeness.

CASCADETTO So you know the admiral?

CORNARINO Not well, not well. We long ago lost sight of each other.

CASCADETTO With that rug over your eye, you've no doubt lost sight of a good many.

ALL Ha ha ha!

CASCADETTO (*echoed by CHORUS*)
Oh, the admiral's market value
Has gone up, so I'm told.
For the one who brings him in
He's worth his weight now in gold.

(*all exit except Cornarino and Baptiste*)

BAPTISTE Hurry, sir! We've got to get away.

CORNARINO With what? My legs have completely given out on me.

BAPTISTE I would offer you mine ...

CORNARINO All right, I'm ready. Let's be off. Farewell ... you whom I love more than the world.

BAPTISTE But not, I hope, more than your own head.
(*As they start leave, again their movement is thwarted, this time by the entrance of Malatromba.*)

MALATROMBA The hour is up. I shall wait no longer.

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE Horror! Him again! The monster!
Malatromba hears, turns around. They lean against each other and start to snore, still standing.)

MALATROMBA Happy peace of mind! (*he enters the palace*)

BAPTISTE Well, sir. You're not coming? You intend to wait here for them to lead you to the gallows?

CORNARINO Oh, what a dilemma! Death if I stay, dishonor if I go. Which to choose?

BAPTISTE Dishonor! For God's sake, dishonor!

CORNARINO Do you know what the word means?

BAPTISTE Yes, yes. But come along anyway.

CORNARINO No! I'm not leaving! Love, despair, desperation – all of these give me courage.

BAPTISTE Sir, you are not yourself.

CORNARINO Follow me.

BAPTISTE Where to?

CORNARINO Inside the palace.

BAPTISTE And what do you intend to do?

CORNARINO I haven't the slightest idea. But heaven will inspire me. Come along!

BAPTISTE (*following*) Ah, women, women!

CORNARINO The bastards! They've changed the lock!

(Cascadetto and the crowd return. As they cross the stage singing, Cornarino and Baptiste climb to the balcony of the palace.)

CASCADETTO (*echoed by CHORUS*)
Oh, the admiral's market value
Has gone up, so I'm told.
For the one who brings him in
He's worth his weight now in gold.

End of Act I

ACT II

NARRATOR We move immediately to Scene II, entitled "Clock and Barometer," taking place inside the palace, an imposing though somewhat oppressive room, salient features of which have been taken over in more recent times by those who specialize in maximum security. Among the rich furnishings, there is an enormous clock; facing it, on the other side, an equally capacious barometer, each capable of concealing several bodies.

Surrounded by handmaidens, Catrina, the Doge's besieged wife, paces the floor, deep in reverie. Laodice, her confidante, hovers nearby, feverishly sewing on a silken ladder.

CHORUS OF WOMEN

Oh alas! Dear, noble lady,
Despondent though you are, oh
Discard that look of sorrow
That we too well discern.

We're also heavy hearted
Ever since our men departed,
Yet soon they shall return,
Our loved ones shall return.

CATARINA

Laodice, send them away. (*chorus exits*)

LAODICE

Madame, now that we are alone, we really must come to an understanding.

CATARINA

An understanding?

LAODICE

You have set me to sewing a silken ladder like a wife who has ... plans. And there you are, weeping over the absence of your husband. This is not logical

CATARINA

Laodice, you will understand, when I reveal my terrible secret. I am in love! I am in love!

LAODICE

In love! But with your husband?

CATARINA

My husband? Come on, be serious. Ah, no! He's twenty years old, the young man that I love. He is handsome, he is brave. I am his life, he is mine. Oh, the way his eyes sparkle beneath a glorious halo of chestnut locks!

LAODICE

In love! All the more reason to wonder why you are so eager for your husband's return.

CATARINA

Listen! This morning, at daybreak, Amoroso stood under my balcony. He sang, the sky opened, the heavens lit up. I ran to throw him the silken ladder. Suddenly, armed and masked, four thugs appeared, headed by that horrible Fabiano Fabiani Mala-tromba. They seized Amoroso, they overpowered him, they carried him off! And that's why I want my husband back.

LAODICE

Madame, I still fail to follow ...

CATARINA

But this could never happen were my husband here. Doge of Venice, who would make Amoroso his closest friend? Cornarino. Who would invite him to dinner? Cornarino.

Who would insist that he accompany me in my gondola and serenade me with his guitar? Cornarino! Cornarino! And that is why I miss my husband.

LAODICE Ah, now you're beginning to make sense.

CATARINA Poor Amoroso! Where have they taken him?

NARRATOR What appears to be a wood panel suddenly parts, and two men abruptly appear, both draped in long cloaks. The wall closes behind them.

LAODICE (*turning and seeing them*) Ah!

CATARINA Who are you?

McCABRE My name is McCabre.

LE MORGUE My name is Le Morgue

LAODICE Madame, no doubt they are spies employed by your infamous persecutor.

CATARINA Loathsome parasites!

McCABRE Whatever you do, we shall observe.

LE MORGUE Whatever you say, we shall hear.

BOTH And shall repeat!

CATARINA Donkeys! Then you may begin by telling your master that I loathe him, I despise him, that his soul is as black as your eyes.

LAODICE And that we would never think of deceiving a husband with a man so barbarous.

CATARINA Well put, Laodice. Come, let us seek refuge in the olive boudoir. (*exeunt*)

NARRATOR Catarina and Laodice have barely left the room when what appears to be a tapestry separates from the wall. Malatromba steps forth.

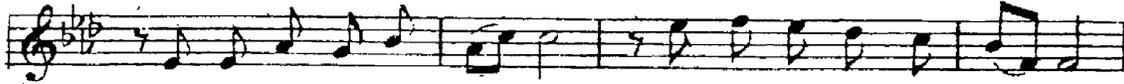
MALATROMBA And so? What have you to report?

McCABRE In the olive boudoir, signor.

LE MORGUE She has gone to seek refuge in the olive boudoir.

MALATROMBA

The olive boudoir. ... Perfect!



The dove, for-lorn & ter-ri-fied, goes seek-ing for a hide-a-way,

**A silken nest inside
The room of olive gray,
The olive gray boudoir.**

**Upon a pillow nested
Her drowsy head lies rested
Beneath a folded wing,
Too weary now to sing,
Too weary now to sing.**

**Ah, little dove, beware!
The vulture hovers near
To circle, circle, circle, circle, circle
Round the chamber where you lie in fear.**

**His prey the vulture's spotted;
His course already plotted.
He circles far above
The tiny, timid dove,
Our tiny, timid dove.**

**Around his prey so frightened.
His orbit ever tightened,
The vulture closes in,
Approaching from afar
The olive gray boudoir.**

**Ah, little dove, beware!
The vulture hovers near
To circle, circle, circle, circle, circle
Round the chamber where you lie in fear.**

(with a Satanic laugh he enters the olive boudoir)

NARRATOR

As Malatromba enters the olive boudoir, what appears to be a shelf of books silently opens. Two figures appear, figures not unfamiliar. *(Cornarino and Baptiste enter)*

McCABRE

A man!

LE MORGUE

Two men!

McCABRE

Masked like us!

LE MORGUE Armed like us!

McCABRE It looks to me we're in for trouble.

LE MORGUE *Mon Dieu!* Could I be seeing double?

McCABRE As tough a two as ever seen.

LE MORGUE A shame for us to intervene.

McCABRE & LE MORGUE A shame for us to intervene.
Who or what they are, God knows
I only wish they weren't so close.

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE Here they come, tip-toe, tip toe;
Strong of arm, their eyes aglow.

ALL FOUR It looks to me we're in for trouble.
Mon Dieu! Could I be seeing double?
As tough a two as ever seen.
A shame for us to intervene.

BAPTISTE (*trembling*) They're rough and tough; I fear the worst.
My mother taught me Safety First.

CORNARINO (*also trembling*) We must be fair and conquer fear.

McCABRE If only they would simply disappear!

LE MORGUE If only they would simply disappear!

EACH, *in sequence* To arms! To arms! To arms! To arms!

ALL FOUR Dzing, dzing, dzing, dzing,
All set to go
To knock'em down and lay'em low.
Dzing, dzing, dzing, dzing,
On with the show!
To box and beat'em blow for blow.

LE MORGUE No retreat, we must go on ...

McCABRE Meet the foe with dagger drawn.

BAPTISTE I prefer it short and sweet.

ALL FOUR They'll tumble down, tumble down
At our feet.

BAPTISTE You don't believe it dangerous?

CORNARINO They're even more afraid of us.

McCABRE Let's show our brawn and brain combined ...

LE MORGUE Yes, by approaching from behind.
You go ahead.

McCABRE No, after you.

LE MORGUE You'll follow through?

McCABRE They're good as dead.

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE The word is "steady."

McCABRE & LE MORGUE My blade is ready.

ALL FOUR Dzing, dzing, dzing, dzing,
All set to go
To knock'em down and lay'em low.
We'll knock'em down and lay'em low.

McCABRE You worm!

LE MORGUE You rat!

BAPTISTE Take that and that!

McCABRE You dog!

LE MORGUE You cur!

CORNARINO As you prefer.

McCABRE Here's one for you.

BAPTISTE You like'em new.

LE MORGUE So back for more!

CORNARINO To war! To war!

McCABRE Pursue!

BAPTISTE Pursue!

LE MORGUE Without a scratch.

CORNARINO For you!

BAPTISTE For you!

McCABRE I've met my match.

CORNARINO One more for you,

ALL FOUR And more for you.
For you, for you, for you, for you!

ALL FOUR Dzing, dzing, dzing, dzing,
All set to go
To knock'em down and lay'em low.
Dzing, dzing, dzing, dzing,
On with the show!
To box and beat'em blow for blow.

LE MORGUE No retreat, we must go on ...

McCABRE Meet the foe with dagger drawn.

CORNARINO I prefer it short and sweet.

ALL FOUR They'll tumble down, tumble down
At our feet.
All set to go,
They're bound to fall
By a blow, by a blow!

NARRATOR After a brief and ugly skirmish, Cornarino and Baptiste slay the two spies and quickly appropriate their cloaks and their masks. What to do with the bodies? Aha! The clock and the barometer! No sooner are the cadavers disposed of, than the door of the olive boudoir flies open. Catarina, followed by Malatromba, hurls herself toward Cornarino.

CATARINA Oh, I beg of you, whoever you are! Save me from this vile man.

(Satanic laugh from Malatromba)

CORNARINO *(aside)* My wife! ... And I, helpless.

MALATROMBA *(aside)* I was well advised to take precautions. She cannot escape.

CATARINA Of course ... they are your employees. *(to Cornarino and Baptiste)* Swine! Nonetheless, you are men. You have a mother ... in her name, I implore you. I am Catarina Cornarino, the wife of the Doge, *your* Doge ... And this animal! *(indicating Mala-tromba)* Do you know what he's trying to do while my husband, my gallant, noble husband, is fighting at sea, even now risking his life for the sake of his country? If you but knew!

MALATROMBA (*with another Satanic laugh*)

Upon seeing you, lovely lady, anyone would surely guess, and would surely forgive me.

BAPTISTE

What a predicament for Monsieur!

CATARINA

Oh, what a monster! (*to Cornarino*) Oh, my friend! Won't you be my friend? Protect me. You must! ... No answer? No hope? He pays you well ... I'll pay you better ... in gold. You like gold, don't you? I will give you lots of it. Jewels also. Everything I've got. And besides, you're a good man with a warm heart. I'm sure you are. (*Cornarino, under his mask, responds only with inarticulate grunts*) He is an idiot. (*turning to Baptiste*) But you will help me, won't you? You have a wife, a mother, a sister, something. My cause is your own. In defending me, it is your own wife, mother or sister that you defend ... You understand because you're intelligent, you're sensitive, you're sympathetic ... Don't you understand? He is even stupider than the other. I have no recourse but to faint. Very well, I shall faint. Ah! ...

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE (*pleading to Malatromba*)

Signor! Signor!

CORNARINO

Oh, have a heart! Oh, have a heart!
It's near the middle on the left.

BAPTISTE

Oh, have a heart! Oh, have a heart!

CORNARINO

It's guaranteed to last for life.

BAPTISTE

Oh, have a heart! Oh, have a heart!

CORNARINO

What good is hers if so bereft?

BAPTISTE

Oh, have a heart! Oh, have a heart!

CORNARINO

A foolish thing to want a wife.

MALATROMBA

I have no heart! I have no heart!
I want a lover, not a friend.

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE

Oh, have a heart! Oh, have a heart!
Platonic love we recommend.
Oh, have a heart!

MALATROMBA

I have no heart!

CORNARINO

Oh, have a heart! Oh, have a heart!
No matter what, it's got the beat.

BAPTISTE Oh, have a heart! Oh, have a heart!

CORNARINO It stays with you until the end.

BAPTISTE Oh, have a heart! Oh, have a heart!

CORNARINO As love is known to overheat ...

BAPTISTE Oh, have a heart! Oh, have a heart!

CORNARINO Far better to remain a friend.

MALATROMBA I have no heart! I have no heart!
I want a lover, not a friend.
I have no heart! I have no heart! I have no heart!

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE Oh, have a heart! Oh, have a heart!
Platonic love we recommend.
Oh, have a heart!

MALATROMBA And who are you? Of course,, my spies. Have you become so soft-hearted? So unprofessional? Take care. One word from me would put you on the gallows.

CORNARINO (*aside*) Alas!

BAPTISTE (*aside*) Little does he know.

MALATROMBA Be gone, get out!

CORNARINO Be gone? Never!

BAPTISTE Never!

MALATROMBA You defy me? When I order you to get out?

CORNARINO And leave you here unprotected? Our duty is to watch over you.

BAPTISTE Our sacred duty!

MALATROMBA In fact, I *am* somewhat exposed ...Oh, the burden of greatness! No privacy! Never alone. The privilege that the simplest peasant enjoys, to me denied! Flattering, but awkward. Ah, well, at least hide and be ready in case of need.

NARRATOR Hide, yes, but where? Ah, the barometer and the clock! In fact, on top of the cadavers of the recently slain victims. Thus disencumbered, Malatromba turns to the more serious

business of awakening Catarina, which he does by tickling her under the nose with a feather.

MALATROMBA How long she has kept me waiting!

BAPTISTE Aaaaaaah! My cadaver just moved.

MALATROMBA She smiles ... it amuses me to play with my victims.
Contemptible, but amusing.

CATARINA (*awakening*) So! You are still here!

MALATROMBA Can the moth leave the flame?

CATARINA You freeze my very blood.

MALATROMBA Come, no more banter. How greatly you wrong me. Never has nature in springtime sung of love as sweetly as I would sing to you, if you would but allow ... my beautiful dream!

CORNARINO (*low*) I have a feeling he is going to start singing about his dream.

BAPTISTE (*low*) Then we have a good five minutes.

MALATROMBA



I had a dream so sweet & strange; I start-ed up a flight of stairs
That quietly began to change
Into a tree of golden pears.

I had a dream, a lovely dream;
I wandered down a marble hall
That turned into a mountain stream
Above a splashing waterfall.

Amid the woods, a green retreat
Hid well away from probing eyes,
Upon a bending willow seat
A lonely lover sobs and sighs.

But not for long he grieves alone –
His lady's kisses soon suffice;
The willow seat becomes a throne
Of emeralds in paradise.

I had a dream, so strange and sweet,
A place where sea and mountain meet.
I perched upon a silver swan
That said, "We're off to Babylon."

I had a dream the other night
That with my lady love I lay;
We sprouted wings, took off in flight,
And landed on the milky way.

I had a dream so very strange.
I had a dream the other night
So sweet and strange.

NARRATOR This heretofore unsuspected side of Malatromba fails to melt the heart of Catarina. He turns to a more effective tactic: threat. Amoroso is locked in a dungeon cell, separated only by the Bridge of Sighs. How unfortunate. So young, so promising, so vulnerable – who knows what might happen?

CATARINA Amoroso! No, no, no! (*airily*) But you are wrong! Whatever gave you the ridiculous notion that I was in love with him? Not in the least. He means nothing to me at all. Ha ha ha! (*suddenly desperate*) Oh, sir, spare him, I beg of you! Have mercy!

MALATROMBA You ask for mercy. Strange, for you show none. I kneel at your feet, begging ...

CATARINA (What a horrible situation!)

CORNARINO And I am stuck in the clock.

BAPTISTE And I in the barometer.

(Catarina makes a sudden movement, as if to trap a fly on Malattomba's nose)

MALATROMBA What are you doing? What's the matter?

CATARINA *Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* Is it not perfectly obvious? I have gone mad!

MALATROMBA Mad? You can't be serious!

CATARINA Not serious? Not mad? Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
The Lido! Marco Polo!
The Piazza San Marco! The Adriatic!
I am mad! Stark raving mad!

Oh, my friend, my gentle friend!
Take the hand that I now extend.
Say not a word to mar for me
The agony and ecstasy,
Now far astray.

My secret love I must betray;
Oh, never was a man so fair!
Oh, fevered frenzy of despair!
Swept off my feet ...
Mortified before you ...
Oh, my handsome prince,
I adore you!

MALATROMBA You adore me?

CATARINA I adore you!

MALATROMBA She adores me!

CATARINA I adore you!

MALATROMBA (Ah! I'll be a bum
And play on her delirium.)

CATARINA A victim of your charms.
I fall into your arms.

MALATROMBA Together, far away ...

CATARINA Yes, yes, this very day ...

BOTH We'll find a spot simpatico,
Where cypresses and olives grow.
Where happy and obscure
We'll revel in *l'amour*,
A nest to bill and coo
With none but me and you.

CATARINA (Where do we go from here?) My sweet ... tell me more!
That little faraway nest made for lovers ... Where is that
little faraway nest? ...

MALATROMBA



In a spot tucked a-way near the bot-tom of Spain

There's a green shady nook
Seldom seen from the plain,
Where the sunlight is gold
And the rivers champagne,
In a spot just for two
Near the bottom of Spain.

Land of milk and honey,
There the sky is sunny,

Valleys green and fertile,
Flower scented.
Troubles we shall banish,
Living like the Spanish,
Loving like the turtle,
So contented.

CATARINA

In a land where the forest
Is wood of castanet,
And the sky purple velvet
Bejeweled with stars,
We shall dance the fandango
And sing a sweet duet
To the tango and jota
On dulcet guitars.

MALATROMBA

In a spot tucked away
Near the bottom of Spain,

CATARINA

There's a green shady nook
Seldom seen from the plain,

CORNARINO, emerging from the clock, & BAPTISTE, emerging from the barometer

In a spot tucked away
Near the bottom of Spain,
There's a green shady nook
Seldom seen from the plain.

ALL FOUR

Land of milk and honey,
There the sky is sunny,
Valleys green and fertile,
Flower scented.
Troubles we shall banish,
Living like the Spanish,
Loving like the turtle,
So contented.

McCABRE, emerging from the clock, and LE MORGUE, emerging from the barometer...

In a spot tucked away
Near the bottom of Spain,
There's a green shady nook
Seldom seen from the plain.

TUTTI

Bolero, Fandango, Cachucha tra la la
A land for lovers, far away!

NARRATOR At the end of this deranged ensemble, Cornarino and McCabe return to the clock, Baptiste and Le Morgue to the barometer, and Malatromba tries to drag the far from willing Catarina into the olive boudoir.

CORNARINO She's going with him, Baptiste, she's going with him!

BAPTISTE Yes, but her heart isn't in it.

MALATROMBA At last, my moment of triumph draws near!

AMOROSO (*suddenly appearing*) Not yet!

MALATROMBA Curses!

CATARINA Amoroso, I knew that you would hear my voice, I knew that you would answer.

AMOROSO Catarina, I heard!

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE The devil!

AMOROSO (*to Malatromba*) Ah! Criminal! Monster! So you didn't expect me? You thought that bars and prison doors could hold back a man in love? Never! The Bridge of Sighs is high, but love leaps over all obstacles. *En garde*, Monsieur! This time your spies are not on hand to help you out. Let us see if the fear of death will spark in you a jot of courage.

BAPTISTE That young man displays spunk.

CORNARINO Just plays punk?

BAPTISTE Displays spunk!

MALATROMBA (*sneering*) Ha ha ha! You think that I'm alone and that you can get away with insulting me! But I was well advised to take precautions. Men, out with you! To your duty!

CATARINA Oh, be careful, Amoroso! The house is full of spies and assassins. They are in there. (*points to the closets*)

AMOROSO I wouldn't count on them, sir. Your servants are quite willing to let you be killed like a snake.

MALATROMBA Help! Help! No hurry, you two, any old time.

AMOROSO You are on your own, sir, and I am about to kill you.

CATARINA Amoroso! Go ahead! Go ahead!

MALATROMBA But this is unthinkable, monstrous. I am abandoned, alone, like the simplest peasant.

AMOROSO Are you ready?

MALATROMBA Very well. Since you are not ashamed of attacking a private citizen.

CATARINA Kill him, Amoroso! Kill him!

MALATROMBA Help! McCabre! Le Morgue!

BAPTISTE Aaaaaah!

CORNARINO What's the matter with you?

BAPTISTE My victim just answered. He's starting to move.

CORNARINO You are out of your mind ... Aaaaaah!

BAPTISTE What's the matter?

CORNARINO Mine is also moving.

BAPTISTE Help!

CORNARINO Sit on him! Smother him! Like me!

ALL FOUR Aie! Aie! Aie!

CATARINA Barely human cries!
What agony could cause it?
Are these knaves or spies
Emerging from the closet?
Subhuman cries! Subhuman cries!

MALATROMBA Barely human cries!
What agony could cause it?
Are they knaves or spies
That I stuck in the closet?

What is this all about?
Two men stuck in the closet
And now four come out.
What miracle could cause it?

CATARINA & AMOROSO Truly, I cannot believe my eyes.

MALATROMBA Say if you will, who are these men?

McCABRE & LE MORGUE The lowest type that's ever been;

They come to kill.

MALATROMBA (*terrified*) Myself to murder!
I could by now be stabbed and slain!
Oh, my precautions were not in vain.

Assault! Come, soldiers!
Bodyguards! Come, police!
Send in the army and militia.

CHORUS (*from outside*) Ever watchful, ever wary,
Comes the proud constabulary.
Day or night, name the time,
We're on the trail of crime.

MALATROMBA Ah, police! Here they come.
Their song conveys the message clearly.
As for you, filthy scum,
For this we'll punish you severely.

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE Here they come, around the bend;
I foresee the bitter end.

CHORUS (*entering*) Ever watchful, ever wary,
Comes the proud constabulary.
Day or night, name the time,
We're on the trail of crime.

Why the cry? Why the call?
Why the row? Why the brawl?
Do I see weapons drawn?
What the hell is going on?

MALATROMBA Arrest these two men! Throw them into the dungeon.

CORNARINO Into the dungeon?

BAPTISTE Why us?

MALATROMBA Because you are outlaws!

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE Outlaws! Us?

BAPTISTE (Ah, inspiration!) And suppose thee two outlaws come
expressly to bring you news about Admiral Cornarino?

TUTTI About Cornarino? Speak out. Tell us. What is it?

BAPTISTE Then hear it from me: the Doge is dead.

TUTTI Dead!

CORNARINO (*low*) Lunatic! What the devil are you saying?

BAPTISTE (*low*) Ah, Monsieur. The only way to stay alive at this point is to pretend to be dead.

CORNARINO I suppose I must ...

MALATROMBA And what proof do you bring?

CORNARINO Our proof we shall present to the Council of Ten.

MALATROMBA Quick! To the Council! To the Council!

CATARINA (*low to Amoroso*) Amoroso, these two men are telling lies.

MALATROMBA So, Cornarino is no more. I shall be Doge. (*to McCabre & Le Morgue*) Go. Instruct them all to give me a spontaneous ovation. (*to all*) Friends, allow me a few words:

Pride and duty go hand in hand;
I would rule with but one desire –
That of serving my native land.

CHORUS A thought one cannot but admire.
(*faintly*) Viva, viva, Malatromba!

OTHERS Possibly true. What else is new?

CHORUS Half a cheer for Malatromba,
Hail to Malatromba!

MALATROMBA My great merits you may recall;
Verve and vigor that never tire,
Constant care for the good of all.

CHORUS A man one cannot but admire.
(*faintly*) Viva, viva, Malatromba!

OTHERS Possibly true. What else is new?

CHORUS Half a cheer for Malatromba,
Hail to Malatromba!

McCABRE & LE MORGUE A waste of breath. For such as these
You need other means to please.

MALATROMBA Not so loud, not so loud;
I've a way to win the crowd.
Not so loud, not so loud;

I can conquer the crowd.

**Never mind if words are feeble,
I've a method known of old,
Guaranteed to stir the people,
Bring the sheep into the fold:
Give'em gold! Give'em gold!**

**All you do is give'em gold.
Scatter, scatter, scatter, scatter,
Scatter, scatter gold.**

CHORUS (*enthusiastically*) **Hurrah, hurrah, Malatromba!
The people want Malatromba!**

McCABRE & LE MORGUE **The tested way from days of old;
When in trouble, give'em gold.**

MALATROMBA **See it glitter, see it pour;
Oh, go the limit, give some more, some more!**

McCABRE & LE MORGUE **And watch the way the ratings soar.**

MALATROMBA **Some more for you and you and you,**

McCABRE & LE MORGUE **A trusty method, tried and true.**

MALATROMBA **Some more for you and you and you,**

CHORUS **For me, for me ...**

BAPTISTE **And me.**

CORNARINO **Are you insane?**

BAPTISTE **We mustn't go against the grain.**

CORNARINO **We mustn't go against the grain.**

CHORUS **Hurrah, Malatromba! Hurrah, Malatromba!**

MALATROMBA **Some more, some more, some more!**

CHORUS **Viva, viva, Malatromba!
Man of the day, hip, hip, hooray!
Head of the land,
Give him a hand.
We are for Malatromba!**

CATARINA & AMOROSO **He's won them all, the dirty rat,
Tyrant now turned pussycat.**

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE He's won them all, the dirty rat;
He's soon to sit where I (you) have sat.

MALATROMBA I've won them all right off the bat;
It pays to be a diplomat.

McCABRE & LE MORGUE One final effort should seal it;
Better far to buy than steal it.

MALATROMBA Some more, some more, some more!

CHORUS Vive, Malatromba!

CATARINA & AMOROSO He's won them all, the dirty rat;
The tyrant turned to purring cat.

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE He's won them all, the dirty rat;
He's soon to sit where I (you) have sat.

MALATROMBA I've won them all right off the bat;
Oh, what a clever diplomat!

McCABRE, LE MORGUE & CHORUS
The Doge to be, hooray, hooray!
Malatromba, hooray, hooray!

End of Act II

ACT III

NARRATOR The scene is a grand municipal chamber, no less than the Council of Ten. Where Cornarino, the disgraced Doge, and his squire, Baptiste. are headed to present their proof that Cornarino is dead.

We have taken the liberty of changing the name of this much dreaded, much feared governing body to the Council of Five, now in session. It has been an extremely dull morning: military tactics, downtown improvements, the election of a new Doge, other tedious chores. However, interest picks up markedly at the next item on the agenda. Carnival week is approaching, and the prettiest girls on the Lido are coming with a petition to take over the gondolas.

CHORUS OF YOUNG LADIES



Glide a-long up-on a gon- do- la. El- e-gant Ve-ne- tians, here we are.

Early, early girls, we come today,
Eager with an offer to convey.

Rather than a surly
Bully, big and burly.
How about a curvy
Girlie gondolier?

Goddesses of grace,
We'd happily replace
That melancholy race
That call it a career.

For a week or more,
We would all adore
Pulling at an oar,
Placid and demure.

Under balconies
We'd skim along at ease
While floating on the breeze
A song of sweet *l'amour*,
Sweet *l'amour*,

Glide along upon a gondola;
Elegant Venetians, here we are.
Early, early girls, we now appear,
Ready to replace the gondolier.

Steering toward the moon
Above the dark lagoon,
Smoothly there we glide along
As we ride along
To a languid tune.

Tactful and discreet,
Our tale we'd not repeat;
Never would we spy upon
Lovers high upon
Air both salt and sweet.

Glide along upon a gondola;

Elegant Venetians, here we are.
Early, early girls, we come today,
Eager with an offer to convey.

At the start of the Carnival
We stand ready to embark, oh
Then to glide from the Grand Canal
Toward the Lido past San Marco.

Harlequin to his Columbine
Whispers secrets, so and not so,
As on velvet the two recline.
Passing piazza and palazzo.

Glide along upon a gondola;
Elegant Venetians, here we are.
Early, early girls, we come today,
Eager with an offer to convey.

ALL

Bravo! Bravo!

CHIEF

A delightful tune.

ANOTHER

Mr. Secretary, I move that it be set down in the minutes.

ALL

Second! Second!

SECRETARY

Then I'll have to hear it again.

CHORUS

Glide along upon a gondola;
Elegant Venetians, here we are.
Early, early, early we appear,
Ready to replace the gondolier.

NARRATOR

The interview is cut short by the arrival of Malatromba, who drastically misinterprets the nature of this purely business transaction. Like many who pursue their own pleasure, his attitude toward others doing the same tends to be austere.

MALATROMBA

No different from the other fellow,
I'm for cards, caviar and cabarets;
I, too, can laugh at Punchinello
And leap when the lively fiddle plays.
And as our fathers, worthy men, did –
I guzzle down a jug of wine.

(spoken) But gentlemen, after all ...

Business hours are business hours;
We have duties to be attended,

And pleasure's further down the line.
And pleasure's not till further down the line.

CHORUS

Business hours are business hours;
We have duties to be attended,
And pleasure's further down the line.
And pleasure's not till further down the line.

MALATROMBA

I know the heart and soul of Venice,
The carnivals that never stale,
The darker clouds that loom and menace,
The sultry girls with goods for sale.
A magic thing, the life Venetian,
At night, beneath the Bridge of Sighs.

(spoken) But gentlemen, after all ...

Business hours are business hours;
We have work calling for completion,
And pleasure hardly qualifies,
And pleasure hardly ever qualifies,

CHORUS

Business hours are business hours;
We have work calling for completion,
And pleasure hardly qualifies,
And pleasure hardly ever qualifies,

MALATROMBA

As I came up, a charmer invited;
She beckoned me with a winking eye.
Another man would say, "Delighted!"
But more austere was my reply;
A motto of my own invention—
The wording need I specify?

(spoken) "Absolutely impossible, I'm expected at a meeting and ...

Business hours are business hours;
I have duties that crave attention,
But come to see me by and by.
My dear, come back and see me by and by.

CHORUS

Business hours are business hours;
I have duties that crave attention,
But come to see me by and by.
My dear, come back and see me by and by.

MALATROMBA

Escort them outside, as I have matters of the utmost
importance to discuss.

CHIEF

A most delightful interview!
A shame they cannot stay for more.

Escort these charming ladies, who
Starting tomorrow, take the oar.

GIRLS We gondoliers, thanks to you,
Shall say goodbye until we meet again.
Break of day we make our debut –
See you then, worthy gentlemen. *(Girls exit)*

MALATROMBA Gentlemen, back to your places. I have most extraordinary
news!

ALL Spoilsport!

CHIEF News about what?

MALATROMBA About whom? About that turntail who has so despicably
compromised the glory of Venice, the jellyfish whom I blush
to call my cousin, Admiral Cornarino Cornarini.

CHIEF The rat! Well, go ahead, tell us what you know.

MALATROMBA That you will learn from two strangers whom I met just this
morning, in the course of my endless rounds on behalf of the
state. The two are waiting outside. Would you care to hear
them?

MALATROMBA *(aside)* O ambition, sweet ambition! ... Be patient. My goal is in
sight. *(Cornarino and Baptiste are escorted in)*

CORNARINO *(aside)* So here I am, back in the chamber where so often I have
presided.

BAPTISTE A sad homecoming!

MALATROMBA These gentlemen bring you news of Admiral Cornarino.

CORNARINO Yes, indeed we do.

CHIEF And how is the Admiral's health.

CORNARINO *(forgetting)* Thanks, not too bad, a little sluggish in the afternoon ...

BAPTISTE Madman!... Gentlemen, Admiral Cornarino is dead.

ALL *(rising)* Cornarino dead?

CHIEF Dead! Ah, a strange thing is life ... all is grass ...here but a
moment ... And how do you know that he is dead?

BAPTISTE How do we know? We know because we killed him.

The spurs that tell an end so glorious,
These noble spurs, do you not recognize?

CHORUS These noble spurs, these noble spurs,
Of course we recognize.

CHIEF The Council declares that you have served your country well,
and thereby have earned the reward offered for the head of
Cornarino Cornarini.

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE Thank God! Saved!

MALATROMBA My triumph is at hand!

NARRATOR Just at this moment when it would seem that we had reached
a satisfactory conclusion for Cornarino, for Paptiste, *and* for
Malatromba, two incidents occur that put a serious crimp in
the happy endings. First, a messenger arrives, winded,
breathless, on the verge of collapse, bearing a letter from the
Secretary of the Fleet, whom you may recall was left in
charge of the unfortunate navy after Cornarino's hasty
departure. He has barely handed it over, when two
roughnecks appear and demand to be heard, bringing news,
they say, of Cornarino.

CHIEF More yet! This is becoming a mania.

NARRATOR Their somewhat menacing appearance is enhanced by the
masks they are wearing. Who knows? They themselves may
be on the list of the ten most wanted ...

CATARINA & AMOROSO (*entering in masculine disguise*)
Two rowdy rogues and roughs are we,
Yet honest men of trade,
Adept at highway robbery
And handy with the blade.

AMOROSO If you good men will lend an ear.
We bring a tale you ought to hear
That's bound to fascinate
A man of state.

CHORUS A man of state

CATARINA Though sworn to secrecy, of course,
You drag it out of us by force;
So for a price agreed
We shall proceed.

CHORUS Yes, do proceed,

BOTH Two roving rogues in work attire,
Returned from foreign wars,
Our knives and daggers up for hire,
We do your daily chores.

AMOROSO We bring a strange and curious tale,
The best you'll ever find for sale.
Of course, we should stay mum,
But name the sum.

CHORUS We'll name the sum.

CATARINA Our story, told on your behalf,
I trust will get a hearty laugh.
For some 'twill be no joke,
O gentle folk.

CHORUS O gentle folk.

BOTH Two roving rogues from parts remote.
Our ways are crude and brash;
We steal a horse or cut a throat
When you put up the cash.

CHIEF And what is the connection between this rugged pair and
Cornarino?

AMOROSO We bring you news about him.

CHIEF We've had enough of that already. Very bad news at that.

CATARINA From whom?

CHIEF From the two gentlemen that killed him.

AMOROSO (*energetically*) These two men killed Cornarino?

CATARINA They are imposters! Cornarino is alive!

ALL Alive!

CORNARINO & BAPTISTE It's a lie!

CATARINA It is you that have been telling lies. (*indicating Malatromba*)
And there is the man that paid you to do so.

MALATROMBA Me? You dare attack my integrity?

CORNARINO Me? Affiliated with him? Obviously you do not know who I
am.

BAPTISTE *(aside)* Happily for us.

CATARINA But it's written on their faces. Have you ever seen a sneakier looking pair? Look at their eyes.

MALATROMBA Allow me ... a band over the eyes it not necessarily a sign of criminality.

AMOROSO Yes, but when the band is over the right eye in the morning and over the left eye at night ...

(Amoroso and Catarina tear off the bands)

CATARINA, AMOROSO, CORNARINO & BAPTISTE
Good heavens! My God! Oh, no!

CATARINA My husband!

CORNARINO My wife!

AMOROSO The squire!

BAPTISTE The page!

CHIEF Wife? Husband? Sir! What is the meaning of this?

CORNARINO Well, yes, that's about the sum of it. I may as well admit it, since you've found out already. I am Doge Cornarino Cornarini.

NARRATOR So all is up with Cornarino and Baptiste. The Council has no alternative. After the shameful display of cowardice, the dastardly betrayal, the unconscionable flight ...

CORNARINO Oh, spare me the details.

NARRATOR Cutting short the details, there is no choice but the death penalty. However, because of the former rank of the condemned man and past friendship, the Council is willing to grant concessions.

CORNARINO Concessions!

NARRATOR Notably, the privilege of going first, preceding Baptiste.

BAPTISTE Oh, *mon Dieu!*

NARRATOR And further, even though such indulgence is undeserved, in fact unprecedented, he gets to choose the way he is to die.

CORNARINO Then let it be from the illnesses of old age.

NARRATOR (*perusing a large menu card*)

That doesn't seem to be listed. But several other tempting selections are available. Let's see, we have the stake, the veal – I beg your pardon, the *wheel* – the axe, the noose, something for even the most finicky.

CORNARINO

I don't seem to have any appetite. Go ahead, order for me.

NARRATOR

The decision is for hanging. And so the two condemned traitors are led out to meet their unhappy fate. (*Funeral March*) Cornarino and Baptiste are marched to the gallows. Malatromba takes charge; business is business. Venice must have a new doge. Although the more frivolous members of the Council want to watch the execution, Malatromba presses on. The vote is cast, the ballots counted. The winner, Malatromba!

CHIEF

We can still catch some of the execution. A shame that we had to miss so much of it, though I suppose the ending is what counts. Perhaps we can get a view from the window here ... Your eyes are better than mine. Too bad I didn't bring my opera glasses ... This might help.

(He rolls up a sheet of paper and peers through it.)

COUNCILMAN

Isn't that the letter from the Secretary of the Fleet? Aren't you going to read it?

CHIEF

Yes, yes, presently. As soon as I have some time. Take a look. Cornarino is climbing the steps of the gallows ... Baptiste behind him, dragging his feet ... You've never seen such long faces.

Gone to the gallows! Ah, most amusing!
Cast in a role not of his choosing.

CHORUS

Gone to the gallows! Ah, most amusing!
Cast in a role not of his choosing.

CHIEF (*reading the letter*)

Good God! Incredible!

ALL

What is it? What does it say?

CHIEF

Stop the execution! Great news! Cornarino won the battle!

ALL

The winner? No! What's that? How so?

CHIEF

Here, here in the letter! The letter I should have read immediately. Listen! The flight of Cornarino, a masterful ruse! Brilliant calculation. The enemy thrown off guard. Result: total victory! And he never said a word about it.

ALL A hero!

CHIEF He won the war! Oh, hurry down!
We mustn't keep a hero dangling.

CHORUS He won the war! Oh, hurry down!
We mustn't keep a hero dangling.

MALETROMBA Stir not! On clemency I frown.
I am Doge and take no wrangling.
Ruler of the land,
I alone command.
I say a noose is for use.

Such a free and easy swinger!
Fanned by breezes ever shifting.
Ah, so lofty, so lofty and uplifting!
I will not suppress the noose.

CHORUS Though a free and easy swinger,
Mustn't leave the fellow shifting.
Maybe lofty, so lofty and uplifting,
Still we'd better break the noose.

MALETROMBA I say let him go hang.

CHORUS Mustn't let him go hang.

MALETROMBA Ah, let him just go hang.

CHORUS No, he must not go hang.

MALETROMBA (*spoken*) Despite all my precautions!

End of Act III

ACT IV

NARRATOR And so Venice finds itself with not one Doge, but two.
Obviously, one of them is superfluous. Some of the cynical
might go further. In the meantime, who is to reign? Why, the
Carnival, of course!

CHORUS Come on, Pierrots and Harlequins!
Play out, you flutes and violins.
Let trumpets sound their silver call;
Come one, come all, to the Carnival!

Come on, Pierrots and Harlequins!
Play out, you flutes and violins.
Let trumpets sound their silver call;
Announce to all the Carnival!

COLUMBINE



Poor Pier- rot, fool to go seek-ing Col-um-bine's em-bra-ces!

Silly one,
She will run
Just as long as someone chases.

CHORUS See her run!

COLUMBINE Just as long as someone chases.

CHORUS Cruel one!

COLUMBINE My heart I give to none.

CHORUS Ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ...

PIERROT Eyes of blue,
Colder, too.
Than the tiger in the jungle.
Why, oh why
Do I sigh
For a prize I'm bound to bungle?

CHORUS Hold, Pierrot!

PIERROT Like a tiger in the jungle.

CHORUS Ah, Pierrot!

PIERROT How all too well I know.

CHORUS Ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ...

LEANDER From a sleep
Long and deep,
Waken me, dear Isabella.
Witty, pert
And alert
Come and rouse a drowsy fellow.

CHORUS Find out now!
Learn this moment how to use it.
Find out now!
Come, let him show you how.

AMOROSO I try to go along but fail.
Is not your song a little stale?

CATARINA I have another, less discreet,
That better shows the modern beat.

CHORUS Then sing your song with lively rhymes
That better suit our jaded times.

CATARINA



All over town, giddy and ecstatic,
The people raise a cry of cheer.

CHORUS The people raise a cry of cheer.
La la la la la la la ...

CATARINA Come along! The dance of life is swirling,
Gaiety unfurling
A lusty call.
Come along! Elite and *hoi polloi*,
All together shall enjoy
The Carnival.
Come along!

ALL Come along! The dance of life is swirling,
Gaiety unfurling
A lusty call.
Come along! Elite and *hoi polloi*,
All together shall enjoy
The Carnival.

NARRATOR The Council of Ten goes into conference. (*they huddle*)
It looks as if they are coming to a decision.

CHORUS Come along! The dance of life is swirling,
Gaiety unfurling
A lusty call.
Come along! Elite and *hoi polloi*,
All together shall enjoy
The Carnival.

One to run from an idle threat?

CHORUS

A Malatromba?

MALATROMBA

**Speak out and name the time
For a fall you will not forget.**

CHORUS

O Malatromba!

MALATROMBA & CORNARINO

**Doge over here, Doge over there,
I notice one that we can spare.
[O/No} Malatromba! O Malatromba!
You had best beware.
O Malatromba! Malatromba!**

NARRATOR

**There are a number of methods for choosing a head of state.
One way is to have the two candidates traipsing across the
country for twelve months, making bloated speeches and
impossible promises. Another way is to hoist up two tall poles
and set a goblet of water on top, where they meet. The
candidate that reaches the goblet first wins the election.
That's the way they decide to go, and I believe it is from here
that we derive the expression, "Victory at the poles."**

CHORUS

**So now must fate decide!
One is down for a last hurrah,
O Malatromba!
His rival frankly I'd
Far prefer to Malatromba.
To Malatromba!
Doge over here, Doge over there,
There's surely one that we can spare.
O Malatromba! O Malatromba!**

NARRATOR

**The struggle begins. The two potential Doges start the climb.
Why torture you by dragging out the suspense? Operetta is
one place, thank God, where you can be reasonably sure that
the good guy wins, and so we wait complacently for
Cornarino, the brilliant war hero to surge ahead. We wait,
we're still waiting. Malatromba insidiously inches toward
the goal. Cornarino is surely reserving his strength for a
sudden final spurt. At last! He makes a superhuman effort –
and falls to the ground, precisely as Malatromba reaches the
top, triumphant. The winner, Malatromba!**

ALL

Long live Malatromba! Viva! Viva! Malatromba!

NARRATOR

Malatromba, the new Doge of Venice. Cornarino – zilch!

MALATROMBA

Long live Malatromba! My triumph is complete. Doge, at

last! Cornarino, my friend. No more hard feelings. To show my generosity, I here and now forgive you for all the wrongs I have done you.

CORNARINO

Very handsome.

MALATROMBA

But duty is duty. To preserve our local tradition which we all cherish, I should have you beheaded. However, I have chosen a different revenge, one that will last longer. Exile! You will depart at once for Spain, where I shall expect you to produce a ten-volume treatise on The Art of Naval Warfare.

CORNARINO

Nine volumes?

MALATROMBA

Ten!

CORNARINO

But Your Excellency! Such a task would be unthinkable without a private secretary ...

MALATROMBA

Malatromba is happy to provide the remedy – a talented young gentleman., named Amoroso, eager to broaden his experience.

CORNARINO

That blasted page again!

CATARINA

Amoroso! A little faraway nest!

AMOROSO

Where happy and obscure, we'll revel in *l'amour*,

BAPTISTE

How romantic! A honeymoon for three.

CHIEF(*to Malatromba*)

But Catarina? You would give up Catarina?

MALATROMBA

The Doge of Venice does not have to look far for the gratification of his every wish. He has merely to snap his fingers.
(He does so, and the ladies come swarming around him)

CORNARINO

Spain? Why Spain of all places?

MALATROMBA

Better ask your wife.

In a spot tucked away
Near the bottom of Spain,

CATARINA

There's a green shady nook
Seldom seen from the plain,

BOTH

Bolero, Fandango, Cachucha tra la la
A land for lovers, far away!

OTHERS

**Land of milk and honey,
There the sky is sunny,
Valleys green and fertile,
Flower scented.
Troubles they can banish,
Living like the Spanish,
Loving like the turtle,
So contented.**

ALL

**(We/They) are off for the spot
Near the bottom of Spain,
For the green shady nook
Seldom seen from the plain,
Where the sunlight is gold
And the rivers champagne,
In a spot just for two
Near the bottom of Spain.
Bolero, Fandango, Cachucha tra la la
A land for lovers, far away!**

The End

