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SF PERUSALS

Aladdin

A Pantomime

John Crocker

Lyrics and music by
Eric Gilder

Additional numbers by
John Crocker

Samuel French — London
New York - Toronto - Hollywood



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PRODUCTION NOTE

Pantomime, as we know it today, is a form of entertainment all on its own, derived from a number of different sources - the commedia dell'arte, (and all that that derived from), the ballet, the opera, the music hall and the realms of folk-lore and fairy tale. And elements of all of these are still to be found in it. This strange mixture has created a splendid topsy-turvy world where men are women, women are men, where the present is embraced within the past, where people are hit but not hurt, where authority is constantly flouted, where fun is poked at everything including pantomime itself at times and, above all, where magic abounds and dreams invariably come true. In other words, it is - or should be - fun. Fun to do and fun to watch and the sense of enjoyment which can be conveyed by a cast is very important to the enjoyment of the audience.

Pantomime can be very simply staged if resources are limited. Basically a tab surround at the back, tab legs at the sides and a set of traverse tabs for the frontcloth scenes, together with the simplest of small cut-out pieces to suggest the various locales - or even just placards with this information written on them - will suffice. Conversely, there is no limit to the extent to which more lavish facilities can be employed.

The directions I have given in the text adopt a middle course and are based on a permanent setting of a cyclorama skycloth at the back, a few feet in front of which is a rostrum about two feet high, running the width of the stage. About two thirds of the depth downstage is a false proscenium, immediately behind which are the lines for a set of traverse tabs. Below the false proscenium are arched entrances left and right, with possibly one foot reveals to the proscenium. A border will be necessary at some point between the false proscenium and the cyclorama to mask lighting battens and the top of the cyclorama. Lastly, there is a set of steps leading from the front of the stage into the auditorium, which I have referred to as the catwalk. I have imagined it to be set stage left, but it is unimportant whether it is left or right.

Into this permanent setting are placed various wings left and right; I have catered for one a side, set on a level with the border, but a greater depth of stage may require two a side for masking purposes. Cut-out ground-rows set on the back of the rostrum complete the full sets. On smaller stages these cut-outs seen against the cyclorama give a better impression of depth than backcloths. The frontcloth fly lines come in behind the traverse tabs. Cloths can, of course, be tumbled or rolled if flying space is limited. It is a good tip always to bring in the traverse tabs when a cloth has to be lowered, then if any hitch occurs the lights can still come up and the actors get on with the scene. Similarly, I have indicated where the traverse tabs should be closed in frontcloth scenes so that there is plenty of time for the cloth to be flown before the end of the scene. The quick flow of one scene into another is important if a smooth running production is to be achieved.

The settings and costumes should preferably be in clear bright colours to give a story book effect. Deliberate occidental touches should be introduced into some settings and some of the comics' costumes.

Pantomime requires many props and often they will have to be home made. Instructions are given in the prop plot for any of the more awkward seeming

ones. Props should also be colourfully painted and in pantomime most props should be much larger than reality. It is wise for the property master to examine carefully the practical use to which a prop is to be put - it is very painful to be hit with a Giant's club of solid wood, one of material filled with foam plastic is far gentler!

I have not attempted to give a lighting plot as this entirely depends on the equipment available, but, generally speaking, most pantomime lighting needs to be full-up, warm and bright. Pinks and ambers are probably best for this, but a circuit of blues in the cyclorama battens will help nightfall and dawn rising effects and can also provide colour variations in the backgrounds for interior scenes. Follow spots are a great help for this kind of show, but not essential. If they are available, though, it is often effective in romantic numbers to fade out the stage lighting and hold the principals in the follow spots, quickly fading up on the last few bars as this frequently helps to increase the applause! Flash boxes, with the necessary colour and flash powders, can be obtained from the usual stage electrical suppliers.

The music has been specially composed so that it is easy for the less musically accomplished to master, but it is also scored in parts for the more ambitious. If an orchestra is available well and good, but a single piano will suffice. It is an advantage, however, if there can be a drummer as well. Not only because a rhythm accompaniment enhances the numbers, but also because for some reason never yet fully fathomed slapstick hits and falls are always twice as funny if they coincide with a well timed bonk on a drum, wood-block or whatever is found to make the noise best suited to the action. A drummer can also cope with the various "whizzes" noted in the directions - a special type of whistle can be got for this - though, if necessary, they can be done off stage.

Pantomime requires a particular style of playing and production. The acting must be larger than life, but still sincere, with a good deal of sparkle and attack. Much of it must be projected directly at the audience, since one of pantomime's great advantages is that it deliberately breaks down the "fourth wall". The actors can literally and metaphorically shake hands with their audience, who become almost another member of the cast; indeed, their active participation from time to time is essential. A word of warning on this, though - the actors must always remain in control; for instance, if a villain encourages hissing he must make sure it is never to such an extent that he can no longer be heard. The producer should see that the story line is clearly brought out and treated with respect and will find an emphasis on teamwork a help here. The selfish actor continually hogging attention is distracting to the audience and very aggravating to the rest of the cast! There is always room for local gags and topical quips in pantomime, but they should not be overdone. Most important of all, the comedy, as any comedy, must never appear to be conscious of its own funniness.

Characterisation should be clear and definite. I prefer the traditional use of a man to play the Dame and a girl to play the Principal Boy. In the case of the Dame, anyway, there is a sound argument for this - audiences will laugh more readily at a man impersonating a woman involved in the mock cruelties of slapstick than at a real woman. For this reason an actor playing a Dame should never quite let us forget he is a man, while giving a sincere character performance of a woman; further, he can be as feminine as he likes, but

never effeminate. Widow Twankey is an exuberant, rumbustious character, at home in any company and seldom at a loss to know how to deal with any situation.

A Principal Boy also requires a character performance, but, of course, with the implications reversed! An occasional slap of the thigh is not sufficient. Aladdin should be thought of as a cheeky young boy, full of high spirits and eager for adventure and romance.

Principal Girls can be a bore, but only if they are presented as mere pretty symbols of feminine sweetness. Princess Baldroubadour should be played as an independent minded young lady, but light hearted and certainly not without a sense of humour.

Her father, the Emperor is vague and meek, but no fool. He often uses his weaknesses to his own advantage when dealing with his spouse, the Empress. She, of course, is never in the slightest vague or meek, but always very sure of herself and overbearing.

Ping and Pong, their Police Force, leave much to be desired in the execution of their duties. Ping, though, does realise he is not very efficient, but tries to be, nevertheless. Pong does not even try - he is aware that his brain moves too slowly for efficiency.

Wishee Washee finds life a slight worry and a puzzlement. He is continually finding himself in situations neither of his choosing nor making. All the same, he usually manages to emerge more or less unscathed.

His pet Panda, Typhoo, is a lumbering, kindly, lovably greedy animal, but with a spark or two of mischief. To play this kind of animal successfully the performer must "think" the part very hard. It will be found surprising - and very rewarding - just how much can be conveyed in this way.

Abanazar is an arch villain, but not without his ridiculous side and should be played with a suspicion of a twinkle.

The Slaves of the Ring and Lamp should look as grotesque, but magnificent as possible and be played as obviously powerful, but rather remote creatures - Genii are seemingly devoid of any private life.

The Camel is as supercilious and independent as camels always are.

I have made provision for a Chorus of six, but naturally the number used will depend on the number available.

John Crocker.

CHARACTERS

PING)) PONG)	- Pekin Police Force.
ALADDIN	
TYPHOO	- A Panda.
WISHEE WASHEE	- Widow Twankey's Laundry Boy.
THE EMPEROR OF CHINA	
THE EMPRESS OF CHINA	
WIDOW TWANKEY	
PRINCESS BALDROUBADOUR	
ABANAZAR	
THE SLAVE OF THE RING	
THE SLAVE OF THE LAMP	
A CAMEL	
CHORUS	- as Coolies, Princess's Attendants, Cave Spirits, Slave Girls, Eastern Dancers, etc.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

PART I

Scene 1:	THE MARKET PLACE, PEKIN.
Scene 2:	THE END OF NOWHERE & WATLING STREET, PEKIN.
Scene 3:	WIDOW TWANKEY'S LAUNDRY.
Scene 4:	OUTSIDE THE LAUNDRY.
Scene 5:	ON THE WAY TO THE CAVE.
Scene 6:	THE MAGIC CAVE OF JEWELS.

PART II

Scene 7:	WIDOW TWANKEY'S LAUNDERETTE.
Scene 8:	THE EMPEROR'S AUDIENCE CHAMBER.
Scene 9:	ABANAZAR'S DEN.
Scene 10:	ALADDIN'S PALACE.
Scene 11:	OUTSIDE THE PALACE.
Scene 12:	THE PALACE, AFRICA.
Scene 13:	LOST PROPERTY.
Scene 14:	ALADDIN'S WEDDING BANQUET.

Running time approximately two hours and thirty minutes.

MUSIC 1 Overture

PART I

Scene One - THE MARKET PLACE, PEKIN.

Full-set. Cut-out around row of Chinese shops and houses on back of rostrum and in C., a notice with "MARKET PLACE, PEKIN" written on it in Chinese characters, and above it a sign on which is a long-fingernailed Chinese hand pointing off R., and the words "TO THE HONOURABLE IMPERIAL BATH-HOUSE". At L. end of rostrum an oriental bridge runs obliquely onstage. A set of steps leading down from rostrum to stage is placed in front of bridge and another set is R.C., in front of rostrum. House wing L., with practical door and practical window and notice above door "WIDOW TWANKEY'S LAUNDRY". House wing R., with practical door and inn sign hanging out from it - "THE UNWORTHY CHOPSTICK & DRAGON ARMS" and underneath - "PROP. WUN LUNG". Flower pot in front of L. side of pros. arch.

(CHORUS discovered singing and dancing OPENING CHORUS.)

MUSIC 2 "CHING-A-LING" (Words by John Crocker)

CHORUS:

In Pekin City the sun shines bright,
Morning, morning, what a lovely morning -
Our hearts are gay and our steps are light,
Ching-a-ling, ching-a-ling-lee
We've left our work to take the air
And thrown away all strife and care.
Ching-a-ling, ling-ling, ching-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling,
Ching-a-ling, ling, ling-a-ling-lee.

Our city's like a lady fair,
Morning, morning, what a lovely morning -
Bedeck'd with flowers and gems so rare,
Ching-a-ling, ching-a-ling-lee
And so there are without a doubt
A hundred things to sing about
Ching-a-ling, ling-ling, ching-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling,
Ching-a-ling, ling, ling-a-ling-lee.

In Pekin city the sun shines bright,
Morning, morning, what a lovely morning,
Our hearts are gay and our steps are light,
Ching-a-ling, ching-a-ling-lee
We hope you will our gladness share
And throw away your strife and care.
Ching-a-ling, ling-ling, ching-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling,
Ching-a-ling, ling, ling-a-ling-lee.

MUSIC 3 (EFFECT 1 Sound of police siren off R., and SERGEANT PING scoots from U.R., on scooter labelled "POLICE", which he propels D.C., towards floats.)

CHORUS; Look out! Stop! STOP!

(PING stops just in time at the floats, and gets off to L. of scooter.)

PING: Ah, that had you worried, didn't it? You thought I was going over, didn't you?

CHORUS: Yes.

PING: So did I. Well, good morning honourable all.

CHORUS: Good morning, Sergeant Ping.

PING: (taking out notebook) Nice day for a few crimes. Any of you lot committed any?

CHORUS: No, Sergeant.

PING: Pity. We haven't had a decent conviction in months. Never mind, I've got an announcement here forbidding everybody to do something, so perhaps that'll encourage one of you to go and do it. Listen carefully. (he bends his knees policeman-like and coughs importantly.) Ahem! Honourable Commoners, this day will her Serene Highness Princess Baldroubadour proceed in state to the Imperial Baths. His Imperial Majesty has decreed that no honourable commoner shall gaze on her save on pain of death by dishonourable chopper. Honourable commoners, you have been warned. All clear?

CHORUS: No. What's it mean?

PING: It means if you don't want your nappers napped you'd better nip off.

CHORUS: (going off L. and R.) Oh, shame. We wanted to see her. It's not fair. Why shouldn't we see her? etc.

PING: Now, no loitering. Move along there, please.

(CHORUS are gone)

Now where's the other half of the police force? Constable Pong! Constable Pong! No, no, no. Let us use the wonders of modern science. (takes hand mike from handlebar) I'll call him up on his squad scooter. (facing R.) Calling Squad scooter 34, 34, 343 oblique 34, 34 343 oblique 2. Where are you? Where are you? Over.

(EFFECT 2 Police siren off L., as PONG enters D.L. propelling a similar scooter and speaking into hand mike)

PONG: I'm here. I'm here. Over. (bumps into PING and knocks him over) Oops. Right over.

PING: You fool. Over.

PONG: Sorry. Over.

PING: Well, help me up. Over.

PONG: Certainly. Over. (he does so)

PING: Thank you. Out. (replaces hand mike)

PONG: Not at all. In. (replaces hand mike)

PING: Out.

PONG: In.

PING: Out.

PONG: In.

PING: Out.

BOTH: (singing)
Jolly boating weather
And a hay harvest -

PING: Stop it. We're supposed to be on duty.

(They put their scooters: PING'S to R., and PONG'S to L.)

But the trouble is we haven't any duties to do. The only offence we've had lately is young Aladdin Twankey playing cricket in the streets and breaking the police station windows. It's just not bad enough. Somehow things have got to get worse.

MUSIC 4. "IN OLD PEKIN" (Words and Music by John Crocker, arr., Eric Gilder.)

PING: Listen here, P. C. Pong,
No one's put a foot wrong
In the city of Old Pekin.

PONG: Yes, I know, there just ain't
Not one single complaint
To be found now in Old Pekin.

BOTH: So we haven't got a thing to do,
Except sit here and admire the view.

PONG: Tell you what, Sergeant Ping,
We must put some more zing
In the crime of Old Pekin.

PING: Good idea, I agree
We'll show no clemency
To the people of Old Pekin.

BOTH: And though 'twill seem like false pretences
We shall invent some new offences.

PING: We'll put narks,

PONG: In the parks,

PING: To report any larks -

BOTH: To the perlice of Old Pekin.

PONG: Make a pass,

PING: Steal a kiss,

PONG: And they'll soon be for this

BOTH: (continued)
In the prison of old Pekin.
Where they'll be fed on bread and water,
For doing what they didn't oughter.
So beware! Have a care!
For we mean to ensnare.

PONG: Ev'ryo.....ne) (simultaneously)

PING: Ev'ryone in old Pek-i-i-i-i-n)

(PING hits PONG with truncheon and stops his sustained note)

PING: Ev'ryone,

PONG: Ev'ryone,

BOTH: In old Pekin.

(EFFECT 3 Glass crash off L.)

PING: What's that?

PONG: Only Aladdin breaking the police station windows again.

PING: Only! After him! Quick!

(They both run towards their scooters and collide in C. and fall over)

Clumsy!

CHORUS: (off) Look out, Aladdin.

(PING rises quickly and gets on his scooter, blowing his whistle. PONG is rather more dazed and is just getting up with his back to PING as PING comes scooting over, knocks him down and continues off L. MUSIC 5. ALADDIN, followed by CHORUS runs on from L., on rostrum and down steps.

ALADDIN: This way boys and girls.

CHORUS GIRL: (sees PONG still floundering on floor) No, Aladdin. There's one of them here!

ALADDIN: This way then!

(They go to run off L. below rostrum. PING'S whistle sounds off L.)

Too late! Here comes Ping again!

(He sees PONG'S scooter, grabs it and scoots off R. on it. PING re-enters L., on his scooter just as PONG is rising again with his back to L., and knocks him down then continues off R., still blowing his whistle and shouting as he comes across)

PING: Hey, come back! Come back!

PONG: I'm getting out of this.

(He climbs up onto rostrum just as ALADDIN scoots on from R., on rostrum and knocks him down)

ALADDIN: Oops! Sorry. But thanks for the loan. (gives scooter to PONG and jumps down from rostrum) Hide me, boys and girls.

(CHORUS crowd round him in C. PING enters R., on rostrum on scooter just as PONG is about to rise again. PONG sits again hastily.)

PONG: Missed.

PING: Well, don't just sit there. Which way did he go?

PONG: I don't know.

PING: (to CHORUS) Which way did he go?

CHORUS: We don't know.

PING: You in the middle. Which way did he go?

ALADDIN: (bobbing up and crossing arms to point both ways) That-ataway. (bobs down again)

PONG: Whichaway?

PING: (crossing arms) Thisaway.

PONG: Rightaway.

(PING scoots off L., on rostrum. PONG R. CHORUS open out. ALADDIN moves down C.)

ALADDIN: Well, that's shaken them off, but I'd better remember to keep out of their way for a bit.

6th C. GIRL: Yes - they might be back here soon.

ALADDIN: What for?

6th C. GIRL: To clear the streets for Princess Baldroubadour's procession to the baths.

ALADDIN: Then I think I'll stay and see the Princess.

7th C. GIRL: You'd better not or you'll have your head chopped off.

ALADDIN: I bet you I won't. I know just the way to see her without being seen.

7th C. GIRL: How?

ALADDIN: I'm not going to tell you lot, but I'm going to do it. And what's more, I'll probably talk to her too and - if she's as beautiful as they say she is - I might fall in love with her.

(CHORUS laugh)

Oh, you can laugh, but it could happen. You wait and see.

MUSIC 6 "WHERE THERE'S LIFE"

ALADDIN: She loves me, she loves me not, she loves me, she loves me not -
My head's completely in a whirl;
But while there's life there's always hope

ALADDIN: (continued)

That she might be my girl.
Who knows? Was she sent for me? Her smile might be meant for me,
And maybe yes and maybe no,
But some day she may realise
That I adore her so.
Fate has many funny ways of keeping us apart,
But you can keep your spirit if there's hope within your heart.
She might be, she mightn't be, she might be, she mightn't be -
My heart is waiting for a sign
That some fine day she'll come to me
And turn my blood to wine,
And then I'll know she's mine!

(Exit ALADDIN C.R., and CHORUS variously)

WISHEE: (off U.L.) Not so fast Typhoo, wait!

MUSIC 7

(TYPHOO, a PANDA, lumbers on L. on rostrum straining at a long leash round her neck. At the other end of which she drags a puffing and panting WISHEE WASHEE)

No, hold on a minute, Typhoo!

(She jumps down C., off rostrum so that WISHEE tumbles down after her and is pulled along on his knees towards D.R.)

Heel, girl. Heel, I say!

(She starts to run to L., as he is stumbling to his feet again.)

No, no, I said heel - not run!

(She stops very suddenly in C., and sits down facing front so that he continues on, trips over her legs and falls flat on his face.)

Typhoo, I was supposed to be taking you for a walk. Help me up, please.

(TYPHOO shambles to her feet and tugs him up by the seat of his pants)

Aah! Typhoo, careful with your claws. Ooh, look, people.

(TYPHOO hastily jumps up)

(protectively) It's all right, there's no need to be bashful. I'm sure they're very nice people. I'll introduce you, if you like. How do you do? I'm Wishee Washee, Widow Twankey's laundry boy.

(TYPHOO shakes his hand)

Very pleased to meet - no, no, we know each other. I'm introducing me so that I can introduce you.

(TYPHOO runs to D.R.)

No don't run away Typhoo, there's nothing to be frightened of.

(As he turns to speak to audience TYPHOO moves onto cat walk and into audience)

WISHEE: (continued) Sorry about this but she's very shy. All pandas are, you know. It takes them a long time to -

(He sees TYPHOO in the audience shaking hands with all and sundry)

Typhoo, what are you doing? I've just been telling everybody how shy you are.

(TYPHOO nods her head to him very happily and continues shaking hands etc.)

Well, come back here and be shy then.

(TYPHOO a little reluctantly waves to audience and returns over cat-walk)

As a panda you're supposed to have a very timid nature. It says so in all the books.

(TYPHOO scratches her head puzzled)

But then you haven't really turned out quite as I expected anyway. When I bought you they said you were a specially bred miniature giant panda.

(TYPHOO nods enthusiastically)

But you're not supposed to have grown any bigger than this - (indicates with his hands something about the size of a poodle) I think you eat too many bamboo shoots.

(TYPHOO, reminded of food, immediately begs)

No, no, no. I didn't mean that.

(He backs away from her. She follows still begging)

I shouldn't have said it. I haven't got any.

(TYPHOO sniffs, nods and tries to get her nose in his R. pocket)

Oh, very well. Here you are. Just one.

(He offers her one on the palm of his hand which she gobbles up eagerly, then begs for more.)

No, no, I said one.

(TYPHOO strokes him affectionately and rubs her head on his leg)

Well, two then. (gives it to her) But no more. You must have eaten a couple of bamboo forests already today. In fact, I've only got one more shoot left. I tell you what, let's plant it and see if it grows any bigger.

(TYPHOO nods enthusiastically)

But where?

(TYPHOO looks to R., then to L., sees flower pot in front of pros. arch and runs and points to it triumphantly)

WISHEE: (continued) A flower pot! Well, what a coincidence. (crosses to it, and plants bamboo shoot) There.

(They move away)

I wonder if it'll take long to grow?

(The shoot begins to grow out of the pot)

Apparently not.

(TYPHOO rushes back to the pot to try to get bamboo shoot. Music whizz. It whistles past her nose. She sits back astonished)

Wait Typhoo. It hasn't finished growing, yet. I can see I'll have to get somebody to keep an eye on it for us, or it'll be pinched. I know. We'll ask these people. (to audience) I say, would you look after our bamboo shoot? If anybody tries to take it you just shout "Bamboo", and then I'll come and stop them. Let's try it, shall we? You go over there, Typhoo.

(TYPHOO goes to R.)

Now, I'll go away and then Typhoo will pretend to take it.

(TYPHOO nods mischievously and rubs her tummy)

I said pretend, Typhoo. (to audience) As soon as she gets to the flower pot you shout "Bamboo" as loud as you can. Ready? Right. I'll go.

(He exits D.L. TYPHOO elaborately creeps over to shoot. AUDIENCE SHOUT. WISHEE pokes his head on D.L.)

Anyone shouted yet, Typhoo?

(TYPHOO gives a sort of grudging movement and moves away from shoot)

Really? Well, they'll have to do it louder than that. Try again.

(He disappears again. TYPHOO again creeps to shoot. AUDIENCE SHOUT. WISHEE pokes his head on again)

Yes, I think I heard a faint murmur of bamboo, then.

(TYPHOO nods, but not very enthusiastically and moves away from shoot)

Once more and be really vulgar this time. BELLOW YOUR GUTS OUT!

(He disappears. TYPHOO creeps over to shoot. AUDIENCE SHOUT. TYPHOO clasps her hands to her ears and hastily moves away to C., as WISHEE runs on to C.)

All right! Splendid! Now, don't forget to do that any time you see someone trying to take the bamboo shoot.

PING:) (off L.) Make way for the Emperor and Empress.

PONG:) Make way for the Emperor and Empress.

MUSIC 8 Chinese slow march begins.

WISHEE: Ooh, I say, Royalty.

(They break a little R. PING and PONG each bearing a large mace enter with stately gait, over bridge and post themselves at either side of it. PING L. and PONG R.)

PING: Illustrious citizens, prostrate yourselves before their Imperial Majesties, our esteemed Emperor and Empress.

(WISHEE kneels with head down and then rises to bring TYPHOO down into same position. Fanfare as EMPEROR and EMPRESS enter over bridge, very dignified. The EMPEROR carries a scroll. PING and PONG bow hitting them on their heads with the maces.)

EMPEROR:)
EMPRESS:) Ow!

EMPRESS: Fools! (surveys WISHEE and TYPHOO) Is this all we have to greet us?

EMPEROR: (looks round vaguely) Er - yes my dear.

EMPRESS: But we have a proclamation to make. We can't make it to one miserable citizen and one piebald door mat.

TYPHOO: (looks up in outraged astonishment then begins to rise growling menacingly) Grrr.

(WISHEE tries to restrain her. EMPEROR and PING and PONG run to hide behind EMPRESS)

EMPEROR: Careful, my dear.

EMPRESS: Don't be feeble, Emperor. (even more menacingly to TYPHOO) Grr to you.

(TYPHOO hastily returns to kneeling position)

(EMPEROR, PING and PONG come out of hiding)

You see a little firmness is all that's needed. Now we need more people. Police, procure some more populace.

PING:)
PONG:) Yes, your Majesty. (they bow and again hit EMPEROR and EMPRESS)

EMPEROR:)
EMPRESS:) Ow!

EMPRESS: You idiots!

PING:)
PONG:) So sorry, your Majesties. Beg pardon, your Majesties. A slip of the -

EMPRESS: Oh, never mind, let the matter drop.

PING:)
PONG:) Certainly.

(PING and PONG drop the maces onto EMPEROR and EMPRESS's feet.

EMPEROR:)
EMPRESS:) Ow!

EMPRESS: Get out of here and find some populace!

PING:) Yes, your Majesty. At once, your Majesty. Populace!
PONG:) Populace!

(PING exits L., and PONG R.)

EMPRESS: Buffoons!

(EMPEROR and EMPRESS come down steps.)

Those two creatures are still here, I see. Well, I suppose we must go through the usual formalities. Illustrious citizens, you may rise and greet us.

(WISHEE and TYPHOO, prompted by WISHEE, rise.)

WISHEE: Thank you. Well - er - (bowing and nudging TYPHOO to make her bow) Good morning, esteemed Emperor and Empress.

EMPEROR:)
EMPRESS:) Good morning illustrious citizens.

(Slight pause)

WISHEE: Er - (bowing with TYPHOO) A very good morning, esteemed Emperor and Empress.

EMPEROR:)
EMPRESS:) (bowing) A very good morning illustrious citizens.

WISHEE: In fact a very, (bowing with TYPHOO) very good morning, esteemed Emperor and Empress.

EMPEROR:)
EMPRESS:) A very, (bowing) very good morning, illustrious citizens.

WISHEE: And it wouldn't be too much to say a very, very, (bowing with TYPHOO) very good -

EMPRESS: Yes, it would. It'll be afternoon if we carry on like this. We are agreed it is a good morning.

WISHEE: Yes, indeed. (bowing with TYPHOO) A good morning, este -

EMPRESS: Silence! Can't you understand plain Chinese?

WISHEE: Yesee.

EMPRESS: Then shut-uppee! And be offee! Chop-chopee!

WISHEE: At oncee!

(He bows himself out backwards right round stage to exit to laundry. The EMPRESS opens her mouth to speak when WISHEE re-enters and bows himself backwards round to TYPHOO watched in astonishment by EMPRESS and with mild interest by EMPEROR.)

Sorry. Forgotee.

(He and TYPHOO bow themselves out round stage and into laundry)

EMPRESS: Extraordinary. Oh, Emperor, my dear, look. There's a tender young bamboo shoot. They're delicious in butter. Go and pick it for me.

EMPEROR: Certainly, my dear.

(he crosses to flower pot. AUDIENCE SHOUT. Very scared he hurries back as WISHEE runs on)

They shouted at me.

EMPRESS: (to WISHEE) Well?

WISHEE: Oh - er - nothing. (aside to AUDIENCE) Thank you. (catching the EMPRESS's eye he hastily bows himself off backwards into the laundry)

EMPRESS: I'll get it myself.

(She crosses to shoot. AUDIENCE SHOUT. WISHEE rushes on, sees EMPRESS and dives back into laundry.)

They shouted at me.

(WISHEE re-enters from laundry bowing as, hands behind his back, he goes down to flower pot, whips a large notice "POISON" from behind his back and puts it against pot.)

WISHEE: (aside to AUDIENCE) Thank you.

EMPRESS: Eh?

(WISHEE shrugs and smiles ingratiatingly and again bows off into laundry)

(looking at notice) Perhaps I won't have it after all.

EMPEROR: Oh, do, my dear.

(EMPRESS glares at him.)

I mean - er.

(he is saved by the entry of the CHORUS herded on from L. and R. by PING and PONG.

PING:) Come on, honourable populace. Hurry along there.
PONG:) Prostrate yourselves, honourable populace.

(CHORUS prostrate themselves.)

PING: (bowing) Your Majesties. The honourable populace.

EMPRESS: They may rise.

(CHORUS do so.)

CHORUS: Thank you, esteemed Empress. (bowing) Good morning, es -

EMPRESS: But they may not greet us. Emperor, we are ready. Read the proclamation.

EMPEROR: Yes, my dear. (clears throat nervously) Ahem! - Er, I can't.

EMPRESS: Why not?

EMPEROR: (sadly) I never learnt to read.

EMPRESS: (taking scroll) But it's in your writing.

EMPEROR: (happily) Of course. I learnt to write.

EMPRESS: Emperor, words fail me.

EMPEROR: How splendid... I mean -

(CHORUS titter)

EMPRESS: Silence. I suppose I'll have to do it as usual. Illustrious citizens, this day has our daughter, Princess Baldroubadour been betrothed to the son of the late lamented Grand Vizier, his Highness Prince Pekoe. (slight pause) Well, I think a few cheers are indicated.

EMPEROR: (moving to pub) Yes, indeed.

EMPRESS: I said cheers, not beers, Emperor.

EMPEROR: Oh, pity.

EMPRESS: Populace, cheer.

PING: Hip - hip -

CHORUS: Hooray!

PING: Hip - hip -

CHORUS: Hooray!

PING: Hip - hip -

CHORUS: Hooray!

EMPRESS: That's better.

PONG: Hooray!

EMPRESS: Too late, my man, take it back.

PONG: Eh - ruh.

EMPRESS: Thank you. Now perhaps some liquid refreshment would be welcome. You may buy me a small port and lemon, Emperor.

EMPEROR: Yes, my dear, of course, only I haven't any money. I was hoping that you - ?

EMPRESS: Certainly not. Police, levy a tax immediately -

(CHORUS hastily bow themselves off backwards L. and R.)

EMPRESS: Unfortunate. You'll have to levy it on yourselves. (prods POLICE towards pub)

PING:)
PONG:) (resignedly) Yes, your Majesty. (they exit into pub)

EMPRESS: Come, Emperor.

EMPEROR: Yes, my dear.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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