

CHIAC-LASFS

PRESENTS

REQUIEM FOR A FAKE FAN

A PLAY BY

James O'Meara

To be staged on Sunday, September 4th, 1960 in the Ball Room, Penn-Sheraton Hotel, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

- TENTATIVE FINAL SCRIPT -

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SCRIPT

TIME: The very near future.

The room is shrouded in darkness. There should be adequate light to find seats, etc. but all unnecessary light should be eliminated. The stage is in complete darkness. From the loud speaker comes the muffled sound of quiet, soothing organ music. After the audience is seated the organ music is exchanged for a funeral dirge. Enter chorus in mock mourning. Each member wears a black mourning arm-band and a lighted candle. They walk slowly, in single file. Immediately behind chorus enter pallbearers, carrying bier. The body on the bier (Ferdinand Fugghead) is draped with a floral wreath and carries upright in his hands, one single lilly. The chorus seats themselves in the front row (seats have been previously marked off as reserved) and extinguishes the candles. Pallbearers place bier against stage (at stage right) on floor level and assume seats with chorus, becoming part of chorus.

Enter Minister, stage left, quietly and assumes position at lecturn. Spotlight centers on lecturn. Minister spreads open a copy of THE IMMORTAL STORM, pauses long enough for it to be visible to everyone in the audience then places it on lecturn. He speaks:

Minister (very solemn and dignified): Brethren . . . you have no idea how glad it makes this old heart of mine to see so many of you here today. That any one fan could have so many true and loyal friends is amazing in itself, and that you all gather here at this solemn time to pay your last respects to

a great and noble fan is as it should be. ...Paying your final homage to Ferdinand Fugghead . . . No matter what else you may say about him, he was a good fan. . . . Never once did he miss the mailing deadline of his apa...but more important he always remembered to keep holy the belief in Bloch. Some of you, who perhaps only knew him slightly, may say he was a tremendous bore, but those of us who really knew him know, deep down inside (clutches at his heart and pauses), that where Ferdinand is going now he'll get everything he ever deserved. . . (waving fist into the air in mock frenzy).

(Spotlight swings from lecturn to bier and Minister exits, carrying lecturn with him. Enter St. Peter from behind screen, walking into circle of spotlight by bier.)

St. Peter (calling, softly): Ferdie... Oh, Ferdinand Fugghead . . .

Ferdinand (puts lilly aside carefully and sits up on bier as if just waking from a deep sleep, rubbing his eyes): Wh--where am I?

St. Peter: In heaven of course, did you expect to be some other place?

Ferdinand: Well, I did wonder about it, but I'm quite happy to be here.

St. Peter: Then come with me, I've got a million and one celestial things to do today and Dirce only allowed us 30 minutes for the play. (St. Peter helps Ferdinand down from the bier onto the stage. Enter girls, stage left. St. Peter leads Ferdinand to the girls then steps back slightly. Girls make a small fuss over Ferdinand, sitting him down, making him comfortable, mumbling sweet things to him, etc. then 1st girl picks up guitar, strums a few notes then proceeds to sing one chorus of _____ . Just as she is finishing, St. Peter steps forward.)

St. Peter: Well young man, now that you've had a taste of heaven, how do you like it?

Ferdinand (rising to face St. Peter): Gosh oh boy, wow oh wow! Somehow I never thought Fan Heaven would be like this.

St. Peter (quizical): Fan Heaven?

Ferdinand: Yes, all good science fiction fen - -

St. Peter (interrupting): I knew it, I knew it. Ghod will be furious! I keep asking for an assistant, but oh no . . .

Ferdinand: What's wrong?

St. Peter: I've made a terrible mistake. This isn't fan heaven. I've put you in folk heaven. This particular section is reserved exclusively for Theodore Bikel fans.

Ferdinand: Theodore who?

St. Peter: Never mind that now, maybe I can still straighten it out, just follow me.

Ferdinand (looking fondly at the girls who are beckoning him to join them): Couldn't I just stay here?

St. Peter (indignently): Absolutely not. Ghod likes his science fiction fans to stay pure and innocent up here just like they were on earth. (St. Peter looks at watch) Besides, it's just about time for Ghod to visit fan heaven and you wouldn't want to miss him, now would you?

Ferdinand (surprised): Oh, is John Campbell really up here?

St. Peter (very indignant): Athiest! I mean Ghod. (St. Peter motions to two men who enter from behind screen and approach him.) Take this man to fan heaven, that's room 770. (Each man takes one arm and they march him across stage to stage right, rear. St. Peter follows closely behind.)

Ferdinand: I'll sue you all. Don't think you can get away with this, I'll have you know I've got a good New York lawyer.... (exit two men.)

(Centered in spotlight now is table filled with typewriters, a mimeograph, stencils, staplers and several reams of paper scattered about.)

St. Peter (firmly): Ferdinand, we're beyond the reach of New York court squabbles, you may as well realize it now, this is where you're going to spend your time in heaven.

Ferdinand (looking around the stage): But this place is deserted. Couldn't I go back to folk heaven? Those girls back there sure - - -

St. Peter (interrupting): No, you can't go back, haven't you read your Bradbury? Besides, I think I hear someone coming now. (looking off stage) Yes, the dear angels, perhaps you've heard of them, they used to be known as the LASFS? (Enter LASFS, carrying packs of beer, a bucket labeled 'Blog', etc., and as they come in they are singing to the tune of Battle Hymn of the Republic:

Glory, glory, papa Villy,
Glory, glory, papa Villy,
Fan-dom goes marching on!

(Exit St. Peter.)

1st LASFS: Ferdie Fugghead!

2nd LASFS: We've been waiting for you . . .

3rd LASFS: You're just the man we need,

Meany: Hello, Fuggie. I'm Eney Meany, OE, and I'd like to greet you and extend the welcome mat for all the fen here in fan heaven . . .

Ferdinand (puzzled): OE? I don't understand . . .

Meany: Sure, I'm OE. Official Editor of APA, The Angelic Press Association, and I'm sure you'd like to - -

Ferdinand (interrupting) All I'd really like to do is go back to folk heaven, if it's all the same to you. . .

Meany: Nonsense! Of course I don't really know, but I hear all they've got over there is a lot of pretty girls with guitars that sing all the time. Why man, this is the only place in all of heaven where you can get egoboo.

Ferdinand: I guess I'll never get back over there . . OK, I'll stay . .

Meany: Great! Now, first I think we better start out with a few of the heavenly necessities. Naturally, the number one item is your TAFF ballot (handing paper to Ferdinand) - -

Ferdinand: TAFF ballot! You mean you have TAFF up here too?

Meany: Naturally . . . The Trans-Angelic Fan Fund!

Ferdinand (examining ballot closely): Isn't this paper you printed your ballot on awfully thick?

Meany: Yes, it has to be asbestos. That's the only thing that'll stand up. You see, it's their turn to send a delegate, so they'll count the ballots down there this year. (Ferdinand writes on the paper and hands it to Meany.)

Ferdinand: There, I've filled it out, and it was no easy choice either. I had a hard time choosing between _____ and _____. Say, do you have any trouble when their delegates come up here?

Meany: No. As a matter of fact the trouble seems to be to get our delegates back up here. Of course they never fully recover and have to spend their time in Beat heaven, but I gather they have some really way out cons down there. (Meany picks up a six/pack of beer and hands it to Ferdinand.) Here,

hurry up and drink this. Your quota is 24 cans a day from now on.

Ferdinand: 24 cans! Why so many?

Meany: The quota has to be high. That's the only way the Berkeley boys will get to finish their tower to earth. We all must do our little bit you know... Now, can I see your SF Writers Union Card please?

Ferdinand: I don't have one. I'm no dirty pro.

Meany: Well, you'll have to join right now. Ghod don't allow no scabing up here. (hands paper to Ferdinand) Just sign this application, we'll take your initiation fee and dues from your first check after you make a sale. (Ferdinand signs paper and hands it back to Meany.)

Meany: Well, I guess that takes care of everything. You're now a full-fledged, fully qualified member of APA. (Meany turns, as if to leave, then goes back to face Ferdinand.) Oh, Ferdie, today's the deadline for the mailing, incidently. I suggest you get right to work, your quota for the mailing is 100 pages.

Ferdinand: A hundred pages!

Meany: A mere trifle for a true Pelzian fan like you.

Ferdinand: And what happens if I miss a mailing?

Meany: Nothing too serious, I just take away your femmefan privileges for a year and apply them to my quota. . .

Ferdinand (interrupting quickly): I'll get to work right now!

(Ferdinand goes to work table and sits at a typewriter and starts typing furiously. Tears the sheet out of the machine and starts again. Stops, looks disgusted then speaks to 1st LASFS.)

Ferdinand: I always thought fan heaven would be a place where I could loaf all the time and think beautiful thoughts about science fiction. And what do I find? The same old worrying about making deadlines; wondering how the mimeo is going to work; where to get the material to fill 100 pages.

(LASFS crowds around Ferdinand, right and left, leaving Ferdinand clear to the audience.)

1st LASFS: I think you're taking it all too seriously, Ferdie.

2nd LASFS: Where else but fan heaven will you receive recognition for your knowledge of all the fan fueds from the year one?

3rd LASFS: And where else could you know the joy of seeing sheets of paper flowing from the mimeo, perfectly inked in four glorious colors?

1st LASFS: On both sides at the same time!

2nd LASFS: Where else could you start a fued that can last for generations and have all of fandom taking sides?

3rd LASFS: Where else could you know the sheer joy of staying up until six in the morning after attending 38 different closed-door parties?

1st LASFS: Then stagger out for seven complete, but separate breakfasts with seven different sets of fans.

2nd LASFS: Where else could you talk to your BNF equals and have three hundred neos listening raptously to your every word as holy gospel?

ALL LASFS TOGETHER: Fandom is a way of life!

Ferdinand: You're right, of course, A tremendous talent such as mine wouldn't be recognized anywhere but in fandom.

1st LASFS: We knew you'd see it our way Ferdie.

ALL LASFS TOGETHER: You have a sensitive fannish face!

Ferdinand: Let's get to work and make that damned deadline. After all, it's the fannish thing to do.

(There is now a period of extremely exaggerated activity, mimeo turning, paper jogging, etc. ALL, including chorus seated in audience, sing to the tune of Sweet Chariot, the following while working:

Ink good, sweet mim-e-o,
Roll-in out the pa-ges for me---
Ink good, sweet mim-e-o,
Roll-in out the pa-ges for me.
Turn-ing the-e han-dle and what do I see---
Pa-ges roll-ing out for me,
To be a-ssem-bled and sta-pled just so-o,
Just to please a cruel O. I.

(The mimeoing is now done, and piles of pages arranged on the work-table. ALL march around the table, assembling the pages and stapling them, and singing through twice (chorus in audience also sings) to the tune of Pop Goes the Weasel:

'Round and 'round the mi-me-o-graph,
We co-a-late the pa-ges.
Hand them to the ed-i-tor chap---
Pop goes the sta-pler!

(ALL hand stacks of pre-assembled zines to chorus who has risen and approached the stage. Chorus then very quickly goes down the aisles, handing out the pre-assembled zines as souvenirs of the play, then resumes their seats as quietly as possible. During the time taken to hand out the zines, there is a lull of activity on stage, therefore this distribution must be handled as quickly as possible. On stage Ferdinand and LASFS assume the previous activity of running off another zine on the mimeo, typing, etc. Ron Ellik, Jim Caughran come on stage collecting empty beer cans. Ad lib lines about working on the 'Earth Tower'. As the chorus resumes their seats, one chorus member turns to face the audience:

1st Chorus (Difinitively): Ghod is coming!

Ferdinand (Startled): Oh, what'll I do -- should I get down on my knees?

1st LASFS: No, you don't hage to do that. He's really very informal you know. . .

2nd LASFS: Look at him come. My but he does do that water walking bit with finesse. . .

(ALL, including chorus, sing to the tune of Rock of Ages:

Bloch is ageless, ghod to me,
Let me send my zine to thee;
'Tis an issue, num-ber one
That I thought would ne'er be done.
Filled with art-work and more crud,
Heck-to-ed in the tint of blood.
Could a fake fan, such as I,
Hope to make it bye and bye?
Pub-ing iss-ues filled with stuff,
That could call a true fan's bluff.
Let them scream and won-der how;
Gosh oh boy, oh wow oh wow!

B n f I will be then,
Up there with the oth-er fen.
Filled with pride and all the things,
That a good job well done brings.
Bloch is ageless, praise him ture
For all the help he gives to you.

(As song ends enter Ghod, accompanied by one handmaiden. Ghod turns to Meany:

Ghod: How are things going in fan heaven, Eney Meany?

Meany: Couldn't be better, Bob. Just finished a big issue in time to meet the deadline. But how are things with you?

Ghod: Oh, you know how these children are. My son's talking about another death hoax or staple war and the shortage of bricks for his hotel...

Handmaiden: Children and fanzines never turn out the way you want them to...

Ghod: By the way, Eney (confidentially), have there been any virgins for sacrifice...?

Handmaiden (Interrupting): I told you to lay off that business...

Ghod: I only wanted to test my will power...

Handmaiden: I'll test you if I catch you trying to bring back that old time religion. You know all fans are pure and innocent . . .

Meany: No virgins, Bob, unless - - - Well, we did get a new fan today. His name is Ferdinand Fugghead.

Handmaiden: That's strange. I don't seem to remember any arrivals scheduled for today. Meany, get out the Fanac file and check it, won't you?

Meany: I should have, of course, but I didn't. I'll do it right away.
(Meany exits. Handmaiden and Ghod approach Ferdinand.)

Handmaiden: Hello, Ferdie. Are you enjoying fan heaven?

Ferdinand (Looking gleefully at handmaiden): You bet I am. And I'm enjoying it even more right now. Who are you?

Handmaiden: I used to be a Soames Sexretary, now I'm just one of the handmaidens.

Ghod: She's in charge of putting squirrels on stencil, and also keeper of the corflu.

Ferdinand: I'll just bet she is.

Ghod: Now, Ferdie, let's not have any of those thoughts. I might have to send you to a warmer climate.

Ferdinand: It could be worth while, if she went . . .

(Enter Meany, excited, waving several copies of Fanac in his hand.)

Meany: Ghod, we've got no record on him!

Handmaiden: Then what's he doing up here?

Meany: I forgot to renew our Fanac subscription and we missed one issue. Maybe his death was mentioned in that one.

Ghod: Well, Ferdie. If we can't prove you're dead by Fanac, I'm afraid you'll have to go back . . .

Ferdinand: You mean I'll never get back here?

Ghod: Don't worry, son. As soon as Science Fiction Times makes it official, we'll let you back in. Hey, Pete, you goofed, escort Ferdinand away. . .

(Enter St. Peter and two assistants. Exit Ghod, Handmaiden and LASFS.)

St. Peter: Now, come along quietly Ferdinand. We've got to take you back.

Ferdinand: But how long will I have to wait?

St. Peter: Oh, not very long. About six months to a year if Science Fiction Times mails two issues at once.

Ferdinand: That's a pretty long time. What happens if you forget where my grave is?

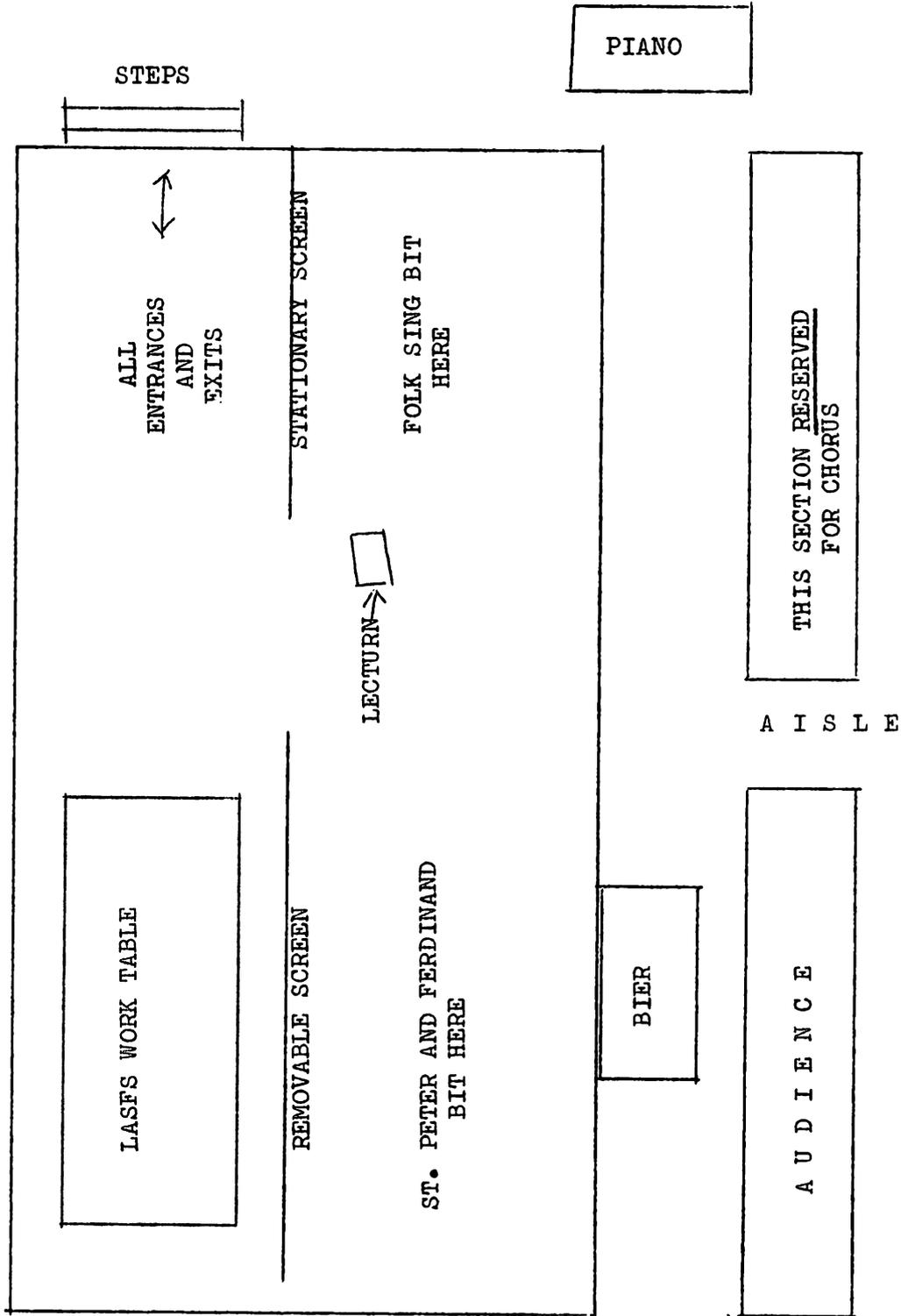
St. Peter (Holding up coat-hanger wires): Oh, that's very simple, we finally found a use for Campbell's dowsing rods. (St. Peter helps Ferdinand back onto the bier, covers him and places the single lilly upright in his hand. Enter Minister, bringing lecturn. Spotlight swings from St. Peter to Minister. Exit St. Peter. Funeral music starts, faintly in the background.)

Minister (Mock sincerity): As I said, we all know Ferdinand will get just what he deserves. As indeed will we all when it comes our time to attend that great convention in the sky. (Pallbearers approach bier. Chorus lights candles and starts marching out in single file. Pallbearers follow behind carrying bier as Minister continues:)

I just want to remind you fans that one of the surest ways to get to that convention up there is to engage in the good works while you can. Friends, give to the missions! Just think of the poor struggling fans, out there in the vast hinderland spreading fandom's word. They need mimeos out there! And as Ferdinand leaves us here, let me just say that because he was always such a staunch supporter of the great work we are all engaged in we've decided on a special tribute to him. Instead of the grave marker that we had intended to place for him, we're sending a subscription to Analog to our mission in Berkeley. We know he would appreciate this generous gesture. A-men, bretherin.

(Spotlight out. Darkness. The music is silenced.)

22' 7"



12' 5"

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

CHORUS }
PALLBEARERS }Volunteers Understudy
MINISTER.Jim O'Meara
ST. PETERSidney Coleman
FERDINAND FUGGHEAD.Joe Sarno.Jerry DeMuth
1st FOLK SINGERAnn Dinkleman
2nd FOLK SINGERJosephine Knuth
1st & 2nd ManVolunteers
1st LASFS
2nd LASFS
3rd LASFS
ENEY MEANY.Robert Briney
1st CHORUS.Volunteer
GHOD.Robert Bloch*.Earl Kemp
HANDMAIDEN.Bjo Wells.Ann Dinkleman

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS:

PIANORosemary Hickey
OFF-STAGE CUES,Nancy Kemp & Jim O'Meara
LIGHTS.George Price
COSTUMES.Nancy Kemp
GRAPHICS.Winnifred McGill
PROPSPitConCommittee
SOUVENIR FANZINE.Volunteers

*Contingent upon being in Pittsburgh.