

# Andrew Lloyd Webber, Poor Fool, He Makes Me

RAOUL

Gentlemen, if you would care to take your seats? I shall be sitting in Box Five.

ANDRE

Do you really think that's wise, monsieur?

RAOUL

My dear Andre, there would appear to be no seats available, other than Box Five . . .

(The front cloth rises to reveal an 18th Century salon, a canopied bed centre-stage. The COUNTESS is played by CARLOTTA. SERAFIMO, the page boy, is disguised as her maid and is played by CHRISTINE. At this point they are hidden behind the drapes of the bed, which are drawn. In the room are TWO EPICENE MEN: one a HAIRDRESSER and one a JEWELLER. The JEWELLER is attended by MEG. There is also an OLDER WOMAN, the COUNTESS' confidante. All a part from MEG are gossiping with relish aboutt he COUNTESS' current liaison with SERAFIMO)

CONFIDANTE

They say that this youth  
has set my Lady's  
heart aflame!

1ST FOP

His Lordship sure  
would die of shock!

2ND FOP

His Lordship is  
a laughing-stock!

CONFIDANTE

Should he suspect her  
God protect her!

ALL THREE

Shame! Shame! Shame!

This faithless lady's  
bound for Hades!

Shame! Shame! Shame!

(The canopy drapes part and we see the COUNTESS kissing SERAFIMO passionately. As the recitative begins, the lights and music dim on stage, and our attention turns to the MANAGERS in their box)

IN THE BOX

ANDRE

Nothing like the old operas!

FIRMIN

Or the old scenery . . .

ANDRE

The old singers . . .

FIRMIN

The old audience . . .

ANDRE

And every seat sold!

FIRMIN

Hardly a disaster beyond all imagination!

(They chuckle and nod to RAOUL in the opposite box.

He acknowledges them)

ON STAGE

COUNTESS

Serafimo - your disguise is perfect.

(A knock at the door)

Who can this be?

DON ATTILIO

Gentle wife, admit your loving  
husband.

ATTENTION BACK ON STAGE

(The COUNTESS admits DON ATTILIO. He is an old fool)

DON ATTILIO

My love - I am called to England on affairs of State, and must leave you with your new maid. (Aside) Though I'd happily take the maid with me.

COUNTESS (aside)

The old fool's leaving!

DON ATTILIO (aside)

I suspect my young bride is untrue to me. I shall not leave, but shall hide over there to observe her!

DON ATTILIO (to COUNTESS)

Addio!

COUNTESS

Addio!

BOTH (to each other)

Addio!

(He goes, pretending to leave, then hides and watches the action)

COUNTESS (CARLOTTA)

Serafimo - away with this pretence!

(She rips off SERAFIMO'S skirt to reveal his manly breeches)

You cannot speak, but kiss me in my husband's absence!

Poor fool, he makes me laugh!

Haha,

Haha! etc.

Time I tried to get a better better half !

COUNTESS AND CHORUS

Poor fool, he doesn't know!

Hoho,

Hoho! etc.

If he knew the truth, he'd never, ever go!

(Suddenly from nowhere, we hear the voice of the PHANTOM)

PHANTOM'S VOICE

Did I not instruct that Box Five was to be kept empty?

MEG (terrified)

He's here: the Phantom of the Opera . . .

(General reaction of bewilderment.

CHRISTINE looks fearfully about her)

CHRISTINE

It's him . . . I know it . . . it's him . . .

CARLOTTA (Finding a scapegoat in CHRISTINE, hisses at her)

Your part is silent, little toad!

(But the PHANTOM has heard her)

PHANTOM'S VOICE

A toad, madame? Perhaps it is you who are the toad . . .

(Again general unease. CARLOTTA and the CONDUCTOR confer and pick up from the opening of the scene)

CARLOTTA (As the COUNTESS)

Serafimo, away with this pretence!

You cannot speak, but kiss me in my croak!

(Instead of singing she emits a great croak like a toad. A stunned silence. CARLOTTA is as amazed as anyone but regains herself and continues. More perturbing, however, is a new sound: the PHANTOM is laughing - quietly at first, then more and more hysterically)

CARLOTTA (as the COUNTESS)

Poor fool, he makes me laugh -

Hahahahaha!

Croak, croak, croak,  
croak, croak, croak, etc.

(As before. The PHANTOM'S laughter rises. The croaking continues as the chandelier's lights blink on and off. The PHANTOM'S laughter, by this time overpowering, now crescendos into a great cry):

PHANTOM'S VOICE

Behold! She is singing to bring down the chandelier!

(CARLOTTA looks tearfully up at the MANAGERS ' box and shakes her head)

CARLOTTA

Non posso piu . . .

I cannot . . . I cannot go on . . .

PIANGI (rushing on)

Cara, cara . . . I'm here . . .

is all right . . . Come . . . I'm here . . .

(ANDRE and FIRMIN hurry out of the box onto the stage. PIANGI ushers the now sobbing CARLOTTA offstage, while the MANAGERS tackle the audience)

FIRMIN

Ladies and gentlemen, the performance will continue in ten minutes' time . . .

(He addresses Box Five, keeping one eye on the chandelier as it returns to normal)

. . . when the role of the Countess will be sung by Miss Christine Daae.

ANDRE (improvising)

In the meantime, ladies and gentlemen, we shall be giving you the ballet from Act Three of tonight's opera.

(to the CONDUCTOR)

Maestro - the ballet - now!

(The MANAGERS leave, the stage is cleared and music starts again. The BALLET GIRLS enter as a sylvan glade flies in. They begin the Dance of the Country Nymphs.

Upstage, behind the drop, a series of threatening shadows of the PHANTOM. MEG is aware of them and dances out of step. When this culminates in one gigantic, oppressive, bat-like shadow, the garotted body of JOSEPH BUQUET falls onto the stage, causing the sylvan glade to fly out. Pandemonium.)

CHRISTINE (calling for help)

Raoul! Raoul!

(RAOUL runs on stage and embraces her)

RAOUL (to CHRISTINE, leading her away)

Christine, come with me . . .

CHRISTINE

No. . . to the roof. We'll be safe there.

(CHRISTINE and RAOUL hurry off)

FIRMIN (Attempting to placate the audience as STAGE-HANDS and POLICEMEN crowd onto the stage)

Ladies and gentlemen, please remain in your seats. Do not panic. It was an accident . . . simply an accident .