

AN UNDERGROUND THANG

WORDS & MUSIC BY STEPHEN MO HANAN

MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. UNDERGROUND.....The Company
2. (CIRCULAR) THINKINGThe Company*
3. I DON'T KNOW YOUR NAMEActivist, Teacher*
4. NEW AGE BLUES.....Lawyer
5. FIRST IMPRESSIONS.....Company
6. MY THERAPIST.....Well-Dressed Lady
7. WHY FIGHT WHEN YOU CAN SING?Clown
8. NOT-GONE SONGGranny & Backups
9. MYRTLE THE TYRTLE.....Well-Dressed Lady & Backups
10. YOU'RE IN MY LIFEStudent *
11. OPERA OR BUST.....Artiste
12. NEED YOU, DARLING?Mechanic & Bimbo & Backups
13. PLEASCompany *
14. MIDDLE-AGE REBEL.....Lawyer & Company
15. ME I LIKESex Therapist
16. THE SEA HAS MANY LOVERSJournalist
17. I'D LIKE TO PRACTICE WITH YOUGranny & Backups
18. THE REBBE AND THE ROCKERRebbe & Rocker*
19. PLENTY LOVE...Company
20. UNDERGROUND (Reprise).....Company *

(*NOT ON TAPE)

This piece is conceived for a pan-ethnic cast of 9. Everybody plays multiple parts.

[The set represents a shiny new subway car, with a pair of retractable sliding doors up center, and a door at each end. It's a November afternoon and the riders, when they first appear, wear topcoats and wraps beneath which they may be underdressed as necessary to accommodate quick changes. The band should be costumed as Peruvian subway musicians.

The first rider we see is a man of about forty, business-suited and with an attache case. He sits between two human-sized dummies, one clothed as a Hasidic Rebbe, the other as a workman. Oblivious to them, the man, a lawyer, sings:]

ONE:
"UNDERGROUND"

LAWYER

TAKE A SEAT
TAKE A POSE
BURY YOUR FACE IN A BOOK
OR LOOK
AT THE TIP OF YOUR NOSE
CLUTCH YOUR DEVICE
LIKE IT'S STUCK TO YOUR HIDE
AND IGNORE ALL THE OTHERS WHO RIDE
UNDERGROUND.

READ THE *TIMES*,
READ THE *NEWS*,
BURY YOUR FACE IN THE AIR
DON'T STARE
AT THE MAN WITH NO SHOES,
WHAT IS THAT ODOR?
HAS SOMEBODY DIED?
OH IT'S AGONY HAVING TO RIDE
UNDERGROUND.

OH FOR A LIMO, OH FOR A LIMO
OH FOR A CAR WITH A BAR
AND A LOADED DVR!
WHERE NOBODY PREACHES OR BEGS,
WHERE NOBODY'S MISSING THEIR LEGS,
WHERE NOBODY STAGGERS OR YELLS
AND NOBODY SMELLS!

STAY ALOOF
DON'T INTRUDE
BURY YOUR FACE IN YOUR STYLE
DON'T SMILE
(IT COULD BE MISCONSTRUED)
TOO MANY PEOPLE
AND NOWHERE TO HIDE

SOME ARE TOO WEARY
 AND SOME ARE TOO WIDE
 AND WE ALL OF US MANAGE TO RIDE
 UNDERGROUND.

[The doors open & the rest of the company enters, each yoked to a pair of dummies representing characters they may subsequently embody. They reprise the above lyric. Then the Latino contingent comes forward:]

NO SE APOYE CONTRA LA PUERTA
 NO SE APOYE CONTRA LA PUERTA
 NO SE APOYE CONTRA LA PUERTA
 CONTRA LA PUERTA NO SE APOYE
 NO NO NO NO NO!

LATINOS

NO SE APOYE CONTRA LA PUERTA
 NO SE APOYE CONTRA LA PUERTA
 NO SE APOYE CONTRA LA PUERTA
 CONTRA LA PUERTA NO SE APOYE
 NO NO NO NO NO!

ANGLOS

DO NOT LEAN ON THE DOOR
 DO NOT SPIT ON THE FLOOR
 DO NOT PULL THIS CHAIN
 OR TRAIN
 WILL STOP!

[The Spanish stanza is now sung in counterpoint with “Take a seat, Take a pose...” Then:]

ALL

SOME MAY BE ON AN EMOTIONAL SLIDE
 SOME MAY BE HARBORING TREASURES INSIDE
 AND WE ALL OF US MANAGE TO RIDE
 UNDERGROUND!

[After applause, the Subway Riff resumes. Design staff creates the effect of tunnel lights speeding past the windows. Music and lights begin to slow down ominously, then grind to a halt. The passengers react expectably. Then a sound effect:]

INCOMPREHENSIBLE P.A.

%##JJQWQWZZZ##\$\$# &&!!!kxkx###%% ??<<<moving shortly.

WELL-DRESSED LADY

Did you understand what he said?

HISPANIC BIMBO

(simultaneously)

¿Intiendes que lo dijo?

[They do a take. Other pairs address each other with the same question in Chinese, Arabic, Yiddish, Tagalog, etc. The “take” snowballs.]

ALL

Aw, shit.

[Blackout.]

TWO:
“(CIRCULAR) THINKING”

[The window display of the train’s number & destination is hit with light & rolls upward to reveal, as in a vaudeville placard, the song title—an effect that will recur periodically. Light isolates the Well-Dressed Lady in a manner to be associated with the “soliloquy” mode, as opposed to scenes in “real” time & space in the car. She sings the first two lines, then with each succeeding couplet a voice or two joins in, until the Full Company is singing, but each actor in a separate light:]

I WAS GOING SOMEPLACE
NOW I’M GETTING NOPLACE
UTTERLY PREDICTABLE
AND UTTERLY A PAIN.
EVERYTHING HAS STOPPED, BUT
ME, I GO ON THINKING
WHAT’S THE POINT OF THINKING
IN A CITY THAT’S INSANE?
FEELING LIKE I’M SINKING
I’M NOT REALLY THINKING
JUST A KIND OF FIDGETING
I’M DOING WITH MY BRAIN:
INTERMINABLE CHATTER
ON A THEME THAT DOESN’T MATTER
OR BAROQUE ELABORATIONS
OF UNFINISHED CONVERSATIONS
OR RELENTLESS REPETITIONS
OF IMPLACABLE POSITIONS
TYING EVER-TIGHTER KNOTS IN
WHAT WAS ONCE MY BRAIN!

[The lines from “INTERMINABLE CHATTER” are repeated as a round.]

AND EVERY NOW AND THEN A HIT
OF HEARTFELT PAIN.

[Slow fade, as music segues directly to:]

THREE:
“I DON’T KNOW YOUR NAME”

[Left in the light is a young man, dressed as a Gay Activist. He sings:]

I DON’T KNOW YOUR NAME
OR THE COLOR OF YOUR HAIR
I JUST KNOW YOU’RE THERE SOMEWHERE

WITHOUT ME
 I DON'T KNOW YOUR NAME
 DON'T KNOW WHEN WE'LL MEET, NOR WHERE
 BUT YOUR GLANCE WILL CHARGE THE AIR
 ABOUT ME
 AND THE LONELY NIGHTS WILL BE OVER
 AND THE SILENT BREAKFASTS FOR ONE
 FOR OUR SPLENDID BLENDED UNFOLDING
 WILL HAVE BEGUN
 YOU DON'T KNOW MY NAME
 HAVEN'T HEARD MY LAUGHTER RISE
 HAVEN'T FELT MY DOTING EYES
 CARESS YOU
 AND THAT'S ONLY ONE OF A THOUSAND WAYS
 THAT MY JOYFUL HEART IN OUR COMING DAYS
 WILL BLESS YOU.

[Lights rise on a young female Teacher at the other end of the car. She takes up the song:]

I DON'T KNOW YOUR NAME
 HOW YOU DRESS OR OR WHAT YOU READ
 I JUST KNOW YOU REALLY NEED
 TO FIND ME
 DO YOU FEEL THE SAME?
 ARE YOU MAYBE HALFWAY HERE?
 MOVING ME TO PUT THIS FEAR
 BEHIND ME
 SO THE LONELY NIGHTS WILL BE OVER
 AND THEY'LL NEVER COME BACK AGAIN
 I'LL BE DONE WITH WONDERING WHY
 AND WONDERING WHEN
 YOU DON'T KNOW MY NAME
 HAVEN'T HEARD MY LAUGHTER RISE...

The Activist joins in and they finish in duet, never noticing each other. Fade.]

FOUR:
"NEW AGE BLUES"

[Soliloquy light rises on the fortyish Lawyer. He sings:]

THERE'S A WAR RESISTER IN THE WHITE HOUSE
 AND HE'S THE HOSTAGE OF THE G.O.P.
 BUT WHAT TAXES THE HUMOR
 OF THIS BABY BOOMER

IS THE FACE IN THE MIRROR I SEE
 IT'S NO LONGER THE FACE OF A YOUNG MAN
 THOUGH I STILL CAN SEE SOME SORT OF CHILD
 WHERE THE ACHING FRUSTRATION
 OF FAILED EXPECTATION
 MEETS THE URGE TO GO ROBERT BLY-WILD:

I'VE GOT THE NEW AGE BLUES
 YEAH, YEAH, THE NEW AGE BLUES
 TRADED IN MY BIRKENSTOCKS FOR SHOES
 AND THE NEW AGE BLUES
 AND ALL THE JUICY BABES
 FOR WHOM I GET THE HOTS
 DON'T KNOW WHO BUCKY FULLER IS
 OR ALAN WATTS
 IS THIS A RIP VAN WINKLE SNOOZE
 OR JUST THE NEW AGE BLUES?

I'M STUCK BETWEEN THE ONES WHO SNEER AT WOODSTOCK
 AND THE ONES WHO ZONE ON MTV
 GOT TWENTY MEGABYTES OF RAM
 BUT I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM
 AND I'VE FORGOTTEN WHO I WANTED TO BE
 AM I TOO YOUNG TO HAVE A KID IN COLLEGE?
 OR TOO OLD TO CONSULT THE *I CHING*?
 AM I AN OBSOLETE RELIC
 OF SEASONS PSYCHEDELIC,
 OR THE BUD OF A VERY LATE SPRING?

I'VE GOT THE NEW AGE BLUES
 OM, OM, THE NEW AGE BLUES
 DON'T EVEN HAVE THE REAGANS TO ACCUSE
 FOR MY NEW AGE BLUES
 IN FACT, ONE CRAZY THOUGHT
 KEEPS TANTALIZING ME
 I WONDER WHAT AL GORE WAS LIKE
 ON LSD
 OR DID HE STEADFASTLY REFUSE
 AND THUS AVOID THE NEW AGE BLUES?

NOW WHEN I ROSS PEROT PERUSE
 AND THAT STUFF RUSH LIMBAUGH SPEWS
 I WONDER WHY THE NEW AGE
 NEVER MAKES THE NEWS,
 AND DOES THAT MEAN I'LL NEVER LOSE
 THESE NEW AGE BLUES?

[Blackout.]

FIVE:
“FIRST IMPRESSIONS”

[“Real time” light returns. The riders are checking each other out.]

WELL-DRESSED LADY

THAT ONE’S GOT A GUN
 I GUARANTEE

BLACK YOUTH

WE COULD HAVE SOME FUN
 THAT BITCH AND ME

HISPANIC BIMBO

THAT ONE’S KINDA CUTE
 BUT WHAT A SNOB

LAWYER

JUDGING BY THE SUIT
 HE’S IN THE MOB

RUSSIAN IMMIGRANT

THAT ONE IS A CROOK
 OR MAYBE WORSE

WELL-DRESSED LADY

WHY’S HE HAVE TO LOOK
 RIGHT AT MY PURSE?

BLACK HOUSEWIFE

WHY’S HE HAVE TO STARE
 RIGHT AT MY BAG?

HISPANIC LABORER

JUST STAY OVER THERE
 YOU FUCKIN’ FAG

ALL

GODDAMMIT, WHAT A BUNCH OF LOSERS
 WHAT A BUNCH OF MUGS
 AND THUGS
 AND SLUGS
 SPEAKING OF HUMANITY
 THIS MUST BE THE POUND
 AND I’M STUCK TOGETHER WITH THEM
 IN A HOLE IN THE GROUND!

[The company exchanges hats, scarves, wigs, etc., with their neighboring dummies, thereby assuming a new set of characters.]

JAMAICAN GRANNY

LEADING THEM IN PRAYER
WOULD SAVE THE DAY

OLD REBBE

GOYYIM EVERYWHERE
I BETTER PRAY

SCHOOLTEACHER (MALE)

THAT'S A PAIR OF EYES
I'D LIKE TO PROBE

GAY ACTIVIST

YOU CAN TELL THAT GUY'S
A HOMOPHOBE

MECHANIC

THAT ONE I WOULD PAY
TO HAVE A FLING

LIBRARIAN

HE'S SO HOT AND, HEY,
NO WEDDING RING

HYGIENIST

WHY CAN'T I JUST SAY
I'D LIKE A DATE?

ACTIVIST

GOD, I HOPE HE'S GAY

LIBRARIAN

I HOPE HE'S STRAIGHT

ALL

GODDAMMIT, WHAT A BUNCH OF LOOKERS
EVERY SINGLE FOX
JUST ROCKS
MY SOCKS
WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY
IT'S BREAKING MY HEART
CAUSE WE'RE SITTING HERE TOGETHER
AND THERE'S NO WAY TO START
NO WAY TO START
NO WAY TO START

I KNEW WHEN I WOKE UP THIS MORNING
 THERE WAS A WHIFF OF SOMETHING AWFUL IN THE AIR
 (SOMETHING MORE-THAN-ORDINARILY-AWFUL IN THE AIR)
 THAT'LL TEACH ME TO IGNORE A WARNING
 NEXT TIME I'LL PREPARE
 WHEN I WANT TO GET SOMEWHERE
 GET SOMEWHERE!

JOURNALIST

I'M GONNA MISS MY INTERVIEW

CORPORATE TYPE

I'M GONNA MISS MY TRAIN

SECRETARY

THE BOSS SAID IF I'M LATE AGAIN
 MY JOB GOES DOWN THE DRAIN

HOUSEWIFE

I THINK I LEFT THE WATER ON
 I'LL BET IT'S OVERFLOWED

GAY ACTIVIST

IF I DON'T MEET HER FLIGHT ON TIME
 MY MOTHER WILL EXPLODE

SCHOOLTEACHER

WHEN A FLASH OF INTUITION
 SENDS A DEADLY PREMONITION
 YOU'RE A FOOL TO DISOBEY IT
 OR TO OTHERWISE BETRAY IT
 BUT DESPITE THE INTIMATION
 OF IMPENDING AGGRAVATION
 I DESCENDED TO THE STATION
 AS SO OFTEN IN THE PAST
 EVEN THEN A FUNNY FEELING
 MADE THE PROSPECT UNAPPEALING
 BUT MY CUSTOMARY TENSION
 GENERALIZED THE APPREHENSION
 SO MY QUALMS REMAINED UNSPOKEN
 AND WITH CONFIDENCE UNBROKEN
 I DEPOSITED THE TOKEN
 NOW I'M GOING NOWHERE FAST

[The foregoing section (WHEN A FLASH...) is now sung by several characters together in counterpoint with the previous section (I'M GONNA MISS...) sung by the remainder.

VARIOUSLY & ALL

DISASTER A LA MODE
 MY BOSS WILL HAVE A FIT
 MY MOTHER WILL EXPLODE
 MY MANAGER WILL SHIT
 IT'S SUCH A ROTTEN MESS
 IT'S TOTALLY ABSURD
 IT'S SALLY'S FIRST DELIVERY
 IT'S U.P.S.'S THIRD
 U.P.S., U.P.S.
 WHAT A MESS, WHAT A MESS
 NEXT TIME I'LL TAKE THE BUS!

[Blackout.]

SIX:
 "MY THERAPIST"

[Lights return, isolating the Well-Dressed Lady. Placard rolls again. She sings:]

EVERY THURSDAY AT THREE
 I'VE A DATE WITH A MAN WHO'S AS HELPFUL AS CAN BE.
 EVERY THURSDAY AT FOUR
 I COME HOME, DROP MY COAT,
 BEAT MY HEAD AGAINST THE FLOOR.
 HE PAYS SO MUCH ATTENTION TO THE BATTLES IN MY BRAIN
 THAT HE'S DRIVING ME INEXORABLY INSANE!

MY THERAPIST IS GENTLE, MY THERAPIST IS WISE
 HE BATHES ME IN COMPASSION WITH HIS LIQUID, LOVING EYES
 NO MATTER WHAT MY PROBLEM, HE POSITIVELY GLOWS
 AND EVERY TIME HE SAYS, "IT'S ONLY FEELINGS,"
 I WANNA PUNCH HIM IN THE NOSE.

MY THERAPIST IS KINDLY, A VERITABLE GEM
 COMPARED TO HIM ST. FRANCIS HAD A THING FOR S&M
 HE CLAIMS THAT LOVE SURROUNDS ME, NO NEED TO BE DEPRESSED
 AND EVERY TIME HE SAYS, "TUNE IN TO YOUR CENTER,"
 I WANNA STAB HIM IN THE CHEST.

OH, WHY CAN'T HE SEE
 HOW MUCH IS THE MATTER WITH ME
 THAT I'M A SEXUALLY COMPULSIVE INSECURE OVERACHIEVER
 AND I'VE BEEN THAT WAY SINCE I WAS THREE!

MY THERAPIST'S A WONDER, COMBINING WITH A SNAP
 THE WARMTH OF JOSEPH CAMPBELL AND THE FORCE OF JOSEPH PAPP

HE TELLS ME I'M JUST PERFECT, NO IFS, NO ANDS, NO BUTS,
AND EVERY TIME HE SAYS, "PLAY WITH YOUR INNER CHILD,"
I WANNA KNEE HIM IN THE NUTS.

OH, WHY MUST HE SAY
THAT THE REST OF MY LIFE BEGINS TODAY?
WHEN I'M A CHRONICALLY JUDGMENTAL EGOTISTICAL NEUROTIC
AND IT'S EASIER TO STAY THAT WAY!

MY THERAPIST IS CHEERFUL, BUT DOESN'T OVERDO
POLITICALLY CORRECT, THOUGH WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR, TOO,
AS CUDDLY AS A KITTEN, AS PLAYFUL AS A PUP,
AND EVERY TIME HE SAYS, "JUST FORGIVE YOURSELF,"
I WANNA FUCKIN' BLOW HIM UP!

[Blackout.]

SEVEN:
"WHY FIGHT WHEN YOU CAN SING?"

[Normal lighting. Riders are as last seen, singing *sotto voce* the closing measures of "First Impressions". There are some new characters personified, notably a spiky-haired Asian Punk Rocker, still in his teens, sitting next to the Jamaican Granny as she knits. To Granny's other side is the Mechanic.]

CAUSE I'M STUCK TOGETHER WITH THEM
IN A HOLE IN THE GROUND
AND THERE'S NO WAY TO START
HOLE IN THE GROUND
NO WAY TO START
HOLE IN THE GROUND
NO WAY TO—

[The music is interrupted by the Punk Rocker turning on his boom-box, which emits sounds of unspeakable toxicity. The riders react with dismay.]

MECHANIC
Turn that thing off, will ya?

ROCKER
Fuck you.

MECHANIC
What did you say?

ROCKER
Fuck you, asshole.

MECHANIC

Don't give me shit, you little punk. Turn that thing off or I'll bust it over your head.

HISPANIC LABORER

Apaga eso, coño! (Turn it off.)

MECHANIC

Keep outa this.

ROCKER

Yeah, keep outa this, coño.

[Granny, caught between them, jabs each one with a knitting needle.]

MECHANIC & ROCKER

Hey!

GRANNY

Both you, shut up. I near drop a stitch. [She shuts off the boom box.] And watch your language with an old lady.

BIMBO

Way to go, *mom!*

ROCKER

(grabbing for her needles)

Fuck you and your knitting, bitch.

MECHANIC

Leave her alone. [He shoves him.]

[A fight threatens to break out. The whole car gets involved. People pull an amazing array of weapons from their bags and coats, including a wrench, a machete, a can of Mace and a cellular phone. Suddenly the center doors spring open. A black Street Clown in whiteface enters, glowing with fiber-optic yo-yos and similar neon accoutrements. He plays a kazoo fanfare to arrest the fight and command everyone's attention. He sings:]

FORGIVE ME FOR INTRUDING ON
THIS ATMOSPHERE OF TENSION
BUT I'VE SOME PERSONAL EPISODES
IT MIGHT BE COOL TO MENTION:
WHEN I WAS JUST A TINY TOT
I HAD A YOUNGER BROTHER
WHOM I WOULD OFTEN PULVERIZE
(TO IRRITATE MY MOTHER).
TILL ONE FINE DAY MY MOMMA FOUND
A WAY TO TURN MY WRATH AROUND
SHE SAID:

WHY FIGHT WHEN YOU CAN SING?
 WHY HIT WHEN YOU CAN DANCE?
 YOUR ANGRY INNER DEMON
 WILL ALWAYS KEEP YA SCREAMIN'
 UNLESS YOU GIVE MUSIC A CHANCE.
 SO RAISE YOUR VOICE INSTEAD OF YOUR FIST
 AND FIND THE KINDA MELODY NO RAGE CAN RESIST
 OH, BABY
 WHEN YOU'VE HAD IT UP TO HERE WITH EVERYTHING
 WHY FIGHT WHEN YOU CAN SING?

THE YEARS ROLLED ON AND I BECAME
 A RUTHLESS CORPORATE RAIDER
 I CRUSHED MY COMPETITION WITH
 THE FRENZY OF DARTH VADER
 AND YET, IN SPITE OF ALL MY WEALTH,
 THE HOUSES, AND THE LADIES,
 MY RAGE BURNED ON UNTIL ONE DAY
 I SMASHED UP MY MERCEDES.
 AS IN THE AMBULANCE I LAY
 THE ANESTHESIA SEEMED TO SAY:

HEY, PAL, WHY FIGHT WHEN YOU CAN SING?
 WHY HIT WHEN YOU CAN DANCE?
 YOUR LACK OF SATISFACTION
 HAS LANDED YOU IN TRACTION
 NOW WHY NOT GIVE MUSIC A CHANCE?
 JUST GRAB THOSE SONGBOOKS OFFA THE SHELF
 YOU MAY NOT MAKE A MILLION BUT YOU'LL GROOVE WITH YOURSELF
 I'M SAYIN
 WHEN THOSE HOSTILE TAKEOVERS HAVE LOST THEIR ZING
 WHY FIGHT WHEN YOU CAN SING?

[He goes into a tap break, working the yo-yos. Some of the more irate passengers withdraw in disgust. The remainder cheer him on to the finish, including a repeat chorus.]

GRANNY
 How you get in here, young fella?

CLOWN
 Pull.

GRANNY
 (giving him a quarter)
 Nice song.

CLOWN
 Oh, I didn't do it for money.

GRANNY

Well, take it anyhow; don't be stupid.

CLOWN

Then you take this. [He offers her a decorative little box.]

GRANNY

What is it?

CLOWN

Present. Don't open it yet. Not unless you're prepared to share it with everybody.

GRANNY

This tiny thing? Everybody?

CLOWN

Hey, granny, what's a present for?

GRANNY

You're crazy, you know that?

CLOWN

Yeah, it goes with the outfit. What do you want most in the whole world?

GRANNY

(suddenly wistful)

Oh, my. To be with someone I long ago lost.

CLOWN

(starting to go)

Open the box.

GRANNY

Where you off to?

CLOWN

I gotta work the whole train. [He vanishes.]

EIGHT:

“NOT-GONE SONG”

[Light change. Placard change. The stage has emptied except for Granny, who opens the box. She begins to sing, contemplatively:]

WHERE THERE IS HEART THERE IS NO BORDER
 NOTHING CAN SEPARATE TRUE FRIENDS
 LOVE MAKES A CURVE OF EVERY CORNER
 JOINS THE BEGINNING TO THE END.
 MUSIC CAN SPAN THE WIDEST SPACES

TEMPLES LONG LOST CAN RING WITH SONG
 STONES CAN BE CONJURED INTO FACES
 NOTHING CAN DISAPPEAR FOR LONG.

[When the tempo picks up, three things happen: Granny becomes a young woman in vivid West Indian costume, tropical island set pieces appear, and so does Granny's backup group. Together they finish the number.]

SO, EVEN THOUGH WE SEEM PARTED, BELOVED,
 THERE IS REALLY NO SUCH PLACE AS AWAY
 FOR THE WHOLE WORLD IS A SHRINE
 WHERE YOU SPARKLE AND YOU SHINE
 IN YOUR FEATURES I SEE MINE
 EVERY DAY.

ONCE YOU WERE DANCING IN THE OCEAN
 ONCE I WAS SINGING IN A TREE
 NOW WE ARE SEPARATELY IN MOTION
 TESTING OUR OWN INFINITY
 LOVE MAY BE SLOW BUT NEVER IDLE
 WAVES TRAVEL MILES TO REACH THE SHORE
 SOMEWHERE ALONG THE RISING SPIRAL
 WE'LL SHARE EACH OTHER'S GLOW ONCE MORE

SO, EVEN THOUGH WE SEEM PARTED, ETC.

GRANNY
 (regarding the box)

I gotta pass this aroun'!

[Blackout.]

NINE:
 "MYRTLE THE TYRTLE"

[Lights up on the Well-Dressed Lady and Granny.]

WELL-DRESSED LADY
 Excuse me. Could I talk to you for a moment?

GRANNY
 You mean me?

WELL-DRESSED LADY
 Yes, I'm awfully sorry, but since we're all just stuck here like this.

GRANNY
 Yes, we are.

WELL-DRESSED LADY

Yes, we are, but you look so cheerful, and I was just wondering if maybe you might have some Prozac you could spare. I'm fresh out.

GRANNY

What is that?

WELL-DRESSED LADY

Oh, well, it's just something for those little stress moments.

GRANNY

[offering her the box] Try this then.

WELL-DRESSED LADY

What is it?

GRANNY

I think you just have to open it up and find out.

WELL-DRESSED LADY

Is it legal?

GRANNY

More than legal.

WELL-DRESSED LADY

Mm, I don't think I could.

GRANNY

Oh, you could. Yes. You be glad you did.

WELL-DRESSED LADY

Maybe just a teeny little peek.

GRANNY

Peek away, girl.

[She does. Chorus Boys in top hats and tails enter from each side, pulling on red velvet drapes that meet in the middle, covering the scene. A grindhouse vamp begins, & the LADY sticks her head through the curtain to sing:]

I USED TO BE SO SHY AND RETIRING
 I NEVER GOT INVITED TO A BALL
 THE CAUSE OF MY CONDITION
 WAS TOTAL INHIBITION
 I'D SIT AT HOME AND STARE AT THE WALL
 BUT NOW NO ONE CAN KEEP FROM ADMIRING
 HOW I'VE BECOME A POPULAR BELLE
 I MADE THE TRANSFORMATION

THROUGH SHEER DETERMINATION
I'M COMING OUT OF MY SHELL

[She emerges from behind the curtain wearing an outrageous turtle costume, stripping out of it as the number continues.]

CHORUS

COME ON, BABY, COME OUTA YOUR SHELL
COME ON, BABY, COME OUTA YOUR SHELL
YOU WON'T GET ANY BLAME FOR
GIVIN' US WHAT WE CAME FOR
COME ON OUTA YOUR SHELL

WELL-DRESSED LADY

I USED TO KNOW A SNAKE FROM DOWN RIVER
WHO CAME ON SMOOTH BUT REALLY WAS THE DREGS
WITH FLATTERY HE SOUGHT ME
BUT I KNEW IF HE CAUGHT ME
HE'D ONLY TRY TO GOBBLE MY EGGS
BUT LATELY I'VE BEEN KNOWN TO DELIVER
FOR GENTLEMEN WHO TREAT ME REAL SWELL
FOR YEARS I'VE BEEN REPRESSED, BABE,
BUT IF YOU DO YOUR BEST, BABE,
I'M COMING OUT OF MY SHELL

CHORUS

COME ON, BABY, COME OUTA YOUR SHELL
COME ON, BABY, COME OUTA YOUR SHELL
WE KNOW THAT YOU'RE A CHARMER
BENEATH YOUR STURDY ARMOR
COME ON OUTA YOUR SHELL

WELL-DRESSED LADY

A WORD OR TWO BEFORE I CONTINUE
MAY SERVE TO MAKE YOU GENTLEMEN MORE WISE
SHE MAY SEEM PRIM AND PROPER
OR JUST A TEENIE BOPPER
BUT NEVER TRUST A LADY'S DISGUISE
AND, LADIES, IF THE FEVER IS IN YOU
YOU MIGHT AS WELL GO OUT AND RAISE HELL
JUST TAKE A TIP FROM MYRTLE
THE LIBERATED TURTLE
I'M COMING OUT OF MY SHELL

CHORUS

COME ON, BABY, COME OUTA YOUR SHELL
COME ON, BABY, COME OUTA YOUR SHELL

ALTHOUGH YOU ARE REPTILIAN
 WE THINK YOU'RE WORTH A MILLION
 COME ON OUTA YOUR SHELL

[She does. Blackout.]

TEN:
 "YOU'RE IN MY LIFE"

[Light isolates a young female Student and an older male Office Worker. She is writing a letter.]

OFFICE WORKER
 You came prepared.

STUDENT
 What?

OFFICE WORKER
 I said you came prepared.

STUDENT
 Always.

OFFICE WORKER
 You must be a Girl Scout.

STUDENT
 Actually I'm an archeology major.

OFFICE WORKER
 Really? Are you writing to your mummy?

STUDENT
 You must be a comedian.

OFFICE WORKER
 I do phone marketing. For the Met.

STUDENT
 Museum?

OFFICE WORKER
 Opera.

STUDENT
 I've never been.

OFFICE WORKER
 Well, you should. Opera's fabulous.

STUDENT

I know. My fiance's a big fan.

OFFICE WORKER

But he's never taken you?

STUDENT

He hasn't had a chance. I only met him yesterday.

OFFICE WORKER

And you're engaged?

STUDENT

Yes, but he doesn't know.

OFFICE WORKER

Excuse me, I think I'm wanted in the next car.

STUDENT

No, don't go. I know it sounds crazy, but I'm so sure. He's the most wonderful man, he's absolutely perfect for me, I felt it immediately and we talked for hours and we're having dinner tonight and I just want to tell everybody I meet how great it is to be in love.

OFFICE WORKER

Don't you think it's awfully soon to be feeling like that?

STUDENT

Isn't that how it happens at the opera?

OFFICE WORKER

Not in the subscription office.

STUDENT

Too bad.

OFFICE WORKER

I know. All that romance and ecstasy and hugeness, and I just sit behind a little desk peddling it. If I could only...I think you're very brave. You're taking a big risk.

STUDENT

[giving him the box] Here. I want you to have this.

OFFICE WORKER

What is it?

STUDENT

Somebody just gave it to me. I have a feeling it's for you.

OFFICE WORKER

You and your feelings.

STUDENT

I know. We're great together. [She sings.]

DARLING, IT'S NOVEMBER
 DAYS ARE SHORT, NIGHTS ARE COLD
 AND YET I CAN'T REMEMBER
 A SUN SO BRIGHT AND BOLD
 BECAUSE YOU'RE IN MY LIFE
 YOU LOVELY GUY
 A LITTLE SCARED, A LITTLE SHY
 A LITTLE WRY AND TENTATIVE
 BUT OH THE GLOW YOU GIVE
 YOU'RE IN MY LIFE
 YOU RENAISSANCE
 YOU PARAGON OF NONCHALANCE
 YOU'RE IN MY LIFE
 DAY AFTER DAY
 AND HOW I HOPE YOU'LL STAY

IT'S A NORMAL CITY
 LOTS OF CARS AND POLICE
 YET EVERY WORD IS WITTY
 EACH SIGHT A MASTERPIECE
 BECAUSE YOU'RE IN MY LIFE
 O LUCKY ME
 TO SPEND THE DAY IN ECSTASY
 IMAGINING THAT SOMEWHERE YOU
 ARE FEELING HAPPY, TOO
 AND WHEN ONCE MORE
 WE'RE FACE TO FACE
 MY FERVOR GROWS WITH EACH EMBRACE
 YOU'RE IN MY LIFE
 ANGELIC PRINCE
 BUT DEVIL TO CONVINCING

YOU SAY THE ONES WHO CAME BEFORE ME
 HAVE PLANTED FEAR WHERE LOVE SHOULD GROW (OH-OH-OH)
 SET FREE THAT PAST, HOWEVER STORMY
 DISSOLVE IT IN MY EYES
 AND WATCH OUR FUTURE RISE

YOU MAY THINK I'M NUTTY
 NOT THE MOST PERFECT CATCH
 WITH A HEART LIKE PUTTY
 AND A BRAIN TO MATCH

BUT YOU'RE IN MY LIFE
 I SING YOUR SONG
 AND WEAR A SMILE THE WHOLE DAY LONG
 I CAN'T RESIST, IT FEELS SO RIGHT
 TO CELEBRATE YOUR LIGHT
 MY HEART DRINKS DEEP
 OF HOLDING YOU
 AND SINGS THAT SOON MY ARMS WILL, TOO
 YOU'RE IN MY LIFE
 THROW WIDE THE DOORS
 THAT TAKE ME INTO YOURS!

[Blackout.]

ELEVEN:
 "OPERA OR BUST"
 (music—"Mattinata"—by R. Leoncavallo)

[The center doors part to reveal a heavy purple velvet curtain before which stands a very grand "lady" in Forties diva recital drag, with a potted palm. It is the Office Worker. Crossing down with the utmost dignity, a cross between Beatrice Lillie and Bert Lahr, the Artiste surveys his audience, nods to the band, and, as the placard rolls to announce the title, sings:]

I'VE SUNG FOR THE SWELLS AT LA SCALA
 I'VE DID A DEBUT IN PAREE
 BUT WHETHER I WARBLE OR HOLLER
 THE MET WON'T DO NUTHIN' WITH ME!
 MY TRILL GAVE A THRILL TO DOMINGO
 HE HEARD MY CADENZA AND PEED
 BUT I'VE HAD MORE LUCK PLAYING "WINGO"
 THAN GETTING THE MET TO TAKE HEED.

MAESTRO LEVINE, JUST ONE AUDITION
 THAT'S ALL I ASK FOR, THAT'S ALL I NEED
 WHEN YOU HAVE HEARD MY VOCAL EMISSION
 YOU'LL UNDERSTAND JUST WHY PLACIDO PEED.
 MAESTRO LEVINE, JUST ONE AUDITION
 THAT'S ALL I LONG FOR, DO IT I MUST
 TAKE IT FROM ME, MY PIPES ARE PATRICIAN
 ALL I AM SAYING IS:
 OPERA OR BUST!

[After curtseying and kicking his train, the Artiste exits up center through the sliding doors, which close malevolently on his train. In the ensuing struggle, the Artiste's wig falls off. Blackout.]

TWELVE:
 “NEED YOU, DARLING?”

[Normal light, but now focused just on a corner bench where the Mechanic & Bimbo are seated, with the magic box between them. He picks it up.]

MECHANIC

This yours?

BIMBO

Uh-uh.

MECHANIC

How'd it get here, y'know?

BIMBO

Uh-uh.

MECHANIC

We sure been stuck a long time.

BIMBO

No shit. Oh, I'm sorry.

MECHANIC

That's okay.

BIMBO

I'm not cheap. Don't have that idea.

MECHANIC

I didn't. I don't. I like a girl who can talk dirty.

BIMBO

No shit?

MECHANIC

Not *dirty* dirty. Just...y'know.

BIMBO

What else you like?

MECHANIC

Nuthin'. I mean...sorry. I get nervous talkin' to a pretty girl.

BIMBO

Go on. A nice lookin' boy like you?

MECHANIC

I'm not a boy.

BIMBO

I'm not a girl, neither.

MECHANIC

I guess that makes me a pig in your eyes.

BIMBO

No way. Anything but.

MECHANIC

Go figure women.

BIMBO

Men also.

MECHANIC

Ya need 'em but ya hate 'em but ya love 'em.

BIMBO

Likewise.

MECHANIC

But let 'em know you need 'em, never.

BIMBO

But if they don't need you, who needs 'em?

MECHANIC

Yeah. And how do ya talk to 'em? I mean, when you're...uh...y'know...like me. I'm so, uh...y'know... [He opens the box.] Devastatingly inarticulate.

BIMBO

Me, too. Huh? [She checks out the box. Their eyes meet.] Astounding.
[Light change. The set sprouts sleek Deco embellishments. He and she are in gorgeous Thirties dinner clothes. He sings:]

LOVERS FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL
HAVE CONSIDERED THEMSELVES CORPOREAL
AND MADE ROMANCE A MUTUAL OBSESSION
BUT IN THIS TIME AND LOCALITY
WE'RE MORE HIP TO SPIRITUALITY
NONETHELESS
I MUST CONFESS
YOU'VE MADE A GREAT IMPRESSION:
YOU'D BE OH SO NICE TO CUDDLE
ON A BEACH IN MEXICO

OR IN YOUR BIKINI ON SANTORINI
 BUT NEED YOU, DARLING?
 NO NO NO
 WE COULD ROMP THROUGH KEATS AND WHITMAN
 TILL THE FIRELIGHT BURNS LOW
 IT WOULD BE SO VERY LITERARY
 BUT NEED YOU, DARLING?
 NO NO NO
 WHY SHOULD I NEED YOUR MYTHIC SMILE
 OR YOUR VIBRANT COMPANY
 WHY SHOULD I BE A YOU-OPHILE
 WHEN I'VE GOT ME?
 THROUGH THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS
 WE COULD WANDER TO AND FRO
 TILL ON BORA-BORA I'D SEE YOUR AURA
 AND HELP IT GLOW
 BUT NEED YOU, DARLING?
 NO NO NO NO NO NO!

SHE

WE COULD RENDEZVOUS FOR HOURS
 ON A ROMAN PATIO
 WITH A DRY LAMBRUSCO

HE

OR HIGH IN CUZCO

SHE

BUT NEED YOU, DARLING?
 NO NO NO
 'NEATH THE LIGHTS OF LINCOLN CENTER
 WHERE THE HIGHBROWS LOVE TO GO
 I COULD KEEP YOU CHEERY THROUGH "DIE WALKYRIE"
 BUT NEED YOU, LIEBCHEN?
 NO NO NO
 WHY SHOULD I NEED YOUR RAINBOW GAZE
 OR YOUR FREQUENT PIQUANCY
 WHY SHOULD I BURDEN YOU WITH PRAISE
 WHEN I'VE GOT ME?
 WHEN THE FIREFLIES COME DANCING
 THROUGH THE MISTS OF BORNEO
 WE COULD BOTH GET BLOTTO ON GADO-GADO
 AND MISTLETOE
 I WOULD SQUEEZE YOU

HE

I WOULD EASE YOU

BOTH

I WOULD LOVE YOU SO
 BUT NEED YOU, DARLING?
 NO NO NO NO NO NO!

[Dance break, including the appearance of backup singers with Carioca sleeves and maracas.]

SHE

I HAVE BLOWN OFF EACH AND EVERY
 DEVOTEE OF ROMANTIC REVERY
 (COMPULSIVENESS LAY JUST BENEATH THEIR BURBLE)
 BUT IF OUR STUFF FLOWS MERRILY
 RATHER THAN NECESSARILY
 I PROPOSE
 THAT NOSE TO NOSE
 WE COULD BE MORE THAN VERBAL:

IN THE WILDS OF MINNESOTA
 WHEN IT'S THIRTY-FIVE BELOW
 YOUR MOST SUBTLE SQUIRM'LL GET ME THERMAL
 BUT NEED YOU, PENGUIN?
 NO NO NO
 WHEN IT'S SUMMER IN THE CASBAH
 AND WE'RE MOVING KINDA SLOW
 I WOULD LOVE TO PESTER YOUR SIESTA
 BUT NEED YOU, KUMQUAT?
 NO NO NO
 WHY SHOULD I NEED YOUR LOVELY FACE
 OR YOUR INNER SYNERGY
 WHY SHOULD I SEE YOU EVERYPLACE
 WHEN I'VE GOT ME?
 I WOULD FLY TO NICARAGUA
 IF YOU THOUGHT WE OUGHT TO GO
 WE COULD TEACH THE CONTRAS PEACEFUL MANTRAS
 TO END THEIR WOE
 BUT NEED YOU, DARLING?
 NO NO NO NO NO NO

BOTH
 (variously)

IN THE TEA-SHOPS OF JAMAICA
 WE COULD FLEE THE WINTER SNOW
 AND HAVE FUN IMBIBIN'
 PSILOCYBIN
 BUT NEED YOU, MUSHROOM?
 NO NO NO
 IF WE BOTH GOT JOBS AS BAKERS
 AND YOU FELL INTO THE DOUGH

I WOULD POUND AND TWIST YOU TO SHOW I MISSED YOU
 BUT KNEAD YOU, COOKIE?
 UH-UH
 WHY SHOULD I NEED YOUR 'LECTRIC TOUCH
 OR YOUR SWEET ET CETERA
 WHY SHOULD I CARE FOR YOU SO MUCH
 WHEN I'VE GOT MOI ?
 AT A NEW AGE CONFERENCE CENTER
 WHERE THE METAPHYSICS FLOW
 I COULD CLEAN YOUR KARMA AND STROKE YOUR DHARMA
 AND WHO WOULD KNOW?
 I WOULD SKETCH YOU
 I WOULD STRETCH YOU
 I WOULD LOVE YOU SO
 BUT NEED YOU, DARLING?
 NEED YOU, DARLING?
 NEED YOU, DARLING?
 NO NO NO NO NO NO!

[Blackout.]

THIRTEEN:
"PLEAS"

[Normal lighting and set. Short reprise of the counterpoint section from "First Impressions". A bedraggled black Beggar appears at one end of the car, paper cup in hand. He sings:]

LADIES & GENTLEMEN
 'SCUSE ME FOR INTERRUPTING YOU
 BUT I'M HOMELESS, HOMELESS
 GOTTA FEED MY KIDS
 MY NAME IS LARRY
 I'M A HUMAN BEING LIKE YOURSELVES
 COULD YOU PLEASE SPARE ANYTHING
 ANYTHING, ANYTHING
 WON'T YOU HELP ME OUT WITH ANYTHING?
 PLEASE HELP ME OUT WITH ANYTHING
 AND GOD BLESS YOU VERY MUCH

[As he repeats this, a bedraggled white Woman Beggar appears at the opposite end, also with paper cup, and sings in tandem:]

LADIES & GENTLEMEN
 'SCUSE ME FOR INTERRUPTING YOU
 BUT I'M HOMELESS, HOMELESS
 AND I HAVE AIDS
 MY NAME IS DOROTHY
 I JUST GOT OUT OF THE HOSPITAL

COULD YOU PLEASE SPARE ANYTHING
 ANYTHING, ANYTHING
 WON'T YOU HELP ME OUT WITH ANYTHING? [etc.]

[They both simultaneously notice the magic box, abandoned on the floor, center, and advance toward it. The woman gets to it first. The man tries to take it from her. As they struggle over it, the box goes flying out of their hands and lands in the lap of a very well-dressed Business Man. Light isolates him as he rises and sings:]

LADIES & GENTLEMEN
 NORMALLY I WOULDN'T DO THIS
 BUT...BUSINESS...FAILING...
 MARRIAGE FAILING, TOO
 ALL AT ONCE, UP IN SMOKE
 GOD KNOWS WHAT I'LL DO
 MY NAME IS FRANKLIN
 I'M SORRY BUT I'M ONLY HUMAN
 THIS COULD BE THE END OF EVERYTHING
 EVERYTHING, EVERYTHING
 I'M SO SCARED OF LOSING EVERYTHING
 I SHOULDN'T TALK THIS WAY TO STRANGERS
 BUT I'M AT MY WIT'S END

[Other individuals rise in turn and their voices overlap. Among the lines that emerge clearly:]

LADIES & GENTLEMEN
 AS LONG WE'RE ADMITTING THINGS
 I HAVE AN AWFUL SECRET
 THAT I CAN'T TELL MY WIFE
 MY NAME IS CHARLIE...

LADIES & GENTLEMEN
 MY SON WAS IN AN ACCIDENT
 HE'S PARALYZED, WILL NEVER WALK AGAIN,
 CAN'T EVEN FEED HIMSELF
 MY NAME IS EDNA...

MY HUSBAND HAS INOPERABLE CANCER
 AND HE WANTS TO KILL HIMSELF...

I HAVEN'T SOLD ONE PAINTING
 SINCE I CAME TO NEW YORK...

I LOST MY JOB WITH THE BUDGET CUTS
 AND I CAN'T PAY MY RENT...

MY LOVER WALKED OUT ON ME
WHEN I GOT DIAGNOSED...

[Last of all:]

THE MISERY I SEE AROUND ME
REALLY PISSES ME OFF...

[They now sing in unison:]

I HATE MY JOB
I HATE MY APARTMENT
I HATE THIS CITY
MY KIDS HATE ME
I NEED SOME HELP
I NEED SOME ANSWERS
I NEED SOME HOPE
WHERE CAN IT BE?
I DIDN'T WANT A LIFE LIKE THIS
I DIDN'T WANT A WORLD LIKE THIS
DOES ANYONE WANT A WORLD LIKE THIS?
ANYONE, ANYONE?

[Slow fade.]

FOURTEEN:
“MIDDLE-AGE REBEL”

[Light isolates the Lawyer, attache case on his lap. He is reading a Post with the headline, SAME OLD SHIT. He dumps it in disgust , opens the magic box, and begins to sing:]

ARROGANT BLIND MEN RULE THE ROOST
 WHILE THE PLANET BLEEDS AND BURNS
 AND THE WILL OF A NATION HAS BEEN SEDUCED
 BY HIGH-YIELD QUICK-BUCK RETURNS
 BUT FIXED IN THE SOUL OF HUMANKIND
 IS A VISION THAT WILL NOT DIE
 THE VOICE OF THE HEART, THE LIGHT OF THE MIND
 ARE AS CLEAR AS IN DAYS GONE BY

SO I'M A MIDDLE-AGE REBEL
 LIVING OUT MY TRUTH
 MIDDLE-AGE REBEL
 STANDING BY THE DREAMS OF YOUTH
 AND TILL THE WIDE WORLD TURNS
 TO A SWEETER TUNE
 AND THE PEOPLE LIVE AS ONE
 I'LL BE A MIDDLE-AGE REBEL
 WHOSE DAY HAS JUST BEGUN

[He tears away his 3-piece suit and is underdressed in a tie-dyed T-shirt, Third-World pants, beads, and other hippie accoutrements. His attache case “transforms” into an electric guitar. Other riders swirl around him like an ecstatic crowd at a rock concert.]

TWENTY YEARS THEY'VE TOLD US LIES
 DISMISSED US AS NAIVE
 THESE EXPERTS WITH THEIR BARREN EYES
 AND THE GOSPEL OF FEAR THEY BELIEVE
 LOOK BEYOND THE FEAR TO THE VIBRANT “YES”
 OF THE PROMISE THAT WILL NOT FADE
 CAUSE IT'S BETTER TO GRAPPLE WITH DEEP DISTRESS
 THAN TO LIVE WITH A DREAM BETRAYED

SO I'M A MIDDLE-AGE REBEL, ETC.

WITHOUT VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH
 BUT THERE'S A BRIGHT UNFAILING STAR
 LOVE FOR THE PLANET WHOSE LIFE WE CHERISH
 THE PLANET WHOSE EYES WE ARE
 I SAY FEAR AND GREED WILL BE DISSOLVED
 IN WAVES OF HEALING, JOY AND PLAY
 WE'RE THE HIGHEST CREATURE TO YET EVOLVE
 AND, DAMN, WE OUGHTA ACT THAT WAY

SO I'M A MIDDLE-AGE REBEL
 LIVING OUT MY TRUTH
 MIDDLE-AGE REBEL
 STANDING BY THE DREAMS OF YOUTH
 AND TILL THE WIDE WORLD TURNS
 TO A SWEETER TUNE
 AND THE PEOPLE LIVE AS ONE
 I'LL BE A MIDDLE-AGE REBEL
 WHOSE DAY HAS JUST BEGUN
 I'LL BE A MIDDLE-AGE REBEL
 WHOSE DAY HAS JUST BEGUN

[Blackout.]

FIFTEEN:
 "ME I LIKE"

[Normal lighting. Some riders, dummies included, are sprawled asleep, others read, knit or do crosswords. Some, less resourceful, twitch or fume nervously. Sound effect:]

INCOMPREHENSIBLE P.A.

Ladies and gentlemen, we regret the continued delay but ***###@@@%%%!!!

FIERCE BLACK LESBIAN

Say what?

SEX THERAPIST (FEMALE)

I can never understand more than half of what they say.

OFFICE WORKER

Find someone who understands the other half and you've got it made.

SEX THERAPIST

This is still the subway, right? It *will* move eventually?

OFFICE WORKER

I sure hope so.

SEX THERAPIST

For a minute I thought I was somewhere between my chiropractor's waiting room and the Twilight Zone.

OFFICE WORKER

That's what the subway is.

GAY ACTIVIST

Don't say that! We've got to start moving! I can't stand sharing these close quarters with people of a different orientation.

FIERCE BLACK LESBIAN

Get over yourself, bubbeleh.

GAY ACTIVIST

I'm not kidding. I can't take any more of this! I can't take it.

LESBIAN

Girlfriend, get a grip.

GAY ACTIVIST
(hysterical)

I can't! I can't!

LESBIAN

Pull yourself together, goddammit! [She slaps him.]

GAY ACTIVIST

Thanks, I needed that.

BOTH

[to the gaping onlookers] *Not!!!* [They crack up laughing in each other's arms.]

JOURNALIST

Don't you love to be made a fool of?

BIMBO

Nah, I do it better myself.

LAWYER

Know what scares me? I'm starting to like it here.

LESBIAN

It's bigger than my apartment.

JOURNALIST

Quieter.

BIMBO

The view's better.

GAY ACTIVIST

A hot tub in the corner would really help.

OFFICE WORKER

A TV.

SEX THERAPIST

(feelingly)

A bed.

[Everyone does a take to her. Light change, placard roll. She sings:]

DAYS LIKE THESE, WITH SOMBER NEWS
CALL FOR DEEP REFLECTION
WISER PEOPLE ALWAYS CHOOSE
TO AVOID INFECTION
BUT LET'S NOT WITH THAT OLD BATH WATER
THROW THE BABE AWAY
AND EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE PLAYING SAFE
DON'T FORGET TO PLAY:

'CAUSE SOME PEOPLE LIKE A TRIP TO THE OPERA
SOME CALL THE DISCO HOME
OTHERS DEMUR 'CAUSE THEY PREFER
TO SIT AROUND CHANTING "OM"
LET ME CONFESS I ACQUIESCE
IN ALL OF THE ABOVE
AND HERE'S MY POSITION IN ADDITION
ME, I LIKE TO MAKE LOVE.
SOME PEOPLE CALL THE DAFFODIL DANDY
SOME VENERATE THE ROSE
SOME NEVER GAZE ON FLORAL SPRAYS
PREFERRING VIDEOS
SOME LIKE VERMEER OR RICHARD GERE
SOME SEEK THE SUN, SOME SHADE
EACH HAS A PREFERENCE HE GIVES DEFERENCE
ME, I LIKE TO GET LAID
I FOR NAVELS AND FLANKS
GIVE THANKS
I FOR NIPPLES AND EARS
GIVE CHEERS
I FOR FINGERS AND BUTTS
GO ABSOLUTELY NUTS
I FOR ALL OF THE BOD

PRAISE GOD
 SOME PEOPLE LIKE A BOOK OR A BOTTLE
 OTHERS A BANK ACCOUNT
 STILL OTHERS CHOOSE ROMANTIC VIEWS
 OF FOREST, SEA, OR MOUNT
 SOME SWEAT FOR YEARS TO BUILD CAREERS
 THEY LATER TIRE OF
 SOME TREK TO LHASA, SOME HADASSAH
 ME, I LIKE TO MAKE LOVE
 (INCLUDING TANTRA)
 ME, I LIKE TO MAKE LOVE
 ONCE MORE WITH FEELING
 ME, I LIKE TO MAKE LOVE!

[Blackout.]

SIXTEEN:
 “THE SEA HAS MANY LOVERS”

[Lights isolate the Lawyer and the Journalist (in a Banana Republic safari jacket), who holds the magic box in hand. Though he toys with it, it remains unopened throughout the scene.]

LAWYER

People are really starting to loosen up in here, have you noticed? [The Journalist shakes his head in disgust.] Whatsa matter?

JOURNALIST

I thought that song was shit. Absolute shit. Tasteless and degrading. Look what casual sex has done to the world. To this city! How dare she?

LAWYER

Personally, I’m all for it.

JOURNALIST

Well, I'm not! I want the real thing. I won't settle for less. [He sings, as lights change.]

ONCE, ON A SUDDEN WHIM, I WENT
 ON A PACKAGE TOUR OF THE TROPICS
 I MET A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO DISCUSSED A LOT OF TOPICS
 AND ALL OF THEM WERE CULTURAL MYOPICS
 SO I STRUCK OUT ON MY OWN
 AND FOUND A SHACK ON THE BEACH
 WHERE FOOD AND DRINK AND CANDLELIGHT
 WERE ALL IN EASY REACH
 AND ONE NIGHT, WHEN THE RUM WAS GONE
 AND STARS WHEELED ROUND THE SKY
 A PLEASING VOICE, A WOMAN'S VOICE
 CAME UNDULATING BY
 SHE DIDN'T SING TOO LOUDLY
 AND SHE DIDN'T SING TOO LONG
 AND I NEVER EVEN SAW HER
 BUT I LOVED HER FOR HER SONG
 I REMEMBER EVERY WORD
 SOBERINGLY HEARD:

“THE SEA HAS MANY LOVERS
 THE SUN'S BRILLIANT KISS
 BLAZES ON HER BOSOM
 IN RIPPLES OF BLISS
 HE BURNISHES HER BEAUTY
 FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE
 BUT NO LOVER FOR ME
 NO LOVER FOR ME

“THE SEA HAS MANY LOVERS
 THE MOON WAXES BRIGHT
 AND SHINING SCALES OF SILVER
 CARESS HER THROUGH THE NIGHT
 SHE MURMURS HER CONTENTMENT
 SO UNEQUIVOCALLY
 BUT NO LOVER FOR ME
 NO LOVER FOR ME.”

THAT SONG HAS NEVER LEFT MY EAR
 YEAR AFTER SOLITARY YEAR
 O HOW I WONDER WHERE THAT WOMAN IS TODAY
 OR IF SHE'D CARE TO HEAR ME SAY, HEY,

THE SEA HAS MANY LOVERS
 I'VE SEEN THEM COME AND GO
 CHANGES CHASE CHANGES

BUT ONE SURE THING I KNOW
 I'D BE YOUR SUN AND MOON AND MORE
 IF YOU WOULD ONLY BE
 THE ONE LOVER FOR ME
 THE ONE LOVER, THE ONE LOVER,
 THE ONE LOVER FOR ME.

[Contemplating the closed box one last time, he lays it aside. Slow fade.]

SEVENTEEN:
 "I'D LIKE TO PRACTICE WITH YOU"

[The Clown appears at the stage right door and crosses the car. Granny notices him.]

GRANNY

There he is!

[She goes after him, along with the Well-Dressed Lady, Lawyer, Bimbo, etc.]

ALL

Hey, you! You! Mister Clown. Stop right there. [etc.]

CLOWN

(echoing DeNiro)

You talkin' to me?

GRANNY

Damn straight. Some of wants to know, where you get that box?

CLOWN

What box?

GRANNY

The box you give me. With the power.

CLOWN

What power?

LAWYER

To reverse time.

WELL-DRESSED LADY

And release inhibition.

BIMBO

And obliterate illiteracy.

CLOWN
(producing it)

Oh, you mean this box.

SEX THERAPIST

Where'd you get it?

CLOWN

Ikea.

WELL-DRESSED LADY

That box is not from Ikea. I get the catalog.

CLOWN

A&S?

LAWYER

Come on, what's the big secret?

CLOWN

The big secret is that the power isn't in the box.

GRANNY

Then where is it?

CLOWN
(trying to go)

Ask the box.

GRANNY

Where you goin' now?

CLOWN

I told you, I've got to work the other cars.

ALL

Oh, please. Don't go. Stay with us. [etc.]

CLOWN

Listen, I really appreciate it, but even a guy with magic has got to make a buck. If you have any questions, ask the box. [He goes.]

GRANNY
(opening box)

All right. Where's the power?

[Organ chord. Light change. Scarlet and gold gospel choir robes drop from the flies. Everyone puts them on and some get tambourines from under the seats. The train windows

become stained glass Inner City Gothic. Granny leads the choir, whose back row stands on a bank of seats:]

HEY-EY-EY BROTHER
 HEY-EY-EY SISTER
 GATHER FOR THE WORD
 THAT SETS YOU FREE:

WELL, YOU CAN SEE EVERYBODY AS BEAUTIFUL
 AND IN YOUR HEART YOU CAN KNOW THAT IT'S TRUE
 IT'S A HELL OF A THRILL
 WHEN YOU DEVELOP THE SKILL
 AND I THINK I'D LIKE TO PRACTICE WITH YOU
 NOW THERE ARE PEOPLE AROUND WHO WOULD DISAGREE
 AND THEY WILL STICK TO THEIR REASONS LIKE GLUE
 BUT THE JUICE OF A SMILE
 WILL SET THEM LOOSE IN A WHILE
 AND TILL THEN I'D LIKE TO PRACTICE WITH YOU
 I'D LIKE TO PRACTICE SEEING ALL THE BEAUTY AND POWER
 I NEVER NOTICED BEFORE
 HOUR AFTER GENEROUS HOUR
 I'LL SEE MORE, MORE, MORE
 SO COULD YOU SPARE ME A COUPLE OF CENTURIES
 (THOUGH IT MIGHT ONLY TAKE A MINUTE OR TWO)
 WITH MY HEART IN MY GAZE
 I'M GONNA START A NEW CRAZE
 AND I THINK I'D LIKE TO PRACTICE WITH YOU

LAWYER

NOW I'VE BEEN SEEING THIS WORLD AS A STONY PLACE
 WHERE DREAMS COULD NEVER, NO NEVER COME TRUE
 WELL, THERE'S A ROSE IN THE STONE
 BUT NO ONE GROWS IT ALONE
 SO I'D LIKE TO CULTIVATE IT WITH YOU

TEACHER

AND I'VE BEEN WAITING AWHILE FOR THAT SPECIAL ONE
 WHO'D HELP ME SKIP WHAT I NEED TO GO THROUGH
 BUT FOR NOW BEING CLOSE
 IS SUCH A POWERFUL DOSE
 THAT I'D JUST AS SOON ENJOY IT WITH YOU

ALL

I'D JUST AS SOON ENJOY THE SWEET, EXUBERANT FEELING
 BORN OF OUR NATURAL BOND
 TAKING ME DEEP INTO HEALING
 AND BEYOND, BEYOND, BEYOND
 SO IF MY WORDS STIR AN ECHO WITHIN YOUR HEART

YOU KNOW THERE'S NOTHING THAT I'D RATHER DO
 THAN IGNITE EVERYONE
 TILL THEY'RE AS BRIGHT AS THE SUN
 AND I THINK I'D LIKE TO PRACTICE WITH YOU
 WITH YOU!

[Blackout.]

EIGHTEEN:
“THE REBBE AND THE ROCKER”

[Full car lighting. After applause, the unmistakable sound of the Punk Rocker's boom-box blasts from behind the still-assembled choir. They part to reveal him sitting there with a scowl. Everyone groans and starts to yell at him. He rises.]

ROCKER

Shut up! All of you just shut up. [He snaps off the boom-box.] You're a bunch of fucking hypocrites, that's what. “Natural bond” my ass. Let somebody just be a little different and see about your natural bond. Your music sucks. Your world sucks. And this fucking subway sucks! [He grabs the box from Granny and rips it in pieces.] So what's there to sing about now?

[The dispirited riders start putting away their choir robes. The Rebbe rises from obscurity.]

REBBE

What's to sing about? What's to sing about? Open your ears a little instead of your mouth, my young sage, and you shall hear a tale. The story of my people, in F-Sharp Minor.

THERE ONCE WAS A VILLAGE FAR AWAY
 WHERE NO ONE HAD VERY MUCH TO SAY
 THEY'D SIT AROUND EVERY SINGLE DAY
 GOING “B-B-BOY”
 IN WINTER WHEN IT WAS FREEZING COLD
 IN SUMMER WHEN HEAVEN'S BOUNTY ROLLED
 THE ONE REMARK FROM BOTH YOUNG & OLD
 WAS “B-B-BOY”
 A LUMBERMAN SHIFTING STACKS OF BOARD
 ONCE CAME UPON HIDDEN TREASURE HOARD
 HE DIDN'T SAY “WOW” OR “THANK THE LORD”
 JUST “B-B-BOY”
 A WOMAN INVITED OUT TO TEA
 CHOMPED ON HER SPOON INADVERTENTLY
 SHE LOST HER TEETH AND WHAT SAID SHE?
 SHE SAID “B-B-BOY”
 IT WAS ALWAYS, “OY B-B-BOYBOY BOY BOY BOY...”
 NOTHING ELSE BUT “OY B-B-BOYBOY...”

NOW YOU CAN IMAGINE EASILY
 THAT IF YOU CAME FROM ACROSS THE SEA
 YOU'D FIND YOURSELF IN A QUANDARY
 WITH "B-B-BOY"
 JUST ASK FOR WHATEVER YOU MIGHT WANT
 A RESTING PLACE OR A RESTAURANT
 THE WORD THAT FLOWED FROM A SINGLE FONT
 WAS "B-B-BOY"
 YOU'D WAKE IN THE NIGHT WITH YOUR BED ON FIRE
 AND RUN OUTSIDE AS THE FLAMES GREW HIGHER
 THE SOLE RESPONSE OF THE LOCAL CHOIR
 WAS "B-B-BOY"
 SUPPOSE YOU HAD TERMITES IN YOUR HAIR
 OR ANARCHISTS STOLE YOUR UNDERWEAR
 THE POPULACE WITH A VACANT STARE
 SAID "B-B-BOY"
 "WHERE'S THE BATHROOM?" "OY B-B-BOYBOY BOY BOY BOY..."
 "TRAVELERS' CHEQUES?" "OY B-B-BOYBOY..."

[The Rocker interrupts, playing air guitar as he sings:]

FEAR OF THE STRANGER
 PLANTED IN THE EYE
 NEVER GONNA LOSE IT
 TILL THE DAY I DIE.
 FEAR OF THE NEIGHBOR
 PLANTED IN THE NECK
 STIFFENING THE SINEWS
 AS THEY DISCONNECT.
 FEAR OF TOMORROW
 PLANTED IN THE BRAIN
 DAMN THEM WHO PLANTED IT
 AND DAMN THE PAIN.
 FEAR OF BETRAYAL
 PLANTED IN THE HEART
 MAKING ME A PRISONER
 IN THE FLAMING DARK.

REBBE [answering the challenge:]

ONE FATAL DAY, AS THE STORY GOES
 A VISITOR IN EXPENSIVE CLO'ES
 WHO CERTAINLY WASN'T IN THE THROES
 OF "B-B-BOY"
 CAME TO THE TOWN FOR A BRIEF VACATION
 MAKING MUCH OF HIS LOFTY STATION
 CHASING "GIRLS" WAS HIS OCCUPATION
 (B-B-BOY!)

A TAVERN MAID WHO WAS GRILLING CHICKEN
 CAUGHT HIS EYE, MADE HIS PULSES QUICKEN
 IN A FLASH HE WAS HOTLY STRICKEN
 B-B-BOY
 FEELING THE MAID WOULD BE WORTH PURSUING
 HE OFFERED WEALTH WORTHY OF A EWING
 SHE REPLIED TO HIS ARDENT WOOING
 “B-B-BOY”
 B-B-BOY B-B-BOYBOY BOY BOY BOY...

[During the above B-B-BOYS, the Rocker sings his lines again, which harmonize roughly.
 Then he wails under the following:]

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT STRANGE EXPRESSION
 SPURNING ME AND MY HEART’S OBSESSION
 ME WITH FRIENDS IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION?”
 B-B-BOY
 HE TURNED ON HIS HEELS AND, DISAPPEARING
 LEFT THE TOWN IN A FIT OF SNEERING
 SAID THE MAID (WHO WAS HARD OF HEARING),
 “B-B-BOY?”
 A COOLED-OFF HEART CAN BECOME SO CALLOUS
 VERY SOON FROM THE ROYAL PALACE
 CAME THE PROOF OF THE RICH MAN’S MALICE
 B-B-BOY
 THE KING HAD ANNOUNCED A STERN DECREE
 ESTABLISHING THE DEATH PENALTY
 FOR ANYONE WHO REPORTEDLY
 SAID “B-B-BOY”
 THAT WAS IT FOR “OY B-B-BOYBOY BOY BOY BOY...”
 NEVER EVER “OY B-B-BOYBOY...”

[The Rebbe beats his breast as he and the Rocker mourn together musically. Then the Rocker’s genuine grief breaks out uncontrollably. The Rebbe takes him in his arms and the music becomes very still. When the boy is done crying, the Rebbe proceeds to finish the tale:]

THERE HAPPENED TO BE IN THIS VERY TOWN
 A FUNNY MAN OF SOME SMALL RENOWN
 THE FOOLISH NAME OF THIS FOOLISH CLOWN
 WAS B-B-BOY
 A PASSING PLATOON OF ENFORCING GRUNTS
 ASKED THE NAME OF THIS SMILING DUNCE
 AND NEED I SAY HE REPLIED AT ONCE
 “B-B-BOY”
 THEY CARTED HIM OFF TO A DUNGEON CELL
 BEGAN TO RING HIS FUNERAL BELL
 BUT JUST BEFORE THE HATCHET FELL

ON B-B-BOY
 THE KING (WHO FOUND IT ALL ABSURD)
 ASKED THE FOOL FOR HIS PARTING WORD
 THE FOOL REPLIED, FOR HIS HEART WAS STIRRED:

[The Rebbe turns to the Rocker, who is totally caught up in the story.]

ROCKER

B-B-BOY!

REBBE

CORRECT!

B-B-BOY B-B-BOYBOY BOY BOY BOY
 B-B-BOY B-B-BOYBOY BOY BOY BOY...

THE KING COULDN'T STOP HIS DANCING FEET
 SOON EVERYONE ON THE ROYAL STREET
 WAS FROLICKING TO THE NEAT SWEET BEAT
 OF "B-B-BOY"

THE EVIL DECREE WAS NOT OBEYED
 THE WEALTHY MAN WED THE TAVERN MAID
 AND AT THE FEAST THE MUSICIANS PLAYED

YES! "B-B-BOY!"
 "B-B-BOY B-B-BOYBOY BOY BOY BOY..."

[The Rebbe whips out his handkerchief, extends it to the Rocker, and they dance together to the finish, as the crowd claps in rhythm.]

NINETEEN:
 "PLENTY LOVE"

[After applause, the Rebbe dips into his coat pocket, pulls out a box exactly like the one the Rocker smashed, and offers it to him with a sly grin. When the Rocker sheepishly takes it, the Rebbe gestures that he expects something in return, and points to one of the Rocker's pockets. The astonished young man finds an identical box, and gives it to the Rebbe. Everyone in the company now produces a box. As they pass them around, Granny begins to sing, and everyone sheds their various character disguises, leaving the company with a "neutral" look by the time they all join in the anthem:]

YOU WHO HOARD AND YOU WHO PINCH
 YOU WHOSE GAZE ENGULFS THE GROUND
 DROP THAT BURDEN, BUDGE THAT INCH
 THERE'S PLENTY LOVE TO GO AROUND
 YOU WHOSE MEMORY SIGHS WITH GRIEF
 VAGUELY FELT OR STERNLY BOUND
 TASTE THE WATERS OF RELIEF
 THERE'S PLENTY LOVE TO GO AROUND

LOVE CAN HEAL THE PAINFUL SCAR
 LOVE CAN SOOTHE THE FEARFUL SOUND
 EYE THE MOMENT WHERE YOU ARE
 THERE'S PLENTY LOVE TO GO AROUND

YOU WHO LONG HAVE BEEN OPPRESSED
 WHO IN NEED HAVE NEARLY DROWNED
 TURN YOUR PASSION TOWARD THE BEST
 THERE'S PLENTY LOVE TO GO AROUND
 YOU WHO EVENLY FORGIVE
 AND WITH HAPPINESS ARE CROWNED
 DEMONSTRATE EACH DAY YOU LIVE
 THERE'S PLENTY LOVE TO GO AROUND

LOVE CAN HEAL THE PAINFUL SCAR
 LOVE CAN SOOTHE THE FEARFUL SOUND
 EYE THE MOMENT WHERE YOU ARE
 THERE'S PLENTY LOVE TO GO AROUND

WE WHOSE HAIR IS THINNED BY TIME
 WE WHOSE RANKS ARE THINNED BY DEATH
 ARE BUT FOOTSTEPS ON THE CLIMB
 'TWINXT THE FIRST AND FINEST BREATH
 ONCE WE SEE WHAT LIFE IS WORTH
 FRAGRANCES AND HUES ABOUND
 FRESH ENOUGH TO CLEANSE THE EARTH
 THERE'S PLENTY LOVE TO GO AROUND

LOVE CAN HEAL THE PAINFUL SCAR
 LOVE CAN SOOTHE THE FEARFUL SOUND
 EYE THE MOMENT WHERE WE ARE
 THERE'S PLENTY LOVE TO GO AROUND

LOVE CAN HEAL THE PAINFUL SCAR
 LOVE CAN SOOTHE THE FEARFUL SOUND
 EYE THE MOMENT WHERE WE ARE
 THERE'S PLENTY LOVE TO GO AROUND!

[After applause, the company suddenly lurches as one, and once again we see that the train is moving. Everyone scrambles for their forsaken costumes and reassumes the place and position they were in at the opening for an abbreviated version of "Underground," ending with:]

SOME MAY BE ON AN EMOTIONAL SLIDE
 SOME MAY BE HARBORING TREASURES INSIDE
 AND WE ALL OF US MANAGE TO RIDE
 UNDERGROUND!

[Blackout.]

FINISH

AN UNDERGROUND REVUE takes place on a subway car, where magical transformations occur to both the set and the passengers. Tonight we can only hint at some of these, and must call on your imagination to supply the rest. Some scenes take place in real time and space, others in the characters' fantasies. Where set pieces and lighting could evoke a tropical island, a rock concert, or a shtetl, we must rely on musical atmosphere and stage directions read aloud, by Marnie Pomerantz. In addition, every actor in the show is meant to play multiple roles, and without benefit of costume changes, you may have to do some guessing. An actor may be an East village skinhead in one scene and a middle-aged lawyer in the next. A woman's style may switch from Laura Ashley to Frederick's of Hollywood, and back again. We will indicate this wherever possible without breaking the musical flow. If we had a band, they would be dressed as Peruvian subway musicians.

Another indicator of change and transformation is that a few numbers will be heard in a sequence different from what the program says. Life imitates art. And without further warnings, we present AN UNDERGROUND REVUE.