

JASON IN THE GROVE

An "Opera" in 3 Acts

by Harris A. Whitley

(with apologies to Rodgers & Hammerstein)

Dedicated to Dr. Jason Tramm
Music Director for O.G.C.M.A.
on the occasion of his 10th Year of Service
for
his dedication to using his
extreme musical talents
to the Glory of God

Harris:

Last summer I was commissioned to compose an opera in honor of Jason Tramm's 10th year by the Camp Meeting Association. The opera was 4 hours long and required a 70-piece orchestra, 16 leads, 200 chorus members, a children's chorus of 50, 32 ballet dancers, 23 scene changes, 4 horses, and a wave machine for the beach scene.

Needless to say, the budget of \$499,000 has been cut. For some unknown reason, the Camp Meeting Association felt completing the boardwalk was a bigger priority. Therefore, the budget was cut to \$23.17. There is no money for scenery or costumes. The orchestra has been fired. The ballet has been cut. The horses have been put out to pasture and there is no money for singers. The opera is now 15 minutes long. Today you will hear 1 aria from Act 1, 1 duet from Act 2, and 1 chorus from Act 3.

Luckily I found 4 singers and 3 orchestra members of the Lower Slorbian Very Regional Opera Company sitting on the boardwalk with a sign that read "Will perform opera for food". It seems they had just completed a most unsuccessful tour of small NJ towns where they performed all 68 solo roles in *War and Peace*. Today they are performing for lunch. They do not speak a word of English, but have memorized the English words for this production. Before we begin, let me introduce the orchestra—Ludmilla Cranknitzi, winner of the coveted blue ribbon for piano playing and raising of wheat; Dinka Ristovski, trumpet, and Nadezhda Ristovski, trombone,

famous husband and wife instrumental duo and tied- for
-first- place national hog callers.

Act I The Ocean Grove Beach

Announcer:

The first act takes place on the Ocean Grove Beach where the 10 years younger Jason Tramm is reflecting on his just completed interview for the Music Director's job. This role is sung today by Borysko Ogulchansky, the leading tenor of the Lower Slorbian Very Regional Opera Company, who is the only person to hit a high C while working in the country's only coal mine—setting off a cave-in and the worst recession in the history of his country.

Borysko:

(Enters and stands with back to audience. Turns a la *Sound of Music* and sings: “How Come I'm Alone and There's So Much Music”)

Announcer:

Thansik , Borysko. (Bows) This was the only scene we were able to show you from Act 1, so we now move to Act 2.

Act II A sidewalk to the tents.

This act takes place 2 years later as two ladies are discussing

Jason on their way back to their tents. The ladies are played by Fania Schnidrowsky and Kasmina Vishnewski, dueling divas of the opera company. Fania is famous for hitting a high E which caused an avalanche that cut her village off for the whole winter. Kasmina is only famous for constantly upstaging Fania. (We hope this goes without incident, although that is highly unlikely.)

Fania and Kasmina:

(Enter one at a time, pulling each other back as they try to enter the stage. Sing: "Jason's Favorite Things" while constantly upstaging each other. In the midst of the song they break into real opera and have to be restrained by the announcer.)

Announcer:

Noraskiev! Noraskiev! Backsi tocahski meinski operaski!
They will begin again.

Fania and Kasmina:

(Sing "Jason's Favorite Things" as they continue to upstage each other.)

Announcer:

Thanski, fraulinksis. (Gives them flowers. They bow. He bows. They bow. He bows, etc. Until he says:) Vaniski, prontovski! Vaniski!

Act III

Rehearsal in the Great Auditorium.

Announcer:

The final act requires a large chorus as Jason 10 years later is preparing yet another Festival Choir. Since we couldn't hire a choir, we ask that you be the chorus. Words to the chorus are printed on the back of the program. Mraz Jetski, bass-baritone, will play the part of Jason 10 years later. Mraz is noted for playing almost every major role in *Aida* including Aida. He has a 6 octave range, but today will be using only his bass-baritone range.

Mraz:

(Warms up the “choir” a la Jason. Teaches them the ending first a la Jason and then leads them in singing “Sing E'vy Song”)

There's So Much Music

**How come I'm alone and there's so much music
With hymns they have sung o'er a hundred years?
The Grove fills my soul with the sound of anthems.
I want to direct ev'ry note I hear.**

**I want to conduct like the beat of the waves
That crash on their way to the shores.
I want to direct those songs that fly
From the Auditorium doors.**

**I want to direct the Choir Festival
And the brass ensemble, too.
I want to work here
And to direct every one of you!**

**I'll come to the Grove when my soul needs music.
I know I will hear what I've heard before.
My soul will be blessed with the sound of anthems,
And I'll direct once more.**

Jason's Favorite Things

Red-headed children and beaches with sand--
Anthems and orchestras and opera so grand--
Words like “*Minnesohta*” to teach choirs to sing--
These are a few of Jason's favorite things!

Sopranos singing in extra long phrases--
Tenors who take up the time with his praises--
Basses and altos who sound just like strings--
These are a few of Jason's favorite things!

Being watched closely when he is conducting--
Choirs singing softly, but always projecting--
Giving a downbeat when everyone sings--
There are a few of Jason's favorite things!

When a section flats on another note--
When the diction's bad--
Jason simply remembers his favorite things--
And then he just feels so gla-a-a-a-d!

Sing Ev'ry Song

Sing ev'ry chorus—sing ev'ry song,
Sing it on the Pathway as we go along.
Sing ev'ry anthem—sing it soft and proud
In the Auditorium, sing it strong and loud.

A song that will need all the praise we can give
Ev'ry day of our lives for as long as we live.
Praise to our Maker we will always sing.
Praise with all our voices 'til we meet our King!
(LOW ENDING)

Repeat:

A King we will meet on that beautiful shore,
Where we'll greet Him with joy and we'll sing evermore!
Praise to our Maker we will always sing.
Praise with all our voices when we meet our King!
(HIGH ENDING)

High ending=Sopranos and Tenors sing high G
Altos and Basses sing G,G#,A,B,C