



Book & Lyrics by
LEVRES DE SANG

Music & Additional Lyrics by
LEB WILLIAMS

*Paul Richard Scott is writing as Levres de Sang
Randy Williams is composing & writing as Leb Williams*

Levres: kyoto41@protonmail.com | Leb: lebwilliamsmusic@gmail.com

July 25, 2022

C A S T

Principals

BERNHARD KAUN

Milwaukee-born, German composer.

CARL LAEMMLE, JR.

Head of Universal Pictures between 1929 and 1936.

MARIANNE MELROSE

Scriptreader and actress from Sun River, Montana.

DOCTOR LIME

Chicago-born, African-American studio physician.

Supporting

ELIOT BELVEDERE: Theater Manager.

HUGO WILHELM KAUN: Bernhard's father.

UNCLE CARL: Affectionate name for Laemmle's father.

PROFESSOR GÖRLITZ: German surgeon / theoretician.

NEWSGIRL / X27: An American Mata Hari.

MARIA / DROWNED GIRL: Childhood memory of Bernhard.

CHESTER MONTGOMERY III: MGM executive.

HERR X: Subject of Görlitz's book.

Additional

BROADWAY & HOLLYWOOD TYPES, ACCOUNTANTS, NIGHTCLUB PATRONS,
SAILORS, SECRETARIES and various other roles to be played /
doubled by the company.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act 1:

1. THE FIFTH CHILD Bernhard & Hugo
2. IMAGINATION (LET IT RUN WILD) Laemmle & Bernhard
3. NEW YORK MOVIES Marianne & Cast
4. CREATE A LIFE Lime w/ Newsgirl
5. MONSTERS & MARGINS Laemmle w/ Accountants
6. THE GIRL FROM SUN RIVER Bernhard & Marianne
7. GIVE IT MORE TRUMPET Laemmle & Bernhard
8. LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER Görlitz & Lime
9. THIS COULD BE MY CITY Marianne w/ Ms. Carrington
10. POSTCARD FROM UNION PACIFIC Lime
11. BLACK MOON Lime (w/ X27 & Cast)
12. THE LAST TIME I SAW MARIA Bernhard w/ Maria

Act 2:

1. DIAS DORADOS Laemmle (w/ Hedda & Executives)
2. SINCE YOU CAME MY WAY Marianne & Chester (w/ Cast)
3. NOBODY MUST KNOW Görlitz (w/ X27 & Chorus)
4. ABOVE SCHUMANNSTRASSE Lime w/ Herr X
5. ROMANTIC SYMPHONY Hugo & Bernhard
6. LOVE IN THE BLACK FOREST Marianne & Bernhard
7. IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY Marianne & Orderly
8. SOMEWHERE IN YOUR ART Hugo & Bernhard

Premise:

A former Hollywood composer prepares to give a talk at a fortieth anniversary double-screening of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, but is distracted by a youthful studio mogul, an old flame, and a now deceased physician.

Time & Place:

Scenes alternate between our 1971 Los Angeles present and the 1930s to 1960s past in Hollywood and Hamburg.

Disclaimer:

The portrayals herein of Bernhard Kaun, Carl Laemmle, Jr., Carl Laemmle Senior and Hedda Hopper are fictional representations of their real-life selves. All other characters, including those of Marianne Melrose and Doctor Lime, are entirely fictitious. Any similarities to persons previously employed by Universal Pictures are purely coincidental.

Note:

"Laemmle" should be pronounced LEM-LEE.

OVERTURE: *Comprising various themes from the show.*

Act 1, Scene 1

*Backroom of movie theater.
Somewhere in Los Angeles. November 1971.*

Curtain rises on a wood-panelled function room lined with Hollywood portraits. Everyone from Garbo and Barrymore to Brando and Hoffman. There's also a desk, chair, drinks cabinet and small piano. The room's silver-haired occupant, BERNHARD KAUN, cuts a distinguished figure in his tweed overcoat. He holds an embossed invitation as he addresses the audience from downstage.

BERNHARD: If you told me I'd be back in the movie world... Well, I don't even recall the last time I saw one on television. Let alone coming here -- Oh, I might conduct at a festival in Boston or New York on occasion, but I've not been to L.A. since before the war. And how long must it be since—?

Bernhard checks his watch.

BERNHARD: It's not like Mr. Laemmle to be late—

The theater manager, ELIOT BELVEDERE, enters. A preppy East Coast type sporting a yellow V-neck and checkered slacks.

MANAGER: Hey, we got quite the crowd in tonight. They're showing *Easy Rider* with *Vanishing Point* at the Rialto across the street so I didn't think we'd sell this many tickets—
(*realizing*)
Wait, you're not Mr. Laemmle?

BERNHARD: We spoke on the telephone.
(*handing over invitation*)
My name is Bernhard Kaun. I scored the picture.

MANAGER: You sound just like Orson Welles.
(*impersonating*)
My name is Orson Welles. I wrote and directed this picture.

BERNHARD: I can assure you I'm not Orson Welles. I'm—

Music #1: THE FIFTH CHILD

BERNHARD: I'M THE FIFTH CHILD OF HUGO WILHELM
 PATRIARCH WITH GREAT EXPECTATION
 DOMICILED TO A STUDIOUS REALM
 DRY AS DUST WITHOUT OSTENTATION
 -- BERLIN, LUGANO, VIOLIN, PIANO
 CLARINET WITH MILITARY INCLINATION
 ALL AT SUCH A TENDER, TENDER AGE
 WHEN OUR KAISER RULED AND OOMPAH WAS ALL THE RAGE.

I'M THE FIFTH CHILD OF LA CRÈME DE LA CREAM
 MADE MY WAY VIA GERMANIC CONNECTION
 I WENT WILD FOR YOUR AMERICAN DREAM
 TRIED AS I MUST WITHOUT EXPECTATION
 -- NEW YORK, ASSISTANT, ARRANGER
 MILLS, RCA, NIBELUNGEN ORCHESTRATION
 ALL AT SUCH AN IMPRESSIONABLE AGE
 WHEN THE CHARLESTON RULED AND CHAPLIN WAS ALL THE
 RAGE.

HUGO WILHELM enters.

BERNHARD: Father...!? But I thought—?

HUGO: I NEVER LIKED THE MOVIES
 I KNOW IT SOUNDS ABRUPT
 DEBAUCHERY'S AMONG THE FACTORS
 AND I DESPISE THOSE METHOD ACTORS.
 I NEVER LIKED THE MOVIES
 I SAID: "HOLLYWOOD'S BANKRUPT
 -- TEACH THEORY IN FREIBERG OR BADEN
 LAEMMLE'S MONSTERS WILL ONLY CORRUPT".

BERNHARD: I'M THE FIFTH CHILD OF HUGO WILHELM
 MIDDLE CLASS WITH ROMANTIC AFFECTATION
 A MIRACLE OF OUR POSTWAR REALM
 EAST AND WEST, DENAZIFICATION
 -- BERLIN, LUGANO, VIOLIN, PIANO
 CONCERT TOURS FOR GENEROUS REMUNERATION
 ALL IN THIS PERMISSIVE, LONG-HAIRED AGE
 WHILE THE DEUTSCHE-MARK RULES AND HIJACKS ARE ALL
 THE RAGE.

HUGO: (*Counterpoint*) SON, THERE ARE SHADOWS
 YOU CANNOT SEE
 UNTIL THEY CLAIM YOU
 NOT WHAT I SAW
 WHEN I RAISED YOU
 RAISED YOU TO BE
 A MAN LIKE ME...
 I NEVER LIKED THE MOVIES.

Hugo exits.

MANAGER: Okay, okay. I remember.

BERNHARD: Any sign of Mr. Laemmle?

An ASSISTANT enters. She wears spectacles and a miniskirt.

ASSISTANT: Ah, Mr. Belvedere, I've been looking for you all over. I had a message from Mr. Laemmle's secretary. He's not coming -- Suspected food poisoning.

MANAGER: Please tell me you're joking around. You are joking aren't you, Dorian?
(*turns to Bernhard*)
Kid likes to spook me. No doubt made a bet with her smart-aleck friends that I'd have a coronary before Hanukkah.

ASSISTANT: I'm sorry... Seems this Laemmle took an early dinner, but hadn't figured on the poached Honduran salmon. Something about the off season—

MANAGER: Poached Honduran salmon! Jeez, why are we discussing the mating habits of Central American marine life when I got a packed house who all paid five dollars a ticket anticipating old-school charm and sophistication -- Christ, I really am having a coronary.

ASSISTANT: I've got to go, Mr. Belvedere. I said I'd help Lori out. There's only twenty minutes before intermission.

She exits.

MANAGER: Wait a minute... Wait a minute -- I got the guy who scored the picture.

BERNHARD: Oh no, Mr. Belvedere. I'm on board with your original plan -- and that was accompanying Mr. Laemmle on stage; you introducing us and me saying "Thank you, Eliot. It's a pleasure to be here tonight..."; but it was absolutely Mr. Laemmle doing the talk -- You can't expect me to step in at a moment's notice. Besides, they won't know who I am—

MANAGER: I wouldn't call it a talk. Just tell them what it was like working with the boogeyman. (*off Bernhard's bemusement*)
What they called Karloff back then.

BERNHARD: That as it may, I never saw him. I was tied to the recording suite. Oh, aside from one time in the canteen -- He was bemoaning the absence of mint sauce.

MANAGER: You knew Junior...?

BERNHARD: After a fashion—

MANAGER: Terrific! So this is how we'll work things: After the intermission, I'll introduce you by saying "Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm afraid our scheduled speaker, former Head of Universal Pictures, Carl Laemmle Jr., has been taken ill and can't be with us, but I'm delighted that Bernhard Kaun has agreed to say a few words in his place -- Among many other things, Mr. Kaun was an orchestrator, composer and musical director in Hollywood between 1931 and 1942 -- and beside his contributions to over two hundred films, including *King Kong* and *Gone With the Wind*, he composed incidental music for the picture you're about to see -- Please, give a warm welcome to—" (*then*)
You get the idea.

BERNHARD: Seems you know something about my career, after all -- You must be one of these hotshot film school kids I heard about.

MANAGER: You need a full beard to hang with those fellas. I just annoy librarians -- Anyhow, as I said, all you gotta do is tell them what it was like working in pictures back then.

BERNHARD: But—

MANAGER: Appreciate this, Mr. Kaun, but I should be in the projection room. The old timer's prone to dozing off during the final reel. (*indicating drinks cabinet*)
Feel free to fix yourself something.

The theater manager exits. Bernhard turns to the audience.

BERNHARD: What can I tell them...?

CARL LAEMMLE JR.'s youthful self enters. Brim full of ginger in a double-breasted suit complete with white carnation.

LAEMMLE: *(Taking seat at desk)* Tell them how Uncle Carl made me head of the studio on my twenty-first birthday—

UNCLE CARL enters. He's similarly attired and full of sparkle.

UNCLE CARL: *(To audience)* Sure makes a swell story -- Although he can leave off how I went and lost it later on.

Uncle Carl removes a document from inside his jacket and sets it on the desk in front of Junior.

UNCLE CARL: Sign here. Here... And here.

LAEMMLE: You know what they'll say, Uncle Carl -- They'll say it's nepotism.

UNCLE CARL: Of course they will, Junior. Because they don't know anything about running a movie studio. They weren't born into the business -- Neither did they spend the last fifteen years dissecting every last nut and rivet of that business.

LAEMMLE: Sure means a lot to me -- I won't let you you down, Sir.

UNCLE CARL: I know you won't, Junior.

Laemmle signs the document. Turns to Bernhard.

LAEMMLE: Boy, that's Uncle Carl alright. Last of the benevolent showmen -- Be sure you tell 'em that.

UNCLE CARL: And that means a lot to me, Junior.

LAEMMLE: It's true, Sir. If it wasn't for you... I mean, you built the backlots and bungalows—

UNCLE CARL: Planted palm trees—

LAEMMLE: Swaying soft and nice in the breeze.

UNCLE CARL: Universal City was a refuge—

LAEMMLE: For the guy who got kicked out by his wife—

UNCLE CARL: For the shopgirl who only a moment ago thought about throwing herself off the Brooklyn Bridge.

LAEMMLE: We gave them our souls!

UNCLE CARL: And you, Junior, gave them—

Laemmle stands. Crosses to center stage as everything around him transforms to the Frankenstein studio set and its evocation of a German village in the 1820s.

Music #2: IMAGINATION (LET IT RUN WILD)

LAEMMLE: IMAGINATION
LET IT RUN WILD
FIND ITS WAY BY MOONLIGHT'S GLOW
BEGUILED.
IMAGINATION
OUR POOR STEPCHILD
CINDERELLA FROM THE WORLD
EXILED
IMAGINATION.

LAEMMLE & UNCLE CARL: SHE'LL MOVE THROUGH YOUR ROOM AT NIGHT
WHEN YOU EMBRACE THE DARK
SO DON'T TURN HER AWAY
OR SWITCH ON THE LIGHT.
AND THEY'LL MOVE THROUGH YOUR DREAMS AT NIGHT
WHEN YOU IGNITE THAT SPARK
SO DON'T TURN THEM AWAY
PLAY WHATEVER FEELS RIGHT.

BERNHARD: I believe your father had his doubts. If I'm not mistaken, he said—

DOCTORS AND THEIR DUNGEONS
THEY'RE TEN-A-PENNY, MAYBE MORE
CALIGARI, ORLAC, NOSFERATU
IT'S ALL BEEN DONE BEFORE
-- WEREWOLVES AT THE WINDOW
THAT TWO-BIT TICKET'S OH SO CHEAP
GHOULS, GHOSTS AND GOLEMS
THE DEAD PREFER TO SLEEP.

LAEMMLE: IF THERE'S ONE THING TO TAKE AWAY FROM MOVIES
LET IT BE, BERNHARD, THIS SIMPLE DRILL
WHAT YOU SUFFER FROM IS NOT A LACK OF IT, MAN
(CONT'D)

LAEMMLE: BUT KNOWING WHAT YOU NEED (JUST LISTEN TO ME)
... TO THRILL.

IMAGINATION
LET IT RUN WILD

BERNHARD: I still say the picture needed more music.

LAEMMLE: THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE VILLAGERS
THE BAYING OF THE DOGS
THE SNAP AND CRACKLE POP
OF BLAZING LOGS
-- LOOK, THEY'VE SET THE WINDMILL ON FIRE
I'M SPENT AND IN A SWEAT
WHO NEEDS A SOUNDTRACK, BERNHARD
WHAT PART OF IT DON'T YOU GET?

IMAGINATION
LET IT RUN WILD
FIND ITS WAY...

UNCLE CARL (Counterpoint) DOCTORS AND THEIR DUNGEONS
& BERNHARD: THEY'RE TEN-A-PENNY, MAYBE MORE.

LAEMMLE: ... BY MOONLIGHT'S GLOW
BEGUILED.
IMAGINATION
OUR POOR STEPCHILD
CINDERELLA FROM THE WORLD
EXILED.

LAEMMLE: IMAGINATION...

UNCLE CARL (Counterpoint) IMAGINATION.
& BERNHARD:

UNCLE CARL: I'll leave all this in your capable hands,
Junior.

Uncle Carl exits. The German trappings fade as the stage is once again the backroom of a movie theater.

LAEMMLE: You see, it's like Uncle Carl said -- A swell
story.

BERNHARD: The folks who've shown up tonight already
heard that story. They're all grown up and
sophisticated. They'd rather hear about the
backroom players: the folks you wouldn't
know existed, but without whom you wouldn't
have a movie -- The best boys and continuity
(CONT'D)

BERNHARD: girls; the lighting operators and set designers; the scriptreaders who filter out all that unreadable junk; or the physicians who ensure everyone on the lot is sound of mind and body.
(suddenly)
That's it! Marianne Melrose and Doctor Lime!

LAEMMLE: Marianne Melrose and Doctor Lime? Who...?
What did those two have to do with any of our pictures?

BERNHARD: They represent everything I'm talking about.
(then)
Say, they both came onto the lot around the same time as myself -- February 1931, if I'm not mistaken.

LAEMMLE: Lemme get this straight: they got a packed house for this fortieth anniversary double screening: Right now they're showing *Dracula* and then they'll run *Frankenstein* after you've done your talk. And you're gonna tell 'em about some backroom physician and a scriptreader who had zip to do with either of those pictures -- Oh, wait, that Marianne dame did coverage on Fort and Faragoh's script before she made a splash for about five minutes over at Metro; but who the hell remembers her now? Who remembers her now...?

Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 2

*Audition Room.
Somewhere off Broadway. January 1931.*

A clipboard-wielding PRODUCER done up in a silk cravat and Princeton blazer stands beside a world-weary DIRECTOR watching MARIANNE MELROSE do her thing. She wears a white suit with matching top hat. There's a battered suitcase at STAGE LEFT.

MARIANNE: (Semi-spoken)
I'm down to my last quarter
so if you think I oughtta
hop a Westbound to the sticks
you mistook me for that funny daughter
who exchanged her brain for bricks.

She winds up with a hokey flourish and winning smile. The two men are dumbstruck.

PRODUCER: Kooky and kinda funny, but—

MARIANNE: Not what you had in mind, huh?

DIRECTOR: Kid's honest. I like that.

PRODUCER: Honesty's alright for Girl Scouts and divinity mistresses, but where did it ever get anyone on Broadway? Besides, I prefer college girls of a certain... How can I put it?

DIRECTOR: A certain elocution.

MARIANNE: I really am down to my last quarter. All I got in that suitcase is an *Olivetti* -- Figured I'd try writing a novel on my nights off. And that's kinda most of 'em.

(then)

Look, I could use a break -- Okay, I ain't got your fancy whatever, but I couldn't have been that bad?

PRODUCER: No, Miss...?
(checking list)
Miss Melrose. No, you weren't bad. You were interminable -- And if this were a show about toothache, then I can assure you that leading role would be yours.

DIRECTOR: Hey, you should try Berlin. I hear they go nuts for all that—

PRODUCER: Cubism and cabarets.

DIRECTOR: Seven-night Dada plays.

PRODUCER: Only she'll sail home Cargo Class and flat broke.

DIRECTOR: You ever thought about pictures? Hollywood and all that jazz.

MARIANNE: Now you just wanna put three thousand miles between me and this production.

PRODUCER: This gal really does have a sense of humor.

DIRECTOR: With guys like you around, she needs it. Seriously, if this were a comedy I'd bite.

PRODUCER: But you don't do comedy?

DIRECTOR: You won't let me!

MARIANNE: (*Fetching suitcase*) Okay fellas, I get it. Thanks all the same.

DIRECTOR: Hey, wait up. You think we're the heartless kind who spit girls like you back onto the street.

MARIANNE: (*Doing her best Bryn Mawr*) Well, you do, don't you?

PRODUCER: Mmm, I do. What's more, I can spot a phoney accent a mile off.

DIRECTOR: Come on, have a heart. She's got *something* going on. I dunno what it might be, but someone somewhere should know what to do with her.

UNDERScore: *Theme from THE GIRL FROM SUN RIVER (a number we'll hear later on in Act 1).*

DIRECTOR: See... Last night I woke up in a cold sweat thinking about all the dreams we shatter -- I mean, these kids only ever hear about the overnight sensations and rags to crazy riches success stories. They never read about Joan or Jean Nobody boarding that bus back to Ohio with their battered suitcase and empty bottle of peroxide.

END UNDERScore.

PRODUCER: (*Dabs a mock tear*) Well, we mustn't let it happen to this Joan or Jean Nobody.

DIRECTOR: That's the spirit!

With perfect synchronicity the two of them lift Marianne from the ground and rush her across the stage as it transforms into the hustle of Times Square. Marianne puts her suitcase down on the sidewalk and tries to get her bearings.

DIRECTOR: You see, Marianne... What's the use in all this razzle dazzle? Our brains can only take so much failure.

MARIANNE: What happens to them? I mean, to the folks who absorb too much?

PRODUCER: Failure?

MARIANNE: That's it. Failure—

PRODUCER: They wind up weaving wicker baskets!

DIRECTOR: Take the girls on those billboards, for instance -- Their names all lit up like Christmas trees. Well, for starters, those ain't their real names—

PRODUCER: Neither's yours.

DIRECTOR: (*Shrugs*) Hey, I never said it was.

PRODUCER: Look, what he's trying to say—

Music #3: NEW YORK MOVIES

DIRECTOR: I HEAR THEY MADE A BLIZZARD
OUT ON THE OTHER COAST
WITH A '24 SNOW TRACTOR
AND SOME DOOHICKEY EXTRACTOR

PRODUCER: YOU KNOW...
THEY ALWAYS MAKE THE MOST—

MARIANNE: STARLIGHT IN THE SKY
SHOWGIRLS ON THE STAGE
WARLORDS IN SHANGHAI
HEADLINES ON A FRONT PAGE.

DIRECTOR: Now you're catching on. Sometimes that last quarter is worth a million bucks—

PRODUCER: Wait, you forgot something!

He hands Marianne her suitcase.

PRODUCER & DIRECTOR: Good luck, kid!

The two men exit. Marianne waves... As the stage fills with picturehouses and an atmosphere of euphoria and tickets for whatever you please. A neon banner declares:

CARL LAEMMLE, JR. PRESENTS
DRACULA.

MARIANNE: I'M AT THE NEW YORK MOVIES
THEY'RE PLAYING ALL THIS YEAR
-- YES, THESE NEW YORK MOVIES
MIGHT GET ME OUTTA HERE.

Several BROADWAY GIRLS enter. Real theatre-school types. One of them wears a crushed beret.

BROADWAY JUST ANOTHER GIRL ON BROADWAY
GIRLS: THEY SAY SHE'S LIKE A GHOST
LOST IN RADIO CITY
YOU GOTTA FEEL SOME PITY.

Marianne buys a ticket. Gets caught up with the BROADWAY GIRLS.

BROADWAY WHEN SHE...
GIRLS: ALWAYS FINDS THE MOST
STARDUST IN HER EYE
CONFETTI IN HER HAIR
GLITTER IN GOODBYE
LOVE AT A COUNTY FAIR.

One of the Broadway girls mischievously swipes Marianne's top hat and exchanges it for the beret.

MARIANNE: I'M AT THE NEW YORK MOVIES
THEY'RE PLAYING ALL THIS YEAR
-- YES, THESE NEW YORK MOVIES
MIGHT GET ME OUTTA HERE.

Various MOVIEGOERS are suddenly illuminated by the beam of the projector as Marianne's suitcase bumps one of them on the head while she takes her seat. Marianne smiles "Sorry".

MOVIEGOERS: (Counterpoint) SHE'S AT THE NEW YORK MOVIES
STARDUST IN HER EYE
OUT ON THE OTHER COAST
CONFETTI IN HER HAIR
WITH A '24 SNOW TRACTOR etc.

The movie theater becomes a dreary train carriage. An INSPECTOR enters and punches Marianne's ticket.

TICKET INSPECTOR: A THIRD-CLASS COMPARTMENT
BROUGHT HER OUT WEST
ACROSS WHEATFIELDS AND PRAIRIES
WITH FIRE IN HER BREAST

The carriage transforms into a Hollywood readers' office. Marianne and the Broadway Girls now sit beside towering piles of scripts. Laemmle enters and paces backwards and forwards as all the while he chomps on a cigar.

Suddenly, one of the girls raises her hand; the script she was reading held aloft. Laemmle motions for her to stand and she crosses the stage to hand him the script. Laemmle skims it before spitting out his cigar into the script and tossing the whole package in a nearby wastepaper basket. Another girl raises her hand...

LAEMMLE: WORKING THAT SLUSH PILE
 OFF STUDIO SEVEN
 SKIMMING FOR MONSTERS
 IN MY HOLLYWOOD HEAVEN

Several PARTYGOERS enter. Marianne hesitates, but soon throws her unread scripts into the air.

PARTYGOERS: YET SOON SHE'LL MAKE
 INFLUENTIAL FRIENDS ON SUNSET
 TALKING ABOUT SOME MOVIE THING
 AND ALL KINDSA DING-A-LING

MARIANNE: YOU KNOW...
 I'LL ALWAYS FIND THE MOST
 TEARDROPS IN MY EYE
 ORCHIDS AT MY DOOR
 VELVET FROM VERSAILLES
 THE WORLD UNLIKE BEFORE.

 I'M AT THE NEW YORK MOVIES
 THEY'RE PLAYING ALL THIS YEAR
 AND THESE NEW YORK MOVIES
 MIGHT GET ME OUTTA HERE.

CAST: (*Counterpoint*) SHE'S AT THE NEW YORK MOVIES
 THEY'RE PLAYING ALL THIS YEAR

MARIANNE: YES, THESE NEW YORK MOVIES
 MIGHT GET ME OUTTA HERE!

Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 3

*Backroom of movie theater.
Somewhere in Los Angeles. November 1971.*

Laemmle sits at the desk. Absorbed in a mountain of paperwork. Bernhard tries to get his attention.

BERNHARD: You see, Mr. Laemmle. Marianne's story—

DOCTOR LIME enters.

LIME: He's not listening, Bernhard. Mr. Laemmle's a busy man.

BERNHARD: Lime...? Doctor Lime. Is that really you?

LIME: It's terrific to see you again, Bernhard -- You're in great shape. Concert tours agree with you. You could double for Von Karajan in *Life* magazine.

BERNHARD: Hotels, rehearsal rooms... It's not as—
(*double-taking Lime*)
Why, I was just telling Mr. Laemmle how the folks out there—

Laemmle gets up. Crosses the stage.

LAEMMLE: Can't you see, Bernhard? He came to tell you he doesn't want his life story broadcast to every Jack and Jill. Let him rest in peace.
(*to Lime*)
Say, you got any of those antacid capsules? The ones with the candy stripes. This mafia script's playing hell with my digestion.

LIME: Sorry, Mr. Laemmle. I no longer practise.

LAEMMLE: Yeah, I took a shot.

BERNHARD: Rest in peace. What—?

LIME: I'm afraid Mr. Laemmle's right. He always was perceptive.

BERNHARD: You mean—?

A SECRETARY enters carrying a manila folder. She sashays across the stage and removes an official-looking document.

SECRETARY: Certificate of Death issued by State of California. Male -- Lime, Otis Claybourn. Date of Death, April 26, 1961. Aged 64. Occupation: Physician. Primary cause of death: Nephritis of liver.

The Secretary exits.

LIME: Ten years. Phew... Seems only yesterday the folks at Evergreen were lowering my coffin into God's good earth -- Just as NASA were launching their first manned spacecraft into the heavens.

BERNHARD: (To Lime) So why are you here—?

LIME: I thought it'd be swell to see old friends.
(then)
And because of that trip I made to Europe --
There were things I couldn't mention at the
time, but I think they're about ready to be
declassified.

BERNHARD: What things?

LIME: (Whispers) Federal secrets.

BERNHARD: You see, Mr. Laemmle!
(to audience)
Maybe I'll start off by saying how when I
came out to L.A. it was snowing for the
first time since records began -- And that I
figured Lime brought it with him all the way
from Chicago.

Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 4

*Newsstand outside movie theater.
Chicago street. Dusk. January 1931.*

*A NEWSGIRL peddles movie magazines and theater listing guides.
There's also a selection of glossy 10x8 publicity stills. While
hung up behind her are a black trenchcoat and fedora. Somewhere
a child practices scales on a decrepit piano. A gaudy placard
declares:*

*THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Starring LON CHANEY ~ Man of a Thousand Faces*

NEWSGIRL: Photoplay magazine! Photoplay magazine! Get
your copy here -- It's red hot. Yes,
sirree... If you don't believe me then see
for yourself and getta load of Mary Astor,
David Manners, Loretta Young, Douglas
Fairbanks, Norma Shearer, Dolores Del Rio
and more fireworks than Chinatown on New
Year.
(pause)
Read all about 'em! Read all about 'em in
your rinky-dink Photoplay magazine!

A younger Doctor Lime enters. He seems preoccupied.

NEWSGIRL: Hey there, Doc! Don't you just think movies are a funny business -- Actors get this dandy idea they'd be better off being somebody else and spend half their lives waiting around to waltz down some staircase. No wonder they keep buying all those fancy houses and fancy cars they can hardly afford to run round the block.

(*then*)

I guess it pays well out there in Hollywoodland, but they're all gonna wind up needing shrinks. Whadda you say, Doc?

UNDERScore: *Theme from IMAGINATION (LET IT RUN WILD).*

LIME: (*To audience*) Imagine changing your appearance at will...

END UNDERScore.

NEWSGIRL: Oh brother, you ain't listened to a word I said.

LIME: I'm sorry, Martha. It's the Lon Chaney effect -- I also found out they'll be tearing down the Home Insurance building. I'm gonna need a new office.

NEWSGIRL: Sorry to hear that, doc.
(*indicating newsstand*)
Although it's a dead cert this new office of yours will be one of those fancy ferroconcrete affairs with, you know, walls and windows, a reinforced roof and drinking water.

LIME: I should be grateful, huh -- What were you saying?

NEWSGIRL: I was running through my ten-dollar pitch for *Photoplay* magazine.

LIME: You know I always buy one regardless—

NEWSGIRL: Sure I do, but I gotta keep in practice. If I don't sell every last copy my boss goes all cranky on me.
(*impersonating*)
Beats me how you can't sell the world's best movie magazine outside a goddamn picturehouse?

(CONT'D)

NEWSGIRL: Oh, I didn't mean to blaspheme, but it ain't me -- It's my boss. I said he was cranky.

Lime gives her a quarter. She hands him the latest edition.

LIME: Hey, you missed something. Seems monster pictures are gonna be all the rage.
(reading verbatim)
"After the success of *Dracula*, Carl Laemmle Junior, Head of Universal Pictures, will terrify audiences all over again with the tale of a man brought back from the dead."

NEWSGIRL: Sounds like a hayride; although from what I hear that Laemmle's a certified crazy. Sure glad he ain't my boss!

LIME: I wonder what it's really like? Out there in Hollywood, I mean?

NEWSGIRL: I'd say it's what you've always wanted—

A streetlight comes on.

Music #4: CREATE A LIFE

LIME:
GLOW STREET LIGHT
RID THE DARK OF ITS BITE
BETWEEN THE LINDEN BOUGHS
OUT OF THIS COBBLED DROWSE
WHEN YOU CREATE A LIFE
FAR FROM YOUR OWN
FALLS EARLY THE DARKNESS
AND THE TROLLEYS CAN'T CARRY YOU HOME.

NEWSGIRL:
GO WHERE YOU MIGHT
RIDE THROUGH EVERY STOPLIGHT
AND WEAR THAT FLASHY NECKTIE
FOR ALL OF THE PASSERS-BY
TO CREATE A LIFE
FAR FROM YOUR OWN
FIND EARLY GREEN PASTURES
DON'T LET THE DARKNESS FOLLOW YOU HOME.

LIME:
CHICAGO...
FROM A WALK-UP NEAR MIDWAY
TO SUMMA CUM LAUDE
I ROSE TO THE HEIGHTS
DESPITE MY CAST...

The Newsgirl slips on the black trenchcoat and fedora.

NEWSGIRL: (To audience) He's perfect!

She makes a dramatic exit and the stage transforms... becoming the entryway to Universal City. Full of California sunshine.

LIME:
 ... I GRIP MY VALISE
 A MEDICAL DOCTOR
 THROUGH THIS STUDIO GATE
 PAST THE CAMELS AND GAFFERS
 I NEVER IMAGINED
 HOW THE STARS WOULD ALIGN FOR ME
 -- CUT SO DEEP, LIKE FATE.

HEAR MY FRIEND
 NOTES THAT FLY FROM THE PAGE
 UP TO THE SILVER SCREEN
 HE TOLD ME OF HIS DREAM
 HOW HE'D CREATE A LIFE...

GLOW STREET LIGHT
 RID THE DARK OF ITS BITE
 AND SHOW ME ONE MORE NIGHT.

Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 5

*Backroom of movie theater.
 Somewhere in Los Angeles. November 1971.*

*Laemmle stands by the drinks cabinet. Fixes himself something.
 Bernhard studies the photo portraits.*

LAEMMLE: So you got a couple of nobodies with stars in their eyes.

BERNHARD: Precisely! It's the Hollywood dream. Marianne and Lime epitomize that dream—

Laemmle puts down his glass. Crosses to center stage.

LAEMMLE: You wanna tell them about the Hollywood dream -- Well, you tell them about a man who dared play God. And the studio that put it up on the screen so ordinary folks could see it and tell their friends -- So that you couldn't move for lines around the block to see a whole bunch of things you'd never set eyes on before.

(CONT'D)

LAEMMLE: I'm telling you, your sophisticated crowd out there are buying the same dreams. Sure, last week they were throwing rose petals at some mystic touting karma or whatever the hell those guys are selling; but tonight they've come for our golden age illusions of glamor and terror -- Hell, those photographs up there are testament to that.
(pause)
We made it look effortless, too. You could never let them see how damn hard we worked or how much we cared.

Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 6:

*Laemmle's Office, Universal Studios.
September 1931.*

Laemmle is sat at a desk with all the executive trappings: a photograph of his father, brass paperweight, fountainpen holder, glass ashtray, desk diary and telephone. Behind him, the wall is covered by velvet drapes. Three ACCOUNTANTS enter waving an assortment of paperwork.

ACCOUNTANT 1: (Incredulous) Monsters made out of body-parts from the grave reanimated by electrical storms! Carl, you're turning the studio into a crazyhouse.

LAEMMLE: Instant box-office gold, gentlemen!

ACCOUNTANT 2: That was last week. Our projections say the public wants homespun musicals. They're going gaga over on Broadway for this Astaire fella -- They say he's better than Pavlova—

ACCOUNTANT 3: There's a wonderful script in your readers' office -- *California Melody 1931*—

LAEMMLE: Yeah, I saw the coverage -- Look, I'd be laughed off the lot. And if you think I'm gonna tell Van Sloan he'll be busting out a show tune on his next picture—
(standing)
More to the point, why are we even having this conversation? *Dracula* sold fifty-thousand tickets within forty-eight hours of its New York opening -- Yeah, I know, that's
(CONT'D)

LAEMMLE: New York. They love a guy who stays up all night then sleeps in a box. But you ever think about that Spanish version we shot after hours? Melford got it made for sixty-six thousand and it's doing gangbusters all over Central and Latin America. Hell, we'll do this one in Spanish if we have to.

ACCOUNTANT 1: They'll love it in Guatemala.

LAEMMLE: Sure they will. They're depressed. Hell, I'm depressed. I got clowns telling me to greenlight some ten-cent musical set in an out of town skate-rink.
(then)

Look, folk just wanna forget their troubles -- Forget the stock market crashed; forget their corn crop got ravaged by a plague of locusts; and forget their boss told 'em there's no use showing up for work tomorrow.

ACCOUNTANT 2: A perfect case for *California Melody 1931*.
(waving paperwork at Laemmle)
What's more, these projections—

Laemmle grabs the offending paperwork. Rips it in two!

LAEMMLE: Projections! Don't you guys think about anything else?

ACCOUNTANTS: (In unison) No!

Laemmle contorts himself like Max Schreck in Nosferatu.

LAEMMLE: Not shadows at midnight or the mysterious stranger who hides from daylight?

ACCOUNTANT 3: Like vampires in tuxedos?

LAEMMLE: Audiences were mesmerized!

ACCOUNTANT 1: They were mesmerized alright. By Lugosi's dopey grin. As for that Mexican *Cónde Dracula* -- Where'd they dig him up from?

ACCOUNTANT 2: You've been shut up in this office too long, Carl. It's given you a warped perspective -- Musicals are the next big thing.
(pause)
Like we were saying, *California Melody*—

LAEMMLE: Sheesh, why's everyone nuts about musicals?

ACCOUNTANT 3: At least consider adapting an *American* novel?

ACCOUNTANT 1: *Little Women*, for instance?

LAEMMLE: *Little Women...?* Sure, I see it now: It's night. Jo hears a noise. Goes to the window. There's a lightning storm. Suddenly, she screams! Cause pressed up against the window, illuminated by weird electricity, is the most horrific thing she ever saw: the face of a man built from the lifeless limbs of the dead!
(pause)
Now that, fellas, is entertainment!

ACCOUNTANT 2: (*Picking up torn sheet*) You ever look at one of these? Really chew the numbers?

Laemmle pulls back the LEFT-HAND drape to reveal a wallchart filled with graphical projections. He grabs the accompanying POINTER.

LAEMMLE: You think I coasted in yesterday? I grew up in the picture business!

Laemmle dances up a storm with the pointer...

Music #5: MONSTERS & MARGINS

LAEMMLE: STUDIO BOOKS
WERE ALL IN THE RED
WHEN POPS SAID TO ME
"TAKE THE REINS
-- BOX-OFFICE BUST
OUR DRAMA'S TOO SWEET
THIS SANDAL AND SWORD'S
NO ZEST FOR DEPRESSION..."
DREAD'S THE BEST
SO REPEAT AFTER ME
WHO'S NEXT
IN THE MONSTER ROSTER
FOR A MOVIE RELEASE, WIDESPREAD?
RKO'S WORKING ON AN OVERSTUFFED MONKEY
WE'VE GOT SOMETHING HUMAN-LIKE INSTEAD.

ACCOUNTANTS: THESE MONSTERS, MARGINS
TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS
CLEAR THESE COLUMNS OUT OF RED.

LAEMMLE: DESPITE NO DINNER ON TABLES
SHOES ON KIDS
RENTS FOR THE LANDLORD
LIFE ON SKIDS
THERE'S ALWAYS A QUARTER SOMEWHERE BE HAD
FORGET ALL THE SAD
BE FRIGHTENED OUT OF ONE'S WITS.

HAND ME THE PHONE
GIVE ME THE COMPOSERS' BACKROOM
I NEED A MUSICIAN
GOT SOMEONE THERE TO EXHUME
SOMEONE NOT CRUSHED UNDER GAMBLING DEBT
NOR DIVORCE SETTLEMENT
OR A PENCHANT FOR GIRLS IN THE CHORUS LINE
FOR MY MASTERPIECE IN DEVELOPMENT
FRANKENSTEIN.

Laemmle pulls back the RIGHT-HAND drape. It reveals some artwork with the tagline: FRANKENSTEIN ~ THE MAN WHO MADE A MONSTER.

ACCOUNTANTS: THESE MONSTERS, MARGINS
TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS
CLEAR THESE COLUMNS OUT OF RED.

Bernhard's YOUNGER SELF enters.

LAEMMLE: WELCOME TO MY OFFICE
TAKE THAT ARMCHAIR
OF TURKISH MOHAIR
AND SOME ARROWHEAD WATER
-- THIS DAY AND ME CAN'T GET ANY HOTTER.

ACCOUNTANTS: MISTER L...

BERNHARD: I rushed right here, Mr. Laemmle. What—?

LAEMMLE: STUDIO BOOKS
WERE BLOODIED WITH RED
WHEN I SAID TO POPS
"LET ME TAKE THE REINS
-- THEATER SEATS RUST
OUR COWBOYS TOO NEAT
THOSE BIBLICAL HORDES
NO ZEST FOR DEPRESSION..."
DREAD'S THE BEST
RING *VARIETY*
TELL THEM WHO'S NEXT
IN THE MONSTER ROSTER
THIS GERMAN WITH A STITCHED-ON HEAD
KARLOFF'S MORE THAN SOME ELECTRIFIED FLUNKY
GIMME MUSIC, GIMME MUSIC BACK FROM THE DEAD.

ACCOUNTANTS: THESE MONSTERS, MARGINS
TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS
CLEAR THESE COLUMNS OUT OF RED.

LAEMMLE: THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
THAT PLAYS ON MY NERVES
JUST WHAT HORROR DESERVES...

DESPITE NO DINNER ON TABLES
SHOES ON KIDS
RENTS FOR THE LANDLORD
LIFE ON SKIDS
THERE'S ALWAYS A QUARTER SOMEWHERE BE HAD.

ACCOUNTANTS: (*Counterpoint*) YOU'LL WRITE HIM A SCORE
THAT PLAYS LIKE NO OTHER—

LAEMMLE THESE MONSTERS, MARGINS
TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS
CLEAR THESE COLUMNS OUT OF RED.

ACCOUNTANTS: (*Counterpoint*) ENTER SOME DARKNESS, BOY
FOLLOW HIM BROTHER.

LAEMMLE: WELCOME TO MY MONSTER PANTHEON!

The defeated accountants exit. Laemmle calls after them:

LAEMMLE: Next time I'll do *Anne of Green Gables!*
(*turning to Bernhard*)
Jeez, the way they're carrying on you'd
think I'd nominated Arbuckle for President
at the League of Decency. And then there's
this thumping in my chest like jackhammers
on a double-shift -- Not that I got time for
a coronary.
(*then*)
I need a favor, Mr. Kaun—

The telephone RINGS.

LAEMMLE: Ah, Jeez, I should get that.

Laemmle picks up. Listens a moment.

LAEMMLE: (*Into receiver*) More to the point, I'm low on
my pills and if they carry me out in a
wooden box I don't see any of these other
clowns nailing distribution; although you
can bet your ass that even six feet under
they won't let me alone. Look, I'll get back
to you when I've actually got five seconds—

Laemmle slams down the receiver. Turns to Bernhard.

LAEMMLE: Lot physician. Can I make it in for a checkup Thursday afternoon? Well, let's see: I'm trying to run a studio so there'll be the usual flimflam with the board in the morning -- I'll also have to remind them I got the distributor on my tail; and that now there's three accountants busting my balls. You saw them, right? Not to mention—

Marianne enters. She's still wearing that crushed beret, but now it's matched with a business suit. She's also clutching a bradded script with a coverage sheet clipped on top. Bernhard stands. Smiles at her.

MARIANNE: Oh, I'm sorry Mr. Laemmle. I should have knocked -- I didn't realize... but you said to let you know as soon as I had the *Sarcophagus* coverage—

LAEMMLE: That's okay, Miss Melrose. You can leave it on my desk -- I'll take the short version.

MARIANNE: The script?

LAEMMLE: No, Beethoven's Fifth! Of course, the script.

MARIANNE: The script. Oh, Lordy -- Well, that Egyptian princess back from the tomb premise was promising, but then she transforms herself into a leopard at a tennis party in the Hamptons and... Oh, it's as preposterous as it sounds—

LAEMMLE: Would they go for it in the sticks?

MARIANNE: ... the sticks?

LAEMMLE: Sun River or whatever place you said you're from? Would they line up for this Egyptian cat creature concoction?

BERNHARD: Boy, Sun River... Sure sounds nice.

MARIANNE: Oh, it is—

LAEMMLE: Miss Melrose—?

MARIANNE: Sorry, Mr. Laemmle -- Yes. I mean... No. Actually, I don't know. They might, but then again they might not—

LAEMMLE: Most insightful, Miss Melrose.
(sarcastic)
 You should work in Publicity.
(suddenly, to Bernhard)
 Oh, that favor I mentioned -- We're throwing a party for the studio crowd on Saturday and I scheduled our usual quartet. Only their piano player went and got his hand stuck in an elevator. Long story short, I'm in a spot. Every ivory tinkler between here and Tijuana is booked. You think you could sit in...?

BERNHARD: Saturday...?

LAEMMLE: Guests arrive from eight; but the guys pitch up half-hour beforehand -- They play Gershwin, Cole Porter. All the jazzy stuff. I'll give you double union rate and as much lobster risotto as you can handle—

BERNHARD: Well, I guess—

LAEMMLE: Terrific. You'll get ahead in this business, Mr. Kaun.

BERNHARD: But where...? I've not been to your—

LAEMMLE: Dias Dorados. It's off Benedict.

MARIANNE: Hey, I once walked by that place! It's real fancy. Well, they all are; but that ring-a-ding stood out cause I recognized it from some highbrow glossy -- I had a lot of time to kill at auditions. I even remember what it said: that Dias Dorados had "all the austerity of the missions". How about that?

BERNHARD: You must have a wonderful memory?

MARIANNE: Oh, I'd forget my hat if I didn't pin it to my head.
(then)
 Anyhow, I doubt scriptreaders are invited.

LAEMMLE: On that point, Miss Melrose, you are correct.

BERNHARD: Well, I could sure use a page turner. And what with Miss Melrose knowing the place—

MARIANNE: Someone who turns over sheet music for a pianist...? I can't read music—

BERNHARD: I'll nod my head. With your memory it'll be a cinch.

MARIANNE: Well, knock me down—!
(*remembers*)
Oh, wait. Saturday evening? I'll be at Mrs. Carrington's place and won't get through until after five -- I housekeep Saturday afternoons, but it should be alright.

BERNHARD: (*Extending hand*) I'm Bernhard Kaun, by the way. Composer and musical arranger.

MARIANNE: (*Accepting his hand*) Marianne Melrose. Reader and failed Broadway hopeful—

LAEMMLE: Jeez, when did this become a dating agency—
(*realizing*)
Hey, what'd you say?

MARIANNE: About being a failure on Broadway?

LAEMMLE: No, about Saturday afternoon?

MARIANNE: Ah...
(*thinking he's annoyed about her other job*)
Well, I promised my mother I'd find a nice boarding-house and... I guess I could find something cheaper, but the landlady—

LAEMMLE: (*To audience*) Who knew I had all day?
(*back to Marianne*)
I don't want your landlady's life story -- You mentioned a Mrs. Carrington?

MARIANNE: You're not put out I got another job?

LAEMMLE: You could run a Chinese laundry on Saturday afternoons for all I care. I just wanna know about this doll you work for?

MARIANNE: (*Relieved*) Oh, well, Esther—

LAEMMLE: Esther-Jean Carrington! I knew it! I also know she's bleeding her spouse for alimony -- and that he sits on the board at Paramount.
(*to audience*)
Well, there's a dandy-doodle thing.

MARIANNE: (*Trying not to get roped into anything*) I should get going, Mr. Laemmle. There's some other scripts I—

BERNHARD: You won't forget Saturday evening?

MARIANNE: You got yourself a date, buster!

Marianne exits. Bernhard looks on longingly.

LAEMMLE: Miss Melrose is the sharpest scriptreader I got, but I sure as hell have no idea what goes on inside that pretty head of hers.

Music #6: THE GIRL FROM SUN RIVER

BERNHARD: GUESS SHE REMEMBERS
THINGS ABOUT WINTER
FROST ON THE HUDSON
CHAPLIN
AND CLARA
ALL KINDS OF JAZZ
AND HOW SHE PRAYED
AT NIGHT FOR HER FATHER.

GUESS SHE IMAGINES
THINGS ABOUT THIS TOWN
GENTLEMEN CALLERS
FOX FUR
AND CANDELABRA
ALL KINDS OF RAZZMATAZZ
OR HOW THEY'LL MAKE
MARLENE AND BARBARA.

WHAT CAN I GIVE HER
THE GIRL FROM SUN RIVER
WITH HER PURPLE PROSE
AND STARRY EYES
LAST YEAR'S CLOTHES
AND LONG GOODBYES
-- OH, THE FUNNY CRUSHED BERET
TAKES MY BREATH AWAY.

Marianne enters. Rushes back to center stage.

MARIANNE: YES, I IMAGINED
THOSE PARTS I MIGHT PLAY
CHEKHOV OR IBSEN
SEAGULLS
AND SISTERS
ALL KINDSA SASS
AND HOW I'D SAY
"WATCH OUT FOR ME, MISTERS!"

BERNHARD: WHAT CAN I GIVE HER
 THE GIRL FROM SUN RIVER
 WITH HER PURPLE PROSE
 AND STARRY EYES
 LAST YEAR'S CLOTHES
 AND LONG GOODBYES
 -- OH, THE FUNNY CRUSHED BERET
 TAKES MY BREATH AWAY.

Marianne exits. Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 7

*Backroom of movie theater.
 Somewhere in Los Angeles. November 1971.*

Bernhard and Laemmle resume their 'present day' conversation.

BERNHARD: See, you just said Marianne was your best
 scriptreader! Without her it would be the
 fortieth anniversary of *Sarcophagus*.

LAEMMLE: I'll give you that Marianne dame, but you're
 not telling me those folks out front paid
 five dollars to hear about some guy writing
 seltzer prescriptions.

BERNHARD: I'd say there's a lot you don't know about
 Lime.

Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 8

*Physician's Office, Universal City.
 October 1931.*

*High-end functional with desk, screen, swivel-mirror, recliner
 and diagrams of the male and female anatomies on one wall. Some
 personal items occupy a shelf alongside several hardbound
 anthropological volumes. A medical journal is open on the desk.*

Lime's younger self stands downstage. Addresses the audience.

LIME: Back in Chicago I thought I'd seen it all:
 diseases you'd classify as either
 hereditary, congenital, infectious,
 allergic, metabolic, hormonal, circulatory,
 degenerative, neoplastic, or nutritional --
 (CONT'D)

LIME: Throw in emotional disorders and conditions caused by physical or chemical agents and...
 (pause)
 Turns out I was wrong. You see, out here it's an artistic colony. I get thrown some curve-balls—

Bernhard's younger self enters.

BERNHARD: You must help me, doctor. I've forgotten how to compose music!

LIME: I'm sorry, Mr...
 (checking appointment list)
 I'm sorry, Mr. Kaun, but problems of creativity aren't my remit—

BERNHARD: But... I've forgotten how to distinguish melody from harmony -- I just let the orchestra off early. I had nothing for them to play.
 (noticing medical journal)
 Hypnosis! That's it! I'll try anything.

LIME: (To audience) See what I mean—
 (back to Bernhard)
 Hypnosis is an experimental technique. I'm surprised you've heard of it?

Bernhard reaches for the journal.

BERNHARD: There's this article right here?

LIME: Oh, that -- *Hypnotism: Three Case Studies*. What makes you think I know anything about it? It was written by some high-flown German academic – a Professor Görlitz.

BERNHARD: Call it a hunch.
 (throwing journal back on desk)
 You do know something about it, don't you?

LIME: (To audience) And I thought I'd be on easy street.
 (checks wristwatch)
 It's unconventional... although I always had this "fervent longing to penetrate the secrets of nature".

BERNHARD: *Frankenstein*, right?

LIME: Right.
(buzzes intercom)
 Oh, Miss Channing. Would you see I'm not disturbed. Mr. Kaun's appointment will run longer than scheduled.

Lights dim as Lime motions for Bernhard to lay on the recliner.

Lime takes out a silver pocketwatch on a chain. He swings it back and forth so that Bernhard's head moves from side to side as he follows its motion.

LIME: *(Soft, monotonous)* Consider this pocketwatch -- Once the mark of a gentleman.
(then)
 Your eyelids are heavy as you fall through the depths of time... because this pocketwatch belonged to Nathaniel Hawthorne. Its inscription reads *House of the Seven Gables, Salem - July 7th, 1851.*
(then)
 On Hawthorne's death it went to an old black servant. Maybe you heard the story?

BERNHARD: *(Under hypnosis)* It came from Italy. No, the maker was Italian -- A white-haired fellow called Saltarelli... but the old servant traded the watch with an itinerant worker from a traveling carnival who wrapped it in a red handkerchief.
(then)
 Why, that's it! Fairground music—

Laemmle enters wearing a somber morning coat. The stage transforms into MISTER LAEMMLE'S MEDICINAL MENAGERIE...

LAEMMLE: Why, my good sir, I'd prefer not to use devilish words such as "carnival" and "fairground". They debase the nature of my work -- which, as you can see, is giving the good people whatever they want. And that's not something you learn overnight. No, sir. You gotta persuade them your cure-all does it better than whatever the guy across the street is hawking. You gotta—

Music #7: GIVE IT MORE TRUMPET

LAEMMLE: INTRODUCE SOME BRASS, BERNHARD
 TO UNDERSCORE THE SCENE, BERNHARD
 (CONT'D)

LAEMMLE: NOTES REFLECT THE THREAT
LURKING OFFSCREEN
SOME VIOLIN
ACCENTUATES A SCREAM.

INTRODUCE SOME BRASS, BERNHARD
TO UNDERSCORE THE SCENE, BERNHARD
IT'S THE *LINGUA FRANCA* OF THE HORROR STORY
SOME MONSTER THEME
A UNIVERSAL DREAM
YOURS TO BRING, YOURS TO SING.

SO GIVE IT MORE TRUMPET
YOU'RE THE ONE IN THE LEAD
IF YOU WANNA BUMP IT
THE TENSION UP HIGH WE NEED.

Bernhard gets up from the recliner.

BERNHARD: I GUESS AT HEART
I'M THE INCURABLE ROMANTIC
BECAUSE THESE GHOULS
ARE MAKING ME FRANTIC
THEY WANT MELODIES FOR *FRANKENSTEIN*
AND *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER*
WHILE THE DOCTOR WRITES
I'M "MOSTLY WATER"...
SO MAYBE SOME DROPS WILL FIND MARIANNE
SWIMMING IN THE THOUGHT THAT THERE MIGHT BE
PARTS THAT SHE COULD BLEND
INTO MORE THAN JUST A FRIEND.

Marianne enters wearing a glittery dress. She sashays center stage and pulls Bernhard towards her. They dance seductively...

... Until with a graceful swirl, Marianne exits.

LAEMMLE: INTRODUCE SOME BRASS, BERNHARD
TO UNDERSCORE THE SCENE, BERNHARD
FIND THAT TINGLE IN EVERY SPINE
TREMBLING CHORDS IN DISJOINTED TIME
MAKE THEM REACH FOR ANOTHER HAND AND PUMP IT
THIS AIN'T TEA AND CRUMPET.

SO GIVE IT MORE TRUMPET
HIGH NOTES THAT CUT 'TIL THEY BLEED,
BERNHARD
GRAB 'EM BY THE HORNS YOU NEED.

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, BERNHARD
THOSE NURSERY RHYMES PLAYED, BERNHARD
(CONT'D)

LAEMMLE: ALWAYS SOMEONE FALLING
BLIND, CONTRARY TO LIFE
I WAS SO AFRAID.

Laemmle exits. The carnival trappings fade. Bernhard lays back down on the recliner.

BERNHARD: I was afraid, too...

LIME: Of what?

BERNHARD: Lake Constance... the Untersee.

LIME: What happened?

BERNHARD: Our family vacation. It was the height of summer.

UNDERScore: *Theme from ROMANTIC SYMPHONY (a number we'll not hear until Act 2).*

BERNHARD: Her name was Maria. She was nine years old.
The same age as me.
(*then*)
I remember the heat... and her arguing with her mother.

MARIA enters. Her hair saturated; her muslin dress wet through.

MARIA: I didn't want to go inside and sit in some stuffy practice room with a stuffy piano master smoking his foul pipe the whole time -- Not on such a beautiful day.

BERNHARD: That's right!
(*Getting up off the recliner*)
Those were your exact words.

MARIA: I ran off and stood by the edge of the lake. The water fascinated me.

BERNHARD: I wondered if you were daring it to steal you away?

MARIA: I liked how my reflection shimmered on the surface.

BERNHARD: I was also mesmerized by your reflection. I lost all sense of time...

MARIA: Just the two of us under that hot sun beside the blue water. And then...

BERNHARD: I can't remember...

MARIA: Neither can I.

Maria exits.

BERNHARD: Only that the reflection had vanished.

Hugo Wilhelm enters. Reads aloud from a newspaper.

HUGO: "A nine year old girl from Immenstadt, Maria Wetzlar, has gone missing on Lake Constance. No witnesses have come forward, but it's widely believed she drowned around midday yesterday. Miss Wetzlar was on vacation with her parents. She was a renowned pianist with numerous recitals to her name -- The search continues."
(*shaking his head*)
Our childhoods overflow with sadness.

Hugo exits. Bernhard lays back down on the recliner.

END UNDERSCORE.

BERNHARD: I was the last person to see her alive. I feel responsible -- I should have alerted an adult. They might have saved her... Over and over again I picture one of them doing so.
(*suddenly agitated*)
The mist is sweeping in...
(*pause*)
... the impossible softness of rain on Lake Constance.

Bernhard slumps back on the recliner. He's asleep.

LIME: When I clap my hands you will awake and remember nothing.

Lime claps his hands: Bernhard raises himself from the recliner. Lights come up again.

LIME: You're in Universal City, Los Angeles. It's 1931.

BERNHARD: What am I doing here?
(*standing*)
There's music to compose!

Bernhard exits. PROFESSOR GÖRLITZ enters. He's wearing circular, steel-rimmed spectacles and holds a book under his arm.

GÖRLITZ: Most impressive. I'm flattered by your adherence to my method.
(indicating article)
 Nevertheless, hypnosis is not my primary area of research -- Rather, it's a means to an end.

LIME: You came a way to tell me that?

GÖRLITZ: You interest me.

LIME: Now it's my turn to be flattered. But I'm just a regular physician who moved out West. I run into a movie star or two, but—

Görlitz clicks his fingers. Lime is immediately hypnotized...

... and walks over to his desk where he slides open a drawer. He removes a small object.

LIME: *(Under hypnosis)* I came here because it is an artistic colony -- A place where someone with my inclinations might be accepted.

Lime holds up a snap-shut case. Flicks it open. And removing a tiny brush, he paints his eyelids. They assume a green, metallic glow.

LIME: An inclination for *feminine* things.

GÖRLITZ: As I suspected.
(then)
 And that's why I brought you this—

Görlitz holds up the book. Lime pockets the case and crosses to center stage.

GÖRLITZ: I had it translated into English.
(to audience)
 Well, I've got to make a few cents! And it'll shift more copies over here.
(back to Lime)
 You must read it as a matter of urgency.

Görlitz hands Lime the book.

LIME: *(Reading aloud)* *The Hermaphrodite Complex: The Man Who Became a Woman...* by Professor Manfred D. Görlitz.

Görlitz pushes the swivel-mirror to center stage. Lime looks up from the book. Sees his own reflection.

Music #8: LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER

LIME: LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER
LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER...

GÖRLITZ: A MAP OF A BOY'S LIFE
THOSE MOUNTAINS HIGH AND STERN
DOWN FROM THEM YOU'D NEVER YEARN

LIME: LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER...

GÖRLITZ: A MAP OF A GIRL'S LIFE
FINE LINES THOSE ROADS THAT LEAD TO HOME
NOT FAR FROM IT YOU'D EVER ROAM

LIME: LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER...

GÖRLITZ: IMAGINING A PATH WHERE THERE'S NONE
WON'T GET YOU THROUGH
LIKE STANDING AT A MIRROR
EXPECTING WHAT YOU SEE THERE
THROUGH YOUR BREATH CLOUDING THE GLASS
IS REALLY YOU.

LIME: A MAP OF A BOY'S LIFE
YOU FOLD IT UP, DON'T LET IT SHOW
YOU IMPROVISE OUR WAY TO GO

LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER
LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER.

GÖRLITZ: My nighttime surgery is on the Hamburg
waterfront -- I'll expect you.

Görlitz clicks his fingers and exits. The intercom buzzes.

FEMALE VOICE: *(Over intercom)* I'm sorry to disturb you,
Doctor, but there's been an accident over at
Soundstage Eleven—

LIME: *(Dashing over to intercom)* Thank you, Miss
Channing. I'll be there as soon as I can.

*Lime grabs his medical bag and exits. Lights dim before coming
up on...*

Act 1, Scene 9

*Laemmle Mansion (Dias Dorados), Los Angeles.
September 1931.*

Spanish revival affair brimful with the Hollywood crowd and their decorative wives. A JAZZY QUARTET are midway through a number. Their honorary member, Bernhard, plays piano.

UNDERScore: *Theme from LOVE IN THE BLACK FOREST (a number we'll not hear until Act 2).*

Marianne acts as Bernhard's page turner and doing her best to keep up she starts turning the pages too fast (like she were in a silent film). This forces Bernhard to play faster and he reaches the end of the number several bars before the rest of the band! Marianne smiles at the audience. Obviously pleased with herself.

END UNDERScore.

BANDLEADER: *(Somewhat flustered)* Ladies and Gentlemen, there will now be a short intermission.

The bandleader and his regular musicians exit. Bernhard and Marianne cross the stage as lights come up on Laemmle's table. He's with CHESTER MONTGOMERY III (all pomade and after-dinner smiles); and ESTHER-JEAN CARRINGTON (flaunting a cigarette holder and wearing a dramatic chiffon number with matching turban as if she's come straight from the set of some biblical epic).

LAEMMLE: I can tell within one second whether or not a girl's got star quality—
(then)
Ah, Mr. Kaun. You're doing fine up there.
(to Esther and Chester)
Bernhard Kaun -- He stepped in at short notice, but I've also got him doing incidental music for the picture I was just telling you about.
(to Bernhard)
Esther-Jean Carrington. No doubt you've seen her pictures.

Esther extends her gloved hand.

BERNHARD: My pleasure—

LAEMMLE: And Chester Montgomery.
(then)
The Third, I should add.

BERNHARD: Pleased to meet you, Sir.

CHESTER: Call me Chester. Your boss here, does! And any friend of Junior is a friend of mine.
(*then*)
Say, what's it like being a genius?

BERNHARD: Well, I'm not—

CHESTER: Aw, modesty got nobody nowhere! I mean, how do you musicians even get to think?

BERNHARD: It's all in the preparation -- On stage we enter into an unspoken agreement with our audience. One founded upon illusion; and yet a few moments later the house lights come back on and—

LAEMMLE: Christ, what is this? A Pulitzer lecture -- Way I see it, the music department should run like General Motors.

ESTHER: Who's the pretty page-turner?

MARIANNE: Why, it's me, Mrs. Carrington -- Marianne Melrose. And you'll be real happy to know I didn't break anything this afternoon—

ESTHER: My... I hardly recognized you.

CHESTER: (*To Esther*) Perhaps you can introduce me—

ESTHER: Oh dear, Carl. It won't do to leave Chester out in the cold.

LAEMMLE: (*Reluctantly*) Miss Marianne Melrose. One of my scriptreaders.

Chester Montgomery kisses Marianne's hand.

CHESTER: So you're the girl keeping the moths out of Esther's wardrobe.

MARIANNE: (*Whispering to Bernhard*) I just realized -- Esther and Chester! They'd make quite the double-act.

Laemmler motions for Bernhard and Marianne to join them.

CHESTER: What were we talking about? Right, Junior was saying how he knows within one second whether a girl has star quality or not.

LAEMMLE: Not failed me yet. Line up a hundred girls and I'll sail down that line and pick out the next Dietrich. Although most often they all wash out.

CHESTER: Now that's a bet I'd take. For all you know she's here tonight under your own roof.

LAEMMLE: Save your money, Chester. Throw it at some Mexican pyramid scheme -- I already checked.

CHESTER: One day I'll prove you wrong, Carl.

ESTHER: Men deciding the fate of women. Now there's something new under the sun -- What do you say, Miss Melrose?

MARIANNE: Well, I'm...

ESTHER: Speak freely. You're off the clock -- Besides, if Junior gives you any trouble I'll tell Uncle C. to stop his pocket money.

MARIANNE: Oh, I know people like Mr. Laemmle make all sorts of decisions before breakfast, but—

LAEMMLE: Now that's the first sensible thing I heard her say.

MARIANNE: ... but when I was trying to make good on Broadway, it often felt—

CHESTER: You were on Broadway?

MARIANNE: Well, if you wanna count my old *Funny Sister* routine then be my guest.

CHESTER: (*Triumphant*) What did I say, Carl? Right under your nose. In that prison you call a Readers' Office.
(*then*)
How about it, Miss Melrose? How about you help me prove Junior wrong -- It's intermission and... Well, I just know you'll be terrific.

MARIANNE: Aw, that ship sailed, Mister.

CHESTER: Let me be the judge of that—
(*to Bernhard*)
Maestro. The keys await!

(CONT'D)

CHESTER: (To Marianne) Follow me, Miss Melrose.

Chester ushers Marianne to center stage. Bernhard resumes his seat at the piano.

MARIANNE: (Dawning on her) You mean...?

CHESTER: I do mean—

Laemmle shakes his head in disbelief as Chester rejoins him and Bernhard plays a couple of bars to quiet the crowd.

Music #9: THIS COULD BE MY CITY

MARIANNE: I CAME FROM MONTANA
A TOWN CALLED SUN RIVER
I CAME FOR THE LIFE HERE
AND MAYBE SOME SILVER
ALL THE PEOPLE MIGHT BRING ME
-- WHEN I CROSSED THE SIDEWALK
RAINY IN WINTER
AND STOPPED BY THE FOYER
TO STUDY THEIR PORTRAITS
THAT GLISTENED WITH NITRATES:
GARBO, COOPER, LILLIAN AND LOUISE
AND MAYBE MAYBE SOMEDAY, MARIANNE.

THIS COULD BE MY CITY
THIS COULD BE MY LUCKY DAY
BECAUSE I—

I DUST THE ART DECO
AT A VILLA ON FAIRFAX
I IMAGINE MY LIFE HERE
BESIDES POLISH AND WAX
WHILE THE LADY'S AT PARAMOUNT
-- I MOVE THRU THE SUNLIGHT
FROM THE GREAT WINDOW
AND STOP BY A BUREAU
TO GAZE AT HER PORTRAIT
THAT GLISTENS WITH NITRATE...
LIKE HARLOW, THEDA, LILLIAN AND LOUISE
AND MAYBE TODAY, MARIANNE.

THIS COULD BE MY CITY
THIS COULD BE MY LUCKY DAY
BECAUSE I—

Esther stands. Crosses to center stage.

ESTHER: SHE READS OUT MY FAN MAIL
FROM A HOUSEWIFE IN GLENDALE
DECLINES AN INVITATION
FOR THAT FOREST LAWN RESERVATION
WHILE I LIGHT A CIGARETTE
AND SAY "IT'S ALL KISMET"
BUT WHEN I GLANCE IN MY MIRROR
AT THIS GIRL FROM SUN RIVER
THAT'S WHEN IT HITS ME—

MARIANNE: THIS WILL BE MY CITY
THIS WILL BE MY LUCKY DAY
BECAUSE I'LL MAKE MY OWN WAY
IN MY CITY—

THIS WILL BE MY CITY
THIS WILL BE MY LUCKY DAY
BECAUSE I'LL MAKE MY OWN WAY
IN MY CITY.

BERNHARD: THIS WILL BE YOUR CITY.

Chester jumps to his feet and leads the applause. Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 10

*Readers' Office, Universal Studios.
A few days later.*

Two READERS engulfed by unread scripts and cigarette smoke.

READER #1: *(Throwing up hands in dismay)* You believe this junk? I gotta guy in an underwater city with some kinda half-man, half-reptile thing going on.

READER #2: *(Striking through entire page)* Try this French aristocrat. Thinks he's a werewolf every third Friday—

Bernhard enters.

BERNHARD: Excuse me...?
(off lack of response)
Excuse me, but I'm looking for—

READER #1: Hey pal, we're on a deadline here. And our boss don't take kindly to coverage hitting his desk the wrong side of that deadline.

BERNHARD: I'm sorry, but I wondered if—

READER #2: You looking for someone, mister?

BERNHARD: Miss Melrose -- I understand she works here?

READER #1: You're barking up the wrong tree, pal. Try down the hall.

READER #2: *(To Reader #1)* Shoot, he means Marianne. You know, cute girl from the sticks. Wears one of those berets that looks like it just got flattened by a trolley-car.

BERNHARD: That's her! Kinda funny, kinda crushed -- The beret, you understand. Not Miss Melrose.

READER #1: Oh, that doll...

READER #2: And don't get me wrong. I'm not saying she ain't in fashion -- Only last week I asked where she got—

READER #1: I think we established who he's looking for.

READER #2: I'm just trying to be pleasant.

READER #1: Which is more than you'll be able to say for Junior if this coverage don't make his desk tonight!

BERNHARD: You've seen her, then?

READER #2: Not for two or three days. She's—

UNDERSCORE: *Theme from THE GIRL FROM SUN RIVER.*

READER #1: Word is she's seeing some big shot from Metro -- Guy with numbers after his name.

Bernhard is crestfallen.

READER #2: Look, all I know is she took a few days off. She got a screen test or something.

END UNDERSCORE.

Bernhard exits. Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 11

Broadcasting Studio.
Time passing.

An ANNOUNCER sits at a microphone. Reads from a script.

ANNOUNCER: Hollywood on the March!
(dramatic pause)
Head of Universal Studios, Carl Laemmle Junior, said his next monster picture will be *The Invisible Man* starring French actor, Claude Rains.

Laemmle enters.

LAEMMLE: You heard that right -- Universal don't only make crowd-pleasing pictures; Universal don't only make thrilling pictures; Universal also make classy pictures.
(pulling out ticket)
So grab your ticket now for *The Invisible Man* -- In case they all...
(making ticket disappear)
... vanish before your very eyes!

Laemmle exits.

ANNOUNCER: Hollywood on the March!
(dramatic pause)
At his inaugural address in Washington, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt stated: "We have nothing to fear but fear itself".
(dramatic pause)
Hollywood on the March!
(dramatic pause)
Metro Goldwyn Mayer higher executive, Chester Montgomery the Third, announced the signing of unknown Marianne Melrose to a six-picture deal.

Chester and Marianne enter. They walk arm-in-arm across the stage; waving at admirers as they go.

ANNOUNCER: Montgomery said Miss Melrose, from Sun River, Montana, is sure to become one of the glittering stars of the sound era. Montgomery also announced his engagement to Miss Melrose.

Chester and Marianne exit.

ANNOUNCER: Hollywood on the March!
(dramatic pause)
 In foreign news, Professor Manfred Görlitz of Hamburg, Germany claimed a major scientific breakthrough with the publication of his book, *The Hermaphrodite Complex*. Görlitz believes that by science alone he can transform a man into a woman and vice-versa.
(dramatic pause)
 It seems Victor Frankenstein is alive and well after all, folks.
(dramatic pause)
 Hollywood on the March!
(dramatic pause)
 Fans of Miss Shirley Temple are getting not one, but two new pictures featuring the adorable starlet. *Baby Take A Bow* will be in theaters at the end of June; while *Now and Forever* – in which Miss Temple appears alongside Gary Cooper and Carole Lombard – will be on general release for the 1934 fall season.
(dramatic pause)
 You've been listening to...
(dramatic pause)
 Hollywood on the March!
(dramatic pause)
 Join us same time next week for the nations's favorite entertainment digest brought to you exclusively by *Finlayson Milk Powder* and...
(dramatic pause)
 ... Hollywood on the March!
(dramatic pause)
 God bless America. Goodnight one and all.

Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 12

*Lime's Office, Universal City.
 April 1934.*

Lime is sat reading Görlitz's book.

FEMALE VOICE: *(Over intercom)* I'm sorry to disturb you, Doctor, but you're wanted over at Soundstage Seven. They just said "Bring bandages!"

LIME: *(Into intercom)* Thank you, Miss Channing. I'll be there as soon as I can.

Lime grabs his medical bag and exits. X27 (formerly our Chicago Newsgirl) enters wearing the trench coat and fedora. She sneaks over to Lime's desk. Finds Gurlitz's book. Opens it.

X27: (To audience) We got word this Professor Görlitz is also the Nazi Uranium contact in East Africa.
(pause)
I figure Doctor Lime can do some work for Uncle Sam.

X27 removes a silver ticket from her coat. Makes to place it inside the book. Lime's secretary, MISS CHANNING, enters.

MISS CHANNING: My word! Who are you...? How did you get in here?

X27: (In a spot): I'm... I'm from the Association for... The Association for Under-Appreciated Hollywood Physicians.

MISS CHANNING: But what are you doing at Doctor Lime's desk?

X27: Let me explain.
(holding up ticket)
I've brought him this ticket and... Well, that's why I'm here.

MISS CHANNING: A ticket?

X27: Not just any old ticket! No, this is recognition for Doctor Lime's service these past three years. It entitles him to return travel on the Streamliner! That's the brand new art deco train. And that ain't all -- It also gives him first class passage on *The Bremen*. One of the super-duper transatlantic ocean liners.

MISS CHANNING: Has Mr. Laemmle been informed? It all sounds most improper.

X27: Oh, Mr. Laemmle was most agreeable. He said nobody deserves a vacation more than Doctor Lime -- Do you know he's written more prescriptions for Junior than all the other studio quacks rolled into one!

MISS CHANNING: So why go sneaking around?

X27: Well... we're a charitable organization and we just like to do a good deed and go right on our way -- We knew, for instance, that Doctor Lime had wanted to visit Europe for a while now.

X27 slots the ticket inside Gorlitz's book. Snaps it shut.

X27: Remember, Miss Channing, not a word. We'd like this to be a surprise for Doctor Lime.

X27 exits. Miss Channing shakes her head.

MISS CHANNING: How ever did she know my name?

Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 13

*First Class Carriage. Art deco Streamliner.
Ten days later.*

Lime rides coast to coast in his new travel suit. A WELL-TO-DO PASSENGER sits opposite. Lime removes a postcard from the rail schedule on the tabletop and a biro from his jacket.

Music #10: POSTCARD FROM UNION PACIFIC

LIME: MY DEAREST, DEAREST BERNHARD
I'M SORRY THAT I MISSED YOU
BUT THERE WERE A MILLION THINGS
I SIMPLY HAD TO DO
-- FOR ONE, I BOUGHT THIS CHECKERED SUIT
ON SALE AT CARSON PIRIE SCOTT
CAUSE THE FOLKS HERE ON THIS TRAIN
WELL, I GUESS THEY KNOW WHAT'S WHAT.

PASSENGER: We most certainly do!

LIME: OH, AND PLEASE TELL MR. LAEMMLE
THAT HE SHOULD GET SOME REST
AND NOT TO MIND MISS CHANNING
YOU KNOW, SHE REALLY DOES HER BEST
-- THERE'S LUMINAL AT MY OFFICE
IN A COPPER TRINKET STORE
BY THAT BOX OF SHERBET CANDY
ON THE SHELF BESIDE MY DOOR.

(CONT'D)

LIME: IT'S TRUE I GOT THIS TICKET
AND SOMETHING I MUST FIND
UNVEILED BY MANFRED GÖRLITZ
AND HIS PHANTASMAGORIC MIND
-- HE REALLY KNOWS HIS STUFF
AND IS SUPREMELY QUALIFIED
BECAUSE MY DEAREST BERNHARD
I'M TORMENTED DR. JEKYLL CONCEALING MR. HYDE.

OH, WE'VE ROLLED INTO A STATION
THERE'LL BE A FIFTEEN-MINUTE WAIT
IT'S RIGHT HERE IN THIS SCHEDULE
THE GOLDEN ZEPHYR'S NEVER LATE
-- I GUESS I'LL SMOKE A CIGARETTE
STRETCH MY LEGS A BIT
HEY, THEY GOT A WOODEN MAILBOX
DESIGNED BY GIDEON COLBY, A WELL KNOWN JESUIT.

Lime signs the postcard, stands and exits. Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 14

*Der Schwarzer Mond Nightclub. Hamburg.
Several days later.*

A sleazy waterfront dive typical of Northern Europe. Sailors and whalers assume studied poses amid the fog of opium and absinthe.

X27 enters holding a package. Görlitz enters in the uniform of a gestapo officer.

They circle each other in a kind of ballet centered on the package; one that culminates with X27 discreetly leaving it on a table. She exits.

Görlitz rushes to the table. Opens the package. It's a book.

GÖRLITZ: *The Hermaphrodite...? If this is her idea of a joke—
(noticing)
Ah-ha! A slip pocket.*

Görlitz removes a map. Unfolds it...

GÖRLITZ: *Mount Kilimanjaro... Subterranean Tunnels!
Wait until the Fuehrer—*

Suddenly, a SMOKE BOMB explodes!

X27 enters and, half-disguised by smoke, she reaches out and grabs the map from Görlitz. She stuffs it inside her trench-coat and immediately exits.

GÖRLITZ: Achtung! Thief!

All hell breaks loose in the shape of a choreographed fight / dance between the sailors and whalers (whereby a sock on the jaw leads to a graceful backflip etc.)

Lime enters. He wears an African robe and glamorous wig complete with white gardenia. Everyone freezes.

Music #11: BLACK MOON

LIME: DIAMONDS, RIFLES AND URANIUM
IT'S THE GERMAN RENAISSANCE
-- ABBYSINIA, FRANCE, SUDETENLAND
FORGERY PAR EXCELLENCE
TRAITORS, SLAVES AND REFUGEES
THE PROFESSOR'S WORK YOU'VE READ
SCALPEL, SUTURE AND HEMOSTAT
WILL RAISE YOU FROM THE DEAD.

ASHES, CHALK AND ROSARY
EYES BECOME DIVINE
MOSQUITO, TIN AND CRUCIFIX
YOUR BLOOD WILL FLOW LIKE WINE
-- TYPHUS, RIVER AND MEDICINE
THERE ARE SOULS THIS NIGHT WILL KEEP
PASSPORT, JASMINE AND IVORY
YOU WILL SLEEP THE ANCIENT SLEEP.

X27 enters.

X27: MINERAL RIGHTS IN TROPIC ZONES
PRINCIPALITIES MADE OF PRECIOUS STONES
AND ONCE IN A WHILE A NOSTALGIC TUNE
BRINGS THEM ALL...

CAST: ALGERIAN SAILORS
WHITE RUSSIAN WHALERS
BUTTONED-UP TAILORS
CRIPPLED BLACKMAILERS

X27: ... BRINGS THEM ALL
TO THE SCHWARZER MOON.

LIME: PAPER, DUST AND DEITY
YOUR LANGUAGE WILL BE MUTE
(CONT'D)

LIME: SOLDIER, SYMBOL AND SACRIFICE
 YOU WILL EAT THE STRANGEST FRUIT
 -- WHISTLES, CYMBALS AND CASTANETS
 WILL SPIRIT YOU AWAY
 SCORPION, SNAKE AND CENTIPEDE
 DEFINE THIS CABARET.

CAST: ALGERIAN SAILORS
 WHITE RUSSIAN WHALERS
 BUTTONED-UP TAILORS
 CRIPPLED BLACKMAILERS

X27: AND ONCE IN A WHILE A NOSTALGIC TUNE
 BRINGS THEM ALL
 TO THE SCHWARZER MOON.

*Lime exits to a barrage of applause, wolf whistles and catcalls.
 X27 returns the map to Görlitz.*

GORLITZ: Danke Schön.

X27: This could be the start of a mutually
 advantageous friendship.

Lights dim before coming up on...

Act 1, Scene 15

*Backroom of movie theater.
 Somewhere in Los Angeles. November 1971.*

Bernhard and Laemmle resume their earlier conversation.

BERNHARD: I told you there was a lot you didn't know
 about Lime. And you can see how things took
 off for Marianne. Her life changed overnight
 -- I never got a second date, for starters.

Marianne's OLDER SELF enters.

MARIANNE: You went up to Lake... Lake somewhere or
 other—?

BERNHARD: Arrowhead—

LAEMMLE: His fancy weekend place. Guy made more than I
 did!

BERNHARD: Straightened out my writer's block.

MARIANNE: Ah, the artist alone and all that?

BERNHARD: Not quite. You see, I wasn't—

MARIANNE: Ah-ha! And to think all these years I felt guilty about going with Chester—

BERNHARD: Oh, not in that way. It was the little girl who drowned when I was a child.

MARIANNE: A little girl came back from the dead? Sounds like a script I once read.

BERNHARD: I know it's—

LAEMMLE: Far-fetched?

BERNHARD: She really did. See for yourself...

UNDERScore: *Theme from ROMANTIC SYMPHONY (the number we'll not hear until Act 2).*

The stage transforms into a bygone music room. A standard lamp illuminates a cabinet of stuffed birds, faded sheet music and a rusted metronome on the piano.

END UNDERScore.

LAEMMLE: A guy could go doolally up here.

BERNHARD: This room is filled with her presence—

MARIANNE: It is a bit spooky. I'll give you that much.
(*then*)
So what happened?

BERNHARD: It was a moonlit night. And—

LAEMMLE: Like I said, a guy could go doolally.

MARIANNE: You really saw her, didn't you?

Music #12: THE LAST TIME I SAW MARIA

BERNHARD: THE LAST TIME I SAW MARIA
SHE WAS TAPPING AT MY WINDOWPANE
SAID WE ARE NOW ONE PLUS ONE
AND THAT I NEED NOT EXPLAIN.

THE LAST TIME I SAW MARIA
WE HEARD THE TICKING OF MY METRONOME
BESIDE THESE BIRDS OF AUDUBON
(CONT'D)

BERNHARD: IN THIS HOUSE FAR AWAY FROM HOME.

COYOTES PROWL THE NEARBY HILLS
ANXIOUS TO BE FED
MY PIANO PLAYS AGAINST THEIR THIRST FOR BLOOD
IN COUNTERPOINT I WED.

THE LAST TIME I SAW MARIA
SHE SPOKE OF SUMMER ON THE UNTERSEE
THE NIGHT BLEW COLD THEN SHE WAS GONE
I GUESS THEY CALL IT C'EST LA VIE.

Maria (the drowned girl) enters.

MARIA: I MOVED THROUGH YOUR ROOM THAT NIGHT
WHEN YOU EMBRACED THE DARK
I MOVED THROUGH YOUR DREAMS THAT NIGHT
WHEN YOU IGNITED A SPARK
I MOVED THROUGH YOUR ROOM THAT NIGHT.

Maria exits. The room fills with moonlight and the baying of coyotes from offstage.

LAEMMLE: There's something ominous on the breeze.

BERNHARD: Oh, it's just your imagination, Mr. Laemmle.

CURTAIN.

ENTR' ACTE:

Theme from CREATE A LIFE