

# GERALDO'S NAVY

## A Musical:

Book & Lyrics by Judge Smith, Music by Maxwell Hutchinson

**SUBJECT:** The musical is set in the 1970's on the one-class, cut-price cruise ship 'Hercules' during this vessel's last voyage. It concerns the Sam Chateau Dance Band, engaged as the ship's orchestra, and events within and around the band that occur during the trip.

**STAGING:** The action is located in one place throughout. The bandstand of the ship's Ballroom.

**MUSIC:** The show contains fourteen original numbers which are to be played entirely by the actors portraying the members of the band,

**PERSONNEL:** A cast of Ten are required.

- One actor (non-singer)
- One actor/singer (Two solos)
- One actress/singer (Two solos)

Seven actor/musicians : -

- One actress/pianist/singer (Three solos)
- One actor /guitarist /singer (One solo)
- One actor/drummer
- One actor/bass guitarist
- Three actors/brass or sax.

The three piece brass section can be made up in various ways:-

Two Sax's & Trumpet, Two Sax's & Trombone, or Sax, Trumpet & Trombone.

The five actor/musicians who do not have their own solo songs could include one or two with no singing ability whatsoever- However, some confident backing vocals will be required from The Band; most conveniently from the Bass Guitarist & Drummer.

**CHARACTERS:**

### **JOYCE McARTHUR, Piano**

Age, mid to late 20s. Not especially glamorous. Trained in, and has aspirations towards classical music. Very much one of the boys. Has recently broken off a relationship with Doug.

### **DOUG HUMPHRY, Drums**

Age, mid to late 30s. Is the comedian within the band. Sees himself as a tremendous 'lad' and a devil with the women, and dresses the part.

**STU ROSS, Bass Guitar**

Age, early 20s. Bearded. Has a Jazz background and has played often with Doug, whose friend he is.

**TOMMY HINCHCLIFFE, Electric Guitar**

Age, early 20s; long hair; a dedicated self-taught musician from the North of England, he has been unsuccessful in making a career in rock music, due probably to a natural diffidence and awkward appearance.

**JOE EZRA , Trumpet or Trombone**

Age, late 40s. the deputy leader of the band. Jewish. Has been with the band for 25 years which have left him somewhat sour.

**TALBOT AUSTIN, Brass or Sax**

Age 50s. Typical first-generation London dance band musician. Has a loud laugh and a vigorous, if crude, sense of humour.

**GEORGE BAKER, Brass or Sax**

Age 60s, Another long-serving member of the band, fiercely loyal to the leader. Capable of playing a faultless set while drunk to the point of being unable to stand. He also doubles on guitar. (the actor would not actually have to play guitar).

**VERONICA SPARKE, Vocalist**

Age mid 20's, attractive. A new member of the band; she is, in fact an earnest ex-drama school actress, doing a singing job for experience and her Equity card, and is regarded with suspicion by most of the band.

**SAM CHATEAU, Band Leader**

Age 56, Dapper, well groomed, grey haired. A Viennese Jew who came to England in 1935 and still retains a slight accent; he led a well-known dance band in the early 1950s and continues to enjoy a certain success due to his considerable charm and powers of leadership. While the band is performing he conducts with a violin bow while holding a violin which he occasionally 'plays'. (The actor would not actually have to play violin. ) He inspires various degrees of loyalty and affection from the band but a uniform degree of respect and obedience. The Band are all complete professionals (even Veronica aspires to this) and admire the supreme professionalism of their leader.

**PAUL COLLINGWOOD, Cruise Director of the 'Hercules' . (Non singing role)**

Age late 20s. Heavily bearded with a naval bearing. Wears naval style uniform at all times and when not wearing a peaked cap carries it under his arm. An ex-Butlins Redcoat he has an air of harassed insecurity.

**STRUCTURE:****Act One**

Scene 1 - First day of cruise - Daytime.

Scene 2 - Later the same evening.

**Interval**

**Act Two**

Scene 1 - One day before the end of the cruise - Daytime.

Scene 2 - Later the same evening.

Scene 3 - The next day.

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

*(JOYCE enters. she wears casual clothes with dark slacks. she looks around the auditorium, walks across the bandstand past piles of drum cases and amplifiers with their covers on. She walks to the piano and pulls off the canvas cover. she lifts the lid and tests the tuning by playing various notes in octaves. Pulling the piano stool from under the instrument she sits down and dusts off the keyboard with a Kleenex from her bag. She then plays various classical figures and arpeggios before playing the introduction to the opening song.)*

**'FLOATING AWAY'**

Letters opened but never read,  
Speeches practiced but never said,  
Those memories that are better dead and. gone;  
So leave them behind  
Empty your mind  
And sail on.

All that lumber could sink your boat,  
Dump your cargo and stay afloat.  
Sweet souvenirs that can cut your throat, you don't need.  
When they drift out of sight  
You're travelling light,  
Newly freed.

Throw it away.  
Throw it away.  
Throw out the..... '

Lists of questions you never asked,  
Bad days, good days, too good to last,  
The flotsam and jetsam of years long past,  
Let them go.  
Oh then you feel you're safe  
From the dangerous wave,  
But that's not so.

In the cabin the crew avoids,  
Lies the trunk uninsured at Lloyds'  
You marked it 'Not Wanted on the Voyage' and fled.  
So, your past's still safely stored

**And you're overboard  
Instead.**

**Floating away.  
Floating away.  
Floating away. Away. Away. Away. Away.**

*(TOMMY, STU, DOUG, JOE, TALBOT and GEORGE enter. They wear appropriate street clothes [TOMMY in jeans, JOE and GEORGE in suits etc.] and are loaded with instrument cases. Throughout this scene they are unpacking instruments, setting up solid, dance band music stands with a 'Sam Chateau' motif on them, fitting instruments together, plugging in amplifiers.etc. STU assists DOUG with setting up the drum kit. The whole stage area gets covered in a litter of empty covers and cases' )*

STU           What a hole.

DOUG           *(In bogus U.S. accent)* Say, kids, don't be downhearted. They say the darkest hour is just before the dawn" ' Why, look! Here's a stage... and lights too!... Say! I've just had the craziest idea. Let's do the show here!

TALBOT       Piss off"

JOYCE         *(With even worse accent)* Wait a minute, guys. The idea is so crazy that...

JOYCE & DOUG... it just might work!

STU           Belt up, the pair of you. It's not funny! It's bloody tragic. Three weeks! Three weeks of my young life cooped up here with you lot. What a come down. I, who have played with some of the kings of jazz.

DOUG         The Kings of Jazz? I've heard of them. They play around Catford don't they? 'An able band for every occasion. Reasonable rates for Weddings, Masonics Barmitzvahs, etc. '

GEORGE       I'll tell you about reasonable rates! Have you been down to the Pig yet?  
*(pause)* It's a bloody disgrace.

TOMMY       What's the Pig?

STU           Plg and Whistle. It's the bar we use.

JOYCE         On ships, the crew bar's always called the Pig and Whistle.

GEORGE       They should call this one bloody Claridges, the prices they're asking. A scotch'll cost you ten P.!

*(General consternation)*

- TALBOT Ten P? That's profiteering, that is.
- JOE Twice what we paid on the last boat.
- TOMMY But that's incredibly cheap.
- DOUG Well it is really, I suppose.
- JOE It's all subsidised of course. One of the few perks of the job.
- STU And the food's free as well, and it's usually not bad.
- TOMMY I think I might enjoy this. I should be able to save a packet.
- JOE Oh yes, the money's good alright. Nowadays it's a very cushy gig; very sought after. But it wasn't always like that.
- TALBOT I can remember the time when going on the boats was what you did when you couldn't get any other work.
- GEORGE You still had to be good, mind. But the pay was rubbish.
- JOE So the cheap booze was a big incentive. Consequently all the piss artists and has-beens you'd have in these bands.
- GEORGE Terrible old bastards they were an' all.
- TALBOT Mind you it was the bands on the boats that brought back all the new music ideas from America. That's how we heard about Swing before the war,
- GEORGE Yes, and they should've stopped then, and left the rest where they found it. Look what we ended up with, eh? Rock'n'Roll! cowboy music; and all this electrical hows-yer-father just so you can play a couple of breadboards with strings on!
- (He indicates the bass and guitar with their amps. The Band have obviously heard this from him often before.)*
- JOYCE Dear old George. ff we were all like you....
- GEORGE We wouldn't play no rock'n'roll!
- STU No, we'd still be playing gavottes and minuets.

*(DOUG has unpacked his bass drum and removed the front skin labelled 'Roy Henderson Big Band'. He is looking through half a dozen others observed by Talbot.)*

- TALBOT           How many of them have you got? 'Ere let's have a look.
- (He grabs the skins and holds the first one up which says 'Doug Humphry' In huge. Lurid letters. )*
- Cor blimey, look at this.
- JOE                Very tasteful, Doug.
- JOYCE             Modest little soul isn't he.
- TALBOT           *(Shuffling through the skins.)* What's this *(Reads)* 'The Gay Desperados'. Who the hell are they?
- DOUG             Just this trio I do a residency with.
- TOMMY            Is that at the gay club you told us about.
- DOUG             Don't mock the Giaconda Club. We get a very nice artistic class of person there.
- TALBOT           You want to watch him, young Tommy. A couple of weeks at sea and he'll have his eye on your 'f' holes.
- STU                Does anyone know what the acts are like?
- GEORGE           A real lot of tat by the look of 'em...conjurer, a couple of dancers,....
- DOUG             *(With interest)* Oh yes?
- JOYCE             A married couple who run a dance school.
- DOUG             Oh.
- GEORGE           A comic. *(Points into auditorium.)* That's him over there.
- JOE                We've worked with him before. I've seen better jokes In a coroner's report.
- GEORGE           And that's it apart from the organist.
- STU                Oh I met him earlier on. He's a right berk. I told him I was with the band but I mostly played Jazz gigs, and he asked if I could read music! it appears he's got a music degree and he'd done things under some famous conductor or other. So I asked him what he was doing pumping the Mighty Hammond on a third-rate, clapped-out cruise ship.
- TALBOT           'Ere, Joyce. Did you ever do things under a famous conductor, eh?

DOUG            Are you impugning the spotless virtue of our queen of the keyboard, Talbot? Shame on you, Now this bloke might be a real soul male for you, Joyce. It sounds as if you have a lot in common; classical musicians, forced by cruel circumstances to prostitute their art for the low amusement of the masses...

JOYCE            Dougie, you make quite a convincing bitch. Have you been taking lessons from your gay friends?

DOUG            No my love, I learnt it all from you. *(Bows formally)*

*(VERONICA enters [in sweater and jeans]. No-one pays any attention. She stands there a moment.)*

VERONICA        Excuse me. Are you the Sam Chateau Band?

*(All look up. DOUG glances down at the Bass Drum which now reads 'SAM CHATEAU'.)*

DOUG            Actually we're Jack Rondini, Illusionist. The Sam Chateau Dance Band is that bloke over there with the cage full of doves.

JOYCE            What do you want, love?

VERONICA        My name is Veronica Sparke.

TALBOT           Your secret is safe with us.

VERONICA        I'm the singer.

JOE                What singer?

VERONICA        Mr Chateau engaged me a fortnight ago. The agency told me to turn up her so here I am.

JOE                *(Ignoring her)* He's done it again. Would you credit it. For twenty-five years I play for him; for fifteen years I'm deputy leader of this band. You'd think by now he'd tell me when he was hiring new people; consult a little. But no, Sam Chateau goes his own sweet way and to hell with the rest of the world.... *(To VERONICA)* So what's your name?

VERONICA        Veronica Sparke.

JOE                Well Miss Veronica Sparke, We don't need a singer. *(Pause. She holds her ground)* Who have you been working with?

VERONICA        The Top Rank Suite at Swindon.

- JOE           And what combo did you grace with your talents?
- VERONICA    I was a solo act.
- JOE           Oh I see, well in that case you'd better sing us something. Confirm my worst suspicions.
- VERONICA    I have already auditioned for Mr Chateau.....Successfully.
- DOUG         *(Doing a Bogart impersonation)* Say, the kid's got guts. Hey brown eyes, what's a nice girl like you doing in a band like this?
- JOYCE         I would imagine about three numbers each set ! *(To VERONICA)* Don't pay any attention to them, love, nobody else does. Have you been on the boats before?

*(JOYCE leads her to one side. The band start to try out their instruments. The trombone plays a few notes of a melody. DOUG finds an old pork pie in a drum case, sniffs it in disgust and throws it to TALBOT.)*

- |          |  |        |  |
|----------|--|--------|--|
|          |  | DOUG   | Have a pork pie.   |
| VERONICA | No. In fact this is only my second singing job, I act really.  |        | <i>(TALBOT sniffs it and throws it on the floor.)</i>  |
| JOYCE    | What, plays?   | TALBOT | Cor. Put it out of its misery someone!   |
| VERONICA | Yes. <i>(Pause. )</i> I've done quite a lot. I've been quite lucky really since I left Drama School].  |        | <i>(STU raises his bass Guitar to his shoulder and shoots it. DOUG providing the sound effects on the snare drum. The Band stand respectfully as JOE sounds the Last Post on his trumpet.)</i> |
| JOYCE    | Anything on the telly?   |        |  |
| VERONICA | A couple of commercials, that's all and The Lively Arts showed an excerpt of a show I was in at the I.C.A. called 'Scabs'. But recently I've been with a company called 'Arts Commando'. We did a lot of community things; street theatre; and psycho-drama with deprived family groups. But I suppose I'm more motivated towards established theatre, |        |  |

even commercial I'm afraid. That's where the singing came in. *(Pause)* You see so many shows now want singing that my agent thought it would be a good idea for me to get some pro. Singing experience. He pulled a few strings and got me a season at Swindon.

JOYCE            How did you get on to Uncle Sam

VERONICA       He came in to see someone on business and saw some of my act.

JOYCE            Look love, do take this the right way, but I wouldn't let on about the acting bit and Drama School- and Scabs and things. They're good guys at heart, I suppose, but they send you up rotten if you give them a chance. They go on a bit, you know, and you can't get away from people on a boat.

*(DOUG takes the strap of one of his drum cases, fastens the ends and hangs it on a hook at the back of the stage. Then he walks over to TOMMY and borrows his guitar.)*

DOUG            Here, lend us that for a minute.

*(Picking up a drumstick, he puts his head and shoulders through the strap.)*

VERONICA       Yes I can imagine. *(Pause)* Do you do this all the time?

Who's this then?

JOYCE            I do about three cruises a year with Sam.

*(Supported by the hook he starts to sway ridiculously from side to side, conducting with the drum stick and occasionally putting the guitar under his chin like a violin, in a parody of what we imagine to be Sam Chateau's romantic on-stage manner TALBOT accompanies him by playing a syrupy waltz on the sax. This is received with much laughter. )*

VERONICA       And the others?

JOYCE            Well, *(pointing them out)* Joe, Talbot and George, the Brass, have been with him for years, but he uses quite a lot of rhythm sections. Tommy's with him full time

though. *(to TOMMY)* Hey Tommy. *(To VERONICA)* He's a nice boy. It's his first cruise too.

*( TOMMY walks over.)*

This is Tommy.

TOMMY *(Awkwardly)* Hello.

VERONICA Hi....*(To JOYCE)* I'm sorry. I don't know your name.

JOYCE Joyce.

VERONICA Joyce was telling; me it was your first trip as well.

TOMMY Yes.

VERONICA I'm really looking forward to it.

TOMMY I suppose f am too. I've never been abroad.

JOYCE Join Geraldo's Navy and see the world.

VERONICA What's Geraldo's Navy?

TOMMY It's like the name for all the musos who play on ships.

VERONICA Why 'Geraldo's'?

JOYCE After the bandleader ; you know, Geraldo's Orchestra. He was one of the great bandleaders of the thirties.

GEORGE The greatest. The all-time Governor.

TALBOT Get on! Ambrose or Roy Fox could blow him off the stage, as could Jack Hylton, as could Carol Gibbons...

JOE Carol Gibbons? That band couldn't blow its own nose.

TALBOT Bloody fine band, as well you know!

JOYCE Oi! you lot, pack it in. I'm just trying to explain to Veronica about Geraldo's Navy.

GEORGE Ah well, you're in something special now Miss Veronica...

STU Part of a privileged minority....

JOE           With a position to maintain.....

TALBOT       A reputation to up'old....

DOUG         The elite of the fleet!

*(The Band sing and play 'Geraldo's Navy')*

**'GERALDO'S NAVY'**

**In every key  
From A to G  
We read or busk in four part harmony.  
Costa Del Sol  
To either Pole  
We foxtrot, quickstep, waltz and rock'n'roll  
Across the sea.  
From Joseph Strauss, through to Count Basie,  
We play them all; Geraldo's Navy.**

**We'll make them go  
We'll play them slow  
We'll make them sound like every song you know.  
And if it's fine  
Or gale force Nine  
Serving hot beef tea or summer wine  
We play a show.  
Always play well, but never play for free.  
That is our code; Geraldo's Navy.**

*(To VERONICA)*

*(Solo)*

**When Nelson's sailors danced hornpipes  
With tar on their hair,**

*(Chorus)*

**We were there. We were there.**

*(Solo)*

**And when Columbus saw land  
And the crew sang in Prayer,**

*(Chorus)*

**We were there. We were there.**

*(Solo)*

**The Flying Dutchman has a ghostly band  
Who doubtless play a haunting air.**

*(To Audience)*

**We're smartly dressed  
We look our best  
But never look surprised or look impressed,  
But here and there  
You'll be aware.  
We smile to see you acting debonair  
With all the rest,**

(To VERONICA)        **So don't say 'yes' it's always 'maybe'.  
You don't salute in Geraldo's Navy**

(Solo)                    **When the Battleship Potemkin's guns  
Sent people running down that stair,**

(Chorus)                **We were there. We were there.**

(Solo)                    **And on Titanic as they waltzed though the night  
Without a care,**

(Chorus)                **We were there, We were there.**

(Solo)                    **We softly played as the stern slowly rose  
Into the arctic air.**

**Our Golden Greats  
And middle eights  
Resound from Cape Horn to the Dover Straits.  
We're hand in glove  
With the stars above;  
We make you dance, we make you fall in love  
At Union rates.  
Contrabass bassoon to ukulele,  
The ones they call Geraldo's Navy.**

GEORGE                *(to VERONICA)* 'Ere, if you're doing the vocals that means Sam won't be singing.

DOUG                    Well if you ask me, it's no bad thing. His voice is a hit clapped out, let's face it.

TALBOT                Well he's no chicken, you know.

TOMMY                How old is he, anyway?

*(CHATEAU has entered unseen and heard the last few lines. He now comes forward, He wears a light grey suit of the latest cut, a wide silk tie, a wide brimmed hat at a jaunty angle and a camel hair overcoat worn over the shoulders. He carries a violin case.)*

CHATEAU            Sixty-five, Tommy, and that is exactly why the lovely Miss Sparke is joining our little family.

GEORGE            Hello, Boss.

*(CHATEAU goes round shaking hands with everybody.)*

CHATEAU            Hello, George: good to see you. Miss Sparke *(takes his hat off)* got here O.K., eh?; Joyce, my dear, looking radiant as ever *(kisses her on the cheek)*. Stuart and Douglas, nice to see you again; Talbot, Joe, everything O.K.?

- JOE            You might have told me about her.
- CHATEAU     Ah, yes, well it's glamour, Joe, the patrons want some glamour. Not that they don't get that from our beautiful Joyce, but a 'Chanteuse', especially one as lovely and talented as Miss Sparke will add that final touch of sophistication to the act. Anyway, as Douglas so perceptively pointed out, the Chateau voice is 'a bit clapped out' nowadays.
- (DOUG looks embarrassed.)*
- But then Harry Belafonte I've never been.
- STU            I'm not sure the passengers on the 'Hercules' are very hot on sophistication, boss. They're hardly Sambas and Champagne. I mean, they're more Hokey-Kokey and Red Barrel.
- CHATEAU     So they are, Stuart, and that's why the bar sells Red Barrel and that's why we will be featuring the Hokey-Kokey
- (General groans and 'oh-no's')*
- It's what they enjoy; what they're happy with, but they like to pretend that they want something better. That's what cruise ships are for. It's easy to pretend on a boat.
- (To VERONICA - taking her aside)*
- So my dear, you've met everybody?
- VERONICA     Well, more or less
- CHATEAU     Wonderful people
- VERONICA     Yes.
- CHATEAU     Cabin all right?
- VERONICA     Oh yes, fine. I only hope I can cope with the job.
- CHATEAU     I'm sure you'll be wonderful.
- VERONICA     You see, performing a song is so much more direct than acting. You're not protected behind the persona of the character you're portraying. You actually have to create a one to one relationship with your audience. It's a very high risk situation for a performer emotionally.

CHATEAU Yes...well... we'll sort all that out.

*(COLLINGWOOD enters carrying a clipboard. All turn to look at him.)*

TALBOT Look here, it's George the Fifth.

CHATEAU Oh yes...*(To everybody)* Boys and Girls, this is Mr.. ..

C'WOOD Collingwood.

CHATEAU Yes, of course, Mr Collingwood is the gallant Cruise Director of the good ship 'Hercules' and he wants a word with you. *(to COLLINGWOOD)* They're all yours, Mr. Collingwood, and I wish you joy with them. '

*(He takes a chair from the band stand and sits to the side of the stage, facing the wings. He files his nails and ignores the rest of the proceedings. COLLINGWOOD turns to the Band. The Sax plays a snatch of 'All The Nice Girls Love a Sailor'.)*

C'WOOD Good morning, Gentlemen; Ladies. Now I understand that most of you have been to sea before.

*(The piano plays a phrase from 'The Sailors Hornpipe'; the rest of the band answer with a few notes of 'Rule Britannia'. DOUG starts a roll on the cymbal and the band make 'sea going' sounds underneath DOUG'S speech. i.e. Morse code from the Guitar, fog-horn from the Trombone, etc.)*

DOUG *(Dramatic, cod Treasure Island accent)* Aye Cap'n, that be true or shiver me timbers! Seven years afore the mast shipmates!

THE BAND Aharrgh! *(etc.)*

DOUG With Black Sam, The Ballroom Buccaneer! *(to BAND)* Belay there, you swabs!

*(The Band stop playing.)*

All shipshape and Bristol fashion, Cap'n!

*(All the Band salute.)*

C'WOOD *(Unamused)* Yes...very good... and the name's Collingwood.

STU All Bristol fashion, Captain Collingwood.

C'WOOD And we'll do without the Captain bit.

STU Sorry, it's all the gold braid. I find it a bit confusing.

- C'WOOD        Have you finished now? ...Good. Firstly, on behalf of Captain Robertson and the Argos Line, I'd like to welcome you aboard the 'Hercules'. I hope we'll have a very happy and successful voyage together. As you may know, this is the final cruise that the 'Hercules' will be making before she goes out of service for the last time.
- VERONICA      Is it going to be broken up?
- C'WOOD        I'm afraid so.
- TALBOT        Failed its M.O.T. did it?
- C'WOOD        Nothing like that, it's just that the day of luxury liners is well and truly over.
- JOE            You can say that again. Just look around, this isn't a cruise ship, it's a floating Butlins.
- C'WOOD        Well, be that as it may, we have the job of giving the passengers a holiday to remember. The Argos Line are particularly keen that the last cruise of the 'Hercules' should go smoothly and that the vessel's high standards of entertainment be maintained. I'm sure you'll find the passengers an easy and appreciative audience. A lot of them will have saved up a long time for this.
- JOE            There's one born every minute.
- C'WOOD        You should already have a copy of crew regulations. They're quite straightforward but I'll just run over a few points. The Off Limits areas; Passengers' Dining Room, Lounges, Bars and so on, are strictly out of bounds. Outside crew quarters you should be respectably dressed at all times, and after six p.m. you should wear a tie.
- JOYCE         Please sir, I didn't bring a tie.
- C'WOOD        Your band uniform is to be worn for all performances....
- JOE            Look, son, this is the Sam Chateau Band, not the Rolling Stones. So what do you think we're going to wear?
- C'WOOD        And lastly please, no public drunkenness. *(To the ladies)* I'm sorry, but we have had some trouble over this recently.
- GEORGE        We should be so lucky. At your bar prices there'll be no private drunkenness either.
- C'WOOD        And of course we have the usual rule that under no circumstances are you allowed to enter a passenger's cabin or to allow a passenger to enter your quarters.

- DOUG But we're the band, Squire. We always get the birds; I mean, what am I supposed to do when I pull a chick?
- STU You'll have to try necking on the decking.
- TALBOT You could get up 'er in the scuppers.
- DOUG Yes; well I think I'll stick to frigging in the rigging.
- CHATEAU *(Getting up from his chair)* That's quite enough, boys, Mr...er...
- C'WOOD Collingwood.
- CHATEAU Mr. Collingwood is only trying to do the difficult job of Cruise Director as conscientiously as possible. Isn't that so? *(To COLLINGWOOD)* You see; they've all done this kind of work often before, and we do have rather a lot of rehearsal to get through.
- C'WOOD Right. Well in that case there's just one more thing to be sorted out. As you all know we have to have your help on the Passenger Activities Programme.
- (General groans)*
- Thank you for filling in those forms. Let's see...*(Consults clipboard)* Mr. Ezra?...I've got you down to run a bridge clinic. In the Sun Lounge. I thought; on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.
- TALBOT *(To TOMMY)* He wins a packet at that.
- C'WOOD Mr Humphreys?...Ah, so that's you...Life saving eh? Well how would official Life Guard duty at the pool suit you? Afternoons, two 'till five.
- DOUG Anything you say, Squire.
- STU Easy billet.
- DOUG Whatchamean easy? You can't relax for a moment.
- JOYCE He's right, Stu; if he relaxes, his beer gut sticks out, and that really puts the girls off.
- C'WOOD You must be Miss McArthur;
- JOYCE That's right.
- C'WOOD *(Consulting Clipboard)* 'It'll mean no shore leave...

- JOYCE            Okay. As long as I don't get roped-in for anything else.
- TOMMY           What are you going to do?
- C'WOOD          Miss McArthur's going to act as a guide and courier while we're in port. .She speaks French and Spanish.
- JOYCE            Some French and Spanish.
- DOUG            You're too modest. my dear. She can say 'yes' in fifteen languages.
- C'WOOD          *(Consulting clipboard)* Nothing here for Messrs Hinchcliffe and Austin.
- TALBOT          Don't worry about us.
- C'WOOD          And I'm afraid there's not much call for saxophone lessons Mr. Baker. And then there's Mr. Ross. *(Reads from clipboard)* 'Discreet visiting massage for ladies'. Well in fact it works out quite well. I've got two deck games that both need organizing and umpiring. It depends which of you are more attracted to Shuffleboard or Deck Tennis.
- STU              Can't say I'm a fervent devotee of either.
- C'WOOD          Well fewer people play Shuffleboard. Probably not a lot to do. Deck Tennis is much more fun. It's faster and more people want to play (pause). So who's volunteering for Shuffleboard?
- (STU, TOMMY, GEORGE and TALBOT all put up their hands, and look at each other in some annoyance.)*
- Which of you are happy to do the Deck Tennis instead?\_
- (All put their hands down)*
- GEORGE          I'm too old.
- TALBOT          I've got a bad back.
- TOMMY          I'm good at shove ha'penny....That's like Shuffleboard isn't it?
- CHATEAU        Oh for heaven's sake. George, Talbot; Shuffleboard. Stuart, Tommy; Deck Tennis....Right well I think that clears everything up. Is there anything else Mr Collingwood?
- C'WOOD          Well I don't have a form from Miss Sparke?

VERONICA *(Who has been standing aside, watching throughout)* Sorry, I've only just arrived.

CHATEAU Our new songbird, Mr. Collingwood.

C'WOOD How do you do.

VERONICA Hi.

*(They shake hands)*

C'WOOD Nice to have you with us...we can sort something out about that later on. *(To the Band)* Thank you for your attention, ladies and gentlemen. Any problems; you know where my office is; I'm Looking forward to the show. Thank you Mr. Chateau.

*(COLLINGWOOD Exits)*

DOUG Redcoat.

STU No.

DOUG Yeah, of course he's a Redcoat, you can tell a mile off.

STU Too nautical

DOUG That's all put on. It's the breezy desperation gives him away. It takes a few seasons at Butlins' to get like that.

CHATEAU *(Beckoning)* Veronica, Tommy...You know each other eh? Good....Cruising, you know, is a very strange business. The band aren't members of the crew, but they're not passengers either. It'll take a little getting used to, particularly for you, my dear; so anything you're not sure of, please ask me... You should both enjoy it. Cruising can be a lot of fun.

JOE It's nothing like it was, Sam.

CHATEAU The whole music business is nothing like it was.

GEORGE There was class then, boss, and style.

CHATEAU Things change, George, but there's class and style in today's music if you know what you're looking that's why we're still here, when all the other bands are finished. And you know why? Because I know what is happening. I've read the Melody Maker each single week since I arrived in this country in 1935. My God, I learned English from that paper.

- JOE           And the week I joined the band; that's in...1952, his photo was on the front page.
- CHATEAU     It's funny, but when I read the Melody Maker today, I understand about as little of it as I did the first time I bought it; when I was a young Yiddisher fiddler straight off the boat train from Vienna. It's all rock now and I don't know the groups or the people...But up 'til now we've kept up well, isn't that so? We were one of the first dance bands, Tommy, to have an electric guitar, and the electric bass.
- GEORGE      Worst move you ever made, boss.
- CHATEAU     There you go, George; how often do I have to tell you? You've got to keep up to date.

*(CHATEAU sings 'You've Got to Keep up to Date')*

**'YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP UP TO DATE'**

**In 1955,  
The Cha-cha had arrived,  
Extraordinarily contrived,  
But from Arthur Murrery's Dancing School  
They came each night in miles of tulle  
with hand sown sequins as a rule,  
So we had to keep up to date!**

**In 1968  
George, you were in a state,  
But skiffle wouldn't wait,  
So with washboard and with tea-chest bass,  
We played 'Freight Train' at breakneck pace,  
The sound we made was a disgrace,  
But on to the floor  
The beatniks would pour  
All shouting for more  
You cannot ignore  
You have to keep up to date!**

**By 1961  
The Trad boom had begun  
For me it wasn't fun.  
'Cause we had to play, without a sax,  
Cheap Dixieland in bowler hats,  
And had to call the audience 'cats'  
It's called keeping up to date!**

**In 1962,  
 With Twist the dance to do,  
 We had to see it through.  
 To do it Chubby Checker's way  
 Meant having just six songs to play  
 To twist the boring night away,  
 But if you declined  
 You'd certainly find  
 They'd leave you behind,  
 So make up your mind  
 You've got to keep up to date:**

VERONICA     What kind of music do you really like, Mr. Chateau?

CHATEAU     Well...(Pause) I was trained for the Viennese Waltz Orchestras, but I didn't really care so much for it. *(He seriously considers the question.)* You know..... I don't know.... I like to see people dancing and hear people clapping. *(Pause. Then to everyone. with sudden decision)* And today I like numbers 16, 23, 24 and 47. So we'll do those now.

*(GEORGE begins to set up an ordinary music stand, front.)*

*(To VERONICA)* Joe will give you the book. Now 24 and 47 are your numbers and you can run through them with Joyce first.... Thank you, George.... O.K. boys and girls, we've wasted enough time this morning. Can we start with Twenty-Four...

*(JOE hands out the 'books' of parts.)*

CHATEAU     *(To VERONICA)* Just get the feel of it to start with. *(To DOUG)* It'll be; let's-see *(Pauses for thought then gives the tempo to DOUG.)* One and two and one and two. *(To the BAND)* Alright? We'll take it from the top. Now it's quite a lively little tune, but it has a sort of wistful feel about it as well; you understand? Everybody set?

STU           *(Leafing through his music)* Sorry, Boss, I can't find Twenty-four. My pad's in a hell of a mess. Has someone had it on the floor or something? what's Twenty-Four called again?

JOYCE        'If I forget to love you'.

STU           *(Still looking)* What's it on the back of?

GEORGE      'Portuguese Doll'.

STU           *(Finding it)* Oh yeah.... Ta. .

CHATEAU One and Two and....

*(The Band start to play the music of 'If I Forget to Love You' a number from Act One, Scene Two. CHATEAU conducts from the music with precise, economical gestures - no baton or violin - After a while he begins to talk over the music.)*

Yes, alright.... now again.... la da da.....

*(They continue to play. Suddenly CHATEAU claps his hands and they stop.)*

'Enough; no more. 'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.' How does it go?..... 'That strain again! It hath a dying fall.' Isn't that so? I want it to 'come o'er my ear like the sweet sound that breathes upon a bank of violets.'

TALBOT Eh?

CHATEAU Shakespeare.

GEORGE What is?

CHATEAU Shakespeare wrote it. So more 'con emozione' please, on those two bars.... From 'B', please....

GEORGE *(Puzzled ; pointing to the music.)* It says 'ere Hutchinson Smith wrote it.

CHATEAU One and two and.....

*(The Band play on.)*

La, da; da.... That's it.... Ya da da..... Let it flow..... now, Ym, Tum Tum!  
Punch those out..... Yum Tum Tum! No....No....

*(He claps his hands and the band stop playing.)*

Those crockets are dotted.... Yum! Tum! Tum!, Brass, each note is equal....  
Again from the first time bar. One and Two and...

*(The Band start playing again)*

That's better..... now into the bridge. Yar... Dar....You're racing Stuart.....  
Yar..... Stop.... Stop.

*(Claps hands. The Band stops.)*

Can we tune up, please.

TALBOT It's me, boss. I don't think me reed likes the salty breezes. *(To JOYCE)* Blow us a doh, love.

*(JOYCE plays a 'C'. TALBOT plays a 'C'. It is flat. There is some laughter at his discomfiture.)*

Blimey!

*(He tunes up. Several other players take the opportunity to check their tuning.)*

STU *(Poring over his music)* Excuse me, I know we haven't got there yet, but what happens at D?

CHATEAU A key change and a 'ral'.

STU Oh it is a keychange. Your handwriting's going off a bit, Joe. Is that supposed to be three flats?

JOE Of course it's three flats. What else could it be? It's not my writing; it's your eyesight.

CHATEAU Okay. Once more.

TOMMY From the top?

CHATEAU No. I thought from the first time bar. Okay? One and Two and....

*(The Band play.)*

La.... Ta Dum.... Too heavy, Doug....With a lilt.... Yes.... better, better.... now on.

*(TOMMY misses a guitar entry)*

TOMMY Sorry.

*(The Band finish the piece)*

Sorry about that.

CHATEAU Okay. Not bad. Doug, it's not on the music, but you can do a fill at the end there.

DOUG You mean..... *(Plays a fill on the drums.)*

CHATEAU Can we have the last eight bars of the coda, please. *(Pause)* One and two and....

*(The Band plays)*

*(To DOUG) Not yet.... Here! (DOUG plays a fill)*

*(The Band finish)*

Yes, very nice.

*(TALBOT catches his eye and points to his watch.)*

CHATEAU Surely not yet! We've hardly started. And they said they served lunch until one thirty.

STU We don't know how crowded it gets, yet.

CHATEAU *(Sighs)* Okay boys and girls; what with one thing and another, we'd better break for lunch now. Back to start at two, please and we'll go through it with Veronica. It's sounding pretty good.

JOYCE Yes, it's a nice number.

DOUG Well, who's for a pint before their salt pork and ship's biscuit?

CHATEAU Just one thing before you go, please.....

*(The Band settle down again)*

You are probably aware that we do not have any bookings on the sheet after the end of this cruise. This isn't because we're not wanted any more, even if we haven't been as busy recently as in the past. The fact is I haven't been accepting further bookings for the band.

*(Some surprise from the band)*

One or two of you know the reason, but it seems proper that I tell you all that I intend to retire at the end of this trip.

*(General surprise and comment from all except the Brass section.)*

I will be sixty-five in a few weeks time. That's the age when you're expected to give up and go and grow roses. So that's what I'm going to do. I've been on the road now for about forty years. It's quite long enough. I'm tired for heavens sake....and I feel I deserve a rest.... *(Pause)* Anyway I'll have my old age pension to live off.

*(Some laughter)*

As far as your future is concerned, I hope that it will be possible for you to continue working as The Sam Chateau Band. There are a few details still to be sorted out; but I feel sure my departure won't affect your livelihoods too much.... We might be an anachronism, but there will always be room for The Sam Chateau Band; particularly with a younger man out front. Of course I'll keep you informed as to how things go, but, for now, I'd ask you to keep this between ourselves. I don't want any nonsense about Sam Chateau's last appearance, or anything of that nature. I hope I make myself understood.... Good.... So back at two o'clock, please.

*(He exits, followed by JOYCE. A few moments later VERONICA exits.)*

STU            Well that's a turn up for the books.

DOUG          No, not really, I guessed it was coming.

STU            George is older than that and he's not retiring; are you George?

GEORGE       Can't bloody afford to can I?

TALBOT        What's all that about workin' on as the Sam Chateau Band.

GEORGE        Wouldn't be the same without Sam.

TALBOT        No. But if they're going to use the name, why hasn't he been taking bookings? *(To JOE)* Joe, You got any idea?

JOE            Look, first off, I know very little more than you. Do you think he takes me into his confidence? I'm only deputy leader.

STU            *(To JOE)* Are you going to be the younger man out front?

*(COLLINGWOOD enters, unobserved)*

JOE            I don't know what or who he's talking about but what I do know is that he wants fifteen percent of the gross for letting the Agency use his name. The Agency says 'No, five' No-one is prepared to compromise, so, a deadlock. Meanwhile he's not accepting any more bookings, and the band has no work when we get home.

GEORGE        *(Admiringly)* what a cunt, eh? What a cunt!

TALBOT        *(Sees COLLINGWOOD, whistles a few notes and breaks into song.)*  
 . . . . . It's Barnacle Bill the Sailor. . . . .

C'WOOD        Excuse me, is Miss Sparke around anywhere?

DOUG Well, she can't be far. That's the thing about a boat, isn't it. You can't get away from someone, even if you want to.

GEORGE She was 'ere a minute ago. Probably gone for her dinner.

C'WOOD Thanks very much.

*(JOE exits)*

TOMMY *(To COLLINGWOOD as he turns to go)* What's Florez like?

C'WOOD Oh, very attractive really. Pretty harbour; lots of white houses; that sort of thing. Bit touristy of course. Rather a lot of Germans about. I'll lend you a guide book if you like.

*(COLLINGWOOD Exits)*

DOUG That's the trouble with it, of course, bulging with Bosch.

STU Crawling with Krauts.

*(DOUG and STU look at TALBOT)*

TALBOT Jammed with Jerries.

DOUG Heavy with Hun.

*(STU and TALBOT approve of this one.)*

STU *(After some thought)* Squirming with Squareheads.

*(DOUG and STU look at TALBOT who is racking his brains for another. After a moment DOUG blows an imaginary whistle )*

TALBOT All right, It's my round.... Two pints, right? *(To TOMMY)* Tommy. A drink?

TOMMY Oh ta. Half of ginger-beer shandy, please

*(TALBOT exits)*

DOUG *(To STU)* Well, what do you think?

STU About what?

DOUG Our new friend, of course 'Miss Veronica Sparke'.

STU Oh nice; very nice, I'd say. The only question being, of course; does it go?

DOUG           Stuart, my son; they all go. The question is; under what circumstances does it go? It looks quite intelligent to me; probably not a candidate for a quick bend over the bass drum.

STU             *(To GEORGE)* What do you think of the new number , Pop?

GEORGE        It's alright. It would be better if Jimi Hendrix here would come in at the right time.

TOMMY         Alright, alright. I wish you wouldn't call me that. It gives me the creeps.

DOUG           Might you go the same way then?

TOMMY         Bloody might at this rate!

DOUG           I can see the headlines.... 'Tommy's Dead! Twenty year old Tommy Hinchcliffe, the hard living rock star who became the idol of his generation, was found today in his penthouse suite at Bradford Y.M.C.A., dead from a suspected overdose of shandy.'

TOMMY         Very funny.

DOUG           Suit yourself, dear.

*(GEORGE & DOUG exit.)*

STU             You seem a bit pissed off.

TOMMY         George gets up my nose, sometimes.

STU             He doesn't mean anything by it. He's just a bit old.

TOMMY         I mean, I really like the music, well most of it, but... you know .... I get a bit ... Well it's not really the sort of stuff I really want to play.

STU             You're a rock'n roller.

TOMMY         Well, I'm more sort of progressive rock. Hendrix, John McLaughlin, Steely Dan; You know.

STU             I don't see us doing a Hendrix number, even without Sam

TOMMY         It'd be good though, with the brass and everything....Purple Haze....Wow!  
*(He laughs at the thought.)*

STU             Well you'll be able to go back to that soon.

TOMMY I wish I could

STU Weren't you playing in groups before you did this?

TOMMY Well, no...I wasn't....I should have been; but I was never able to get the right gig. *(Pause)* To tell the truth, I wasn't able to get a rock gig at all, well, not fully pro.

STU Blimey...that's surprising. You're a pretty shit hot player. Some of your solos are alright.

TOMMY Ta.

*(TALBOT AND JOYCE enter with drinks.)*

TALBOT It's the ones who stuff the money in your breast pocket 'oo get up my nose... I mean, all right, they want a tune played so they bung you a few bob, but why not put it in your hand? Makes you feel like a bloody slot machine to have it poked into your top pocket. If they did that to a taxi-driver, they'd get done over. It only happens to musos.

JOYCE And cocktail waitresses. They get money stuffed down their fronts.

TOMMY You could always sew fish hooks inside.....

DOUG *(Entering in mid-conversation with VERONICA)*  
....It's right up in the mountains behind Torremolinos. Very exclusive, but I know the 'patron' you see. Did him a favour once and they always look after me very well; We should go up there the night we're in port; the Beef Andaluthia is a dream.

VERONICA Actually I'm not eating meat at the moment. I'm very into whole grains..;

TALBOT Here you go. *(To TOMMY)* Shandy... *(To STU)* Bitter...

TOMMY Ta.

STU Ta. Cheers.... *(To TOMMY)* So why couldn't you get a band?

TOMMY Well there were people at home I played with, but they really weren't very good. There wasn't much future there, you know. So I started going up for auditions. Adverts in the M.M. and I'd go up for them. I must have gone to about thirty.

STU Is the standard so high then?

TOMMY No. That's it. I could play most of the others off the stage. I don't know. I just never got offered the job. *(Pause)* Stu?

STU Yes?

TOMMY Do you think I look all right?

STU Give us a kiss and I'll tell you.

TOMMY No, I'm serious. A lot of these bands said it was my image that was wrong. It wasn't aggressive enough. I s'pose they meant I didn't ponce about like they wanted.

STU Well, you've got long hair, haven't you? *(Shrugs)* You look like a guitarist.

TOMMY That's all I ever really wanted to be, too. It was the first thing I was really interested in.

*(Starts playing the intro to 'PLAYING BY EAR')*

STU How did you start?

*(TOMMY sings 'Playing By Ear')*

**'PLAYING BY EAR'**

**When I was Twelve I bought a guitar,  
'Cause it seemed like the thing to do.  
It cost four pound ten that I borrowed from Ma  
And My friend Ronnie bought one too.  
In just two days J found I'd left him far behind.**

ALL **Playing by ear, he was playing by ear.**

TOMMY **I'd lost my childhood, but found my peace of mind.**

ALL **Playing by ear, he was playing by ear...  
Playing by ear, he was playing by ear.**

TOMMY **The greatest guitarists used to come each day  
Just to show me what to do  
Jeff Beck and Pete Townsend taught me how to play,  
Jimmy Page and Eric Clapton too,  
I'd have my private lesson each time they were there ..**

ALL **Coming along, he was coming along.**

TOMMY                   **On Radio Luxembourg or on my 'Dancette' record player**

ALL                       **Song after song, song after song  
Getting quite strong, he was getting quite strong.**

TOMMY                   **And every week one or two new L P's,  
Depending on the money I'd earned  
New licks, new tricks, new chords, new keys,  
From each track something learned.**

**I'd play all loose with the Rolling Stones  
With the Beatles I'd play more .... precise  
With the Pink Floyd I'd go psychedelic,  
And play classical for .... the Nice**

ALL                       **Living for Rock n' Roll  
Practicing day and night  
Living for Rock n' Roll  
Trying to get it right**

TOMMY                   **I soon had firm ideas on how you ought to play.**

ALL                       **Had it all clear, yes he had it all clear.**

TOMMY                   **Then Jimi Hendrix came and blew them all away.**

ALL                       **Playing by ear, he was playing by ear  
Playing by ear, he was playing by ear**

TOMMY                   **Coughing and howling at a thousand watts,  
It was a brand new way to play,  
But even psychedelic leopards can't change their spots,  
And the Blues were never far away.**

**I knew right away that I needed some soul,  
That much was quite plain to .... hear,  
So I bought lots of records by B B King,  
And played just twelve-bar blues for a .... year**

ALL                       **Living for Rock n' Roll,  
Practicing day and night  
Living for Rock n' Roll  
Finally got it right.  
Living for Rock n' Roll  
Practicing day and night  
Living for Rock n' Roll  
Finally got it right.**

*(GEORGE enters carrying a pint. TOMMY starts to change his guitar strings.)*

STU           *(Indicating TOMMY'S guitar strings)* How often do you change those things?

TOMMY       Oh, about three times a week.

STU           That's ridiculous. It must cost you a fortune.

TOMMY       The best players change their strings once a day

STU           It's obsessional.

TOMMY       No, the edge goes off them. The sound gets a bit dull.

STU           Christ, I haven't changed mine for six months... Just as well at six quid a set.

*(TALBOT enters with drinks)*

GEORGE       They ain't strings. Not proper strings. Look, the bottom G's like a piece of fuse wire, and you can't hardly see the top ones.

TOMMY       Oh, God, it's Segovia again.

GEORGE       Gnat's ball hairs, that's what they are. No wonder you've got to stick it through all them boxes to make it sound like anything. An' look at the neck! It's like a billiard. cue That's how he can play so fast.

TOMMY       Look, I get all this stick from you and ...

GEORGE       *(Interrupting)* That's 'cause I'm a guitarist too, a proper one

TOMMY       You mean you carry a guitar case around with you. I've never seen you open it.

GEORGE       I can play! Don't worry about that. Well an' all. And on a proper guitar with a proper neck and proper strings and .... I play proper music. Not cowboy music. Not that thump thump thump rubbish you go on about all the time. Hendrix and Clapton....I've seen it. 'Clapton is God'....He's rubbish! Hendrix is Rubbish! They're all con men.

TOMMY       *(Shouts)* You're a stupid old git!....You're past it, you are!

DOUG         Now then, girls. That's quite enough.

*(TOMMY and GEORGE both subside into sinister mutterings of vengeance. CHATEAU enters unnoticed).*

- JOYCE Really. They're like kids.
- DOUG I shall make you two kiss and make up I shall; or there'll be tears before bedtime, you mark my words.
- JOE You're out of order, George. I'm sorry. Tommy's a good player. You're a good player. You've both had to work very hard to be as good as you are.
- JOYCE Haven't we all?
- CHATEAU Indeed we have. *(To JOYCE)* My dear, you say they're like children. *(To ALL)* Well, is it any wonder? For someone to earn their bread as a professional musician, they must have spent their childhood, or most of it, learning to play. While the other kids were out playing football, we were all indoors playing the piano or whatever. Isn't that so?

*(General assent)*

No one understands how long it takes to achieve, excellence. No one imagines the effort, the slogging, the bloody work. They think: 'Oh, he's talented. He can play the flute. How lucky he is be able to earn his living by playing the flute. How I wish I was talented like that!.... And they never see that he spent actual years of time as a boy and a young man, sitting in a little room on his own, holding a steel tube to his mouth at one precise angle 'til his arms ached; and blowing into it until his head swam. They just say 'Oh, isn't he lucky to be so talented, but of course he is a bit gauche and unsophisticated, and isn't it strange, so many musicians are. I wonder why?'

- STU How did you learn, Boss?
- CHATEAU Oh I had to. For poor Jews in Vienna there were only a few alternatives if you wanted out; and I wanted out. Music was the best for me, so I did it. I never really enjoyed it very much. It was something I had to be good at or else I would never get away.
- TALBOT Just as well you got to like it later on, eh?
- CHATEAU Yes....*(Pause)* Well.... *(Pause)* I suppose I did .... sometimes I'm not sure. . . . *(To VERONICA)* Have you eaten yet, my dear?. . . Good. Come along and I'll buy you some lunch
- (CHATEAU and VERONICA exit.)*
- DOUG *(Calling after them)* She's very into whole grains.
- JOE I had to join the Salvation Army to learn to play properly.

STU But they er.... I mean I thought you.....

JOE I'm Jewish, you mean. Yes, well they had a very good brass band, the local Citadel, but they really needed cornet players. I knew 'cause I used to follow them around. I was about eleven or twelve and mad to play the trumpet. The teaching was great and it was free if you were in the band. So I went to see the Bandmaster and said "Look, I'm good enough to play third cornet in your band already. You need the players; I need some good teaching. I'll work hard and sing the hymns and say the prayers, but I won't convert because it'll upset my grandparents. What do you say?" He had a think and spoke to my parents and they didn't mind very much. They couldn't afford the lessons I needed, you see, so, in the end he said all right. I'll bet I'm the only Sally Army band-boy who wore a Yamaluke under his peaked cap.

TALBOT 'Ere, I wonder if you know, Sam's got his eye on that Veronica.

JOE You could be right. Another Chateau conquest on the way.

STU It's the fatherly air and the silver rinse that gets 'em every time.

GEORGE And their mothers.

DOUG I don't see it myself, the famous Chateau charm.

JOYCE That's because, despite rumours to the contrary, you're a man.

TALBOT It's being a band leader does it. I once played for a bloke called Sid Montague, and he only had one leg. Grotesque it was.

STU What, his leg?

TALBOT No! Him standing up front conducting a band. Awful band too, but the point is even he was pulling birds left, right and centre.

DOUG He probably had a nice looking crutch.

TOMMY We don't exactly get mobbed by ladles, do we.

DOUG You speak for yourself. I've been doing quite nicely thank you.

TOMMY What's your secret?

DOUG A jealous woman hovering in the background. It increases the allure no end.

JOYCE Careful, Dougie.

DOUG Well it was all your idea. 'Let's be free agents' you said. 'I want to be a free agent'.

TOMMY *(Trying to change the subject)* I mean I wasn't exactly expecting groupies, but I thought perhaps.... there might be....

DOUG You don't make the most of your opportunities mate. Anyway, you don't need groupies in this band. We've got Joyce....

*(JOYCE slaps him hard round the face. DOUG recovers from his surprise and gingerly feels his face. The others start drifting towards the door.)*

Bloody hell!.... Cor.... That hurt.

JOYCE It was supposed to.

DOUG Yes; well; point taken. *(He starts to exit, speaking to TOMMY)* She's a bit het. up.... Time of the month I shouldn't wonder. . . , .

*(Joyce is left alone. She moves to the piano and sings 'Drifting')*

**'DRIFTING'**

When I was small,  
I used to think that life was neatly planned  
All the way.  
No choice at all,  
And nothing would get too much out of hand  
If I practiced each day.

Well, life's nothing like that,  
But no one told me  
Silly old me...

Where is the man ?  
The one I thought was going to appear  
And rescue my heart.  
I made no plan.  
I often think 'What am I doing here °  
And just how did I start...

Drifting...Drifting...  
Down and away with the tide.  
Drifting...Drifting...  
S'pose I could stop if I tried.

I was so sure

That there would be a marriage of true minds,  
Real success, even fame...  
A Dance Band tour  
With one night stands of both familiar kinds,  
Well, it's not quite the same.

I just went with the tide  
I've given up dreams,  
Why swim upstream ?

Wonder where they went °  
Each grand idea, each lovely thing to do,  
Each shimmering ideal...  
But I'm content  
With my little loves, and little traumas too  
Well at least they're all real

Drifting...Drifting...  
Down and away with the tide.  
Drifting...Drifting...  
S'pose I could stop if I tried.

*(LIGHTS DIM TO BLACKOUT. END OF SCENE 1)*

ACT ONE SCENE TWO

*(BLACKOUT. The first part of this scene is played out in darkness. An audience applauds. CHATEAU's voice is heard together with those of two passengers.)*

CHATEAU Now if you'll just come on to the stage.....That's right. Very good..... Over here by the microphone. That's it..... Well, congratulations on winning our first spot prize of the evening. Can I have your names, please?

MAN Brian Gudgeon..... and my wife Pauline.

CHATEAU Brian and Pauline..... Are you having a good time?

MAN Yes, great thanks.

CHATEAU That's good. Are you here with friends?

GIRL *(Giggling)* No! We're on our own.

CHATEAU How long have you been married, Pauline?

GIRL Five and a half days.

CHATEAU Five and a half days? And they said it wouldn't last. Ladies and Gentlemen; a round of applause for our honeymooners..... *(Audience applause)* Brian, may I kiss the bride? Mm...mm... Isn't she beautiful?..... Well, I'll tell you something. We had another honeymoon couple here and the first night at dinner the headwaiter said to the young man, 'I've got just the thing to set you up,' and served him a dozen oysters. Well, the next morning at breakfast, the young man went over to the headwaiter and said, 'You know those oysters you gave me last night? Well, three of them didn't work!..... *(Loud audience laughter and applause.)* Here's your bottle of champagne; with the compliments of Sam Chateau. Good Luck and God bless you both.....

*(Audience applause. The Band strikes up a vigorous, up-tempo, instrumental dance number and lights come up on the bandstand (These are bright 'show' lights). The Band are now resplendent in their band uniforms - black evening trousers, crimson jackets with black, shawl collars, matching pastel frilled evening shirts and large black velvet bow-ties. JOYCE wears a long evening dress matching the band's shirts. CHATEAU wears an exquisitely cut black evening suit, a white shirt with huge paste-ruby cuff-links and studs, black tie and a crimson carnation in his buttonhole. There is a microphone centre stage. CHATEAU carries a violin and conducts the Band with his bow in a showy and 'romantic' way; in contrast to his conducting of the rehearsal. Occasionally he 'plays' a few notes on the violin. The number comes to an end, and CHATEAU comes to the mike.)*

**'STOMPING AT THE CHATEAU'**

CHATEAU Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen. That was 'Stomping at the Chateau'. Now, there are four more champagne spot prizes to be won this evening, so keep your dancing shoes on. But for now, I invite you to relax and snuggle up to your partner... or indeed, snuggle up to someone else's partner, as, once again, I introduce a beautiful girl to sing a beautiful song..... Gentlemen, hold on to your hats: Ladies, hold on to your gentlemen, as we welcome our very own Veronica Sparke!

*(He leads the applause as VERONICA enters transformed, in a tight glittering evening gown. CHATEAU leads her, with old world courtesy, to the mike, and strikes up the band. VERONICA performs (In a spotlight) 'If I Forget to Love You' in an effective, dramatic, and entirely derivative way; running the whole gamut of mannerisms from Garland to Bassey. Some lines are sung to CHATEAU as he sways romantically in front of the Band.)*

**'IF I FORGET TO LOVE YOU'**

**If I forget to love you,  
Won't you please stop and remind me.  
I'll never rise above you  
If you're standing behind me.  
I hope you don't object if I say these things to you:**

**But I know myself well enough now  
To know I'll give you trouble, and how.  
I'll get mad and I'll be ungrateful,  
I might easily be unfaithful...**

**But if I once stop caring,  
Just tap me right on the shoulder;  
If I don't care what you're wearing  
Or say that you're looking older.  
Remind me once again of my promises to you.**

**I'll feel bad and I'll say I'm sorry,  
And I'll make it up, don't you worry;  
But I couldn't change if you paid me,  
That's the way the good Lord made me.**

**If I forget to love you,  
I won't need fining or jailing.  
If I forget to love you,  
It's just my memory failing.  
You'll know that deep inside I'll be so in love with you.**

**Underneath my selfish behaviour,  
In spite of the trouble I gave 'ya,  
When it seems that I'd even leave you,**

**You will know, though none believe you...  
That I only need reminding that I still love you.**

*(At the end of the number, there is applause and VERONICA exits. CHATEAU brings her back for another bow, kisses her hand; etc.)*

CHATEAU     Veronica Sparke, Ladies and Gentlemen.....

*(Applause dies down. VERONICA exits for a second time)*

Now does anybody here like steam trains? Yes? ... Very good; because we're going to take you on a nostalgic railway journey. And I'd like to see everyone on the floor for this number. It's a samba but you can do anything you want to it, as long as it's legal. We're going to get up steam now for your trip on 'Steamline Streamline'

*(The band play a novelty instrumental beginning with an imitation of a steam train leaving the station, complete with whistles, cries of 'All aboard' etc. At the end of the number there is a blackout.)*

**'STEAMLIN STREAMLINE'**

END OF ACT ONE - INTERVAL

## ACT TWO - SCENE ONE

*(VERONICA, in jeans and barefoot, is alone and practicing Kung-Fu. After a few stock moves complete with aggressive cries, she begins various esoteric voice and breathing exercises which involve producing a wide variety of alarming grunts and shrieks, and are performed with great seriousness. COLLINGWOOD enters reading a duplicated news-sheet, and VERONICA stages a fierce Kung-fu attack on him. He is obviously used to all this. The two embrace, and are involved in a passionate kiss as GEORGE, DOUG and TOMMY enter. They wear casual summer or beach clothes, and GEORGE carries an empty beer-crate.)*

DOUG           Ello ello ello...

GEORGE        Pardon us, I'm sure.

DOUG           Didn't mean to interrupt a tender moment.

C'WOOD         That's O.K. we were just going.

DOUG           We could see that.

TOMMY         What's that in the news-sheet about you being a professional actress before you joined us?

C'WOOD         Didn't you know?

VERONICA      I never mentioned it.

C'WOOD         *(Proudly)* Oh yes. She's not just a musician

DOUG           Well, who'd want to be just a musician?

GEORGE        How long have you been singing, them?

VERONICA      Well, professionally; about a month before I joined you. This is only my second pro. gig.

GEORGE        You're not doing too bad then, to have got in a top band straight off. I thought you'd been singing for years *(to others)* Didn't you?  
*(To VERONICA)* Stick with it and you might do all right.

VERONICA      That's kind of you, George. Singing's wonderful fun, but really I think my real work should be the Theatre.

C'WOOD         It would be the waste of a talent.

DOUG           Oh, I can see that. Being a professional musician would be aiming a bit low.

VERONICA That's not what I meant at all. It's just that I think people should try and do things that are difficult and meaningful.

TOMMY Like what?

VERONICA Well, I'm going to try to start a committed feminist theatre company...., probably call it the Womens Drama Army.... That's if I can get a grant.

DOUG Well you should have no problem about getting committed.

VERONICA If you've lost sight of your ambitions, that's your problem.

*(VERONICA and COLLINGWOOD Exit. TOMMY picks up his guitar and starts to play runs quietly. GEORGE slowly begins fill his crate with empty beer bottles from inside his music stand. It seems to hold a very large number. After a while he comes across a full one which he opens with an opener permanently attached to the stand and drinks from it before continuing.)*

DOUG *(To TOMMY)* If you pick that any more it'll never get better.

TOMMY Home tomorrow then.

DOUG Yeah.... None too soon either.... Mind you, I could have done with a longer stop in Spain. What a place, eh?

TOMMY 'Spose it is.

DOUG Did you not relish the delights of the Kingdom of Castile?

TOMMY Eh?

DOUG Didn't you get off on Sunny Spain?

TOMMY Oh.... Yes, it was all right.... I was surprised because it was.... so foreign. I wasn't expecting it to be like the pictures. I didn't like the food though. Don't know how the Spanish stand it.... I had hamburger, beans and chips, and it tasted really bad.

DOUG Did you go anywhere good?

TOMMY Well me and Stu and Joyce went off to hear some flamenco at this sort of wine bar. Great band; all got up like gypsies. They all I looked really bored, like a sort of Spanish version of us, but the music was fantastic. You know the sort of thing.... *(He plays a couple of flamenco flourishes.)* They reckon a lot of jazz came from flamenco music.

- DOUG Don't you ever get fed up with music?
- TOMMY *(Slightly puzzled)* No....*(pause)* What did you do, then?
- DOUG Well, my son, I'll tell you. I wandered far from the tawdry tourist haunts, deep into the mystery that is Spain herself, 'till at length I found myself within the old Moorish quarter, and there it was that I came upon not one but two raven-haired beauties; one haughty and proud with dark flashing eyes, the other modest and shy, of but eighteen summers. With their permission I accompanied them both back to their hacienda where I was almost shagged to death!
- TOMMY Yeah.... don't believe you.
- DOUG Bloody true as I'm standing here! I'll show you the scars.
- TOMMY I thought Spanish girls were all very moral and couldn't do it without their father's consent.
- DOUG Spanish girls? These two weren't Spanish; they're from Watford! Spanish girls are a dead loss. *(Pause)* Anyway, they don't shave their legs.
- (DOUG exits singing 'Y Viva Espania'. Pause, as TOMMY continues to practice quietly.)*
- GEORGE He's very full of himself.
- TOMMY *(Enviously)* He's been getting his oats, hasn't he? *(He plays a loud and elaborate heavy rock riff.)*
- GEORGE You still playing that cowboy music? You won't get nowhere playing that rubbish.
- TOMMY Look. Why don't you stop getting at me? Three weeks; and all you can bloody do is go on about 'cowboy music'. You're an old pain in the arse, you are.... I don't go on about boring Henry Hall and rotten old Roy Fox and all that other boring stuff you like, so why don't you piss off and leave me alone!
- GEORGE *(Excited)* That was real music, that was, and I don't like to see a young fella throwing his talent away trying to copy a drugged up monkey!
- TOMMY *(Shouts)* Shut up, you old bastard!
- GEORGE Look, you think Jimi 'Endrix was the greatest guitarist of all time don't you?
- TOMMY Yes....
- GEORGE Well, he wasn't. It was Django Reinhardt.

TOMMY That's different.

GEORGE What d'yer mean, that's different?

TOMMY Django's the greatest too; but in a different way.

GEORGE Yeah, go on, I bet you never even heard of him.

TOMMY I sodding have! I've got four.... no, five albums. I know all the tunes. 'Sweet Sue', 'Djangology'. 'La Mere' and all them.

GEORGE Not to play though.

TOMMY I can play most of 'em.... That's the lead part too.... I am a good guitarist you know!

*(Pause)*

GEORGE I saw them once.

TOMMY The Django Reinhardt Band?

GEORGE 'The Quintet of the Hot Club of France'; at the Porchester Halls in 1938.

TOMMY What was it like?

GEORGE Fantastic. Even better than the records. He was a cheerful looking little bloke, Django. They all had these dinner suits on, and when he sat down you could see he 'ad one red sock and one black one.... *(Pause)* You reckon you can really play that sort of rhythm?

*(TOMMY runs through some fast chord changes.)*

Here, 'ang on a minute. There's something I'd like you to have a look at.

*(He goes to the back of the bandstand and brings out a guitar case. He opens it and takes out a 1930's style guitar, which he leans on a chair while delving further into the case.)*

TOMMY I've never seen your guitar before. Hey, that's beautiful! Must be really old.

*(GEORGE brings out a sheaf of yellowed manuscript selects a few sheets and shows them to TOMMY.)*

GEORGE Can you read that?

*(TOMMY looks through it, fingering his guitar.)*

TOMMY        Yeah.... I think so... *(Pointing to a part of the music)* What happens here?

GEORGE        It goes back to here, and then on to the bridge.

TOMMY        Here, I don't know this one. It's not a Django tune is it?

GEORGE        No. I done it. *(Pause)* You want to try it?

*(Pause)*

TOMMY        Okay.... How fast does it go?

*(GEORGE indicates a fast tempo.)*

Christ!.... all right.

*(They start to play an exciting Django Reinhardt style instrumental. NOTE: GEORGE can face TOMMY away from the audience, and one guitar part can be recorded. GEORGE talks him through it as they play.)*

### **'DJANGO'S TUNE'**

GEORGE        .... Now back to the start.... That's a minor seventh, not a ninth.... four bars rest coming up.... Now!

TOMMY        Now what happens?

GEORGE        Same again for the solo. *(etc. to suit the music.)*

*(STU and JOE enter and stand, listening delightedly. After a moment, CHATEAU's voice is heard off.)*

CHATEAU       *(Off)* Ah, Veronica, Mr Collingwood, just the people; now about tonight. . . .

*(After a moment, CHATEAU, VERONICA and COLLINGWOOD enter from the other side and begin to listen intently, tapping their feet. At the end of the number all applaud.)*

VERONICA       Great!

STU             Knockout!

CHATEAU       That's really nice boys. Who wrote it?

GEORGE        I did, boss.

TOMMY        You got any more like this?

- GEORGE        A few.... oh 'bout ten or fifteen.
- TOMMY        That's magic, that is.
- CHATEAU      You should have a spot in the show. I think it would go down well.
- C'WOOD        It certainly would. You ought to have the violin with it, though; a touch of the old Stefan Grapelli's.
- CHATEAU      You've heard of Stefan Grapelli? You know, you're more cultured than I gave you credit for.
- C'WOOD        I actually took violin lessons at school 'cause I liked him. Him and Stuff Smith. Got to Grade Two. Didn't carry on with it of course.
- VERONICA     *(To CHATEAU)* Do play with them. It'd be great.
- CHATEAU      No; I think they do it very well by themselves
- JOE            I agree.
- C'WOOD        That's a shame. You see we don't hear much of your fiddle with the band.
- CHATEAU      Well, I don't use a microphone. I think it spoils the tone.
- VERONICA     Can we hear it again?

*(TOMMY and GEORGE begin to play the number again. While the others are standing around the Duo. COLLINGWOOD picks up CHATEAU's violin from the piano and offers it to him. CHATEAU shakes his head deprecatingly, and turns back to the music. COLLINGWOOD admires the fiddle, replaces it in its case, and takes out the bow for inspection. He runs his finger over the horse-hair and seems puzzled. He examines it closely and then, unseen by the others, picks up the violin again and starts to bow it. After a moment he stops, puzzled; examines the bow; tries again; stops; feels the bow strings; starts trying to play; vigorously sawing at the strings. CHATEAU looks around and sees him.)*

CHATEAU      *(Shouts)* Don't do that!

*(The music stops. COLLINGWOOD continues to bow the violin which makes no sound. CHATEAU rushes across and snatches the instrument.)*

Stop it! Please no. I don't like people to play my violin; it's very personal to me.

*(He is ashen; shaking)*

C'WOOD        There seems to be something wrong with your bow.

CHATEAU       No....no....nothing wrong....You don't know how.

STU            Oi! Nelson. Leave it out, will you.

C'WOOD        *(Deliberately.)* I'm sorry, but I don't think that violin can be played.... I'll bet any money you can't get a sound out of it. It's got oil or something on the strings. *(Pause.)* No wonder we couldn't hear much of the violin.

*(Long pause)*

What's going on Mr Chateau '?

JOE            *(Fiercely)* Look. If you've got any complaints, you go to the Agency. Just remember that you employ Mr. Chateau through the agency, and that you don't employ us at all!

GEORGE       So if you ain't satisfied, you know what you can do, eh?

CHATEAU       Thank you. Joe... George; but Mr. Collingwood is quite right. I don't play anymore. I only pretend.

VERONICA      *(Shocked)* Why?

CHATEAU       It wasn't always like this, my dear. Ask Joe.

JOE            He was a lovely player. One of the best. It's on the records; beautiful. Hear him play 'Samantha' and you'd cry. My word on it, people used to weep buckets.

VERONICA      I don't understand.... Why don't you play?

CHATEAU       I don't understand either, my dear....

*(CHATEAU sings 'Nobody Noticed' accompanied quietly by TOMMY's guitar. )*

**'NOBODY NOTICED'**

**In 1958  
We headlined the Savoy,  
Centre of the life I had the money to enjoy.,  
For then we were famous,  
For then they all danced to Chateau;  
The records selling by the ton,  
A weekly wireless show.  
Would anyone believe that I didn't like music,**



GEORGE Mind? What's there to mind.

C'WOOD Well, he doesn't sing any more. He doesn't do the arrangements, and he doesn't play.

GEORGE He conducts.

C'WOOD The band don't need conducting. They can all do it all with their eyes shut. In fact you usually do. . . He's hardly pulling his weight, is he.

STU *(In disbelief)* Oh fuck off. . . . .

*(STU exits)*

GEORGE Look, you don't know nothing, you don't. He is the Leader.... Sam Chateau.... the front man. He doesn't have to pull his weight.

C'WOOD You're very loyal all of a sudden. I thought you said that he was a cunt.

GEORGE 'Course he's a cunt. That's why he's been a successful bandleader for thirty years. He's kept going longer than all the others 'cause he's a bigger cunt than them. He hasn't really needed to do this for years, you know. He's retiring to a big fucking house in Ventnor and two blocks of flats he owns, and a parade of shops.

C'WOOD Why has he kept doing it so long?

GEORGE He loves it.

C'WOOD What; the music.... showbiz?

GEORGE Not the show, so much; it's the biz. He loves the trade. Hiring players as cheap as he can get them and making a band that goes out for top whack. He's done that for thirty years..... and tonight was his last gig.... And you fucked it up!

C'WOOD All right, I'm sorry.

GEORGE He wasn't having no fuss or announcement or anything; so the plan was to go along with this; just do the gig, right; and then after we're going to have a sort of presentation, and give him 'a small token of our esteem'. And that's only a silver fucking violin, isn't it! That'll look a bit sick now, won't it. Sixty quid, it cost us in Tangiers. It's all engraved and everything....

C'WOOD It'll still be all right won't it. Talbot and Joyce and Doug weren't here, were they?

GEORGE        Yes, well I suppose so.

C'WOOD        But if you all knew anyway....

GEORGE        That Veronica didn't know. No idea.... She don't count much; but he lost.... his dignity then; with all of us; there; That's never happened before, ever. Even when he was on the booze, years ago. He used to drink away from us. We'd hear the tales from other people; but we never saw him really pissed.

C'WOOD        You all think a lot of him, don't you?

GEORGE        Push off, son, would you; we've got a bit of practice to do.

*(COLLINGWOOD exits. GEORGE picks up his saxophone and reflectively plays the theme from 'Nobody Noticed'. Blackout.)*

END OF SCENE.

ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

*(Blackout. During this the Band play a reprise of 'Stomping at the Chateau'. As the number finishes, bright 'Show' lights come up on the Band. The scene and costumes are the same as in Act One, Scene One, except that the Band all wear party hats and JOE, STU, and CHATEAU are absent. As DOUG comes out to the mike it becomes obvious that the Band have all been drinking.)*

DOUG            Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen, we'll be back with more music for your dancing pleasure in just a moment.

*(The 'Show' lights are switched off. DOUG comes back to the Band.)*

TALBOT        'Struth; he's never done this before.

DOUG           He's never even late!

*(All help themselves to more drinks from a couple of large jugs.)*

JOYCE         I hope he's all right .... You don't think he found out about our presentation, do you?

DOUG           I'll bet he knows anyway. He loves all that stuff. Wouldn't miss it for the world; whatever he says.

GEORGE       'Ere, look at this lot, eh? *(Indicates the audience.)*

TALBOT        Isn't it amazing what pillocks people will make of themselves as long as everyone else is doing the same.

JOYCE         Having a fancy dress do on a boat is a bit stupid anyway.

TOMMY         Well they've got a whole lot of costumes that you can hire.

GEORGE        Not so stupid after all eh?

TALBOT        Look at that bloke over there *(pointing)* behind the Vikings. He's got a dinner jacket on and balls of cotton wool stuck all over his trousers. I mean, what's that all about?

JOYCE         Well it shows some imagination at least. About half the rest have come as pirates.

GEORGE        What's that bloke supposed to be in the long brown coat?

JOYCE         Is it a highwayman?

DOUG           *(Stares out. Then, with mild surprise)* I think he's come as a turd....

GEORGE       *(Raising his mug)* Well here's to us....

ALL             And fuck the rest!

TOMMY         Hey! What about our guitar spot, then?

JOYCE         It was great, love.

GEORGE       They really seemed to like it, didn't they?

*(JOE and STU enter looking grim. During the next few minutes they get given drinks and for the rest of the scene, they like the rest of the band are drinking steadily with frequent refills. Eventually, all the band, minus VERONICA, show signs of advanced inebriation.)*

JOYCE         Did you find him?

JOE            Yes

TALBOT       Well?

JOE            He won't be appearing tonight....He's drunk.

*(TOMMY finds this amusing.)*

STU            Paralytic.

JOYCE         *(Rising)* I'll go and talk to him.

STU            It won't do much good love. He passed out on us in his cabin.

JOE            Let him alone. He won't wake up for hours.

TALBOT       Well that's marvellous in'it?

STU            He's broken his fiddle too.

GEORGE       What; by accident?

STU            I dunno; but it's all smashed up on the floor. *(pause)* What a mess eh?

GEORGE       Blimey. He hasn't been pissed for years as far as I know; and when he was boozing he never missed a gig. He'd look like a corpse sometimes but he always did the show.... Except that time in France. You remember that, Joe? We were in Paris to do a Telly show but Sam was out boozing the night before and he missed the plane *(Pause)* We were very big in France,

you know. They liked his name.....

JOE *(Interrupting)* The old bastard! He's just a spoilt child. *(to TALBOT and JOYCE)* All this is because that shmuel Collingwood found out he didn't really play the violin any more.

JOYCE Oh no....

TALBOT Well that explains it then.

JOE Explains it?...Yes but it's no excuse....Look. All the money; all the applause; he's had everything. Is this enough? No. Sam Chateau must still be the great violin player, and when someone sees through the pantomime, he breaks down...It's all been too easy for him.

JOYCE That's very hard and unfair. Where would you be without him?.

GEORGE Come on Joe. That was an awful do this afternoon; enough to mess anyone about. Just before 'is last gig an' all.

JOE He's got you at it too! You've all caught it off him. You're all as soft and shmaltzy as he is....except he knows what he's doing behind it all.

TOMMY Look out. Here comes Collingwood.

STU *(Looking off stage)* Oh my God. What does he look like?

JOE Quick. Play something..... Fourteen. I don't want to talk to him.

*(The Band quickly leaf through their music. DOUG counts them in and they begin to play quiet dance music. [At the start of the piece the brass are not playing]. COLLINGWOOD and VERONICA enter arm in arm. VERONICA is in her stage outfit and COLLINGWOOD is dressed very elaborately as Sir Francis Drake, complete with doublet, hose and ruff. COLLINGWOOD is obviously concerned about something, and goes up to JOE to ask him a question. At that moment JOE begins to play and nods towards GEORGE who is at the next desk. COLLINGWOOD moves behind JOE and starts to talk to GEORGE just as he makes his musical entry. GEORGE motions COLLINGWOOD to TALBOT, at his side ; but the same thing happens as the third front line instrument joins the arrangement. COLLINGWOOD turns to the rhythm section. The Band continue to play throughout the following exchange.)*

DOUG *(Straight faced, forestalling his question)* Good evening Mr. Collingwood. I must say I admire your choice of costume for tonight's festivities. Most distinguished I'd say. Sir Walter Raleigh perhaps?...No, your air is more virile. Less the courtier, more the man of action. I have it: Sir Francis Drake. Am I right?

C'WOOD *(Dry)* You are as a matter of fact.

DOUG            You have the man to perfection; the old sea dog himself *(to TOMMY who has been convulsed throughout)* I don't see what you find so funny in Mr. Collingwood adopting such an apt disguise....

*(TOMMY turns away in hysterics)*

I apologise for him Mr. Collingwood. He is but an unsophisticated youth.

C'WOOD        I came to ask about Mr. Chateau. Where is he?

JOYCE         Migraine....Very bad. He gets them sometimes.

C'WOOD        Will we be seeing him at all?

JOYCE         Sorry, no. He's too ill. It's probably the emotion of doing his last performance.

C'WOOD        Has he seen the doctor?

STU            No need. He's got these knock-out drops for it. Me and Joe made sure he was tucked up in bed. He's asleep now.

C'WOOD        Damn! It would be tonight.... *(Pause)* Well you'll have to carry on as best you can.

DOUG         Never fret Mr. Collingwood. You can trust us to look after things.

STU            We won't let you down, Mr. Collingwood.

C'WOOD        *(Sardonically)* You've no idea how relieved I am to hear you say that.

*(COLLINGWOOD exits. The Band come to the end of the number they have started and the music stops.)*

DOUG         What a berk!

VERONICA     I don't see what you've got against him.

JOYCE         *(Surprised.)* Don't you, love? Hell hath no fury like a drummer scorned.

DOUG         He's Management.

VERONICA     Oh come on! He earns less than we do.

DOUG         Anyway he's a redcoat. I hate redcoats.

VERONICA     So what? He worked at Butlins for two seasons....

- DOUG            *(To the others)* Told you! Told you!..... I knew I was right. I can smell 'em.
- GEORGE        *(To VERONICA)* 'Ere, Ronnie do you want a drink?
- VERONICA      *(Walking over)* Yes; thanks. *(as GEORGE pours from the jug)* What is it?
- JOE             Yes. What exactly are we drinking?
- JOYCE &  
GEORGE        Champagne cocktails!
- JOE             Good God. Whose round was it?
- JOYCE          Courtesy of our Public.
- TALBOT         This old geezer put a bar order in for us; as many champagne cocktails as we can drink. All night!
- STU             Hey! Fantastic. *(Looking into the audience)* Who was it?
- DOUG           Oh, he's gone. That's why he bought us the booze. It seems that the tango got his woman going in a manner unprecedented. Apparently our sensual rhythms touched the secret spring that unlocks her desire.
- JOE             He's going to have a shock tomorrow when he gets the bill.
- STU             Well, that's not our problem. We'll be gone.
- GEORGE        *(To VERONICA)* So, Ronnie, how have you liked life at sea, then?
- VERONICA      I've found it a very fulfilling experience in a lot of ways; I can really identify with a lot of the material too, but....do you have to do all that really hackneyed stuff?
- JOE             You're joking. You know what our most requested number is?.....'Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree'.
- TALBOT         That, and 'Oomer Paloomer Blanker'.
- STU             I seriously reckon we could play the same half a I dozen numbers, over and over, all night, and they'd love it.
- (General agreement)*
- VERONICA      No. That's awful. You should only play what you believe in.

- DOUG Right fellers. New musical policy. We're doing all originals with lots of good solos. We open next week at Marble Arch Underground Station with a special evening show outside the Odeon.
- VERONICA People love your original stuff. They get tired of the same old rubbish.
- JOE Pigs never get tired of swill.
- STU That's true, you know. We had to play the Conga for twenty minutes last night, I timed it.
- DOUG Twenty minutes, that's nothing. You are speaking to one of the holders of the World Conga Endurance Record. I was with the Dave Reilly Band for a while, and we played this Young Conservative do near Stratford. Well we started the Conga about half ten, and of course all the little Herberts Joined In. Out of the room they go, and we could hear them thumping about for a bit and then nothing. Well, we kept on playing for twenty minutes or so to an empty room, then we decided we'd pack it in until they hove in sight. Then the bloke who'd booked us came back from the bog and told us to keep playing, so we did. He kept saying 'They'll be back in a minute' and rushing out to look for them..... We played the sodding Conga till one o'clock in the morning. They never came back, so we went home. Apparently they were seen heading north up the A46, but we never found out what happened.
- STU Have you noticed something? It's always the same idiot in the front?
- JOE It's true! Every time! Ever since I can remember, it's been the same man. It's like a nightmare. He never gets any older. I've seen the same stupid red face time after time.
- DOUG I know him....It's the same bloke who asks if he can play the drums.
- STU *(To DOUG, confidentially)* Here, you know that blonde, what's-her-name....Stephanie? Have you seen her tonight. She's over there with the Cowboy.
- DOUG *(Looking out at the Audience)* Jesus wept! She's wearing a Gymslip and pigtails; I can't take it....Look at those legs.... Christ, she looks about fourteen. She ought to be locked up.
- JOYCE You're the one who ought to be locked up. She probably is about fourteen.
- STU *(To VERONICA)* Ronnie; your friend's jumping up and down.
- VERONICA He wants us to play the next set.
- DOUG Big chance....

JOE            She's right. The Sam Chateau Band must go out in a blaze of glory. *(Imitating CHATEAU, with the others joining in)* Isn't that so?

*(He leafs through his music)*

Start with Eight; then Forty-seven, Ronnie.... and Thirty.. Then the usual end sequence.

*(VERONICA exits)*

TOMMY        Thirty? That's 'Eden' isn't it?.....That's a rotten number.....I hate playing that....Is there any more of that cocktail?

DOUG         *(Refilling his glass)* Hey, you be careful. It's not ginger beer shandy, you know.

TOMMY        I'm alright. I can play all this rubbish standing on my head.

TALBOT       *(To GEORGE)* He's well away.

JOE            All set?

*(General chorus of 'Okay's, 'Yes' etc.)*

Tommy, go and tell them we're ready

*(TOMMY exits rather unsteadily The others get another refill from their respective sources of drink.)*

GEORGE      Do you realise, this might be the last time we'll play these numbers.

TALBOT       *(Stands)* I'll give you a toast. To the Sam Chateau Band, the finest crowd of bastards you could wish to play with.

ALL            To us! *(They drink)*

DOUG         And here's to Uncle Sam our illustrious Fuhrer.

ALL            Good old Sam, *(etc)*

GEORGE      Hang on. Hang on...Joe, you stop looking sour and drink Sam's health.

JOE            I was just thinking...

TALBOT       That's your trouble ain't it? Thinking. All you Ikey Mo's think too much. That's why you get miserable.

GEORGE Joe, You may be the 'de facto' leader of our ensemble, at this point in time....

*(General cheers)*

But I am the oldest cunt in this band and I say that you must stop thinking and start drinking.

JOE *(Rising)* Alright... Samuel Kyron Rosenblatt.....L'Chaim.

ALL To Sam *(They drink.)*

STU Where's Tommy got to?

*(All look into the audience)*

JOYCE There he is, with that girl you were talking about.

STU He's got his arm round her waist....Hey, and he's whispering in her ear.

TALBOT She's enjoying it an' all.

DOUG *(Put out)* Dirty little beast.....Go and throw a bucket of cold water over 'em.

STU Here he comes.

*(TOMMY enters to general acclaim. DOUG does a drum roll and cymbal smash, 'Show' lighting comes up on the band. DOUG comes out to the mike.)*

DOUG Ladies and Gentlemen. The Sam Chateau Band are back to bring you music for dancing; but first, |I'd like to say what a great audience you've been and what fun we've had playing for you on this cruise *(to Band)* Don't you agree? *(to Audience)* They all agree. And Sam Chateau agrees too, but he can't be here tonight as he's rather under the weather.

JOE *(Whispers)* Get on with it!

DOUG And now by popular demand, we'll get on with it and introduce to you little Miss Personality herself, the warm and vibrant Veronica Sparkel

*(VERONICA enters, giving DOUG an icy stare She goes to the mike.)*

VERONICA Ladies and Gentlemen. I'd like to do a number by two of my favourite writers; Max Hutchinson and Judge Smith.

*(Half way through her intro DOUG brings in the band to start the number. VERONICA falters but finishes what she is saying.)*

It's called 'Airport Incident'.

*(VERONICA performs 'Airport Incident')*

**'AIRPORT INCIDENT'**

I was standing in the airport lounge  
 Waiting for your plane;  
 Wondering would we still be in love  
 When we met again.  
 A strangely familiar couple stood quite near.  
 As I wondered where I'd seen them,  
 could I help but overhear?

I heard them say goodbye.  
 She promised not to cry.  
 Just a small white lie.  
 "Look...  
 I should go; now...  
 'Ciao...."

They stood quite close to me.  
 It was sad to see  
 Her dumb misery.  
 What  
 Could she say?  
 She  
 Wanted him to stay.  
 Those words won't come.  
 All she said was "See you later, chum."

God knows who they were.  
 An undistinguished pair  
 And none of my affair.  
 But  
 I'd seen them before,  
 For sure.

Then your plane had arrived  
 And you were at my side,  
 But had our love survived?  
 I  
 Thought "How would things go?"  
 Then,  
 As we kiss hello,  
 I realize  
 I'd just seen us saying our goodbyes.

*(At the end of the song COLLINGWOOD enters carrying a clipboard, and stands by the side of the stage, joining in the applause enthusiastically. As VERONICA exits, he speaks in JOE's ear. JOE signals to DOUG indicating that COLLINGWOOD is going to make an announcement. DOUG does a drum roll and cymbal smash, and COLLINGWOOD starts to walk to the mike. Suddenly the band break into the classic, frantic, five-second intro for a slapstick comedian. COLLINGWOOD ignores them. The band finishes.)*

C'WOOD      Ladies and Gen.....

*(The Band plays the intro again, interrupting him. COLLINGWOOD turns angrily to the band.)*

Be quiet! *(Turns back to the mike)* Ladies and Gentlemen, our Grand Fancy Dress competition will be judged at eleven thirty this evening; so would all those taking part please give their names and collect their numbers from Mr. Wharburton, who is the Teddy Bear at the table to the left of the stage....I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate you all on making such a splendid effort with your costumes. You all look magnificent and I'm sure you're going to give Captain Robertson, Lieutenant Peavey and myself an impossible job when it comes to awarding the prizes.....

GEORGE      *(Muffled)* Here, Here. *(Claps slowly)*

C'WOOD      And we have some splendid prizes; so it's well worth entering. I'll just remind you what they are....

*(The Band play [straight] a fanfare, followed by a long drum roll and a dramatic chord Jangled on the piano. COLLINGWOOD consults his clipboard.)*

The Third prize is... four bottles of champagne!

*(Cymbal smash. Another dramatic chord.)*

The Second prize is... an entire case of champagne!

*(Cymbal smash. Another chord with the whole band joining in dramatically. COLLINGWOOD is pleased.)*

And our Grand First prize is.....

*(The Band cutes off dead. COLLINGWOOD reads from the clipboard)*

.....A Hobwood Chefmaster electric mixer/blender with liquidizer attachment!

*(The trumpet plays a descending series of 'wha-wha' notes, as in a Tom & Jerry cartoon. As COLLINGWOOD, annoyed, walks off stage, the band launches into the comic intro again. COLLINGWOOD stops to shout inaudibly at JOE then exits. DOUG comes forward to the mike)*

DOUG           What a barrel of laughs! A big hand for that Tudor tease; the Jacobean Joker himself; your own, your very own Mr. Collingwood!

*(Leads the applause)*

And now I'd like to introduce the members of the band

*(Turning to the band)* Joyce, I'd like you to meet Stuart. Joe, this is Talbot.....

*(Etc. etc. The Band start shaking hands with each other.)*

And now we all know each other a little better, we'll play, just for you, a romantic, slow foxtrot entitled 'Eden'.

*(DOUG returns to the drums and the Band start to play 'Eden', a slow instrumental. After a minute or so TOMMY stops playing and looks around with a glazed expression)*

TOMMY         Fuck this for a game of soldiers.....

*(He gets to his feet, turns his amp up full and suddenly smashes out a 'heavy metal' Hendrix style chord sequence. The Band are aghast but after a moment start to shout their encouragement, and then join in with enthusiasm. VERONICA enters and views the scene with horror. Over the band's accompaniment, TOMMY plays a blistering solo featuring every guitar-hero pose known to man; dancing and staggering about the stage and playing the guitar with his teeth, behind his head, and on his knees. It is most impressive, and ends with an extended climax where the guitar is rubbed across the mike stand, tossed into the air and set leaning against the amp in a storm of feedback as TOMMY swaggers off stage in the approved manner; only to appear a moment later being dragged, by the scruff of the neck, by COLLINGWOOD.)*

### **'TOMMY'S NUMBER'**

C'WOOD        Right. I've had enough! *(to TOMMY)* You're drunk! *(Cheers from the Band)* You're all drunk! *(More cheers)* Well that's it *(to TOMMY)* You're fired. Go to your quarters and stay there.

TOMMY        Shan't.

GEORGE       He ain't fired.

C'WOOD        Oh yes he is!

THE BAND *(In chorus)* Oh no he isn't!

C'WOOD Any more insubordination and you'll all be dismissed.

STU Big deal.

C'WOOD You'll never work for this company again.

DOUG You're right; they don't have bands on Jumbo Jets.

C'WOOD I'll have your cards withdrawn.

TALBOT Sod off, Popeye.....You can't do nothing. You're just a jumped up Redcoat.

VERONICA You're all so unprofessional!

*(Ironic cheers)*

DOUG Well of course you'd know all about that. Miss Showbusiness herself. The old trouper....How long have you been in the music business? Must be at least two months by now.... '

VERONICA Well I seem to have learnt more about it than you have, however long you've been dragging about in bands! *(To the band)* You're beyond belief....As soon as the boss is out of the way you start behaving like a bunch of naughty children. It's pathetic.

C'WOOD You should listen to her. She's got more talent and intelligence than the lot of you put together....Now sit down and get on with the job.

JOE Gentlemen. I think we've just resigned, haven't we?

*(General agreement)*

Yes... *(To Collingwood)* We just resigned.

*(The band start packing up their instruments)*

C'WOOD I'm giving you a direct order to continue playing....

*(They ignore him)*

Well you know what that is, don't you? 'I'm a duly appointed ships officer, and if you refuse to comply with a legal and direct order, then you're committing an act of mutiny.....

THE BAND *(Leaping about and shouting)* Mutiny! Mutiny!

C'WOOD        Be quiet. You're disturbing the passengers.

TALBOT        *(Mildly)* Fuck 'em.

C'WOOD        You have to play the rest of this evening. It's in your contract.

DOUG          *(Reasonably)* Look... I have a suggestion to make. Get hold of the contract. Fold it up very tight; and stick it up your bum. Alternatively *(Indicating VERONICA)* stick it up her bum. Whichever turns you on the most...

*(COLLINGWOOD punches DOUG in the stomach. DOUG collapses. STU jumps on COLLINGWOOD and VERONICA starts kicking STU. In the middle of the melee, a very loud alarm bell starts ringing, followed by repeated claxon blasts. The fight collapses.)*

C'WOOD        My God!

*(He exits at a run. The alarm bell continues to ring as DOUG is revived by JOYCE and the rest of the combatants pick themselves up. The bell and claxon stop, but in the distance, another bell continues to ring.)*

TALBOT        What's going on?

DOUG          *(Groaning)* Oh the bastard...

JOYCE         Are you alright?

GEORGE       *(Pointing)* Here, look, all the officers are leaving;

JOE            Shhh.

*(TALBOT starts to say something but is silenced by JOE.)*

Be quiet....Listen....

*(Pause. They all listen.)*

The engines have stopped.

TALBOT        We've probably hit an iceberg.

TOMMY        No, someone in the galley's dropped a tray of that bread pudding, and it's gone through the bottom.

STU            *(Looking out at the audience)* They all look a bit agitato. *(To DOUG)* Hadn't you better say something?

DOUG I can't. I'm winded.

*(TALBOT Sways up to the mike. Blows into it and taps it.)*

TALBOT Don't panic everybody. Keep calm. I know all the officers have gone, but don't panic. They're really bloody safe these modern boats . . . *(Looks around)* Oh, well what I mean is all boats are bloody safe really . . . Lifeboats most of all. So don't worry. Remember Dougie here is a qualified lifesaver . . . And remember you're all English people and you mustn't panic. Just keep repeating 'Women and Saxophonists First.' over and over . . . And now we'll play some soothing music.

*(The Band lurch into a drunken, ad hoc rendition of 'Nearer My God To Thee.' After a moment COLLINWOOD appears quietly. Something in his manner makes the band peter to a halt and wait for him to speak.)*

C'WOOD *(Speaking carefully)* I'm afraid I've got some bad news . . . There's been an accident . . . I'm afraid you must prepare yourselves for a shock . . . Mr Chateau . . . he fell overboard.

JOYCE Oh god.

GEORGE What's he say?

C'WOOD Mr. Chateau has fallen overboard.

STU Is he alright?

C'WOOD I'm afraid not. I'm sorry. He's dead.

GEORGE Sam? Sam's dead.?. . . Why?

C'WOOD He must have been taking a walk . . . someone saw him fall in.

DOUG Couldn't they get him out?

C'WOOD I'm afraid. . . I'm sorry this isn't very pleasant. He was hit by the propellers. He would have died at once. . . I really am most terribly sorry. Please excuse me, I must speak to the passengers. -

*(He puts on his peaked cap, forgetting he is still in costume, and goes to the mike.)*

Ladies and Gentlemen. May I have your attention. *(pause)* I'm afraid there has been a most unfortunate and tragic accident involving Mr. Sam Chateau our Band leader, and I therefore feel, and I'm sure you will agree; that we should . . . as a mark of respect; end the evening's festivities at this point. I'm sorry such a splendid evening has ended in this way . . . The Cocktail and

Tudor bars, and the Beerkeller will continue to be open and of course cabin service is operating as usual. I would, however, ask you not to go on deck for the next hour . . . Thank you.

*(Turns back to the band)*

If there's anything I can do, please let me know.

TALBOT It's all your bloody fault upsetting him in the first place! This would never 'ave 'appened if you'd 'ave left him alone, 'stead of poking your nose in where it wasn't wanted!

C'WOOD I'm sorry! What else can I say?

DOUG *(Quietly. Leading him away)* It's all right, mate, off you go....*(When they are away from the others)* Why can't we go on deck?

C'WOOD *(Quietly)* They're still bringing him up on to the aft deck. It's not very pretty..... the propellers...you understand?.....

*(COLLINGWOOD exits with VERONICA. There is a long pause. The band sit in silence.)*

GEORGE I remember when we played the Combined Charities Gala Ball in 1954, It was at the Albert Hall and they asked for Sam.....'cause we were the best... ..Twenty five of us, there were then; You remember Joe? We 'ad new outfits for it and it was lords and ladies and filmstars and actors.....and the Queen and Him, they were there, and they had to start the dancing. They had to dance before the others could start..... Well, we begun with 'Autumn Reverie' and I 'ad this opening figure to play, stood up. Like in duet with Sam's violin. And as we was playing it, the Queen and Him they stood up and come on to the floor; so it was just me and Sam and Them. An' she looked a picture; all in gold.....Then everyone come on.... You never saw such dresses and jewels. It was like a lot of flowers, all different colours, floating in a bucket, going round and round.....or like them little tropical fish what you see, all bright colours, swimming round and round.....And there was Sam; starting 'em and stopping 'em and making 'em laugh; like he did the gig every week. An' after; all the top people were lined up to be presented to the Queen; and Sam, he was there too, 'cause he was famous then; enough to be presented....An' he give 'er this low bow, and she smiled and said something, but we couldn't 'ear, 'cause we was looking from a balcony, see? But he told us what she said....She said 'I enjoyed your music very much,' There. That was Sam. 'I enjoyed your music very much,' *(Pause. Then anxiously)* But we never give 'im 'is silver violin! He never saw it..... He never got 'is little silver violin.....*(pathetically)* What we gonna do eh?

JOE *(Arm round GEORGE'S shoulder)* We'll give it to Lotti, eh?

GEORGE        What she want a silver violin for? That's Sam's that is!.. We'll throw it in the sea, eh?...Throw it in the sea for 'im..... so 'e can play for all them little fishes.... *(Starts to cry; his head in his hands.)*

TALBOT        Come on son.....come on off to bed.

*(TALBOT and JOE help GEORGE to his feet and lead him out.)*

JOE            *(Looking back over his shoulder)* Well, he stole the show again.

*(TALBOT, JOE and GEORGE exit)*

TOMMY        *(Rising)* I don't feel very well...

*(TOMMY Exits hurriedly.)*

STU            What a fucking mess. . . What happened, do you think?

DOUG         What. How he fell in you mean?

STU            Yes.

DOUG         Well, he was pissed for a start. He woke up and wanted some air, or maybe he was looking for the bog, I don't know.

STU            I mean, there's railings right round the edge. You can't just walk over.

DOUG         You mean, did he do it on purpose?

STU            Well you weren't there this afternoon. He was in a hell of a state.

JOYCE         I think Stu's right. He had nothing else really, except the band. What would he have done; gone home to Ventnor?

DOUG         He had a wife and kids and grandchildren; plenty of money.

JOYCE         He'd have hated it. Did you ever meet Lotti? She's very... old. Sort of little old lady. Sam was so young....

STU            But not young enough to keep up to date. That's why he had to pack it in. He couldn't do with being less than up to date.

JOYCE         Perhaps it's all for the best.

DOUG         That's as may be, but don't go around talking about suicide for heaven's sake.

JOYCE         I'm not a complete raving idiot, you know.

STU           *(indicating the audience)* Have you seen what's going on out there?

DOUG         I can see someone in a gorilla suit with a pile of table cloths... and a pirate with a couple of candelabra....

*(They all look out intently)*

                  They're all pinching stuff! '

JOYCE         Bloody hell. They're all at it... There's a woman there filling a suitcase with cutlery.

DOUG         Of course! That's it, isn't it. The end of the Hercules; finished, scrapped, after tomorrow.

STU           Do you see that bloke there with a screwdriver trying to get the light fitting off the wall? *(Pause)* No, he's broken it..... -

DOUG         So he's trying the next one

JOYCE         They're tearing the place to pieces.

DOUG         Here Joyce, keep an eye on the gear for a minute, would you. I don't want my kit ripped off. Who wants coffee?

*(DOUG exits.)*

JOYCE         I wonder if that mixer-blender they were going to give away is around somewhere.

STU           I'll just see how George is.

*(STU exits as TOMMY enters.)*

JOYCE         Feeling better, love?

TOMMY        Yeah. I was really sick, but I feel fine now..... It's very strong that stuff, isn't it?

*(TOMMY goes and sits on the floor by her piano-stool.)*

JOYCE         It is rather.

TOMMY        Oh, I'm really choked about Sam. I really liked him, you know. He was very nice to me.

- JOYCE He was very nice to me, too. *(Pause)* Where's that girl you were chatting up? I thought you were all fixed.
- TOMMY Oh her... I didn't really fancy her very much. She was stupid. But I thought it would be fun to give Doug the needle.
- JOYCE Oh you did that, alright... I thought you were rather shy with girls.
- TOMMY I am usually. I think I must have been a bit drunk.
- JOYCE Just a bit probably *(pause)* ..... What sort of girls do you like?
- TOMMY Oh I don't know: all kinds.
- JOYCE But no one special.
- TOMMY No, not yet... What about you?
- JOYCE Oh I'm like you, I like all kinds of fellas; but I'm not very shy, you see; So... I suppose I'm not what you'd call a very good girl.
- TOMMY Er... but I thought you and Doug...
- JOYCE Sometimes. Sometimes not. Sometimes it's someone else. *(Pause)* Sometimes it used to be Sam *(Pause)* You look a bit shocked.
- TOMMY No... It's just... well, wasn't he a bit old?
- JOYCE He was a charming lover. Being young isn't very important...but it's very nice of course *(She ruffles his hair)*. You'll find out....It's odd. I'm going to cry a lot tomorrow, but I'm alright now.
- TOMMY Did you have someone special?
- JOYCE I did: Once upon a time; someone very special.
- TOMMY Someone in the band?
- JOYCE No; he was a violinist, but a classical violinist. Very brilliant. We were at music college together in Manchester. I did okay but he won every prize in sight. We were living together and we made all these plans...He was going to be a great soloist and I was going to be his accompanist. We got an agent, and Simon went down to London to fix things up and he never came back. I never saw him again. He never phoned or wrote or anything. I'll never forget sitting by that phone waiting for him to call and watching the hands on the clock go round.

(She turns to the piano and plays 'THE CLOCK ON THE WALL')

**'THE CLOCK ON THE WALL'**

The clock on the wall says quarter to two.  
I should go out, but I've nothing to do,  
And I'm just waiting for you to call.  
It looks like we'll have a fine afternoon....  
I'd better say; I expect you'll call soon  
And you haven't forgotten at all. '

You promised I'd hear from you midday today,  
Because I'd be here on my own.  
The clock on the wall says just after three...  
I wish you know what you're doing to me!  
As I sit very close to the phone.

I'm glad that no-one can see how I am....  
It's just one call! And he's just one man!  
So just five minutes more, then I'll go.  
The clock on the wall says quarter to four.  
I'd be a fool if I wait any more...  
Oh! I said that an hour ago.

The afternoon sunlight is turning to dust,  
And shadows grow thick in the hall.  
The clock on the wall says he doesn't care,  
I phone my friend, but she isn't there,  
So I talk to the clock on the wall.

TOMMY      What had happened?

JOYCE      I found out later that his agent had offered him a first violin desk with the Santa Monica Symphony, and he'd just gone off there and then.. He could have been a star... I suppose he still could... *(Pause)* So could you for that matter. You were fantastic tonight! Quite incredible.

TOMMY      Just the booze, I suppose.

JOYCE      Rubbish. I felt really proud of you. I'll throw my knickers on stage any time you play like that. Like Doug said, you don't need groupies when I'm around. *(Pause)* Tommy?

TOMMY      Yes

JOYCE      would you like to come to my cabin tonight?

TOMMY        *(Very surprised)* Er... Yes. I would. I'd like that... Thank you... why me... now?

JOYCE        Well, because I rather fancy you; and because I might not see you again; and because you deserve a treat; and because I've had quite a lot to drink; and because I'm going to wake up in the middle of the night and think about Sam; and I'll think of some other reasons on the way.

*(JOYCE rises and starts to exit)*

TOMMY        Oh, hang on...

*(TOMMY hurriedly picks up his guitar and case and follows her.)*

JOYCE        God in heaven, you're not going to need that, are you?

*(They exit hand in hand. Lights fade to blackout.)*

END OF SCENE

## ACT TWO SCENE THREE

*(The next day, early afternoon. The stage is set as before. GEORGE and TOMMY casually dressed; are in the middle of a discussion.)*

GEORGE *(After some thought)*.... All right, but we've gotta get a few things sorted out. Now we ain't calling ourselves anything stupid like the Electric Bananas or the Pyscadaelic Ravers or nothing like that. It's got to be something dignified.... And I ain't growing me 'air or wearing any nancy outfit.... An' another thing. It's got to be acoustic. We can't 'ave that style music played on one of them cheese slicers.

TOMMY I haven't got a decent acoustic.

GEORGE Now listen. I got a mate whose got a guitar very similar to mine. Now 'e might be prepared to lend it; 'cause he don't play no more.

*(DOUG, STU, JOE and TALBOT enter)*

TOMMY But the neck's so wide on yours. I don't reckon I could play fast enough.

GEORGE You're young enough to learn new tricks but I ain't. I couldn't squeeze a fart out of one of them electric toasters.

TOMMY You've got to move with the times a bit, George.

DOUG You two still at it?

TOMMY No..... Here, we're going to be a double act!

STU Who?

TOMMY Me and George

STU 'Struth!

TOMMY We're going to do a guitar duo. Do George's numbers and some Django stuff.

DOUG Well that's great! Best of luck Where you going to work, wine bars and places like that?

GEORGE We think we can do a bit better than that.

TOMMY *(Enthusiastic)* I've got this mate, see, who's really quite high up in a big rock agency. He wasn't able to help me get into a band, but I did some record sessions for him and he's a nice bloke. Anyway a lot of these big rock bands

don't like to have a support band on with them when they play concerts. So usually they have a folk singer or something as an opener. But folk singers are really boring and I reckon that we'd go down really well with a rock audience. So that's what we're going to try to do; opening act at rock concerts.

STU Great idea.

JOE You've got it all worked out, haven't you.

TALBOT 'Ere George, you'll have to grow your hair an get a leather jacket.

GEORGE Predictable. That's your trouble, mate, you're fucking predictable.

TOMMY What are the rest of you going to do?

JOE Well I'm going home. Maybe for good. I get home last time, my little Shena says 'Hello Daddy, when are you going?'.... I know some people and I can get some arranging work and sessions for the local TV..... I dare say I'll get by.

TALBOT It's all right for some. These talented buggers.

TOMMY *(To TALBOT)* What about you?

TALBOT Go down Archer Street, I suppose. See what's going. Do they still have Archer Street? Is the Club still there?

GEORGE Just about.

TALBOT Well, I'll have five bobs worth of ad. In the Melody Maker, and see what happens. 'Able Saxophonist. Alto/Tenor/Clari. Read/Busk. Gigs, residences. No groups'.

STU It's more like five quid now, but still.....

*(JOYCE enters.)*

TOMMY *(To TALBOT)* Could you get another cruise?

JOYCE God, the very idea.....

TALBOT That's all gone now isn't it. How many boats with bands are there still sailing from England. A dozen?.... ii you're lucky. And most of them are tatty like this one. No, that's all over.

TOMMY There'll be others though; you know, in the future, you'll see.....

*(The BAND play and sing a reprise of 'Geraldo's Navy' with some different lyrics.)*

**'GERALDO'S NAVY - REPRISE'**

**And when there are  
Hotels on Mars,  
We'll play the tourist routes between the stars.  
With saxophone  
Hydraulically blown,  
With nuclear drums and laser-beam trombone,  
Eight to the bar.  
The seas of space are Milky Wavey,  
But we'll survive, Geraldo's Navy.**

**(Solo) When the first submarine liner  
First comes up for air.  
(Chorus) We'll be there. We'll be there,  
(Solo) And when new giant silver airships  
Fly quietly everywhere,  
(Chorus) We'll be there. We'll be there.  
(Solo) Another Sam will strike up the band  
with space-age savoir faire.**

**In every key  
From A to G  
We read or husk in four part harmony.  
Costa Del Sol  
To either Pole  
We foxtrot, quickstep, waltz and rock 'n roll  
Across the sea.  
From Joseph Strauss, through to Count Basie,  
We play them all; Geraldo's Navy.**

*(At the end of the number the band start packing up their instruments and putting-- them in their cases so that when they eventually exit the stage is as it was at the beginning of the show.)*

STU Look, who's looking after..... You know.....

GEORGE I'm doing all that. They're very organised for it here. They got a special little room, you know, and there's a proper coffin and flowers and everything. Not very grand, but it'll do for the time being. I phoned his son this morning on the radio telephone they've got, an he's taking over when we arrive.

DOUG Blimey, George, I don't half feel guilty. I never thought of doing any of that.

GEORGE        Wouldn't 'ave let you. That's my job. I was with 'im the longest.

TOMMY        Should we sort of look in? Pay our respects.

GEORGE        Can if you want. I doubt if he'll notice if you don't. But I hope you're all coming to the funeral.

*(Chorus of assent. VERONICA enters.)*

JOE            We'd better get this stuff cleared up.

*(The BAND continue to pack up the stands and equipment.)*

JOYCE        *(To VERONICA)* Hello, love.

VERONICA    Hello. *(Pause)* Anything I can do to help?

TALBOT       No, ta, love. It's quicker for us to do it.

STU           Christ, I feel rough.

TALBOT       I know what you mean. I've got a mouth like the bottom of a bird cage.

DOUG        *(Looking at him closely)* You know you're right. You have got a mouth like the bottom of a bird cage.

JOYCE        *(To VERONICA)* I s'pose it's back to the theatre for you.

VERONICA    Well no, actually. Not for a bit, anyway.

JOYCE        What about the Women's Drama Army?

VERONICA    You see Paul, you know, Mr. Collingwood; he's just heard he's got the job of Director of Entertainments on a cruise ship in the Med. It's quite a big Greek ship, and he's in charge of booking all the acts; so he's going to offer me a job; a solo singing spot. So it would be silly of me to turn it down..... wouldn't it.

TALBOT       Right. That's it. Who's for a drink?

*(General assent. The Band, except for TOMMY and JOYCE, start to exit carrying their instruments in their cases.)*

DOUG        *(Awkwardly)* Here, er.... Veronica. Will you... Can I buy you a drink?

VERONICA    *(Surprised)* Okay.... thanks.

DOUG           *(As they exit)* I'm sorry..... you know; about last night, eh?

*(DOUG and VERONICA exit. Pause. TOMMY and JOYCE are alone)*

TOMMY       Hello.

JOYCE       Hello, love.

TOMMY       I think I've got a name for the act.

JOYCE       What's that?

TOMMY       I thought about just calling us.....'Hot Club'...

JOYCE       Oh that's good. That's a good name.

TOMMY       Yeah... Where are you going to be?

JOYCE       Oh, here and there I'll go and see my mum for a blt.

TOMMY       Will I see you again?

JOYCE       Perhaps... One of these days. Bound to in the long run. *(Pause, then gently)*  
You mustn't count on it, though.

TOMMY       No..... I understand .... *(Pause)* Will you write?

JOYCE       Probably

TOMMY       Hey.... It was smashing last night. Knockout.

JOYCE       Glad you enjoyed it.

*(TOMMY looks a bit worried)*

Oh it's all right, I enjoyed it too.

TOMMY       I can't stop thinking about it;

JOYCE       My god, What have I done? I've turned him into a sex maniac..... Go on down  
and have your drink. I'll see you before you go.

*(DOUG enters, carrying two drinks)*

DOUG       Ah, young Thomas. There's a drink at the bar for you.

TOMMY       Ta, but I don't think I could.

DOUG This is an Uncle Dougie special. You go on down; hold your nose and knock it back. You'll feel no pain thereafter; you see,

TOMMY *(Rather unwillingly)* Alright.

*(TOMMY exits)*

DOUG He must have been paralytic last night.

JOYCE Yes.

DOUG I've brought you a drink. *(Hands it to her.)*

JOYCE *(Slightly surprised)* Oh; Ta.

DOUG Look; I've been having a word with Stu, and I was wondering, you see, 'cause there's a lot of work up there. I mean quite good work; the Giaconda Club for starters; 'Cause I'm pretty well known now in the North, and I reckon there's probably about six months of residences we could pick up dead easy.... And the money's pretty good...

JOYCE Doug. What exactly are you talking about?

DOUG What I mean is, would you like to do a Trio?

JOYCE With you and Stu.

DOUG Yes.

JOYCE *(Warily)* On what sort of basis?

DOUG Ah well, that's exactly what I wanted to talk to you about..... Have you really enjoyed yourself this trip? Not the last bit.... Sam; of course, but.....

JOYCE I've been fine.

DOUG Oh yes, I've been fine, too.... But what I mean is.....

JOYCE You want us to start again.

DOUG Er. How would you feel about that?

JOYCE I thought you were enjoying your freedom far too much..... How many affairs have you had this last month?

DOUG Oh well, you know how it is. You don't want to hear all that sordid stuff. They weren't important. None of them meant anything; not like you do.

JOYCE            How many? *(Pause)* Come here, where I can look at you.

*(DOUG comes and stands close to her.)*

Ten?..... Five?..... Three?..... Oh Dougie; didn't you have any?..... My poor baby. Not one?

DOUG            Yes I did have one!.... Well, I would have done, but I'd had a lot to drink, and, well you know how it is sometimes.....

*(She holds out her arms to him and they embrace. He kneels by the side of the piano stool resting his head on her chest. She strokes his hair.)*

What about you. Did you have lots of adventures?

JOYCE            No

DOUG            None at all?

JOYCE            None at all.

DOUG            Scouts honour?

JOYCE            Scouts honour.

DOUG            *(Pleased)* Ah, but plenty tried, eh?..... *(Proudly)* Yes, I'll bet..... lots of 'em. They all fancy Joyce..... Yes, they all fancy my Joycey..... Hey. You're going to do down a bomb at the Giaconda! You'll be a sort of mother figure for all the poufs.

JOYCE            Thanks very much!

DOUG            No, I mean like Judy Garland.

JOYCE            That's a bit better, I suppose.

DOUG            *(Getting up.)* I'd better go back to the bar for a minute, actually. I'm having a drink with that Ronnie. She's a nice kid really.... Not my type of course; a trifle immature and impressionable; still, see you in a bit, eh?

*(He exits cheerfully. Left alone, JOYCE plays and sings a brief reprise of the opening number 'Floating Away'.)*

**'FLOATING AWAY - REPRISÉ'**

**In the cabin the crew avoids,  
Lies the trunk uninsured at Lloyds.**

**You marked it 'Not wanted on the voyage' and fled.  
So, your past's still safely stored  
And you're overboard  
Instead.**

**Floating away.  
Floating away,  
Floating away. Away. Away. Away. Away.**

*(During the song the cast enter one by one, to take their bows and join in the song.)*

THE END