

Poor Fool, He Makes Me Laugh

Andrew Lloyd Webber

Poor fool, he makes me laugh!
Haha,
Haha!
Time I tried to get a better better half !
COUNTESS AND CHORUS
Poor fool, he doesn't know!
Hoho,
Hoho! etc.
If he knew the truth, he'd never, ever go!
(Suddenly from nowhere, we hear the voice of the
PHANTOM)
PHANTOM'S VOICE
Did I not instruct that Box Five was to be kept empty?
MEG (terrified)
He's here: the Phantom of the Opera . . .
(General reaction of bewilderment.
CHRISTINE looks fearfully about her)
CHRISTINE
It's him . . . I know it . . . it's him . . .
CARLOTTA (Finding a scapegoat in CHRISTINE,
hisses at her)
Your part is silent, little toad!
(But the PHANTOM has heard her)
PHANTOM'S VOICE
A toad, madame? Perhaps it is you
who are the toad . . .
(Again general unease. CARLOTTA and the
CONDUCTOR confer and pick up from the opening of the
scene)
CARLOTTA (As the COUNTESS)
Serafimo, away with this pretence!
You cannot speak, but kiss me in my croak!
(Instead of singing she emits a great croak like a toad. A
stunned silence. CARLOTTA is as amazed as anyone but
regains herself and continues. More perturbing,
however, is a new sound: the PHANTOM is laughing -
quietly at first, then more and more hysterically)
CARLOTTA (as the COUNTESS)
Poor fool, he makes me laugh -
Hahahahaha!
Croak, croak, croak,
croak, croak, croak, etc.
(As before. The PHANTOM'S laughter rises. The
croaking continues as the chandelier's lights blink on
and off. The PHANTOM'S laughter, by this time
overpowering, now crescendos into a great cry):
PHANTOM'S VOICE
Behold! She is singing to bring down the
chandelier!
(CARLOTTA looks tearfully up at the MANAGERS ' box
and shakes her head)
(ANDRE and FIRMIN hurry out of the box onto the
stage. PIANGI ushers the now sobbing CARLOTTA
offstage, while the MANAGERS tackle the audience)
FIRMIN
Ladies and gentlemen, the performance will
continue in ten minutes' time . . .

(He addresses Box Five, keeping one eye on the chandelier as it returns to normal)
. . . when the role of the Countess will be sung by Miss Christine Daae.

ANDRE (improvising)

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

(to the CONDUCTOR)

Maestro - the ballet - now!

(The MANAGERS leave, the stage is cleared and music starts again. The BALLET GIRLS enter as a sylvan glade flies in. They begin the Dance of the Country Nymphs. Upstage, behind the drop, a series of threatening shadows of the PHANTOM. MEG is aware of them and dances out of step. When this culminates in one gigantic, oppressive, bat-like shadow, the garotted body of JOSEPH BUQUET falls onto the stage, causing the sylvan glade to fly out. Pandemonium.)

CHRISTINE (calling for help)

Raoul! Raoul!

(RAOUL runs on stage and embraces her)

RAOUL (to CHRISTINE, leading her away)

Christine, come with me . . .

CHRISTINE

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

(CHRISTINE and RAOUL hurry off)

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

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