

BEPPO 1

Florida Repertory Theater - License 502532
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ACT TWO

(Ten minutes later. In the darkness we hear BEPPO's huge tenor voice singing the last thirty seconds of the aria "Recondita Armonia" from Puccini's Tosca. The sound is magnificent and it fills the theatre.)

(An instant after the last note, while it is still reverberating, the lights pop on and we see BEPPO with his arms outstretched in the gesture of a born performer. SAUNDERS and MAX are looking at him, their mouths open in astonishment.)

(By this time, the luggage cart is on stage, having been pulled on by BEPPO during the ten minutes between the acts.)

Start

BEPPO. Good enough?

SAUNDERS. Yes. Yes, I'd say that's good enough.

MAX. And you're the bellhop?

BEPPO. That's right.

(During the following, BEPPO starts to take the luggage off the luggage cart.)

SAUNDERS. And you understand what happened.

BEPPO. Yah. Signor Merelli, he leave-a-da-concert, and I'm a-gonna sing for him.

MAX. Exactly.

BEPPO. Ha haaaa! That's a-good! I like to sing in front of people. It make them happy. It give a-them pleasure.

SAUNDERS. Good –

BEPPO. I was gondoliere in Venezia, eh? Every day I pole a-da boat through the mud of my country and I sing

BEPPO. (*singing*)

O SOLE MIO –

SAUNDERS. Excellent. Now I said that we lost a singer, but in fact we lost *two* singers, so you and Max will carry the entire weight of the concert. You’ll be our soloists.

BEPPO. I like that. “Soloist.”

SAUNDERS. So the idea is that you will each start out with a few solo numbers, then you’ll join together in the second half and sing some duets – if you know them, of course.

BEPPO. Like what?

MAX. Uh, “O Mimì,” “Sì pel ciel,” the *Don Carlo* –

BEPPO. Ha ha! Of course I know. Are you joking? That’s a-my life. My blood. You want to see?

(He pulls out a knife.)

I show you the blood in my veins, it has a-music inside!
 You see the notes a-go by that have come a-from my heart!

MAX. We got it –

SAUNDERS. (*taken aback at the knife*) Thank you – Mr. uh...?

BEPPO. Beppo. Just Beppo. My father name is a-Beppo, too. And his father. And my uncle. All in *Venezia*, the greatest city in the world, the town of my people, my soul, my family, my life’s own –

SAUNDERS. *I understand!* Now listen to me. The concert starts in less than an hour, and we’re on a *tight schedule*.

BEPPO. Tight is good. I like to *do* things *fast*. Bim-Bam. Like American movie.

SAUNDERS. Good –

BEPPO. I like a-Robin Hood with a-Douglas Fairbank. *Wsh!*
Wsh!

MAX. I like that one, too!

BEPPO. He is man of honor, like me. He inspire people who need his help because honor is the most important

thing a man can possess. If you have a-no honor, you have *nothing*.

SAUNDERS. *Thank* you. So here's the plan: you take a shower, freshen up and shave off that moustache –

BEPPO. (*at the food buffet*) Is this food a-for me?

MAX. Help yourself.

SAUNDERS. But are you *listening?!*

BEPPO. (*mouth full*) I hear everything.

SAUNDERS. So you'll freshen up, with Max to help you –

MAX. I'll be here the whole time, don't worry.

BEPPO. But Mr. Merelli, he may not like that I take his place, eh?

SAUNDERS. Don't worry, he owes me one, believe me.

BEPPO. Because he leave the concert.

MAX & SAUNDERS. Right.

BEPPO. "Tito Merelli." Ha! I see his name on poster. And I hear of him. He is big singer. He is good, uh, how you say, *a-simbolo* for the people of my country –

SAUNDERS. Good –

BEPPO. Italia, the land of my father, the land of honor, the land of –

SAUNDERS. *Would you get moving!* We have a *time* problem!

BEPPO. I *hate* time problem, they are bad! A man should relax and have a good life. Live a-well, eat a-well, and enjoy his wife. I had a good wife, she pass away. I love her so deep. In bed she was like machine, her pistons pumping like –

SAUNDERS. *WOULD YOU JUST STOP TALKING!*

BEPPO. He is always like this?

MAX. He's my father-in-law.

BEPPO. I pity you.

MAX. Thanks.

SAUNDERS. *Would you please just go!*

BEPPO. Okay, okay! I'm a-move! Wait! Do I get paid for this?

Stop