

STILL LIFE

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

A play by Phil Lewis

This play requires permission to perform and a performance fee

SHORTENED **SAMPLE** VERSION

For full version please contact:

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Approx. 7 minutes.

CAST:

MARC: 30+

WOMAN Any age – non-speaking

SET:

Open stage.

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

((OPENING MUSIC.

LIGHTS UP ON MARC ENTERING. HE IS DRESSED IN A BLACK HAT, STRIPPED SHIRT AND MAKE UP OF A MIME ARTIST.

HE STARTS TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE AUDIENCE USING MIME. ASKING HOW THEY ARE AND HE IS FINE, ETC. HE CAN MOVE IN AMONGST THE AUDIENCE.

AFTER A WHILE HE GIVES UP AND SPEAKS. HE CAN HAVE A STRONG, ACCENT – NORTHERN, SCOTTISH, WELSH, ETC)

MARC: What's the point of keeping that up, eh?

God gave us a voice and a brain, we really should try to use it occasionally. It's a pity some of the public I meet don't follow that rule.

It's extremely difficult to please and entertain people these days. It's only the children that still find my act funny. Adults and adolescents have seen so much TV, movies, DVDs that they think they've seen it all. It's only children that have the limited life experience to appreciate my line of work.

(DURING HIS MONOLOGUE HE CAN DO SOME SIMPLE STREET MAGIC AND JUGGLING WHILE HE IS TALKING)

Magic has gone out of the all round entertainer. You have to be an all-rounder, one trick ponies don't last in this business. I do conjuring, magic, tight rope walking, mime.

When I'm still and not responding – in my zone, people think I can't hear and see. They say the most remarkable things, as if I couldn't hear them. Some of them quite rude. I've a series of mimed put-downs. Subtle, but they get the point.

Also, the questions I get asked. They all think I haven't heard them before. Things like....

Do you need a silencer if you are going to shoot a mime?

If the cops arrest a mime, do they have to tell him he has the right to remain silent?

Is it true that cannibals don't eat clowns because they taste funny?

Do mimes watch silent movies?

But this is a dying art, you know. Mainly because there's little money in it. Irregular income at the vagaries of strangers who are willing to part with small coins at whim. It's a talented and skilled way of begging. Nothing more.

(A WOMAN ENTERS AND WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE. HE FREEZES, ONLY HIS EYES MOVING AS IF WATCHING HER BEHIND HIS BACK. SHE EXITS. WHEN SHE HAS GONE HE RESUMES AS IF NOTHING HAS HAPPENED)

People are used to being entertained for free. They watch TV, although a license fee is paid it's soon forgotten that there is a cost. People assume it's for free, why pay money to a street artist? The only benefit is that people are UNUSED to live performance. That can be a trigger to make them donate.

People on the street can be wonderfully generous, or horribly cruel. Sometimes hurling insults like, "Get a proper job." I react with the heavily crestfallen clown face (DEMONSTRATES) and sometimes they can change their minds. But not often enough.

There are times when the weather is nice and I'm out in the fresh air doing the thing I love. People enjoy it too and throw money. But there are other times when it's cold and wet and the hearts of the public reflect that too.

I have a three year old son and wonder what the child will be when he grows up. Not like his father. No money, or security in the street entertainment business.

I'm sure that if those people passing by knew how much me, my wife and child needed every penny, they'd give more.

I once had a dream that my son and I could do a double act. Double the empathy. It's taken me over ten years to learn my carft. Do I want my son to have to go through that too?

When I look at the state of the business nowadays, I wouldn't want to subject my son that that level of disappointment and hardship. He deserves a better future, a better life.

(THE WOMAN RETURNS ACROSS THE STAGE. THIS TIME MARC FOLLOWS BEHIND HER AND MIMICS AND EXAGGERATES HER WALK. SHE IS UNAWARE. SHE EXITS THE OTHER SIDE. MARC GRINS)

I love doing that.

EDITED