

Act 1**Scene 1****THE OPENING****#1 – Magic To Do**

At rise, the stage is filled with smoke and in total darkness except for moving hands. The hands are illuminated by a light curtain consisting of ungelled flashlights focused directly upwards mounted on the stage floor which keeps the stage in virtual darkness, so that the writhing hands exist in a strange macabre limbo.

An orchestral vamp is accompanied by a low, crooning vocal wail.

Then, from the center of the rotating hands, the face of the LEADING PLAYER appears and is hit by a spotlight. HE crosses the light curtain and moves downstage to the audience and sings.

As the song progresses, we can see a bare stage populated by a GROUP of ACTORS. Their costumes are of an undetermined period. But THEY are definitely PLAYERS ... a troupe... a theatrical caravan of some kind.

One by one, THEY come through the light curtain, and are hit by spotlights; until finally, THEY all come forward and join in the song.

ALL

WOO...

WOO...

WOO...

WOO...

LEADING PLAYER

JOIN US, LEAVE YOUR FIELD TO FLOWER

JOIN US, LEAVE YOUR CHEESE TO SOUR

JOIN US, COME AND WASTE AN HOUR OR TWO

DOO-DLE-EE-DOO

JOURNEY, JOURNEY TO A SPOT EX-

CITING, MYSTIC AND EXOTIC

JOURNEY THROUGH OUR ANECDOTIC REVUE

WE'VE GOT MAGIC TO DO, JUST FOR YOU

WE'VE GOT MIRACLE PLAYS TO PLAY

WE'VE GOT PARTS TO PERFORM, HEARTS TO WARM

(LEADING PLAYER)

KINGS AND THINGS TO TAKE BY STORM
AS WE GO ALONG OUR WAY.....

FASTRADA

INTRIGUE, PLOTS TO BRING DISASTER

BERTHE

HUMOR, HANDLED BY A MASTER

TWO GIRLS

ROMANCE, SEX PRESENTED PASTORALLY

LEADING PLAYER

DEE-DLE-EE-DEE

LEWIS

ILLUSION, FANTASY TO STUDY

CHARLES

BATTLES, BARBAROUS AND BLOODY

LEADING PLAYER

JOIN US, SIT WHERE EV'RYBODY CAN SEE

(The remaining PLAYERS step through the light curtain and THEY ALL sing)

ALL

WE'VE GOT MAGIC TO DO, JUST FOR YOU
WE'VE GOT MIRACLE PLAYS TO PLAY
WE'VE GOT PARTS TO PERFORM, HEARTS TO WARM
KINGS AND THINGS TO TAKE BY STORM
AS WE GO ALONG OUR WAY....

(The song develops into a dance of sorts. It involves all kinds of magic tricks, etc., all the things that PLAYERS have ever done to attract and hold an audience)

WE'VE GOT MAGIC TO DO, JUST FOR YOU
WE'VE GOT MIRACLE PLAYS TO PLAY
WE'VE GOT PARTS TO PERFORM, HEARTS TO WARM
KINGS AND THINGS TO TAKE BY STORM
AS WE GO ALONG

WOMEN 1, MEN 1

WE'VE GOT
MAGIC TO DO
JUST FOR YOU

MEN 2

OUR WAY
WE'VE GOT
MAGIC TO DO

WOMEN 2

MAGIC TO DO
MAGIC TO DO
MAGIC TO PLAY

(WOMEN 1, MEN 1)

WE'VE GOT MAGIC TO DO
JUST FOR YOU
WE'VE GOT MAGIC TO DO
JUST FOR YOU

(MEN 2)

JUST FOR YOU
WE'VE GOT MAGIC TO DO
JUST FOR YOU
WE'VE GOT MAGIC TO DO

(WOMEN 2)

WE'VE GOT FOIBLES
AND FABLES
TO PORTRAY

ALL

AS WE GO ALONG OUR WAY...
HEY...

(After the song, the music continues under)

#1a – Magic Underscore #1**LEADING PLAYER**

This evening, for your entertainment pleasure, we present our most mysterious and miraculous tale. A stunning example of ...

A PLAYER

Magic!

A PLAYER

And merriment!

LEADING PLAYER

You will witness acts of --

A PLAYER

Lust!

A PLAYER

Murder!

A PLAYER

Holy war!

LEADING PLAYER

And a climax, ladies and gentleman, a climax justly famous throughout the civilized world!

(A PLAYER jumps onstage from a hidden platform on the side of the stage. HE has a lighted torch in his hand)

Not now...later...

#1b – Magic Underscore #2

(The PLAYER with the torch goes. The LEADING PLAYER continues)

(LEADING PLAYER)

Our tale today concerns the firstborn son of Charlemagne...and is entitled...

(The PLAYERS pull out a large cloth, which has been concealed in one of their costumes. It reads: PIPPIN: HIS LIFE AND TIMES)

PLAYERS

Pippin!...

OTHER PLAYERS

...His Life and Times!

LEADING PLAYER

But, before we begin, let me assure you that what you are about to see is the true life story of Pippin. You see there have been many misconceptions about Pippin...one that he was...

A PLAYER

A hunchback...

LEADING PLAYER

Or that he was...

A PLAYER

Enormously tall...

LEADING PLAYER

Or that he was...

A PLAYER

Left-handed, except for bowling...

LEADING PLAYER

But I beg you, cast all previous misconceptions aside, and accept what we enact for you today.

(Pause)

The life of Pippin begins...

(There is a slap and a cry. A WOMAN PLAYER is raised above the sign with a bundle in her arms)

Pippin, as a child, showed tremendous thirst for knowledge...

(The WOMAN PLAYER is lowered, and the SMALLEST MALE PLAYER is held up reading a small book)

Immersed in these pursuits, the years went by quickly.

(The PLAYER is lowered and PIPPIN is raised above the sign. HE is reading a large book. HE looks out at the audience and smiles as HE is lowered behind the sign)

CHARLES

Fall to, men. Eat. Drink. Rape.
Give thanks to God who granted this...
victory.

SOLDIERS

AND THEN THE MEN GO MARCHING
OUT INTO THE FRAY
CONQUERING THE ENEMY AND
CARRYING THE DAY
HARK! THE BLOOD IS POUNDING
IN OUR EARS
JUBILATIONS! WE CAN HEAR A
GRATEFUL NATION'S CHEERS!

(PIPPIN is alone on stage. HE moves among dismembered body parts)

PIPPIN

(Seeing a severed head)

I suppose it's a little late to wonder who this man was.

HEAD

It is a little late...but as long as you're interested. I'm just a common man, a Visigoth, but a good man...a very good man.

PIPPIN

You're also a very lucky man. You've had the privilege of dying for your king.

HEAD

Words fail me.

PIPPIN

You know of course, dying in battle like this, you'll be going straight to Valhalla...or wherever you Infidels go, won't you?

HEAD

Absolutely. The King has assured us personally. But this waiting around's got me edgy.

PIPPIN

This wasn't your first battle, was it?

HEAD

No. My third.

PIPPIN

Well then maybe you could tell me, how did this battle compare with your other two?

HEAD

Well, unless you get killed, one battle's pretty much like another.