

# THE MAN IN THE MAN-MADE MOON

(The Man in the Man-Made Moon was premiered in February, 1956. The first man-made moon was launched in 1957...thus the "history" is a prediction, not an actual account of what happened. The author takes no responsibility for the historical veracity of the events herein described.)

## 1. OVERTURE

### 2. THE HISTORY OF OUR TIMES

AMATEUR ASTRONOMER: Now it came to pass that men on earth, in order to spy on other men on earth, invented a sphere which, when released from the Earth, revolved around it as a new satellite. This new man-made moon was dispatched for reconnaissance purposes.

CHORUS: There's a man-made moon in the sky!

A,A.: But, as the man-made moon ascended, people became curious.

CHO: Is there a man in the man-made moon?

A.A. Among the curious was the Man in the Moon.

CHO: Yes! There's a man in the man-made moon! ( enter MITMMM)

### 3. CONCERNING THE NEUROSES OF SIBLING RIVALRY

A.A. And it came to pass that the Man in the Moon became very jealous of the Man in the Man-Made Moon.

MAN IN THE MOON:

From the beginning, the only man

Was I, in the total celestial plan.

With never a rival in all the night sky,

The ruler of heaven by evening was I.

When I crossed the horizon in my bright garb of red,

The proud lights of evening all faded and fled.

The stars of the Archer would make their departure

With Scorpion, Sea-goat and Fishes.

The Beehive in Cancer with honey would answer my most Epicurean wishes.

Enthroned at the zenith, majestic in white,

I'd smile, and in smiling, make day out of night.

I'd banish Orion, tame Leo the Lion, and when I'd the whim to be vain,

My slaying of Taurus would win me a chorus

Of plaudits from ladies in Spain.

And once, every month, when my travels were done,

I'd sleep with sweet Virgo. Don't tell anyone!

With never a rival in all the night sky,

The ruler of heaven 'til morning was I.

Encouraging lovers, my soft, spreading rays

Helped many a man win his mate.

Ungrateful, such kindness, at last, he repays

With sky-cycling symbols of hate!

#### 4. A STUDY OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

A.A. And so it came to pass that the Man in the Moon approached the Man in the Man-Made Moon in an effort to assert his dominance over the heavens.

MITM: Oh, Man! Oh, Man in the Man-Made Moon!

A.A. Said the Man in the Moon.

MITM: You are not a real man in a moon!

MAN IN THE MAN-MADE MOON: Why not, oh Man in the Moon?

MITM: Because you're only a man-made man. A man-made man in a man-made moon!

CHO: A man-made man in the moon made by man, in the man-made moon

SOMEBODY: How does he know there are man-made men in man-made moons?

OTHERS: He must have noticed a man-made mien in the mane of the Man in the Man-Made Moon.

A.A. But at this charge, the Man in the Man-Made Moon became quite angry, and belligerently asserted to the Man in the Moon:

MITMMM: Oh, Man in the Moon, you are mad!

CHO: Oh, mad! The man-made man is a man made mad by a madman!

MITMMM: No, the Man in the Man-Made Moon isn't mad; mad is the Man in the Moon!

MITM: No, the Man in the Moon isn't mad. (aside) If I am mad, my name is mud!

CHO: Oh, mud! Mud be the name of the madman who made mad the man-made Man in the Man-Made Moon!

SOMEBODY: How does the Man in the Man-Made Moon know that the Man in the Moon is mad?

OTHERS: He minds the mode and the mood of the Man in the Moon, who is mud if he's mad 'mid the mead that he made in the moon!

#### 5. A TREATISE ON LOGIC

MITM: Why do you think I', mad, oh man-made Man in the Man-Made Moon?

MITMMM: Because your suggestion is so illogical. How can I be a man-made man? (to the chorus) Suppose you were a man who had made a moon, and who'd made a man. Would you hide the man you made in the moon you made?

CHORISTER: If the moon you meant to be a monument, you might put the man you made *on* the moon you made, but you'd certainly not hide the man you made *in* the moon you made.

MITMMM: Well, mister Man in the Moon, by the laws of logic, your labor is lost!

MITM: By the laws of logic; but what are the laws of logic worth when describing the behavior of man on earth?

CHO: What does the Man in the Moon mean?

MITM: Man on earth has only one dependable characteristic. Sometimes he's faithful and sometimes he's fickle. Sometimes he's active and sometimes he's passive. He'll squander a fortune, yet cherish a nickel. A list of his inconsistencies would be massive. But he's always dependably stupid. Therefore, where two

courses are open to him, he can be depended upon to choose the more stupid one: in this case, hiding the man he made in the moon he made.

## 6. AN ESSAY ON MAN

MITMMM: (greatly distressed) This misrepresentation approaches infamy!

MITM: But it is absolutely true. Observe:

With pomp and eloquence Man announces his belief in a thing called the golden rule. And then in practice he rejects and ignores it. Man is a fool!

Man is a joke! Man is a dope!

With pain he teaches himself to smoke and teaches himself to tope.

He masters each "cultured" acquired taste and then is considered socially graced

As, with charm and assurance, he humbles the chaste

Then decides, with a sense of disaster,

That the harm of his habits is horribly plain,

And so, all too late, and with infinite pain,

Tries to bring himself to abstain

From those things it took pain to master.

But by now, with his habits it's too late to cope.

Man is a downright dim-witted dope!

Man is a churl! Man is a clown!

He puts himself in a frenzied whirl to build an attractive town.

He drills for water, he drills for oil. He cultivates each acre of soil.

He passes his days in ceaseless toil

Until he has built his nation.

And then, unable to rest content, He lets all the wealth he's acquired be spent

Bombs of terror and war to invent until, drunk with exaltation,

He knocks his hard-won empire down.

Man is a classic clamoring clown!

## 7. THE RELIGIOUS PERCEPTION

(The MITMMM has been deeply upset by the foregoing. The chorus observes that he is holding back sobs)

CHO: He moans! He moans for Man, does the Man in the Man-Made Moon. Why does he waste his worries and woes on such a wearily wild buffoon?

MITM: Because, and this proves that the Man in the Man-Made Moon is a faker. It's the nature of living things to worship their maker. You're a man-made man!

CHO: In a man-made moon!

MITM: Nothing but a mangled man-made man!

CHO: A manifestly maniacal man-made man in a man-made moon!

MITMMM: Very well, I may be a man-made man

CHO: In a man-made moon! In a man-made moon!

MITMMM: Talk all you wish about a man-made moon! You are nothing but a moon-made man!

CHO: Oh the man-made moon and the moon-made man. Defend yourself as best you can, oh Man in the Moon!

8. WHAT IS ART? (1956 was just before the total take-over of the field by 12-tone music. The Man in the Moon's speech here is an allegory for the advocacy of its use, and the music he sings and the orchestra plays follows its rules explicitly. The original program notes referred to this as *dodecacaphony: a system introduced by Arnold Schoenberg and practiced to this day by many composers and few listeners.*)

MITM: Mine is the noble and necessary job of marking months. There are twelve, and each is distinctive. It is up to me to see that none of them recur until all twelve have appeared in turn. Thus I insure an ample variety of climate within every year, giving to time a convincing, logical order.

MITMMM: But, if every year must contain the same twelve months, where is that variety? I should think things would get tedious! Now, when I rule the sky, I promise the world a cool July, a mild December or, perhaps, a whole year of May or September.

CHO: By all means, a whole year of May or September.

When he rules the sky, he promises pie, for it is long since I remember a mild December. So, let's have a whole year of May or September!

#### 9. WHY THE UNIVERSE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DESTROYED DURING THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY:

(implication: that the art wasn't brutal enough to inspire such mayhem)

MITMMM: And you, you're nothing but a moon-made man!

MITM: I am not, I am a self-made man.

MITMMM: Perhaps you are not really a man.

MITM: I am a man.

MITMMM: You admit it?

MITM: I declare it.

MITMMM: Under oath?

MITM: I swear it.

MITMMM: Very well, you are naught but what you have sought in vain to prove that I am!

CHO: We are wrought at the thought that he is naught but what he sought to have brought on the haughty head of the Man in the Man-Made Moon! Is he caught?

MITMMM: Since you are self-made and a man, both by your own admission, you are a man-made man!

MITM: Let it be fought!

(As the two moons prepare to fight, the Amateur Astronomer comes forward and gestures causing a freeze of all action. Everyone remains frozen in place until the end of this number)

AMATEUR ASTRONOMER: And so it came to pass (and, indeed, things had come to a pretty pass at that) that the two moons approached for a battle which would decide who would be top moon. But this posed a problem of gravity for all, as the result of such a fight could only mean one thing:

CHO: (sung in 19<sup>th</sup> century style) The complete and final destruction of the universe.

## 10. UNMOONLIKE ACTIVITIES

(The freeze ends. The two moons initiate combat. The chorus is alarmed)

CHO: The complete and final destruction of the universe!

(The two moons continue fighting)

CHO: Including the two moons themselves!

(The moons stop. There is silence.)

MITM: Just a minute, I have an idea.

BYSTANDER: The Man in the Moon has an idea! The Man in the Moon is getting bright.

MITMMM: The Man in the Moon is getting dim.

BYSTANDER: The Man in the Moon will conquer the night!

MITMMM: The night is going to conquer him.

(MITM exits suddenly. Great surprise and consternation)

MITMMM: That was the most unmoonlike behavior I have ever seen! Running off like that and setting hours too early! And think of the tidal waves this will cause! And exiting by the East gate, unthinkable! He is unfit to rule the night sky!

(MITM returns with the Scientist. MITMMM sees SCI and recoils)

MITMMM Oh, no!

MITM: Let us call upon the man who made the man-made moon and who made the Man in the Man-Made Moon!

## 11. THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN THIS DAY AND AGE

SCIENTIST: I in every way epitomize the scientist atomic;  
My inventions can be added up to figures astronomic.  
Although, upon the stage, I am considered to be comic,  
My philosophy has always been all work, no play.  
I sweat all day in laboratories chemically reeking;  
The answers to the problems of humanity am seeking.  
Although I'm rather fond, at times, of after-dinner speaking,  
I really don't have anything to say.  
For I spend my time examining the facts of relativity  
And find that I cannot attain the least proclivity  
For all the trivial small talk and indulgence of humanity.  
I'll stick to my equations, isolation and inanity.  
Congressional committees may indulge in speculation  
About the chance of scientists endangering our nation.  
Don't they realize, so engrossed are we in our occupation  
That we never let political intrusions cross our mind?  
For science is a field that is completely blind  
To any outside influence of any kind.  
CHO: As long as we can give this man his test-tube and his theorem,  
As long as we leave him alone and do not come too near him,  
I do not think that we should ever have a cause to fear him.  
For science is a field (etc.)

SCI: The one who can maintain a distant, scientific attitude  
Is owed by less impassive men unmitigated gratitude.  
I say this with solemnity, it isn't just a platitude!  
CHO: If you investigate the scientific mind,  
There isn't any doubt about it: you will find:  
To all intents, your subject is completely blind  
To any outside influence of any kind!

## 12. ON OVERCOMING THE CULTURAL LAG

(The "cultural lag" was a term widely used in the 1950's. I do not remember exactly what it meant. It probably referred to the inability of some who thought themselves wise to persuade large numbers of others to see things their way. The 1956 notes suggested that perhaps this opera not only refers to the cultural lag but also embodies it.)

PERSON: What a mess you made when you made a mass!

SCI: If the mass is amiss we will master the mess.

CHO: The mass is amiss!

MITM: No the mass ain't a miss but a mister.

PERSON: You must muster the mastery of this mystery!

SCI: What a monstrous mess is this tongue-twistery.

CHO: The mass is amiss!

MITM No, the mass ain't a miss but a mister.

The massive message that unmask my misery

Is that, unless what's a miss is very illusory,

Nowhere is a miss, and the miss ain't a miss but a mister.

SCI: I'm pleased to announce, if I judge you aright,

Science has the answer to your unhappy plight.

I've used in my figures a factor too few,

(Or too many, depending on your point of view).

(An operating table is moved in and the MITMMM is placed on it.)

## 13. WHAT IS NEWSWORTHY?

SCI: What was made by man can be remade by man!

Man has the power to undo his mistakes!

Man has the power to take back what he makes!

What was made by man can be remade by man!

A decision, frayed, can be reweighed by man!

So let's not admit defeat, for in the battles heat,

Man's own begotten doom can be allayed by man!

(he addresses the body of the Man in the Man-Made Moon on the table)

CHO: He cuts as though cutting a cake at a wedding!

Is this what we thought it was, or is it a beheading?

SCI: The crux of our troubles we'll soon be shedding.

(triumphantly) What was made by man can be remade by man.

What was made man by man can by man be made maid!

(The Man in the Man-Made Moon has been transformed into a beautiful woman who

now rises from the operating table and sings a wordless cadenza)

#### THE CAUSALITY OF LOVE

BYSTANDER: But why does the Man in the Moon moan?

SCI. By the process of natural selection the Man in the Moon has fallen love with the only available maid, the man-made Maid in the Man-Made Moon. He wishes to become a maid-made man, by a man-made maid.

In the main, he doth mean "Please, be mine", by each moan in the moon.

CHO.

The moon groans, the moon croons, the moon moans, the moon moons

Even the moon is thinking of love, why shouldn't we?

The moon sighs when he speaks. The moon cries. The moon seeks

A mate in the heavens above. As you can see,

Love resolves our pain into laughter, it lights up the path of life.

Let's live happily ever after by becoming man and wife!

The moon stares. The moon knows

That she cares. The moon glows!

Even the moon is thinking of love. Why shouldn't we?

Our troubles now are done, for the two moons are one!

But they will have just begun, if they should beget a sun!

THE TWO MOONS: Together we will rule the sky in harmony and bliss.

BYSTANDER: Whoever thought an opera could ever come to this?

CHO: This nonsense has gone far enough; it could last longer yet.

Let's stop before we illustrate who crazy one can get.

2 MOONS: Our love throughout the future years will never suffer eclipse.

BYSTANDER: Still lower yet the level this operetta slips.

CHO: If you are still unsatisfied, we leave you with regret.

Let's stop before we illustrate how crazy one can get.

#### 14. IS ACADEMIC FREEDOM A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?

CHO: How crazy can you get?

AUDIENCE: Quite!