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Dramatic Publishing

MY NIGHT AT JACQUES'

An Offenbach Folly

Music by
JACQUES OFFENBACH

English dialogue by
JACK HELBIG

English lyrics by
GREGG OPELKA



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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English lyrics by
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(MY NIGHT AT JACQUES')

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MY NIGHT AT JACQUES

Premiered October 10, 2003

at Light Opera Works, Evanston, Illinois

Stage Director MICHAEL KOTZE
Music Director VALERIE MAZE
Choreographer LARA TEETER
Additional Staging by T. DANIEL & LAURIE WILLETS

Your Presence Requested

Music by Jacques Offenbach

Original French libretto by M. de St.-Remy

English dialogue by Jack Helbig

English lyrics by Gregg Opelka

Ernestine PAMELA SHANDROW
Mme Balandard KATHRYN KAMP
Babylas STAN Q. WASH
Choufleuri JOHN PAYONK
Petermann ANTHONY E. BARTON
Balandard ERICH BUCHHOLZ

The Island of Tulipatan

Music by Jacques Offenbach

Original French libretto by Henry Chivot and Alfred Duru

English dialogue by Jack Helbig

English lyrics by Gregg Opelka

Alexis PAMELA SHANDROW
Theodorine KATHRYN KAMP
Cacatois XXII JOHN PAYONK
Romboidal ANTHONY E. BARTON
Hermosa ERICH BUCHHOLZ
Valet STAN Q. WASH

YOUR PRESENCE REQUESTED

DRAMATIS PERSONAE (4 men, 2 women)

ERNESTINE
BABYLAS
CHOUFLEURI
PETERMANN
BALANDARD
MME BALANDARD

OVERTURE

SCENE 1

(The curtain rises on the comfortably furnished salon in the Choufleuri home. Double door at the rear, French window at stage left, piano at right.)

DIALOGUE No. 1

ERNESTINE *(entering at the rear, she turns and calls back)*. Oh, Papa, calm down, Papa. I'm just about to get dressed and everything is ready for this evening's soiree. I didn't forget. How could I? The 24 of January, 1833, the night of my father's great musical fete. *(She crosses to the French window, opens it and looks out.)* No light in the window. He's out. *(To the audience.)* That window over there belongs to Babybas. Chrysodule Babybas,

(*sighs*) my beloved Chrysodule Babylas! He lives in the building next door. Papa doesn't suspect a thing. I may be young, but I'm not stupid.

No. 1 - COUPLETS: ERNESTINE'S SONG

ERNESTINE.

**When I was just a girl in school,
I studied subjects most complex.
Yet in the end I was a fool,
For I knew naught of boys and sex.**

**To rectify this situation,
I found a handsome, dear *garçon*,
And gave my further education
With no hesitation to him alone:**

**He's my sweet boy Babylas,
My only joy, Babylas.
He takes me each night on a tour
Of _____-*l'amour*.**

**He lives right there across the way.
We're number five, he's number three.
He sits at home and writes all day
And then at night comes here to me.**

**Across the rooftop scarce one *metre*,
He steals his way at my behest
And soon appears at my *fenêtre*,
Et cet'ra, et cet'ra—you know the rest!
He's my sweet boy Babylas,**

**My only joy, Babylas.
I love him, the boy from next door.
Ernest and Babylas, that's what I call *l'amour*.**

**My boy next door I just adore.
How could I love him more?**

(Scarcely has she finished the song than a bassoon is heard outside, playing a tune.)

DIALOGUE No. 1a

ERNESTINE. It's him. It's Babylas. He is telling me that he loves me. I'll answer him. *(She runs to the piano and plays a nursery tune.)*

(The bassoon replies.)

Poor boy! He is telling me that he's depressed. That makes me so happy. To hear he's sad when I'm not around.

(The bassoon plays again.)

I learned this at the theater. There was this boy and girl who lived in adjacent apartments and they were in love but their parents wouldn't let them see each other because there was this Romeo and Juliet like thing going on and their parents were fighting. Anyway, the boy and girl communicated using music. It was so romantic. Like this. *(She plays a bit more.)*

(She has scarcely finished playing before the window opens.)

BABYLAS *(appearing at the window)*. Ernestine! Chere Ernestine!

ERNESTINE. Cher Baby las!

BABYLAS. Can I cross the threshold of this window?

ERNESTINE. You seem to be doing a great job of it so far.

BABYLAS *(looks about suspiciously. Then speaks in a put-on accent)*. Your excellent father is out?

ERNESTINE *(answers in the same put-on accent)*. Yes, my excellent father is out for an hour.

BABYLAS. Ah, good. Did you two talk about us.

ERNESTINE *(sighing)*. Yes.

BABYLAS. Yes?

ERNESTINE. No.

BABYLAS. No?

ERNESTINE. No.

BABYLAS. How about the invitation to the soiree.

ERNESTINE *(sighing)*. Yes.

BABYLAS. Yes?

ERNESTINE. No.

BABYLAS. No?

ERNESTINE. No. He doesn't want you at the soiree either.

Papa, I asked him in my sweetest voice, do you know who you should invite to this soiree? *(Imitates her father.)* Who? *(Back to her own voice.)* I know this gentleman. *(Father's voice.)* You know gentlemen? *(Back to her own voice.)* I don't know him. I just know him. His name is Monsieur Chrysodule. *(Father's voice.)* What's his angle? *(Back to her own.)* Oh, Papa. *(Forced laugh.)*

He's an artist. (*Father's voice.*) Is he a rich artist? Do they write about him in the newspapers? (*Back to her own voice.*) Not yet, but one day, I'm sure one day he'll be famous all over Paris

BABYLAS. Really, you said that?

ERNESTINE. Yes. It's true! You are great, Babylas, you really are. Anyway, do you know what Papa said? He made me so angry. He said, If you invite Mr. Chrysodule to my soiree you might as well pack your bags, because I'm sending you back to that convent school in Switzerland where you will be safe from the Chrysodules of the world.

BABYLAS. Then all is lost.

ERNESTINE. You are so melodramatic. This isn't an opera, you know. Nothing is lost. He doesn't know you live next door. After you've written your magnum opus, that grand opera will make you rich and famous. And then my father will love you. So, when will you finish it?

BABYLAS. Soon. Chere Ernestine.

ERNESTINE. Oh, sing to me. I love the ballad in the third act. You know the one about the mule skinner named Pablo who has the enchanted cigar.

BABYLAS. Oh, you mean, "The Enchanted Guitar of Pedro the Mule Driver."

ERNESTINE. Yes, that one. Please, sing it.

BABYLAS. How could I refuse?

No. 2 - BOLÉRO

BABYLAS.

**Ev'ryone knows when Pedro's coming:
From far away you hear him strumming.**

BOTH.

**All of the *señoritas*
Rush out into the street as
Pedro's guitar plays "bling bling bling."**

ERNESTINE.

**All of the Spanish girls adore him
And if he stops they just "Encore" him:**

BOTH.

**"Play us another chorus.
Pedro, do not ignore us.
Oh, how we love your 'bling, bling bling.'"**

BABYLAS.

**From Sierra Nevada
To the mighty fortress at Granada,
He's a musical *matador*.**

ERNESTINE.

**No guns, no sharp arrow,
He will conquer you with his *bolero*,
Till your heart cries "*Mi amor!*"**

BOTH.

**More than a traveling musician,
He is a musical magician.
“Pedro, *por favor, caro señor,*
play us one more.**

BABYLAS.

For we love your tra-la-la-la

BOTH.

La la la la.

ERNESTINE.

We adore your tra la la la

BOTH.

**La la la la.
There is no more splendid star
Than you with your guitar!”**

ERNESTINE.

**But later on, the poets tell us,
All of the men in town grow jealous.**

BOTH.

**“Pedro, he’s too seductive
And his guitar destructive.
Oh, how we hate that ‘bling bling bling.’”**

BABYLAS.

**After enough of them protested,
Poor little Pedro was arrested.**

BOTH.

Now ev'ry livelong hour
High in a prison tower,
Pedro repeats his "bling, bling, bling."

ERNESTINE.

Each sweet incantation,
Undeterred by his incarceration,
Flies aloft like a bird on wing.

BABYLAS.

And down in the plaza
Ev'ry swooning *señorita* has a
New *cancion* to sing.

BOTH.

Ah!
So in the end they could not beat him.
And ev'ry night the girls entreat him:
"Pedro, *por favor, caro señor,*
play us one more.

BABYLAS.

For we love your tra-la-la-la

BOTH.

La la la la.

ERNESTINE.

We adore your tra la la la

BOTH.

La la la la.

**Even from your prison cell
You cast a lovely spell.”**

DIALOGUE No. 2

ERNESTINE. Ahhh. I could never marry a man who lacks
a musical soul.

BABYLAS. That would be a sacrilege.

CHOUFLEURI (*outside, calling*). Petermann! Petermann!

ERNESTINE. It's Papa! Bye, bye, cher Baby las.

BABYLAS. Bye.

ERNESTINE. Au revoir, mon amour.

BABYLAS. Au revoir. (*At the window.*) I can't wait until I
hear you play that sweet tune that tells me I can see you
again.

ERNESTINE. Me neither. A bientot, mon amour.

BABYLAS. A bientot.

ERNESTINE. Till we meet again.

BABYLAS. Till we meet again. Now I must run.

ERNESTINE. I know you must.

BABYLAS. Adios!

ERNESTINE. Adios!

BABYLAS. Ciao!

ERNESTINE. Ciao! My father! Bye.

BABYLAS. Bye!

ERNESTINE. And take care not to fall.

(*BABYLAS goes.*)

The Island of Tulipatan

THE ISLAND OF TULIPATAN

DRAMATIS PERSONAE (4 men, 2 women)

THEODORINE, wife of Romboidal and mother of
Hermosa

ROMBOIDAL, husband of Theodrine, father of Hermosa,
and Undersecretary to Duke Cacatois

HERMOSA, the 18-year-old daughter of Theodrine and
Romboidal

DUKE CACATOIS XXII, the Grand Duke of the Island of
Tulipatan

ALEXIS, the 18-year-old son of Duke Cacatois

A VALET TO CACATOIS

(A chorus may be added; it was not in the 2003 Evanston,
Illinois, premiere but was added in the 2005 Ohio Light
Opera production.)

OVERTURE

SCENE 1

*(The scene represents a park. At the left is the entrance
to a mansion that has the appearance of belonging to a
wealthy owner. At the right is a small pavilion. Garden
furniture—tables and chairs—fills part of the stage.)*

DIALOGUE No. 1

THEODORINE (*speaking directly to the audience*). A woman's face is a work of art, don't you think? Or it can be, if a woman works at it. Look at this face. Look at this skin: smooth, soft, firm like a schoolgirl's. Not a wrinkle, not a worry line. You'd think, I don't have a care in the world. Oh, you'd be so wrong. For the last eighteen years I've been carrying a terrible secret. A terrible, terrible secret. One of those secrets that keeps you up half the night. Oh, I know what you are thinking, but this isn't one of those French farces. I don't have a lover. I don't need one—my husband is purrrrfectly fine for me. What's my secret? Oh, I couldn't tell you. All right, but this doesn't leave this room.

ROMBOIDAL. Theodrine! Theodrine!

THEODORINE. My husband! We'll talk later. Yes, dear!

ROMBOIDAL. This is more than I can stand. My horse is lame, because someone rode it too hard. My expensive oriental vases destroyed because someone turned our living room into an obstacle course. My favorite salon chairs are full of muddy footprints because someone wanted to practice climbing the Matterhorn. And do you know who that someone is?

THEODORINE. Who, dear?

ROMBOIDAL. Hermosa.

THEODORINE. She was probably just playing.

ROMBOIDAL. That girl is a menace to society.

THEODORINE. Aren't you being a little harsh? She's just a little high-spirited.

ROMBOIDAL. A little high-spirited. I wish my soldiers had half her spirit; we'd never lose a battle.

THEODORINE. I am sure she didn't mean it.

ROMBOIDAL. She never means it. Still, she needs someone to teach her how to be a lady. And that, my dear, is your job.

THEODORINE. Honey, sweetie, I have done all I can. You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it do what you don't want it to do.

ROMBOIDAL. It's incredible that this would happen to me, Romboidal, the Undersecretary of External Affairs to the great Duke Cacatois the twenty-second, sovereign of the great nation of the Isle of Tulipatan, a country almost as big as Luxembourg, but with better cheese; me, a man who has always taken pride in being a warrior in wartime, a lover in peacetime, and an all-around great guy in those times in between; that I, me, of all people, would have an unladylike daughter like Hermosa. It's all your fault, she takes after your side of the family.

THEODORINE. My side of the family, you've got that uncle who's the opera fanatic.

ROMBOIDAL. He's not a fanatic, he just likes operas. Anyway, you have that aunt who never married.

THEODORINE. She never met the right man.

ROMBOIDAL. She met the right woman.

THEODORINE. They're just good friends. Well, they are.

ROMBOIDAL. You get my point. It's not natural. None of it is natural.

THEODORINE. But she is all I've got.

ROMBOIDAL. Why do you say it like that? We tried to have other children.

THEODORINE. I know, but you were at the first Tulipatan War or the Second Tulipatan War or the war of Ruritanian Secession.

ROMBOIDAL. I can't help it if we live in difficult times.

THEODORINE. You and the Duke have made them difficult times. Is there nothing you won't go to war over?

ROMBOIDAL. "War is politics, by other means."
Clausowitz.

THEODORINE. "I don't really care." Mrs. Clausowitz.

ROMBOIDAL. Well, that's nice, real nice. I wanted a family, too. I hoped at least for a boy and a girl.

THEODORINE. You have a boy and a girl all in one. (*Off-stage crash!*) What was that?

ROMBOIDAL. That was our dear sweet daughter, again.

(HERMOSA enters carrying a huge hunting bow, an arrow knocked in place. She looks like she could let the arrow fly with a microsecond's notice.)

No. 1 - COUPLETS D'HERMOSA

HERMOSA (*entering quickly*).

**I love a lovely racket and the happy noise of guns,
And cannons and military toys—
Sweet smell of ammunition, sweet the musket's
roar.
Sweet demolition is what I adore!**

**I'm a girl with cheeks red and glowing,
To which fact, alas! I'm resigned.
But to sit at home with my sewing,
Sacre bleu, I'll lose my mind.
I need entertainment that's louder.
My boudoir will not be my tomb!**

**My perfume is “Eau de Gunpowder.”
Give me things that go bang and kaboom! Oh!**

**I love the heat of battle and the bugle corps,
Big hordes of swords and warriors at war.
I’ll not make any man a meek and mousy wife.
I love too much the martial life.**

**Piff, paff, poof, bing, bang, oof.
Thud, bam, bow, pitter pop, pitter pow.
Bing, bing, bing. Piff, paff, poof,
Bing, bang, oof. Thud, bam, bow, pitter pop, pitter
pow!**

**All restrictions now are revoked
For I at last have turned eighteen.
Cigarettes were made to be smoked
And if I can’t smoke one, I’ll make a scene.
Tell me, then, what God gave us brains for?
Age is long but youth very short.
Well I know what good champagne’s for.
Popping corks is my favorite sport! Oh!**

**I love a lovely racket and the joyful din
Of horns and trumpets, not the violin!
I’ll not make any man a meek and mousy wife.
I love too much the martial life.
Piff, paff, poof, bing, bang, oof.
Thud, bam, bow, pitter pop, pitter pow.
Bing, bing, bing. Piff, paff, poof,
Bing, bang, oof. Thud, bam, bow, pitter pop, pitter
pow!**

DIALOGUE No. 2

HERMOSA. *Bonjour, Maman; bonjour, Papa.*

ROMBOIDAL. My God, Hermosa, put that away.

THEODORINE (*more calmly*). What have I told you about weapons in the house?

HERMOSA. Sorry. But I was just outside. I couldn't just leave this in the umbrella stand. And I love this new bow. (*ROMBOIDAL takes bow from HERMOSA.*) Hey!

ROMBOIDAL. The bow isn't very ladylike.

THEODORINE (*takes bow from ROMBOIDAL*). Diana the huntress carried a bow. (*THEODORINE hands the bow to HERMOSA.*)

HERMOSA. The wood is specially hardened; you should see how taut the bowstring gets. (*She aims the arrow like she's aiming at a stag.*) There's a great stag now. A six-pointer. Whoosh! Thup! (*Mimes bleeding from an arrow wound. ROMBOIDAL takes bow from HERMOSA.*) Hey!

ROMBOIDAL. Diana is hardly the best model for our daughter. She wasn't very ladylike herself.

THEODORINE (*takes the bow from ROMBOIDAL*). But she was still a goddess. (*THEODORINE hands the bow to HERMOSA.*)

ROMBOIDAL. Did she like boys? I seem to remember Diana not being very fond of men. Like your aunt who never married. See this is a problem. (*ROMBOIDAL tries to get the bow from HERMOSA but HERMOSA stands far from her father, holding the bow away from his grasping hands.*)

THEODORINE. Do you want to break her spirit?

ROMBOIDAL. It's either her or us, Theo.

THEODORINE. Oh, Rommie.

ROMBOIDAL. She's eighteen, time for her to start getting down the business of being a woman. (*ROMBOIDAL gets the bow from HERMOSA. Immediately he hangs it up, and that puts an end to it.*) Hermosa, I hate to see you spending so much time with your archery and neglecting your piano.

HERMOSA. I'm not neglecting the piano, Father, I am doing it a favor. Some people tickle the ivories, I torture them.

THEODORINE. Honey, you are being hard on yourself.

HERMOSA. No I'm not. The piano and I just don't get along. Why can't I learn an instrument that suits my temperament like the hunting horn?

ROMBOIDAL. The hunting horn?

HERMOSA. Yes, I love the sound it makes. So noble.

ROMBOIDAL. And I say you should master the piano.

THEODORINE. She prefers brass instruments, is that so bad? It is still music. Still she's getting a little culture.

ROMBOIDAL. Culture she's got. What she needs is to be more like a girl.

THEODORINE. She's doing the best that she can.

ROMBOIDAL. What does that mean? She's a girl. Why doesn't she do things girls do—needlepoint, knitting, crochet. She hunts, she fishes, she shoots better than me, she's deadly at sports. There are men in Tulipatan who are not as macho as she is. Like the Duke's son, Alexis. He loves to do things I would kill to have my daughter do.

THEODORINE. Like what?

ROMBOIDAL. Cook. He is a marvelous cook. And he sews, did you know that, a boy who can sew wonderful

clothes. Why can't our daughter be more like the Prince?

HERMOSA. Papa, Alexis' father complains all the time that he's not man enough. I think he's very nice, very, very nice, very very very nice.

ROMBOIDAL. Hermosa? What are you saying?

HERMOSA. It's not me, Papa, it's my heart. I can't help it. I think he's the most wonderful boy in all of Tulipatan, even if he does spend his day making quilts with his mother and gossiping.

ROMBOIDAL. I don't want to hear it. That match is impossible.

(Enter VALET.)

Will you talk to her?

THEODORINE. Shhhh, not in front of the help.

(VALET whispers something in ROMBOIDAL's ear.)

ROMBOIDAL. Ohmygod, ohmygod, ohmygod!

THEODORINE. What is it, dear?

ROMBOIDAL. The Duke, the Duke.

THEODORINE. The Duke?

ROMBOIDAL. Is here.

THEODORINE. Ohmygod, ohmygod, ohmygod!

ROMBOIDAL. Your apron! your apron!

THEODORINE. My what?

ROMBOIDAL *(pointing wildly, hysterical)*. Your! Your!
Your!

THEODORINE. Oh, my! my! my! *(She hurriedly removes the apron.)*