

THE CHARLATAN Working Copy (ACT I, part 1)-1

ACT I

(OVERTURE.

CURTAIN RISES. The scene is a country fair in the province of Bokhara, in the southern part of Russia, under the reign of Czar Nicholas II.

There are several booths and tents with signs and posters of games, prizes, exhibitions and side show attractions such as acrobats, a bearded lady, a woman with an iron jaw and a pig that reads and plays a barrel organ.

Predominant are two such booths -- each a wagon with raised platforms for the novelty acts and persuasive spiels of the showmen. On Stage Left is Skobeloff's "Marionette Theatre", which is complete with a small stage and curtain. On Stage Right is Jelikoff's wagon, decorated with Victorian styled comedy and tragedy masks, a front curtain, and a sign which reads "Jelikoff's Tragedians". A large special-effects machine can be seen extended above and behind the platform.

It is morning and a crowd of VILLAGERS is gathering in front of the various booths. THEY are awakening the fair ground workers, who are scurrying to open the booths for the day's activities.)

CHORUS

Mountebanks, come waken from your dreaming,
Golden dawn is breaking in the sky.
Push and hustle,
Noise and bustle,
Is in keeping with the day.

Palpitating hearts with hopes are teeming,
For your posters one and all imply
You have new acts,
And a few acts,
Worth a fortune in their way.