

# **THE TWO WHISTLERS**

**A musical comedy**

**LIBRETTO**

**Words and music by Phil Shaw**

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# THE TWO WHISTLERS

## 1. Prelude

*(MAVIS & JORDAN enter on one side of the stage, and MARTIN & REMBRANDT enter on the other side. enter.)*

## SCENE 1: THE VEGAS STUDENT ART SHOW

### 2. Song - *The Vegas Student Art Show* - JORDAN & MAVIS, REMBRANDT & MARTIN

(Verse 1)

You'll see paintings proudly hanging almost everywhere.  
You'll see paintings aimed to stop you short and make you stare.  
You'll see paintings calculated to engage your inner eye.  
You'll see paintings meant to make you want to cry.

(Chorus 1)

You'll hear what paintings can say.  
You'll see what paintings can do.  
The world of art before you, the art of art on display.

(Verse 2)

You'll see people wondering what the heck they think they've seen.  
You'll see people asking what the heck it all may mean.  
You'll see people saying five year olds could do at least as well.

You'll see people roll their eyes and say, 'Oh, what the hell'.

(Chorus 2.)

You'll find that this is true,  
Surprising though it may be.  
You look at the paintings, and they look back at you.

(Spoken commentary 1.)

(MAVIS gestures toward "Future Perfect", a blank canvas.)

**MAVIS**

JORDAN! Look here! A totally blank canvas!

**JORDAN**

And the title is "Future Perfect", MAVIS!

**MAVIS**

Pellucid, yet lambently irenic.

**JORDAN**

Indeed, it contextualizes the aesthetics of absence, with a post ironic dispensation.

**MAVIS**

Perhaps, but its conjunction of concision and loquacity yields a plangent vitalism.

**JORDAN**

Just what I was thinking!

(Sung interlude 1.)

**MAVIS**

Art can be a riddle, you don't know what to do.

**JORDAN**

So smile and mutter darkly, "This belongs inside a zoo"!

---

(Spoken commentary 2.)

(MARTIN gestures toward "47", a large canvas with the number "46".  
)

**MARTIN**

REMBRANDT, here's a work that even I can understand. A big number "46".

**REMBRANDT**

And look, MARTIN, the title's "47", and it's entry number is 45!

**MARTIN**

Am I wrong, or does this suggest an apotropaic epinicion?

**REMBRANDT**

I see a synoptic commentary on the ironies of univocal ambiguity.

**MARTIN**

I think you're over-complicating. It's simply a delightful concretion of indexical entropy.

**REMBRANDT**

I hadn't looked at it that way!

(Sung interlude 2.)

**MARTIN**

Art can be perplexing, you don't know what it is.

**REMBRANDT**

So grin and say "No thank you, I think I'll skip the quiz".

---

(Spoken commentary 3.)

**MAVIS gestures toward a rack of dresses.**

**MAVIS**

JORDAN! Look at this one! A simple rack of ordinary dresses!

**JORDAN**

It can only be an esemplastic recension in search of quiddity.

**MAVIS**

Or, a mimetic effulgence of mereological essentialism.

**JORDAN**

Plain and simple, it's just an equiparation lacking inter-subjective confrontation.

**MAVIS**

Who could argue with that!

(Sung interlude 3.)

**JORDAN**

Art can be confusing, you don't know what it means.

**MAVIS**

So laugh and say, "It matters not. I take my tea with kings and queens".

---

(Spoken commentary 4.)

**MARTIN**

REMBRANDT! Look at this one. It's just a box.

**REMBRANDT**

And the title is "A sealed box containing a letter that wasn't written by Abraham Lincoln"!

**MARTIN**

It's clearly a reification of hieratic epistemology.

**REMBRANDT**

Yes of course. But it confirms the hermeneutics of demonstrative valorization.

**REMBRANDT**

You hit the nail on the head!

**MARTIN**

Art can be a question, and art is a quiz.

**REMBRANDT**

But love it or leave it, art is what it is.

(Chorus 3.)

And this is what you'll find.  
You'll see the paintings twice.  
First here upon the wall, then later in your mind.

(Verse 3)

You'll see worlds that only artists ever dare to see.  
You'll see worlds arranged as they were always meant to be.  
You'll see worlds that may perplex, that may befuddle and confuse.  
You'll see worlds of witty wonder you cannot refuse.

(Tag)

We don't know much about art,  
but we know what we like.  
The Vegas Student Art Show.

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(ALL exit.)

## SCENE 2: JORDAN and MAVIS

### 3. Dialogue - "This is the art show, MAVIS" - JORDAN and MAVIS

(JORDAN and MAVIS re-enter.)

**JORDAN**

This is the art show, MAVIS. The Vegas Student Art Show.

**MAVIS**

Interesting, JORDAN. Very interesting. Oh, and by the way, JORDAN. Your mother called me last week. She seems to think that since I'm your neighbor, I'll keep track of everything that you do you do. Anysay, you can guess what she wanted to know.

**JORDAN**

She probably wanted to know if I've got any romance going.

**MAVIS**

And?

**JORDAN**

No, I haven't got any romance, except,

**MAVIS**

Except?

**JORDAN**

Except...Except...

---

### 4. Song - *There's this...*(JORDAN's version)

There's this guy.  
 I see him here and there, but we have never met.  
 And there's no reason I should mention him, and yet.

There's this guy.  
 When I am all alone, nobody by my side.  
 I wonder what perhaps I maybe might have tried.

I wish he'd walk right up and say 'hello'.  
 I wish he'd introduce himself and say 'how do you do'.  
 I wish he'd take my hand and talk and laugh and plot and plan.  
 I wish he'd say that this is where it all began.

There's this guy.  
 I know he may be just a chance I passed on by.  
 But all the same I hope we'll meet, I hope, I hope, oh me oh my.

---

## 5. Dialogue - "Can't you just" - JORDAN and MAVIS

**MAVIS**

Can't you just walk by him and drop your handkerchief?

**JORDAN**

Oh, I've done lot's of stuff like that, but so far this fish just won't bite the bait.  
 Anyway, here's your Whistler, MAVIS. Thanks for loaning it to me.

**MAVIS**

Why is it upside down?

**JORDAN**

It's a statement. It's commentative transpositional art.

**MAVIS**

Commentative transpositional art?

**JORDAN**

I call it "Icarus Whistling".

**MAVIS**

"Icarus Whistling". I see.

**JORDAN**

It's "Icarus", so I hang it upside down because Icarus is falling.

**MAVIS**

And it's "Icarus Whistling" because?

**JORDAN**

Because it's a Whistler self-portrait. A deft comment on the passing of generations, with a *soupçon* of ironic detachment.

**MAVIS**

It isn't really a Whistler, it's a copy.

**JORDAN**

Of course it's a copy. If it was real it would be hanging in the Freer Museum in Washington, or on auction at Christies for a fortune.

**MAVIS**

But you didn't actually paint it.

**JORDAN**

Of course I didn't paint it. Artists don't paint! Artists conceive! However, if you know a good painter, my kitchen needs a fresh coat of enamel!

**JORDAN and MAVIS**

Ha! Ha! Ha!

**MAVIS**

So you're going to pretend that you painted my Whistler copy?

**JORDAN**

No, no, no. My entry isn't the Whistler copy. It's the comment I make when I hang it upside down.

**MAVIS**

Well, I hope you get an "A". But take care of my Whistler. I like it a lot, even though it reminds me of my ex-husband. My good-riddance ex-husband. That man was always arguing. Quibbling and quarreling, hassling and haggling, grouching and grousing. He could argue over anything.

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**6. Song - *What a disaster!* (MAVIS's version)**

I'd say east, he'd say west  
 I'd say coat, he'd say vest  
 That man was a horrible pest

I'd say up, he'd say down  
 I'd say smile, he'd say frown  
 That man was an odious clown.

----

It's easy to fumble and  
 find that you've done something  
 wrong that you'd like to forget.  
 It's easy to find out that you've been a fool.  
 So try to avoid taking steps you'll regret.  
 And don't ever marry a stubborn, obstreperous mule.

-----

I'd say creation, he'd say cremation

I'd say alsacian, he'd say dalmation  
That man was a constant vexation

I'd say prediction and he'd say clairvoyance.  
I'd say ornateness and he'd say flamboyance.  
That man was a major annoyance.

What a disaster he was,  
What a mistake I made.  
I wish I didn't think of him so much.

## 7. DIALOGUE - "The only thing" - JORDAN and MAVIS

**MAVIS**

The only thing we didn't argue about was our Whistler. We bought it in a little shop on our honeymoon, then we hung it right there in our dining room. Our dining room where we argued all the time. And our Whistler, hanging up there on the wall, watching us squabble. When we split up, somehow he got the Whistler. Then last year, at an estate sale, I saw this Whistler that looked just like our Whistler, so I bought it, even though it reminds me of my good-riddance ex-husband.

**JORDAN**

I understand. I'll take good care of it. But that reminds me. I need your receipt for the painting. I have to show proof of ownership. The school requires it.

**MAVIS**

I've got the receipt at home.

**JORDAN**

Can you get it for me? I need to have it before the show opens

**MAVIS**

Oh kay. Now I just hope I can manage to find the garage again.

**JORDAN**

I'll go with you this campus is a maze.

(JORDAN and MAVIS exit.)

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## SCENE 3: REMBRANDT and MARTIN

### 08. DIALOGUE - "Here it is, uncle MARTIN" - REMBRANDT, and MARTIN

(REMBRANDT and MARTIN enter.)

**REMBRANDT**

Here it is, uncle MARTIN, the Vegas Student Art Show.

**MARTIN**

Interesting, REMBRANDT. Very interesting.

(REMBRANDT points to "Man with Cactus flowers", which is already hanging.)

**REMBRANDT**

And, here's my entry for the show, the painting I've been working on. I call it "Man with Cactus Flowers".

**MARTIN**

Ah, "Man with Cactus Flowers". Excellent!

**REMBRANDT**

Thank you.

**MARTIN**

And I see I'm the man in the painting, the man with cactus flowers.

**REMBRANDT**

Yes. It will be fun to have the model for the painting standing right here next to it.

**MARTIN**

Bad news, REMBRANDT. A meeting came up, so I won't be able to stay for the show.

**REMBRANDT**

No problem, MARTIN. At least you got to see the show.

**MARTIN**

But I know your mother's going to call me, and I know what she'll ask: Has REMBRANDT got a girlfriend?

**REMBRANDT**

(Laughs) No, I haven't got a girlfriend, not exactly.

**MARTIN**

Not exactly?

**REMBRANDT**

Not exactly.

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## 09. Song - *There's this...* (REMBRANDT's version)

There's this girl.  
I see her now and then, it's almost like a game.  
But all the same I still don't even know her name.

There's this girl.  
I see an empty room, I see an empty chair.  
and all the same I seem to see her sitting there.

I'd like to walk right up and say 'hello'.  
I'd like to introduce myself and say 'how do you do'.  
I'd like to take her hand and talk and laugh and plot and plan.  
I'd like to say that this is where it all began.

There's this girl.  
 I know she may be just another might-have-been.  
 But all the same I hope we'll meet I hope and hope and hope again.

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## 10. Dialogue - "Can't you just" - MARTIN and REMBRANDT

**MARTIN**

Can't you just walk up and say "Hi, I'm REMBRANDT"?

**REMBRANDT**

Easier said than done!

(MARTIN notices "Icarus Whistling".)

**MARTIN**

Hey! Look at that painting over there! "Icarus Whistling". The one that's upside down!

**REMBRANDT**

It is upside-down.

**MARTIN**

I'll hold it right-side up. Just as I thought! It's a Whistler self portrait!

**REMBRANDT**

A Whistler self-portrait? How did you recognize that?

**MARTIN**

That's easy, I have one just like it in my office. But my Whistler's more than a Whistler, it's a reminder. A reminder of my ex-wife. My good-riddance ex-wife. That woman was always arguing. Grouching and griping, growling and grumbling, squawking and squealing, whinging and whining. That woman could argue over anything.

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**11. Song - *What a disaster!* - MARTIN's version**

I'd say five, she'd say four.  
I'd say less, she'd say more.  
That woman was always a bore.

I'd say boast and she'd say brag.  
I'd say deer and she'd say stag.  
That woman was purely a nag.

It's easy to wander astray  
from the sensible path  
to a hopeless dead end.  
It's simple to find out you failed your own test.  
So don't make a promise you'll want to rescind.  
And don't ever marry a pest.

I'd say over, she'd say under  
I'd say lightning, she'd say thunder  
That woman was my worst damn blunder

I'd say bibble, she'd say bubble.  
I'd say dribble, she'd say drubble.  
That woman was nothing but trouble.

What a disaster she was,  
What a mistake I made.  
I wish I didn't think of her so much.

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**SCENE 4: JORDAN, REMBRANDT, and MARTIN****12. Dialogue - "We split up before you moved out here" - JORDAN, REMBRANDT, MARTIN**

MARTIN

We split up before you moved out here, REMBRANDT. Too bad you never met her---then you'd know how that woman could argue. The only thing we didn't argue about was our Whistler. We bought it in a little shop on our honeymoon, then we hung it in our dining room. Our dining room where we argued all the time. And our Whistler, hanging up there on the wall, watching us squabble. When we split up, somehow I got the Whistler. I like to look at it. It reminds me how lucky I am to be rid of that good-riddance woman. But this Whistler here, in "Icarus Whistling", do you think it's supposed to be upside down?

(JORDAN enters.)

**REMBRANDT**

My God, MARTIN! The girl that just came in.

**MARTIN**

That girl? Ah! Is that the girl in "There's this girl"?

**REMBRANDT**

Yes! That's her. But don't say anything!

**JORDAN**

Hi, I'm JORDAN. JORDAN JANEWAY.

**REMBRANDT**

Hi, uh, uh, JORDAN, I've seen you around, but we never met. I'm REMBRANDT. REMBRANDT JONES. And this is my uncle MARTIN.

**JORDAN**

Hi REMBRANDT, Hi MARTIN.

**MARTIN**

We were just looking at this upside-down painting.

**JORDAN**

This upside-down painting is mine.

**MARTIN**

And it's upside-down because?

**JORDAN**

It's upside down because, well, look at the title.

**MARTIN**

It's "Icarus Whistling".

**REMBRANDT**

Ah! It's "Icarus", so you hang it upside down, because Icarus is falling.

**MARTIN**

And it's "Icarus Whistling" because it's a Whistler self-portrait.

**JORDAN**

It's not really a Whistler self-portrait. It's a copy.

**REMBRANDT**

Of course it's a copy. The real one's in the Freer Museum in Washington. But this is a very good copy. In fact, it's almost too good. Let me see it right-side up.

**REMBRANDT**

Interesting...the sweeping brush strokes...the layering of pigment...the palatine hint of magenta... Yes, without a doubt. This is James Abbott McNeil Whistler, by his own hand. I'll call doctor Freeman at the Freer.

(REMBRANDT talks on his phone.)

Dr Freeman?...This is REMBRANDT JONES...Ah, you remember me!...Thank you... Well I've come across something I wanted to ask you about... Recall the Whistler self-

portrait? It was stolen? Well, it's shown up here at the Las Vegas Student Art Show. Yes, I'm certain...the sweeping brush strokes...the layering of pigment...the palatine hint of magenta... Yes, without a doubt. This is James Abbott McNeil Whistler, by his own hand. You'll send someone for it? Yes, I'll keep watch. Bye.

(REMBRANDT ends his call to DOCTOR FREEMAN.)

**REMBRANDT**

Well, JORDAN, your Whistler copy is Whistler's. Whistler's Whistler. Stolen from the Freer.

**JORDAN**

But my neighbor MAVIS bought it at an estate sale, some guy who died...

**REMBRANDT**

Whoever stole it from the Freer must have sold it to the guy who died, and the guy who died didn't tell anyone it was real.

**JORDAN**

But if they send someone to take it back, I won't have an entry for the art show!

**MARTIN**

Well...

**REMBRANDT**

Yes, MARTIN?

**MARTIN**

I have to go to a meeting. But on my way there I could drop off my copy.

**JORDAN**

Your copy?

**REMBRANDT**

MARTIN has a copy of the Whistler, just like your Whistler.

**JORDAN**

Wonderful! Thank you, MARTIN.

**MARTIN**

I'll drop off my Whistler before the art show begins. Bye.

**JORDAN**

Bye, MARTIN, and thanks again. Oh my goodness, REMBRANDT! This other painting. "Man with Cactus Flowers" That's MARTIN in the painting. He's the "Man with Cactus Flowers"! This must be your entry, REMBRANDT!

**REMBRANDT**

Yes.

**JORDAN**

I like it! I like it a lot. I could look at that painting and look at that painting, and still see something new.

**REMBRANDT**

Thank you. Thank you very much.

**JORDAN**

Well.

**REMBRANDT**

Well.

**JORDAN**

Nice weather.

**REMBRANDT**

I can't complain.

**REMBRANDT**

How 'bout the Dodgers!

**JORDAN**

They're doing OK. Seen any good movies, lately?

**REMBRANDT**

Nothing I remember. Flamingo Boulevard---I hear they're closing it next week.

**JORDAN**

It's always something. Did you hear the new plans for...

**REMBRANDT**

It's odd we never met, JORDAN.

**JORDAN**

We only met just now because you and MARTIN were looking at my entry, "Icarus Whistling".

**REMBRANDT**

That was lucky. But I've noticed you around.

**JORDAN**

I've noticed you noticing me.

**REMBRANDT**

I didn't know you noticed.

JORDAN

I tried to slow down so you could catch me.

REMBRANDT

I didn't want to rush things.

JORDAN

In the bookstore, under letter "A", when I saw you looking at the "Art" books, letter "A", I looked at the "Architecture" books.

REMBRANDT

I didn't want to seem too eager.

JORDAN

In the coffee shop, I sat at the table right next to you.

REMBRANDT

I wanted to do things right.

JORDAN

And I just wanted you to just do something. Anything.

---

**13. Song - *Nothing ventured nothing gained* - JORDAN and  
REMBRANDT**

REMBRANDT

(Verse)

I wondered how I might contrive to meet you.  
 I thought about how you and I might be.  
 I asked myself if this might be the time to have a go.  
 I figured what the heck let's try and see.  
 Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

### JORDAN

(Verse)

I speculated you might be receptive.  
 I guessed there might be more than just a chance.  
 I reckoned you might be supposing much the same as me.  
 I saw some hint of interest in your glance.  
 Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

### JORDAN and REMBRANDT

(Chorus)

Like a pit bull locked and chained,  
 like a novice never trained,  
 like a theory unexplained,  
 Nothing ventured nothing gained.

Like a dollar never spent,  
 Like a letter never sent,  
 Like a promise never meant,  
 Nothing ventured nothing gained

(Verse)

I may be just a tiny bit presumptuous.  
I may be letting hope deceive my heart.  
But if your inclinations are compatible with mine,  
then this is where tomorrow's gonna start.  
Nothing ventured nothing gained.

(Tag)

Like a plane that's never flown,  
Like a sail that's never blown,  
Like a seed that's never sown,  
Nothing ventured nothing gained.

Like a tide that's never turned,  
Like a bridge that's never burned,  
Like a prize that's never earned,  
Nothing ventured nothing gained

(Verse)

I picked up subtle signals from your gestures.  
I noticed indications in your smile.  
I caught a glance a look a hint that lingered in your eyes.  
I saw a certain something for a while.  
Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

(Tag)

Like a summit unattained,  
like a puzzle unexplained,  
like a priest not yet ordained,  
nothing ventured nothing gained.  
Nothing ventured nothing gained.

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## 14. Dialogue - "Oh, REMBRANDT, how horrible!" - JORDAN and REMBRANDT

**JORDAN**

Oh, REMBRANDT! Oh REMBRANDDT! How horrible! How horrible!

**REMBRANDT**

How horrible? What horrible?

**JORDAN**

Horrible. Horrible. REMBRANDT! We've only just met, and already we're almost a comfortable couple.

**REMBRANDT**

Comfortable couple sounds good!

**JORDAN**

Comfortable couple sounds great, but didn't we skip the excitement?

**REMBRANDT**

Skip the excitement?

**JORDAN**

Skip the excitement!

**REMBRANDT**

What excitement?

**JORDAN**

The perils of passion. The rigors of romance. The fun of flirtation. The folly of fervor.

REMBRANDT

The perils of passion?

JORDAN

The rigors of romance.

REMBRANDT

The fun of flirtation?

JORDAN

The folly of fervor.

REMBRANDT

The mystery madness of moonlight?

JORDAN

Something like that.

REMBRANDT

We'll have plenty of romance, JORDAN.

---

**15. Song - *Dancers on the Moon* - JORDAN and REMBRANDT**

(Verse)

REMBRANDT

We'll dance a tango in the afternoon

We'll waltz by midnight candlelight.  
We'll rave and drink champagne and watch the dawn ignite.  
We'll dream of dancers on the moon.

(Verse)

**JORDAN**

We'll pick petunias in the month of June  
We'll plant begonias in the Spring.  
We'll run through fields of daffodils where joy is king.  
We'll howl at dancers on the moon.

(Chorus)

**REMBRANDT**  
Do you still have the dreams of the young?

**JORDAN**

Do you still hear the songs never sung?

**REMBRANDT**

Do you still look beyond where the road seems to end?

**JORDAN**

Do you still want the help of the hand of a friend?

**JORDAN**

Do you still want to know what tomorrow will show?

**EMBRANDT**

Do you still want to find what the fates have de-signed?

(Verse)

**JORDAN and REMBRANDT**

We'll take a quiet breath and hum a tune.  
We'll build our home on solid ground.  
We'll make our plans and do our work and settle down.  
We'll be the dancers on the moon.

We are the dancers on the moon.

---

**JORDAN**

Well, REMBRANDT, no more time for romance.

**REMBRANDT**

The show's about to start.

**JORDAN**

Our last art show at Las Vegas University.

**REMBRANDT**

This is our moment.

JORDAN

This is our day.

REMBRANDT

Launch the ships.

JORDAN

Fire the Rockets.

REMBRANDT

Raise the flag!

JORDAN

(Pause.)

Start the race.

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## 16. Song - *This is it!* - JORDAN and REMBRANDT

(Verse 1.)

This is it!  
This is where we go.  
This is it!  
This is all we know.  
This is it!  
This is what we show.  
This is it!

(Verse 2.)

This is it!  
No more lame excuse.  
This is it!  
Let them cook our goose.  
This is it!  
Turn the wild dogs loose  
This is it!

(Bridge)

Now our destination comes in view.  
And our ship has reached the shore.  
All the work we've done and the race we've run,  
now we've reached the open door.

(Verse 3.)

This is it!  
Now our work is done.  
This is it!  
Now let's have some fun.  
This is it!  
Greet the rising sun.  
This is it!

(Spoken.)

**JORDAN**

Do you like abstract paintings, REMBRANDT? Paintings of squiggles and blobs?

**REMBRANDT**

No, JORDAN. When I see a blob, I just don't know. Is it a good blob? Or a bad blob?

**JORDAN**

Then just toss a coin, REMBRANDT! And you will be the expert!

(Sung.)

**JORDAN and REMBRANDT**

Art is a torment. Art is a trick.  
Say the wrong thing and you must be a hick.

(Spoken.)

**REMBRANDT**

JORDAN, I think artists should do stuff that people can recognize.

**JORDAN**

Then take a photo, REMBRANDT.

**REMBRANDT**

Photos show light waves, JORDAN. Paintings show people.

(Sung.)

**JORDAN and REMBRANDT**

Art is a teaser. Art is a taunt.  
Don't show that you're nervous, just act nonchalant.

---

(Spoken.)

**JORDAN**

How do you know if something is art, REMBRANDT?

**REMBRANDT**

Just remember Marcel Duchamp, JORDAN: "If the artist says it's art, then it's art".

**JORDAN**

But how do we know the artist is an artist? And not just pretending?

**REMBRANDT**

Simple, JORDAN. If he's pretending, then his pretense is his art, so he's an artist.

(Sung.)

**JORDAN and REMBRANDT**

Art is a player. Art is a ploy.  
You wanted a tool and they gave you a toy.

---

(Spoken.)

**JORDAN**

Some of these paintings seem like a joke, REMBRANDT.

**REMBRANDT**

Don't say that too loud, JORDAN. You might insult the artist!

**JORDAN**

You can't insult an artist, REMBRANDT! He'll just smile and say "thank you"!

(Sung.)

**JORDAN and REMBRANDT**

Art is a juggler. Art is a joke.  
You planted an acorn, but that's not an oak.

(First tag verse.)

**JORDAN and REMBRANDT**

This is it!  
Now we've run the race.  
This is it!  
Now we'll take our place.  
This is it!  
Now we'll play our ace.  
This is it!

(Second tag verse.)

This is it!  
Let the rockets fly.  
This is it!  
Raise the flags on high.  
This is it!  
Say our last goodbye.  
This is it!

---

**SCENE 5: The Art Show - ALL**

17. Dialogue - "Jordan!" - JORDAN, MAVIS, MARTIN and REMBRANDT

(MAVIS enters.)

MAVIS

JORDAN!

JORDAN

MAVIS! You're back!

MAVIS

Here's the receipt for the Whistler copy.

JORDAN

The Whistler copy? Whistler copy? Have I ever got come big news about your Whistler copy. But first, this is REMBRANDT. REMBRANDT JONES!

MAVIS

Hi, REMBRANDT. I'm MAVIS. JORDAN's neighbor.

REMBRANDT

Hi, MAVIS. Pleased to meet you.

MAVIS

JORDAN, is REMBRANDT the guy in "There's this guy"?

JORDAN

Yes, yes, yes, MAVIS. REMBRANDT's the guy. The guy in "There's this guy". But hush about that now. This is REMBRANDT's entry in the art show, "Man with Cactus Flowers".

MAVIS

JORDAN! That painting! That man! The man in "Man with cactus flowers"! That's MARTIN!

**JORDAN**

MARTIN?

**MAVIS**

MARTIN! My ex...

(MARTIN enters with his Whistler, but doesn't notice MAVIS.)

**MARTIN**

Here it is, JORDAN, my copy of the Whistler.

**MAVIS**

MARTIN?

**MARTIN**

MAVIS?

**MAVIS**

What are *you* doing here?

**MARTIN**

What are *you* doing here?

**MAVIS**

My neighbor JORDAN is in the art show!

**MARTIN**

My nephew REMBRANDT in the art show!

**JORDAN**

I guess you two have met?

**MAVIS**

He's my good-riddance ex-husband.

**MARTIN**

She's my good-riddance ex-wife.

**JORDAN**

That explains the cordiality!

**MAVIS**

This is awkward.

**MARTIN**

This very awkward.

**JORDAN**

But remember, this is an art show!

**REMBRANDT**

High culture!

**JORDAN**

Lofty contemplation!

**JORDAN**

Suspend old fights!

**REMBRANDT**

Forfend old feuds!

**MAVIS**

Well...

**MARTIN**

I suppose...

**MAVIS**

We really don't have anything to argue about.

**MARTIN**

We haven't got a thing to dispute.

**MAVIS**

So. Hello, MARTIN.

**MARTIN**

Hello, MAVIS

**MAVIS**

This is my neighbor, JORDAN.

**MARTIN**

Thanks. I met JORDAN earlier. And this is my nephew, REMBRANDT. REMBRANDT painted the "Man with Cactus Flowers".

**MAVIS**

Hi, REMBRANDT. I like the "Man with Cactus Flowers". I like it a lot. I could look at that painting and look at that painting and still see something new. MARTIN may be a bum, but your painting is fine, really fine.

**REMBRANDT**

Thank you.

**MAVIS**

Except. Except.

**MARTIN**

Except? Except what?

**MAVIS**

Except he's got it hung too high.

**MARTIN**

He's got the painting hung too high?

**MAVIS**

It should hang just a little bit lower.

**MARTIN**

Hang just a little bit lower?

**MAVIS**

Yes, Martin. Maybe a foot.

**MARTIN**

A foot?

**MAVIS**

Yes, the painting is hung about a foot too high.

**MARTIN**

The painting is hung where the painting should hang. REMBRANDT knows what he's doing.

**MAVIS**

REMBRANDT certainly knows how to paint. But he doesn't know how to hang!

**MARTIN**

REMBRANDT knows how to paint and he knows how to hang!

**MAVIS**

He hung this painting too high!

**MARTIN**

He hung this painting exactly where this painting should hang!

**MAVIS**

He hung it too high. You've got to stand on your tip-toes to see it!

**MARTIN**

Better to stand on your tip-toes than kneel on your knees!

**MAVIS**

Paintings have a proper and suitable height to be hung.

**MARTIN**

And this painting is hung at its proper and suitable height.

**MAVIS**

If it were hung at its proper and suitable height then I wouldn't have to be saying it ought to be hung just a little bit lower! Maybe a foot!

**MARTIN**

If it were hung a foot lower, then you'd be saying it ought to be hung a foot higher.

**MAVIS**

If you weren't such a stubborn ignoramus then you wouldn't be arguing about something you know nothing about.

**MARTIN**

If you weren't such an obstinate harridan then you wouldn't be arguing about something that doesn't need arguing about. rr

(MAVIS and MARTIN pause, staring at each other hotly.)

**MAVIS**

MARTIN?

**MARTIN**

MAVIS?

**MAVIS**

It's getting warm in here.

**MARTIN**

It's getting very warm in here.

**18. Song - *The Stormy Winds of Lust* - MAVIS and MARTIN**

**MAVIS**

I want to grip you, want to strip you,  
 want to pluck you, want to shuck you,

**MARTIN**

want to steer you, want to spear you,  
 want to roll you, want to pole you,

**MAVIS and MARTIN**

want to snarl and growl and grunt and howl with you.

**MAVIS**

I want to feel you, want to peel you,  
 want to snare you, want to bare you,

**MARTIN**

want to stroke you, want to poke you,  
 want to bong you, want to prong you,

**MAVIS and MARTIN**

want to claw and scratch and scrape and hatch with you.

**MAVIS**

The stormy winds of love sublime

tear down all discretion and sense.  
Love conquers my last lame defense.

**MARTIN**

The tides of passion at the flood  
uproot all reserve and restraint.  
Love's not for the feeble and faint.

**MARTIN and MAVIS**

Love is what it is, not what it ain't.

**MAVIS**

I want to hold you, want to scold you,  
want to bite you, want to fight you,

**MARTIN**

want to jump you, want to thump you,  
want to hump you, want to pump you,

**MAVIS and MARTIN**

want to twist and turn and tryst and burn with you.

---

**MAVIS**

MARTIN?

**MARTIN**

MAVIS?

**MAVIS**

My car's right outside.

**MARTIN**

My van's just across the street.

**MAVIS**

Let's go!

**MARTIN**

Let's go!

(MAVIS and MARTIN exit in a frenzy.)

---

## **19. Dialogue - "They left!" - JORDAN and REMBRANDT**

**JORDAN**

They left!

**REMBRANDT**

MAVIS and MARTIN just ran out!

(Pause.)

**JORDAN**

Were they supposed to walk out?

**REMBRANDT**

Nobody told me.

(Pause.)

**JORDAN**

Do you think they'll be back?

**REMBRANDT**

I hope so. They've got another number to do!

(Pause.)

**JORDAN**

How long should we wait?

**REMBRANDT**

This is all new to me!

**JORDAN**

What if they don't come back?

**REMBRANDT**

What a nightmare!

(MAVIS and MARTIN begin singing off-stage, then re-enter,  
appropriately disheveled.)

---

**20. Song - *I have seen the light* - MAVIS and MARTIN**

(Verse)

**MARTIN**

I have seen the light.  
 Now I know the where's and why's  
 Now I know the proper prize,  
 it's clear as black and white

(Verse)

**MAVIS**

I have seen the way.  
 Now I know the worst and best.  
 Now I know the cursed and blessed.  
 It's clear as night and day.

(Bridge)

**MAVIS**

You've got to give a little  
 if you want to get a lot.

**MARTIN**

You've got to learn a little  
 if you want to know a lot.

**MAVIS**

You've got to frown a little

**MARTIN**

if you want to laugh a lot.

**MAVIS and MARTIN**

You've got to fight a little  
If you want to love a lot.

(Verse)

**MAVIS and MARTIN**

-

Now the future's bright.  
Now we know the path to take.  
Now we know the moves to make, now  
Everything is right.  
We have seen the light.

(FINE)

(INTERLUDE)

**MARTIN**

I'd say gleam, you'd say glow.

**MAVIS**

I'd say toss, you'd say throw.

**MARTIN**

I'd say hide, you'd say show.

**MAVIS**

I'd say stash, you'd say stow.

**MAVIS**

I'd say deer, you'd say doe

**MARTIN**

I'd say friend, you'd say foe

**MAVIS**

I'd say rain, you'd say snow.

**MARTIN**

I'd say rake, you'd say hoe.

**MARTIN**

I'd say shrink, you'd say grow.

**MAVIS**

I'd say high, you'd say low.

**MARTIN**

I'd say fast, you'd say slow.

**MAVIS**

I'd say yes,

**MAVIS and MARTIN**

you'd/I'd say yes.

(Verse)

**MAVIS and MARTIN**

We have  
We have seen the light.  
We have found which way is up.  
We have won the loving cup.  
Skies are blue and bright.  
We have seen the light.

---

**21. Song - The Art of Art - ALL**

(Verse)

The art of art is seeing what you never saw before.  
 The art of art is showing what was just beyond the door.  
 You paint a fire and watch it glow.  
 You paint the wind and watch it blow.  
 The art of art is sailing out of sight of any shore.

(Verse)

The art of art reveals the man inside the man you see.  
 The art of art parades the woman she would like to be.  
 You paint a book and turn the page.  
 You paint a man and watch him age.  
 The art of art is climbing where there isn't any tree.

(Chorus)

You see the image in your mind before you take to paint.  
 You see the semblance deep inside, the truth that is but ain't.  
  
 You paint by numbers, learn the rules they teach in all the schools.  
 Then splish and splash and squish and crash,  
 and show the golden, gilded, gleaming, glowing, grail of jewels.

(Verse)

The art of art displays the past that maybe might have been.  
 The art of art exposes what you hide somewhere within.  
 You paint the future, paint the past,  
 You paint the tiny, paint the vast.  
 The art of art presents the prizes you can never win

(Tag chorus.)

You let the painting paint itself, you haven't got a clue / while you stand by and stare.  
You know the shapes and colors come from someplace else, not you. /out there.

You follow dictates and directions word by word by word.  
Then test and twist and taunt and tease,  
and celebrate the giddy, goofy, gawdy, gay absurd.

(Tag verse.)

The art of art announces what you didn't want to know.  
The art of art reveals the things you reap but do not sow.  
You paint the planets, paint the moon.  
You paint the piper, paint the tune.  
The art of art transports you any where you want to go.

(Tag)

We don't know much about art,  
but we know what we like.

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## 22. Exit Music ("The Vegas Student Art Show" reprise)