The Experimental Music Man

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

Ben Ericsen

Advised By
Professor Stan Sollars

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

May 31, 2005

Graduation in May 2005
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Abstract

In most cases parodies are created by people who genuinely love and respect the particular genre they parody. I guess “The Experimental Music Man” is a unique case. Since being introduced to *The Music Man* and experimental music, I have regarded both with disdain. I wrote “The Experimental Music Man” to blatantly display this dislike. Producing this audio parody, though, utilized elements I have passion for, such as writing for comedy, voice acting, and audio production. The tracks contained on this CD are a capstone of my Ball State career, and a product of both what I love and loathe.
Acknowledgements

-I would like to thank Professor Stan Sollars for advising me on this project. His extensive knowledge of radio drama and audio production was instrumental in completing this production the way I had envisioned.

-I also need to thank the talented voice actors who took the time to stretch their abilities and play some unorthodox characters: Dustin Cox, Josh Hedge, Tony Kubek, Sarah McWhorter, Sahar Montalvo, Matthew Mumper, and Matt Pelsor.

-Also, many thanks to Dustin Cox and Josh hedge for lending their tremendous musical talents to this project. Their “experimental” score enhanced this production immensely.

-Finally, I thank Ms. Amy Gleason and Mr. Dan Crall for exposing me to The Music Man and experimental music, respectively. Obviously, without this exposure, my audio production would not exist.
“The Experimental Music Man:” Chronicling the Production

Whether I had been aware or not, “The Experimental Music Man” has been in the works since my sophomore year of high school. It was during that year that my drama instructor, Ms. Amy Gleason, had our class watch *The Music Man*, starring Robert Preston and Shirley Jones. At the time, I was not sure if it was the movie itself or the animosity I had for my instructor (we butted heads often), but I absolutely loathed *The Music Man*. The film struck me as the most unrealistic, grating, piece of two and a half hour tripe I had ever been subject to, and an abhorrence for all musicals stemmed from viewing it.

My distaste for experimental music developed years later. During my junior year at Ball State, I was paired up with fellow TCOM student, Dan Crall, to shoot some entertainment news stories. Dan told me about his plans for an experimental music radio show he was pitching to Indiana Public Radio. I had no idea what experimental music was, and still being open to examining new forms of media, I asked to hear some examples. Though I could respect the audio production, the unique concepts, the creativity, and the originality that went into experimental music, I would not accept it as a legitimate form of music. Miriam Webster defines music as “vocal, instrumental, or mechanical sounds having rhythm, melody, or
harmony.” In my opinion, experimental music did not even come close to fulfilling those requirements. Thus, I had a major problem with it being called music.

Then I realized that instead of being angry, I could have fun at experimental music’s expense. That gave me the idea that a musical scored entirely with experimental music could be fairly funny. Originally, I was going to include a recurring experimental music-pushing character on my radio comedy show at WCRD 91.3. Then, I remembered *The Music Man*. I quickly decided that it would be possible to loosely follow the plot of that production and substitute Robert Preston’s Professor Harold Hill with my experimental music peddler.

Fleshing out this idea and actually writing a script proved to be quite the challenge. Even in parody, I had a hard time adhering to *The Music Man*’s unrealistic plot. My ideas were generally fanciful and ridiculous, but I wanted them more based in reality than the events present in *The Music Man*. Plus, based on my opinion of experimental music, there would be no way the Experimental Music Man could seduce an entire town and its sexy shrew through song.

As a result, the script became a very loose parody of the original *Music Man*. The key characters were still present, albeit in altered form. Xander Ventoux obviously was my representation of Professor Harold Hill, though significantly less competent and convincing. Chuck Chodely assumed the role of Charlie Cowell, the salesman antagonist. Herman
Johnson was based off of the character Marcellus Washburn, ex-salesman and music man henchman. I took a few liberties with the Marian the Librarian character. I was not going to have the unrealistic love relationship Marian and Professor Harold Hill had in *The Music Man*. To counter this, I turned Marian into Estella, the gal who would speak in Spanish to deter disgusting potential suitors such as Xander. Since Marian had a brother with an exaggerated lisp name Winthrop, I made sure Estella had one as well. I named him Sanchez.

Since the script was so loosely tied to the original plot, I determined that “The Experimental Music Man” soundtrack would be the most effective element connecting my parody to the original work. Upon the completion of the script, I figured that I would just slap together some ambient noises together because that was all I considered experimental music to be. I am not a musician, and in this case I thought I would not have to be. After thinking about it, I decided that instead of taking the easy way out, I should at least ask some musically gifted friends if they would be interested in helping out. I was working with a local rock band, Black Cloud Theory, on another project, and the guitarist and vocalist, Dustin Cox and Josh Hedge, had already expressed interest in helping with voice work. I approached Dustin and Josh about doing the soundtrack, and they were eager to get started. By the end of the week, I had a CD of eight spectacular tracks to use in “The Experimental Music Man.” Not only were the tracks of fine production quality and better than I envisioned, they can
stand alone as hilarious comedy. Thus, I made sure to include those tracks after “The Experimental Music Man” on the CD.

The next step in production was to record the voices. I had a number of great vocal resources at my disposal with Dustin Cox, Josh Hedge, Tony Kubek, Sarah McWhorter, Sahar Montalvo, Matthew Mumper, and Matt Pelsor providing a wide variety of hilarious and appropriate character voices to the project. Though I wrote the script, I was not married to it. They were allowed to craft their own characters and improvise whenever they could come up with funnier lines than what was written in the script. There were plenty of times during recording where the improvisation added that extra bit of humor the script was missing.

Unfortunately, I was unable to use some of that improvisation and even some of their variations of a particular character. When I began organizing the voices and sound effects during post-production, Professor Sollars and I found that I committed a number of cardinal sins whilst recording.

For one, since I recorded my voice actors often at separate times, there were inconsistencies in their vocal texture. Some of my actors spoke too close to the microphone, resulting in some unnaturally bassy voices that had to be modified through equalization in post-production to make them sound more realistic. At points, some spoke too directly into the microphone at times, and thus the plosives from saying words beginning with “p” and “t” was too evident. This I had to correct with equalization
and volume fades during post-production. Finally and unfortunately, a number of characters and lines Sahar delivered had to be discarded because I recorded him with the volume fader up too high, and his audio over-modulated and became distorted. I think the reasons I made all these recording mistakes was because I was so captivated by the original and hilarious characters my voice actors were creating. If I did it over again, I probably could have used a humorless audio production guru to force me to pay attention to my microphone positioning and fader volume levels.

Another main hurdle I had to clear in order to complete this project involved the acquisition of the sound effects. The problem was that I simply did not have the time to capture many of my own sound effects. As a result, I had to use sound effects I had recorded for previous projects and scour commercial sound effects libraries. Since I did not record the sound effects myself, I did not have the direct control to sync the sound effects to the dialog. I had to do that in post-production. I think the sound effects I utilized worked, though personally recording them would have spared me of some editing, equalization, and de-noising in post-production.

Post-production was probably the most rewarding part of the project because I could hear it take shape as I worked. I spent about twenty to thirty hours a week for a month in the Ball Building’s audio editing suites chopping dialog, placing and pacing sound effects, and utilizing any audio processing that was necessary. My meetings with Professor Sollars during this stage were especially beneficial. He showed me how to utilize
equalization to counter the bassy proximity effect on some of the vocal parts. Also, he helped me better pace the “musical” salesman number so that it actually moved at a similar beat as the number in *The Music Man*. Professor Sollars also suggested that I add a minor character that was not in the original script. This character appeared during the scene where Xander first encounters Herman Johnson. That character, the confused and ignored customer, added a great deal more to a scene that was previously stark with only dialog between two characters.

“The Experimental Music Man” proved to be one of the most beneficial projects I have worked on. It stretched me creatively and pushed my scriptwriting, vocal performance, and audio production abilities to their limits. Plus, it allowed me to bring an idea that had been swimming around in my head for years to realization. In spite of the mistakes I made during the recording process, I would still probably consider “The Experimental Music Man” the capstone to my college career.
The Experimental Music Man Script

By Ben Ericsen

MUSIC: Just like *The Music Man*, the song 76 Trombones fades up. Abruptly it's warped into experimental synth crap. Music under

ANNOUNCER: So begins the Experimental Music Man.

MUSIC: Under and out

SFX: Ambient freight train yard noise up and under. Ex: trains arriving and leaving, goods being tossed around, etc.

SFX: Fade up and in footfalls on gravel. Running with flopping baggage.

CHUCK CHODELY: Aw man! Aw crap! I'm getting too old for this! Why me?!

SFX: Fade up and in a number of running footfalls on gravel

CROWD: (a number of people saying stuff like, "That no good swindler! That dopey hoodlum! He's lowering our community's collective IQ!")

SFX: A train starting to move. Chuck's footfalls running up and jumping onto the train (could acquire sound by having someone jumping into a bed of a truck)

CROWD: Saying stuff such as "He got away!" Good riddance! "This chase was the most fun since Elmer Carnes mad a hot tub out of the bed of his pickup truck!"

SFX: Cut to ambience of inside the freight car. Muttering of fellow salesmen. Chuck dusts himself off and sets his stuff down.

SALESMAN1: Hey Chuck. Is that town not interested in your asbestos baby wear?

SFX: The singing will go roughly to the beat of the train's movement.

CHUCK: (GROWLS) We used to get cash for the hard goods!

SALESMAN2: Cash for the soft goods!

CHUCK: Cash for the ab workouts in 20 minutes or less!

SALESMAN3: Cash for the dry goods!

SALESMAN1: Cash for the wet goods!

CHUCK: Cash for the under-sized, chafing, polyester dress!

SALESMAN2: Whatty'a talk?
SALESMAN3: Whattya talk?
SALESMAN1: Whattya mean?
CHUCK: You can talk, talk, talk! You can bicker, bicker, bicker! You can talk all ya want because it’s different than it was!
SALESMAN2: Yessir, it’s different than it was! We can’t sell a thing anymore!
SALESMAN1: Why could that be?
CHUCK: I’ll tell ya!
SALESMAN3: I’ll tell ya!
SALESMAN4: It’s EBay!
CHUCK, SALESMEN 1, 2, & 3: (SIMULTANEOUSLY) NO!
SFX: Cartoon throwing sound.
SALESMAN4: Ahh! (FADES OUT)
CHUCK: I’ll tell ya who it is!
SALESMAN2: Whattya talk?
SALESMAN3: Whattya talk?
SALESMAN1: Who could it be?
CHUCK: Why it’s that dang dope Xander Ventoux!
SALESMAN2: Xander who?
SALESMAN3: Xander who?
CHUCK: Xander Ventoux, that’s who!
SALESMAN1: What’s he do?
CHUCK: He’s a music man!
SALESMAN2: He’s a music man?
SALESMAN1: Hasn’t that been done?
CHUCK: He’s an experimental music man! With his weird synth keyboards, and crickets, and noise!
SALESMAN3: Noise?
SALESMAN1: Noise?
CHUCK: Noise! That’s all it is, noise!
SALESMAN2: Does he sell?
SALESMAN3: Does he sell?
SALESMAN1: He make the coin?

CHUCK: No! He’s a dope, he’s a doof, he’s a total nincompoop! He doesn’t sell, and he makes us all look bad!

SALESMAN1: Lookin’ bad!

SALESMAN2: Lookin’ bad!

SALESMAN3: I hate him!

XANDER: You all hate what your brains are incapable of understanding.

SALESMAN2: Whattya talk?

SALESMAN3: Whattya talk?

SALESMAN1: Whattya mean?

CHUCK: It’s him!

SALESMAN2: It’s him?

SALESMAN1: Let’s get him!

XANDER: Experimental Music Man, away!

SFX: Cartoon throwing sound

CHUCK: No! I’ll get you Ventoux! I’ll get you (CONTINUES TO YELL. FADES OUT)

SFX: Train pulling away and fading into the distance. Xander standing up and dusting himself off.

XANDER: My fellow salesmen are getting better at being experimental. That last song was almost devoid of constraining rhythm. Too bad the subject matter was disagreeable. Anyway, it’s a beautiful day to enlighten the ignorant, savage masses to the wonders of the experimental. Now where am I? Ooh, that crudely constructed, almost wonderfully experimental, sign says that I’m entering River City, Iowa, but that I am not welcome.

MUSIC: Fade in muffled Iowa Stubborn. Begin the song roughly around 16 seconds and out around 54 seconds. If need more time, start it earlier.

XANDER: But what’s this? It sounds like this town loves music! It’s bound by the traditional constraints of harmony and beat, but they have the potential to be blessed with
the wonders of experimental music. Onward, Xander Ventoux! To River City and free the lives of the uncultured ignoramuses!

SFX: Xander walking through the cornfields. Remains at a constant volume while the musical number increases in volume (simulates Xander getting closer to the town)

**XANDER:** (FINISHING THE MUSICAL NUMBER) Provided that you are contrary!

(BEGIN WEIRD AMBIENT EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC)

**TOWNSPERSON1:** Where’d that racket come from?

**TOWNSPERSON2:** It sounds like one of them alien raccoons!

**TOWNSPERSON3:** And who’s this ugly guy?

**TOWNSPERSON4:** And why’s he wearing a burlap sack?

**TOWNSPERSON5:** And why does he smell like dirty pickles?

**XANDER:** Behold ignorant plebeians, I am Xander Ventoux, your prophet, guiding you to an intellectual and experimental plan that was previously unattainable within the simple lives you lived!

**TOWNSPERSON4:** Is he making fun of us?

**TOWNSPERSON2:** I think he’s calling us dumb!

**TOWNSPERSON3:** I hate him already!

**XANDER:** Yes you are ignorant, only because you haven’t yet been introduced to the wonders of the experimental! Don’t worry, you have shown potential to be worthy of an experimental boys and girls band! I will train your children and expose them to the experimental!

**TOWNSPERSON1:** Wait a minute! Did he just say that he’s gonna expose himself to our children?

**TOWNSPERSON5:** He’s one of them pedderfiles!

**XANDER:** You fools! You misunderstand and close your minds to the possibilities! Allow me to demonstrate the wonders of experimental music!

MUSIC: Begins ambient crap and is quickly cut off

**TOWNSPERSON2:** He thinks we’re idiots!

**TOWNSPERSON5:** He wants to go all Michael Jackson on our kids!

**TOWNSPERSON3:** Let’s get him!

**TOWNSPERSON4:** Bring them tar and feathers!
XANDER: They obviously need some time to think it over. Away!
SFX: Footfalls running away
TOWNSPERSON1: After him!
SFX: The townspeople pursue, stomping and screaming
SFX: Cut to Xander running on the sidewalk, running past, running back, opening the door to a storefront, and diving inside. A couple of seconds later, the crowd runs past.
XANDER: (OUT OF BREATH) They’ll take to my experimental, mind stimulating music soon.
HERMAN: (FURTHER AWAY IN BACK OF THE STORE) Hold on, I know that voice! (SFX FOOTFALLS COMING CLOSER AND STOP) Engie? Engelbert Huckelby? It’s you! Well I’ll be a spayed wombat!
XANDER: Why it’s none other than Chase Dando, my loyal lackey in all things experimental!
HERMAN: (FURTHER AWAY IN BACK OF THE STORE) Hold on, I know that voice! (SFX FOOTFALLS COMING CLOSER AND STOP) Engie? Engelbert Huckelby? It’s you! Well I’ll be a spayed wombat!
XANDER: Why it’s none other than Chase Dando, my loyal lackey in all things experimental!
HERMAN: Aw c’mon Engelbert. I haven’t gone by that stupid name since we were into that stuff in high school. My name’s Herman Johnson, and that’s what I go by.
XANDER: Sure Chase, whatever you say. Once you’ve gone experimental, you never want to go back. Believe me, I know.
HERMAN: (MUMBLING) Engelbert, you’re still nuttier than an outhouse rat.
XANDER: What was that Chase?
HERMAN: Nothing Engelbert. Just making a mental note about some inventory management I gotta do.
XANDER: Ah yes Chase, your business establishment. Tell me, what wares and services are you specializing in?
HERMAN: (EXCITED) Well Engelbert, it’s lawn ornaments! I construct and distribute all kinds of lawn ornaments! You would never guess at the demand there is in Iowa for lawn ornaments. I’m processing and delivering orders all over 5 counties!
XANDER: That’s excellent Chase! You’re an artisan! A creator and distributor of experimental lawn sculptures!
HERMAN: Well...
XANDER: This brings me hope that finally, after all these years of wandering, there is finally a place willing to immerse itself in the brilliance of all things experimental!
HERMAN: Umm...

XANDER: Tell me Chase, what manner of experimental beauty have you constructed? A gathering of baby food jars welded to manhole covers? Or perhaps the fusion of used baby wipes and a stuffed badger? Or...

HERMAN: Actually, the demand isn’t there for those kinds of products. The money’s to be made in making and selling lawn flamingos, yard balls, lawn gnomes, and plaster geese that you dress up.

XANDER: (SADDENED) I never though that you would be a man controlled by materialism.

HERMAN: When you’ve got a wife to support in addition to yourself, you gotta do what’s necessary.

XANDER: A wife? Chase, you dog! You have a wife?!

HERMAN: (PROUD) Sure do! Here’s a picture!

SFX: Picture exchange

XANDER: She is your equal in attractiveness.

HERMAN: Thanks...I think.

XANDER: You’ve done the best you could for yourself since you’ve turned away from experimental enlightenment. I, on the other hand, am destined to be rewarded equivalent to what I deserve.

HERMAN: Engelbert that might end up being a toothless bag lady that smells like fungal body wash because it costs money to maintain life and relationships. From the looks of it, you’re not gonna be able to pull it off with this experimental boys and girls band scheme. It’s the sad truth Engelbert. Quit trying to be different for the sake of being different. Try doing some things in a traditional manner, and you’ll be surprised with the good things that will follow. It worked for me.

XANDER: No, Chase! You are a quitter! My determination to share my high pursuits will be justly rewarded with a mate of the greatest beauty.

SFX: High heel shoes slowly approaching and walking past

MUSIC: Something sexy, like Marvin Gaye’s *Let’s Get it On.*

XANDER: (IN AWE) Who is that raven-haired beauty.

HERMAN: That’s Estella, she clerks the general store across the street.
**XANDER:** Estella Ventoux...yes! She is destined to be mine! Chase, I go to woo her!

**HERMAN:** Wait Engelbert! She...

SFX: Xander opens the door and runs across the street.

**HERMAN:** (AS THE DOOR CLOSES) ...doesn’t speak English.

SFX: Xander’s footfalls approaching and opening the door.

**MUSIC:** Elevator/Retail music plays softly in the background.

**XANDER:** There she is.

SFX: Cash register closer and Xander’s footfalls on a tiled floor

**XANDER:** I have never wilted so at the sight of such beauty before.

**ESTELLA:** Que?

**XANDER:** You may not realize this yet, but I can see in your eyes that you and I are destined to be experimental together.

**ESTELLA:** (SPEAKING SPANISH. HER TONE IS PUZZLED, NOT YET ANGRY)

**XANDER:** No, not that way my passion fruit. At least, not yet. For now, we will make incredible experimental music together.

**ESTELLA:** (SPEAKS IN SPANISH THAT SHE CAN’T UNDERSTAND ENGLISH)

**XANDER:** Wait a minute, I recognize that phrase. Are you saying that you can’t understand English?

**ESTELLA:** Si.

**XANDER:** But yet you remain with me, communicating in the language of the experimental, in awe of my fascinating self! We are destined to be together!

**SANCHEZ:** Hey mithter! What’re you doing talking to my thither? Are you gonna buy thomthing or what?

**XANDER:** (MUTTERING TO HIMSELF) Sister eh? Perhaps I shall get further wooing privileges if I befriend the boy...

**SANCHEZ:** Are you thpeaking to yourthelf?

**XANDER:** My boy, you have amazing tongue movement. Have you ever considered the experimental?

**SANCHEZ:** I’m calling the polith!
XANDER: No, no, no, I don’t mean that! I mean experimental music! Your unique speech would make for an amazing lead in my experimental boys and girls band!

SANCHEZ: Aw thuckth mithter. Uthually folkth make fun of my voith becauth I lithp.

XANDER: You are a god among ants. Don’t let anyone tell you different.

SANCHEZ: Gee, thankth!

XANDER: What’s your name, my boy?

SANCHEZ: Itth Thancheth, and my thitherth name ith Ethtella!

XANDER: Estella, my dove, I kiss your hand.

SFX: Kissing the hand

ESTELLA: (SAYS SOMETHING IN SPANISH, NOT VERY IMPRESSED)

SANCHEZ: Tho what’re we doing with thith ethperimental muthic boyth and girth band? Whath ethperimental muthic? Whath your name? How come you’re bald?

XANDER: My name is Xander Ventoux. I’m bald because I’m too virile for hair, heh, heh...

ESTELLA: (DISGUSTED, BUT IN SPANISH)

XANDER: And as for our experimental music boys and girls band, we best go to the store across the street and speak with my experimental ally, Chase Dando. He owns the establishment.

SANCHEZ: Chathe Dando? You mean Mithter Johnthon?

XANDER: Enough! We scheme!

SFX: Opens door and walks away

SFX: Scene begins with Sanchez and Xander’s footfalls moving toward Herman’s store and opening the door.

XANDER: Chase, this town is able to grasp the wonder that is the experimental. Behold. Sanchez, the first of the River City Experimental Boys and Girls Band!

SANCHEZ: Mithter Thander ith nithe to me! He thayth I’m gonna be a thtar!

HERMAN: (SIGHS) Engelbert, this cockamamie scheme has never worked before, and just because you got a 10-year-old kid to actually buy into it doesn’t mean that it’ll work now.
XANDER: You don’t understand, Chase, it’s destiny! We will open River City’s eyes to the enlightenment that is the experimental!

SANCHEZ: Yeth!

XANDER: All we need is an angle to show how beneficial experimental music is. Tell me, Chase, what locale in River City could be most likely to encourage evening debauchery?

HERMAN: If I tell you, will you leave my store?

XANDER: As you wish.

SANCHEZ: You can thleep in our outhouth Mithter Thander!

XANDER: Thank you Sanchez. Now Chase, about that locale?

HERMAN: (SIGHS) There’s a new dance club called the Cornstalk that the kids frequent most nights...

XANDER: Spectacular! Once the parents drop off their children to the club, we shall condemn its uncouth nature!

SANCHEZ: Yeth!

XANDER: And then, once they’re roped in we’ll convince them of the sacredness and purity of experimental music through an appropriate and experimental song!

SANCHEZ: They wouldn’t be able to refuth!

XANDER: Let’s go, Sanchez! We must gather our strength for this eve!

ANNOUNCER: That evening...

SFX: Car doors slamming. There are teenie boppers saying dumb shit to one another such as “I love your hair” and “nice outfit!”

XANDER: Okay Sanchez, this is it. We must make our move before the parents leave. Do you remember the experimental song we practiced?

SANCHEZ: You mean thothe noitheth we were making the pathht ten minuteth?

XANDER: You mean that brilliant, beat less, ambience we honed to present to the plebian masses?

SANCHEZ: Thure, I remember the noitheth I need to make.

XANDER: Then let’s spring into action!

SFX: Jumping out of bushes and jogging towards the crowd.
XANDER: River City parents! Can you even fathom the great mistake that you are making?!

TOWNSPERSON1: Who's that bald, ugly guy wearing burlap?
TOWNSPERSON2: And what's little Sanchez doing tagging along?
TOWNSPERSON3: Hey! It's that feller from this morning that called us idiots!
TOWNSPERSON4: Yeah, and that's the feller who is after our kids too!
TOWNSPERSON5: Let's get him! He ain't gonna get away this time!

XANDER: No, you fools! I'm trying to save your children from descending into the vile realm of traditional debauchery!

TOWNSPERSON3: What's he talking about?

MUSIC: Experimental crap

XANDER: You've got trouble (EXPERIMENTAL NOISE) here in River City (MORE NOISE) It's trouble which starts with "T" (MORE NOISE). It rhymes with "C," which stands for the Cornstalk Dance club! (NOISE)

TOWNSPERSON2: That barely rhymed.

TOWNSPERSON4: Is he trying to get us into doing one of those dancing numbers?

XANDER: (STILL "SINGING") You've got trouble.

SANCHEZ: Thuper duper trouble.

TOWNSPERSON1: Nah, the song has to have beat and rhythm for it to be a dancing number song

TOWNSPERSON5: And this one doesn't have either!

XANDER: ("SINGING") Starts with "T."

SANCHEZ: Which rhymeth with "D" which thandth for danth the club!

TOWNSPERSON2: I can't stand anymore of this crap! I'm gonna wing him with this rock!

SFX: Whipping/throwing sound followed by skull impact.

XANDER: Ugh!

SANCHEZ: Mithter Thander! You've been thtruck!

TOWNSPERSON1: He's down!

TOWNSPERSON5: Let's get 'em!

TOWNSPERSON4: Light the oily rags!
MAYOR SHEMA: (SHOUTING) Now wait a gol-darned minute here!

SANCHEZ: Mayor Themp!

SHEMP: Now that's Mayor Shemp, little boy. You oughta see on of them speech therapists.

SANCHEZ: Yeth Thir.

SHEMP: Now, as for the rest of yas, as the mayor of this town, I demand to know why you're bothering this here man-child.

TOWNSPERSON3: But Mr. Mayor, he's been botherin' us all day!

TOWNSPERSON5: Saying we're dumb!

TOWNSPERSON4: Claiming we're bad parents!

TOWNSPERSON1: And forcing us to listen to a bunch of clicks and whirs and chirps that he calls music!

XANDER: (WEAKENED) Because it is music...for those enlightened few who want more than mere entertainment...

SHEMP: Aw dang! He's one of them simple people! He don't know better! You can't hurt one of them simple people! It ain't Christian!

TOWNSPEOPLE: (COLLECTIVELY) Oh...

TOWNSPERSON2: Honest Mayor Shemp, we didn't know!

SHEMP: He just wants to help make this town a better place...hey, I got an idea!

XANDER: You'll fund the creation of my experimental music boys and girls band!

SHEMP: I'll let you and little Sanchez help Herman Johnson with the lawn ornament decorations at tomorrow's 4th of July picnic!

XANDER: And in return, the town will fund my experimental music boys and girls band?

SHEMP: (OVER-THE-TOP SARCASM) Sure we will! I heard your "music," and it sounds great! We'll be sure to spring for it after the picnic!

XANDER: My dreams are coming true!

SHEMP: Someone supply this man-child with some moldy overalls!

ANNOUNCER: The next day, at the 4th of July picnic!

SFX: Picnic/Park ambience. Low patriotic music in the background
SANCHEZ: Mithter Thander, I don’t think you thould be putting arth where they don’t belong on that Yankee Doodle yard gnome.

XANDER: Sanchez, free yourself from the iron restraints of conservative thought. The 4th of July is a holiday celebrating independence, so let us be independent of traditional practices.

SANCHEZ: That thounds like a thwell idea!

HERMAN: NO it does not, especially with my products! Engelbert, I am being paid good money to decorate the greenery with a tacky ensemble. That’s what I’m going to do, and you’re not going to screw this up!

XANDER: What happened to freedom of expression, Chase? It’s what this great nation was founded upon. Why are you trying to abolish it, Chase?

HERMAN: You idiot! My name isn’t Chase Dando! I’m Herman Johnson!

XANDER: Oh Chase, your time here has given you delusions of grandeur...

HERMAN: Call me Chase one more time, Engelbert, and this yard ball is getting chucked straight at your skull!

XANDER: Maybe a good Epsom salt bath will calm you down Chase.

HERMAN: Argh!

SFX: Throwing yard ball, whizzing by

XANDER: Criminy, Chase! Your aim is terrible!

SFX: In the background, we hear an impact his with a grunt. The band abruptly stops playing, and people worriedly mutter.

SANCHEZ: I wonder whatth going on over there?

XANDER: Perhaps it’s something experimental! Let’s investigate! Are you coming, Chase?

HERMAN: Gaaaaaaahhhhh!

XANDER: Fine, have it your way.

SFX: Footfalls running through the grass. The crowd’s muttering fades up and becomes more coherent.

TOWNSPERSON1: Poor Old Man Peterson.

TOWNSPERSON2: He was the best band director River City’s had in a while.
TOWNSPERSON3: Shame he had to go this way.
TOWNSPERSON4: A yard ball right to the bean.
TOWNSPERSON5: Right in his death spot.
SHEMP: Well cripes! Who's gonna direct the 4th of July band now?
SANCHEZ: I think that's our chanth, Mither Thander!
XANDER: Yes! Mayor Shemp, I shall lead this fine band into producing sonic beauty to the likes this town has not yet seen. I call this patriotic overture, "Shapoopy!"
SFX: The crowd mutters its displeasure
CHUCK: You most certainly will not, you fraud!
TOWNSPEOPLE: (SIMULTANEOUSLY) Gasp!
SHEMP: Now who in the devil are you?
CHUCK: The name's Chodely, Chuck Chodely. Traveling salesman extraordinaire. A man cut from the cloth of six generations of competent, daring entrepreneurs. A man who...
SHEMP: Yeah, yeah, yeah! Whattya want with us?
CHUCK: Oh, I just wanted to save River City and my professional reputation by exposing Xander Ventoux, the Experimental Music Man, as a total boob, aggressively pushing his ridiculous noise on unsuspecting folks such as yourselves and ruining the rest of our good names!
SHEMP: That's it? C'mon, we knew this guy was a dope and that his music ain't close to being music at all. No one in River City likes this crap. It's just noise, and we get enough noise from the dang pigs during rutting season!
XANDER: No one here appreciates the experimental?
EVERYONE: No one!
XANDER: (SNIFFS) I can't believe it...wait it's not true! Estella, the Latina love of my life and her brother Sanchez worship me and all things experimental!
SFX: Grabs Estella.
ESTELLA: Dios mio, no!
XANDER: I have all I need! Come Sanchez! Away to the train yard!
SFX: Their footfalls fade out
TOWNSPERSON1: He's kidnapped Estella and Sanchez!
TOWNSPERSON2: After him!

SHEMP: I'll call the River City SWAT team to apprehend him!

SFX: Townspeople hollering and pursuing.

HERMAN: So, Chodely, what do you sell anyway?

CHUCK: I'm so glad you asked! Why I am the premier distributor of smooth, silken, sturdy baby wear! It's made entirely from Asbestos! I can sell you the whole mess for only forty-nine ninety...

HERMAN: Forget it, I could get a better deal online.

CHUCK: GRRRR!

SFX: Running footfalls fading in, coinciding with huffing and puffing

XANDER: Don't' worry, my dove, soon we will be safely aboard the next fertilizer freight train bound for Gary, Indiana.

SANCHEZ: Gary, Indiana?


MUSIC: Experimental music fades up

ESTELLA: All right, that's enough!

SFX: Swings and hits Xander in the head

XANDER: Ugh, Estella, my pimento loaf...you hit me! Hey, you speak English!

ESTELLA: I sure do! I only spoke Spanish so that you would lose interest, but instead it's some sort of sick turn on for you!

XANDER: Oh yeah it is, my mama sita.

ESTELLA: I am nothing of the sort, you idiot! I want nothing to do with your or your sorry excuse for music. you stupid, ugly, balding, little man!

XANDER: But...it was meant to be...

ESTELLA: Just get lost. you creep!

SANCHEZ: Okay Estella, he geth the point. Leave him alone.

XANDER: (SNIFFS) Sanchez? Ah yes, Sanchez is the only one in this town of troglodytes willing to be enlightened by the experimental!

SANCHEZ: Hold on a thecond, Mithter Thander.
**XANDER:** We go! Xander Ventoux and his faithful new sidekick, Sanchez! The Experimental Duo forever!

**ESTELLA:** Not if my can of mace has anything to say about it! Mace in your face!

SFX: Spraying Xander in the eyes

**XANDER:** ARGH!

SFX: The SWAT team jogs up saying, “hut, hut, hut” the whole way.

**SWAT1:** The target is down! I repeat, the target is down! Move in to apprehend!

SFX: The “hut, hut, hut” stuff fades out

**ANNOUNCER:** The next few months

(PROCESSING NOTE: ALL THAT FOLLOWS WILL SOUND AS IF IT’S IN SOME REVERB FILLED ECHO CHAMBER SO IT SOUNDS DREAM-LIKE)

**BALIFF:** All rise for the City of River City vs. Xander Ventoux, real name Engelbert Huckelby. The honorable Mayor Shemp presiding.

**SHEMP:** It is the professional conclusion of this court that Mr. Ventoux’s aggressive behavior and attempted kidnapping is a direct result of his infatuation with odd noises that he claims to be music. Truly, this is a mark of insanity. Thus, the court sentences Mr. Ventoux to spend ten years incarcerated at the State of Iowa’s correctional facility for the criminally insane.

SFX: Gavel strike followed by prison doors closing.

SFX: (LOSE THE REVERB) Fade in the insane muttering and gnawing of those institutionalized.

SFX: Door opens and footfalls on concrete approach.

**DR. FEELSTRANGE:** Good morning group! How is everyone feeling this day?

SFX: Pulling up a chair.

**PATIENT1:** Plasticene suspenders!

**FEELSTRANGE:** That’s delightful Leon! Now, today’s discussion is going to be about things that bring us joy. Xander, would you like to be first?

**XANDER:** Of course. Doctor, for I am a misunderstood pioneer, blazing the trail towards intellectual and cultural fulfillment! Of course my cause brings me joy!

**FEELSTRANGE:** And what cause is that again Xander?
**XANDER:** Why, to make everyone enjoy the bliss that is experimental music! First, I thought that people were just ignorant of the wonders it could bring, but I’ve realized that people are idiots, only wanting to be entertained! They ignore media that makes them think!

**PATIENT2:** (MAKES GNAWING SOUNDS)

**FEELSTRANGE:** What does Jasper have to add, Leon?

**PATIENT1:** He says that he likes Xander’s experimental music. I like it too, cuz it’s crazy like me!

**FEELSTRANGE:** That’s great! What do you say Xander? Would it bring you more joy if the group made experimental music with you?

**XANDER:** It would be my dream come true! Finally, my experimental boys and girls band! Come group, let your conventional thoughts and inhibitions go! This one’s called *76 Trombones*!

**MUSIC:** The crazy people start doing their own experimental mix of *76 Trombones*, and it fades out.