

An idea seems to strike CERVANTES.

GOVERNOR. (*Impatiently*) Let's hear your defense!

CERVANTES. Your Excellency, if you've no objection I should like to present it in the manner I know best...in the form of a charade—

GOVERNOR. Charade?

CERVANTES. An entertainment, if you will—

THE DUKE. Entertainment!

CERVANTES. At worst, it may beguile your time.

(*To the other PRISONERS*) And if any of you should care to enter in ...

THE DUKE. Governor! I should like to protest!

GOVERNOR. No, no let's hear him out!

Quixote

General acquiescence from the PRISONERS.

CERVANTES. Then ... may I set the stage?

The GOVERNOR waves assent. The PRISONERS shift position to become audience as CERVANTES gestures to his MANSERVANT who scurries, like a well-trained stage manager, to assist as required. Music begins, softly, under, as CERVANTES, seated center, begins a make-up transformation through the following speech.

No. 1a

Man of La Mancha

See p. 62

(Don Quixote & Sancho Panza)



I shall impersonate a man ... come, enter into my imagination and see him!
 His name ... Alonso Quijana ... a country squire, no longer young.
 Bony, hollow-faced...eyes that burn with the fire of inner vision.
 Being retired, he has much time for books. He studies them from morn
 to night, and often through the night as well. And all he reads oppresses him
 ... fills him with indignation at man's murderous ways towards man.
 He broods ... and brood ... and broods—and finally from so much brooding
 his brains dry up. He lays down the melancholy burden of sanity and
 conceives the strangest project ever imagined...to become a knight-errant
 and sally forth into the world to right all wrongs. No longer shall he be
 plain Alonso Quijana ... but a dauntless knight known as —
 Don Quixote de La Mancha!!!

*The transformation of CERVANTES into DON QUIXOTE is now complete.
 The MANSERVANT, who will become SANCHO PANZA, assists further
 by dressing him and providing props during the beginning of the song.
 CERVANTES sings a little tongue-in-cheek;
 an actor aware that he's performing.*

DON Q. Hear me now, oh thou bleak and unbearable world,
 Though art base and debauched as can be;
 And a knight with his banners all bravely unfurled
 Now hurls down his gauntlet to thee!