

Script Sample

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Woyzeck

by Georg Büchner
translated by Rob Melrose
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Though written in 1836 and 1837, *Woyzeck* was first published in 1879 and first produced on November 8, 1913 in Munich at the Residenztheater.

This translation premiered March 15, 2007 at The Cutting Ball Theater (Rob Melrose, Artistic Director) in residence at EXIT on Taylor. It was directed by Adriana Baer with music by Cliff Caruthers, sets designed by Melpomene Katakalos, costumes designed by Raquel Barreto, props designed by Carlos Aguilar, and lighting designed by Rob Melrose. It was dramaturged by Lucia Scheckner and stage managed by Robert McPhee with the following cast:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Marie | Drea Bernardi |
| Woyzeck | Chad Deverman |
| Carnival Barker, Captain | David Sinaiko |
| Doctor | Ryan Oden |
| Barker's Wife, Kathy, Child | Felicia Benefield |
| Horse, Margaret, Little Marie | Rebecca Martin |
| Drum Major, Merchant | Matthew Purdon |
| Under Officer, Innkeeper, Child | John Russell |
| Ape, Andres | Bill Selig |

Characters

Franz Woyzeck
Marie Zickwolf
Christian, her child about one year old
Captain
Doctor

Drum Major
Under Officer
Andres
Margaret
Carnival Barker
Barker's Wife
Kathy
Little Marie
Grandmother
Karl (Fool)
Jew (Merchant)
Kathy
Innkeeper
Ape
Horse
Children
Journeymen
Townspeople

1 - Open field. The town in the distance.

WOYZECK

Yes Andres, this place is cursed. See that light streak on the grass there where the toadstools are so thick? A head rolls down it every night. Once there was a guy who picked it up, he thought it was a hedgehog. Three days and three nights later, he lay in his coffin.

(listens)

Andres, it was the freemasons, I know it, it was the freemasons, quiet!

ANDRES (sings)

Sitting there two rabbits,
Eating the green, green grass...

WOYZECK

Quiet! Something went by!

ANDRES (sings)

Eating the green, green grass
Until they hit the dirt.

WOYZECK

It went behind me, under me...

(stamps the ground)

hollow, hear that? It is all hollow under there. The freemasons!

ANDRES

I'm scared.

WOYZECK

It's strange, quiet. Makes you hold your breath. Andres!

ANDRES

What!

WOYZECK

Say something!

(stares off in the landscape)

So bright! It's glowing over the town. A fire shoots up to the sky and it sounds like trumpets down below. What a wind! Quick. Don't look behind you!

(pulls Andres into the brush)

ANDRES (after a pause)

Woyzeck! Do you still hear it?

WOYZECK

Silence, all is quiet, as if the world were dead.

ANDRES

Do you hear? The drums. We have to get back.

2 - The Town

Marie with her child at the window. Margaret
The troops go by with the drum-major at the head

MARIE bouncing the child in her arms

Hey baby! Sa ra ra ra! Hear? They're coming.

MARGARET

What a man, like a tree.

MARIE

He stands like a lion.

The Drum-major greets her

MARGARET

Hey, what a friendly eye, Mrs. Neighbor, not every man gets that out of her.

MARIE (sings)

Soldiers are handsome men...

MARGARET

Your eyes are still shining.

MARIE

And so! Take yours to the jew and let him polish them, maybe they'll shine again and someone can buy them for two cents.

MARGARET

What you? You? Mrs. Purity, I'm an honest person, but you, your eyes could burn through seven pairs of leather pants.

MARIE

Bitch!

(Closes window)

Come, my baby. Why do they care? You're just the poor child of a whore and you make your mother happy with your illegitimate face. Sa! Sa!

(sings)

Maiden, what will you do now?
You have a little baby and no man.
I don't even ask about it
I sing the whole night
Heigh ho Popio my babe. Whoopie!
I have no man and little else.

Hansel harness your six white horses
Give them new food to eat
No oats for them to eat
No water for them to drink
Cool golden wine it must be. Whoopie!
Cool golden wine it must be.

(A knock at the window)

Who's there? Is it you, Franz? Come in!

WOYZECK

Can't. Got to go to roll call.

MARIE

What's the matter Franz?

WOYZECK (secretly)

Marie, it was there again. Isn't it written "and behold there came smoke from the land like smoke from an oven?"

MARIE

Franz!

WOZECK

It went under me right to the town. What does it mean?

MARIE

Franz!

WOYZECK

I have to go.

(he exits)

MARIE

That man! So distracted. He didn't even see his child. He'll snap from all that thinking. Why are you so still, Baby? Are you afraid? It's so dark, makes you feel like you're blind. They should always have the lanterns lit. I can't stand it. It's scary.

3 - Booths. Lights. People.

CARNIVAL BARKER (in front of his booth with his wife in pants and a costumed ape)

Gentlemen, Gentlemen! See this creature as God made him, with nothing at all. Now see him with a little art: a cocky walk, a coat, pants, and a saber. Voila, the monkey's a soldier! It's not much, the lowest rung on the ladder of man. Ho! Take a bow! So...now you're a baron. Give us a kiss.

(he trumpets)

The thing is musical as well. Gentlemen, here you see the astronomical horse and the little canary. They're the favorites of all the crowned heads of Europe. They can tell people everything, how old, how many kids, what ails them. The show is starting. It will be the beginning of the beginning!

WOYZECK

Do you want to?

MARIE

I don't care. There must be pretty things. Look at his tassels! And his wife's wearing pants!

(They both go into the booth)

UNDER OFFICER

Whoa, now! Did you see her? What a woman!

THE DRUM MAJOR

Hell, she could breed a cavalry regiment and spawn drum majors.

UNDER OFFICER

When she holds her head, you'd think her black hair must pull it down like a stone, and her black eyes-

THE DRUM MAJOR

Like looking down a well or a chimney. Go, after her! -

[Inside the bright and shining booth]

MARIE

What lights!

WOYZECK

Yes, Marie: black cats with fiery eyes. What a night!

THE BOOTHOWNER (showing his horse)

Show your talent! Show your animal reason! Put mankind to shame! Gentlemen, this animal, that you see, tail and body, on its four hooves is a member of all the learned societies, is a professor at our University where the students learn from him how to ride and whip. He does it with simple logic! Now, think with your double logic. What can you accomplish when you think using double logic? Is there in this learned society, an ass?

(The horse shakes its head)

Now, do you see the effects of double reasoning? That is horse reasoning. Yes, this is not a stupid, animal individual, this is a person! A man, an animal man, and still a horse, a beast.

(the horse behaves indecently (horse droppings))

Oh, put society to shame! You see that this horse is still natural, unspoiled nature. Learn from him. Ask your doctor, to be anything else is the greatest danger. The moral is...Man be natural, you were created from dust, sand, dirt. You want to be more than dust, sand, dirt? See the logic: it can calculate and can't count on its fingers, why? It can't express itself, can't explain, it's a transformed man. Tell the gentlemen what time it is. Which of our Ladies and Gentlemen have a watch? A watch, anyone?

THE DRUM MAJOR

A watch!

(takes one from his watch with great show)

There you are sir.

MARIE

I have to see this.

(She climbs to the front bench. The drum major helps her)

4 - Marie sits, her child on her lap, a piece of mirror in her hand

MARIE (looking at herself in mirror)

Look how the stones shine! What are they? What did he say? --Sleep baby! Close your eyes, tight

(the baby puts its hands over its eyes)

tighter, keep them like that, quiet or he'll come for you.

(sings)

Maiden, close the shutters tight
A gypsy boy will come tonight
He will lead you by the hand
All the way to Gypsyland

(looks in mirror again)

It must be gold! Our kind has only a tiny corner in the world and a broken piece of glass and my mouth's as red as the rich ladies with their full-length mirrors and handsome gentlemen who kiss their hands; I'm just a poor woman.

(the child sits up)

Quiet baby, eyes closed, the sandman! Look at him walking on the wall

(she shines the mirror on the wall)

eyes closed, or he'll see in them and you'll go blind.

(Woyzeck comes in, behind her. She starts and covers her ears)

WOYZECK

What's that?

MARIE

Nothing.

WOYZECK

Under your fingers, it's shining.

MARIE

An earring, I found it.

WOYZECK

I never found anything like that, two at once.

MARIE

Am I bad?

WOYZECK

It's all right, Marie. –Look how the baby's sleeping. Hold him under his little arm, the chair is pinching him. He has shiny drips on his forehead, everything under the sun is work, even sweat in sleep. We're poor folk. There's more money Marie, my pay and extra from my captain.

MARIE

God reward you Franz.

WOYZECK

I have to go. Tonight, Maire! Good bye.

MARIE (after a pause)

I'm an awful person. I could kill myself. Everything is going to hell...man and wife.

5 – Room. The Captain in a chair. Woyzeck shaves him.

CAPTAIN

Slowly, Woyzeck, slowly; one thing after the other! You make me dizzy. What should I do with the ten minutes you save by finishing early? Woyzeck, think, you still have thirty good years to live, thirty years! That makes three hundred sixty months, and days, hours, minutes! What will you do with this enormous amount of time? Portion it out, Woyzeck!

WOYZECK

Yes Sir, Captain!

CAPTAIN

It makes me scared for the world when I think of eternity. Think about it, Woyzeck, think about it! Eternity...is eternity...is eternity. You see that, right? But it is also not eternity, it is a moment, yes a moment – Woyzeck, it makes me shudder when I think, that the world makes a full rotation in one day. What a waste of time! Woyzeck, I can't watch another millwheel or I'll get depressed.

WOYZECK

Yes Sir, Captain!

CAPTAIN

Woyzeck, you always look so tense! A good man doesn't look like that, a good man, that has a good conscience. Say something, Woyzeck! What's the weather like today?

WOYZECK

Bad, Captain, bad. wind!

CAPTAIN

I feel it already, it's so windy outside; such a strong wind affects me like a mouse.

(whistles)

I think it's coming from the South-north?

WOYZECK

Yes Sir, Captain!

CAPTAIN

Ha, ha, ha! South-north! Ha, ha, ha! Oh, you are dumb, completely, dreadfully dumb!

(moved)

Woyzeck, you're a good man - but (with dignity) you have no morals! Morals, that is, when one *is* moral, you understand. It's a good word. You have a child, without the blessing of the church, like our holy garrison-preacher says, without the blessing of the church, they aren't my words.

WOYZECK

Captain, our loving God won't worry whether or not Amen was said before the poor worm was made. The good Lord said: let the children come unto me!

CAPTAIN

What did you say? What a strange answer. That answer has me completely confused. *Your* answer, not *His*.

WOYZECK

We're poor people, you see Captain: money, money! We don't have money- Just let one of us try to get a child into the world in with our morals. We also have our flesh and blood. Our kind isn't blessed in this world or the next. I think, when we come into heaven, they'll make us help with the thunder.

CAPTAIN

Woyzeck, you have no virtue, you are not a virtuous man. Flesh and blood? When I'm lying by my window after it rains and I see little white tights skipping on the grass, damnit Woyzeck, I feel love! I have flesh and blood, too. But virtue Woyzeck! Virtue! What should I do with my time? I say to myself continually: "You are a virtuous man –

(moved)

a good man, a good man."

WOYZECK

Yes, Captain, virtue, that's not how it is for me. You see, people like us don't have virtue, we only have nature; but if I were a gentleman and had a hat and a watch and a topcoat and could speak proper, then I'd be virtuous all right. It must be a nice to have virtue. But I'm just a poor guy.

CAPTAIN

Good, Woyzeck. You are a good man, a good man. But you think too much, it wears you out; you always look so tense. This discussion's upset me completely. Go now. And don't run! Slowly, nice and slowly down the street!

6 - Room

DRUM-MAJOR

Marie!

MARIE (looking at him with expression)

Just a couple of steps. Chest like a bull, beard like a lion. Like no other man. – I am prouder than any woman.

DRUM-MAJOR

On Sundays, when I've got the big plume and white gloves. Damn, Marie! The prince always says, "Now that is a man!"

MARIE (teasing)

Ah, really...

(goes to him)

"Now that is a man!"

DRUM-MAJOR

And you are quite a woman. Christ. You want to start breeding Drum-Majors, huh?

(he puts his arms around her)

MAIRE

Let me go.

DRUM-MAJOR

Animal!

MARIE (threatening)

Don't touch me!

DRUM-MAJOR

Do you see the devil in her eyes?

MARIE

Doesn't matter. It's all the same.

End of Script Sample

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