

*David Byrne & Fatboy Slim
Here Lies Love*



*A song cycle about
Imelda Marcos & Estrella Cumpas*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prologue, Introduction, Explanation, Why?....	1
1. Here Lies Love.....	8
2. Every Drop of Rain.....	13
3. You'll Be Taken Care Of.....	18
4. The Rose of Tacloban.....	21
5. How Are You?.....	25
6. A Perfect Hand.....	29
7. Eleven Days.....	34
8. When She Passed By.....	37
9. Walk Like a Woman.....	40
10. Don't You Agree?.....	44
11. Pretty Face.....	47
12. Ladies in Blue.....	52
13. Dancing Together.....	55
14. Men Will Do Anything.....	59
15. The Whole Man.....	63
16. Never So Big.....	69
17. Please Don't.....	72
18. American Troglodyte.....	77
19. Solano Avenue.....	82
20. Order 1081.....	84
21. Seven Years.....	89
22. Why Don't You Love Me?.....	94
Acknowledgments.....	101
Credits.....	103

PROLOGUE, INTRODUCTION, EXPLANATION, WHY?

What is this? Why am I interested in this? Why do a series of songs about Imelda Marcos and Estrella Cumpas?

This project goes back quite a ways. Some years ago I read a wonderful book, *The Emperor*, by the late Ryszard Kapuściński. He interviewed the former court of emperor Haile Selassie, who had ruled Ethiopia for decades. The world of a royal court was revealed to be surreal and, to my sensibilities, very theatrical. No doubt there were dramas, but by theatrical I mean rather an artificial world, full of pageantry, ritual, proscribed and very symbolic behavior. There was, for example, a man whose job it was to be the royal pillow bearer, always at the ready in case His Highness made an unanticipated move to sit down. (The pillow bearer said there was skill and intuition involved—you couldn't always anticipate the move to sit, and God forbid you were late with the pillow.) The descriptions in this account were beautiful. They reminded me of the non-naturalistic dramaturgy of a lot of avant-garde contemporary theater and dance, as well as of the ritual theater of the East—Japan, China, Bali and Indonesia.

Nothing more came of this insight until I read a news article about Imelda Marcos, the wife of Ferdinand Marcos, who was the elected president of the Philippines from 1965 to 1986. The article mentioned that Imelda loved to go to clubs and discos—this was in the late '70s and early '80s—to dance and hang with the demimonde at Studio 54, Regine's, or whatever other exclusive velvet-rope joints there were in various cities.



I suddenly remembered my insight about the theatricality of the bubble worlds of the rich and powerful, but now there was an added soundtrack! I love a lot of the club music from that period, and dance music in general as it has evolved over the decades—so I wondered if the heady transcendental music and grooves might work for a music-theater piece focusing on one of these powerful people. I imagined that the ecstatic joy and loss of self inherent in a lot of dance music might mirror some of the headiness of a person in power as well as their view of themselves as a living symbolic entity—so the combination could be a natural one.

I did a year's worth of research to see if there was a story, a narrative arc. I found that, yes, there was a lot more to tell in this particular case than just the famous shoes. In fact, early on I decided that the shoes, all 3,000+ pairs, would never be mentioned. The story I was interested in was that of Imelda's rise alongside the tragic parallel story of Estrella, the woman who raised her as a child. I felt that this story was more universal, revealing and profound than that of the shoes—which anyway weren't discovered until the mobs descended upon the Manila palace after the Marcoses fled. For me the Marcoses' departure from the palace was the end of the story. So the shoes, and even the house on the palace grounds filled to the roof with cans of Heinz Sandwich Spread, were irrelevant.

The story I am interested in is more about asking what drives a powerful person—what makes them tick? How do they make and then remake themselves? Estrella reminds Imelda (and us) of Imelda's past, of her origins, of the events and situations that formed her and made her who she is. Imelda doesn't want to be

shackled to her past—who does?—but she knows it's a part of who she is, and that it can be useful as well.

I thought to myself, wouldn't it be great if—as this piece would be principally composed of clubby dance music—one could experience it in a club setting? Would it be possible to experience something beyond the usual evening-length arc consisting of the rise and fall of the DJ's beats and tracks in a dance club? Could one, as if by osmosis, absorb an emotional story, a narrative even, in the course of a night out dancing? Could one bring a "story" and a kind of theater to the disco? Was that possible? If so, wouldn't that be amazing!

I approached Fatboy Slim (Norman Cook) out of the blue about collaborating on this project. I love his funky beats and the variety of his dance tracks as well as his obvious sense of humor. We met over a beer on one of the revamped West Side piers in the West Village, and Norman said he'd be up for seeing how it went.

That was about five years ago. I immediately dove into writing songs over some rough beats and loops that I had programmed, and before too long I also had a handful of them from Norman, over which I wrote some of the other tunes. Tom Gandey (a.k.a. Cagedbaby), a friend of Norm's in Brighton, added material to the tunes that I had initiated. We sent material back and forth over at least a year, I visited Brighton a couple of times, and the series of songs slowly came into view. Some of the songs hark back to sonic elements reminiscent of the hits that were popular during the period when Imelda was going to dance clubs, while others are mutations—new and old and maybe something hard to describe.



I might have had another, more pragmatic reason for delving into a project like this: the death of the album. As it is now incredibly easy to download just a single song off a new album release—or to rip just a couple of the most accessible songs—I, like many others, have wondered: How do we incentivize listeners to check out more of what we have recorded? Is it possible to have an experience of some added depth, as one sometimes does when listening to a series of songs? Is it possible to have a set of songs that play off one another, so that each one both informs and reflects some of the others? The more songs you hear in such a sequence, the more accumulated depth and information there is in each one. A character from an early song might reveal something new about themselves in a later one, but of course you'd never know that unless you heard them both. At least that's the idea. So how do we get that to happen?

Maybe by having the songs tell a story? Maybe. Old idea. Could it be done not in a standard narrative way? None of these songs advances the plot by telling you, "Now it's three weeks later



and I'm going out and now I'm heading downtown." Instead—actually somewhat like more traditional musicals—they tell you what the characters are feeling at particular points. The narrative is a succession of emotions rather than events. One could say that history is a series of collective moods and emotions as well, and we record the symptoms and resulting effects of those states—but the underlying emotions are sometimes lost to us.

As I was doing research, I kept track of the many peculiar, emotionally loaded and original phrases that Imelda, Ferdinand Marcos and others were quoted as saying. As a songwriter these were a godsend. I couldn't have made them up, and of course they naturally encapsulated what that person was thinking and feeling perfectly—or at least how they wanted the world to perceive what they were thinking and feeling. Reading the quote from Imelda that she wanted the words "Here Lies Love" inscribed on her tombstone was like being handed a title on a platter. Not only did it epitomize how she viewed her personal love and sacrifice for the Philippine people, her identification of herself with the nation, but it also gave me an opportunity to have

her reflect on her life and accomplishments in a song...with some subtle ripostes at detractors thrown in.

So, I mapped out a rough narrative—the parallel stories of Imelda and Estrella—and as I read further I put various quotes or notes of what had happened in a pile dedicated to each song. After a while, when each song/scene had accumulated sufficient phrases and notes, I reordered this material into rhyming stanzas, verses and choruses. Some were easier to song-ize than others, but the months of preparation really paid off; the lyrics came relatively quickly (for me). I'd written from a character's point of view in the past, but this time I could assign all the responsibility and "blame" for the sentiments expressed to the historical record. I found myself feeling incredibly free and liberated at that point—well, as a writer, maybe not as a human being.

After the songs were demoed, my band and I were joined by some wonderful singers on a few live test performances of this material. Joan Almedilla, Dana Diaz-Tutaan and Ganda Suthivarakom sang the parts of the main characters on this work in progress. We performed just the songs (with no real staging yet) at the Adelaide Festival of Arts, in Australia, and at Carnegie Hall, in New York. For the latter show, Tony Finno did arrangements for a small orchestra, which helped raise the emotional bar on some of the tunes.

In keeping with the club idea, the staging was conceived to be "light." Conceptually, it was designed so that it would fit into discos and could be set up in less than a day—fast for a theatrical show. I began to collect lots of archival film and video footage to accompany the songs, and I imagined these background elements

might also eliminate the need for typical dialogue or for some of the expository material in a performance of this type. (Six of these videos are included on a DVD in this package.) However, no conclusions were reached regarding staging, as we hadn't developed a full theatrical version at that time.

There was no "book," as it is called in the music-theater world. For me this was an issue, as I find the acting-out of dramatic bits in traditional musicals pretty corny, and I wasn't sure how to deal with the inevitable need for some exposition here and there. Since there was no theatrical presentation in the offing, I decided to go ahead and let the songs speak for themselves and to record this "all-star" record. I invited amazing singers who I thought were perfectly suited for the emotion and style of each particular song. The "casting" in this case was very important, and I was very lucky. Each singer—with his or her identifiable vocal approach—represents and embodies how I imagine the character to feel and express themselves at a particular moment. So, if I were a woman, there might be times when I would feel a certain way, and if only—if only—I could be Sharon Jones for an instant, I could express that feeling perfectly in a song. Well, in this version Sharon Jones herself steps up to the mic and lays it all out. What more could any character ask for?

1. *HERE LIES LOVE*

This song acts as a prologue and is sung from Imelda's point of view in a style reminiscent of mid-to-late-'70s club music. She's whooping it up at a disco, and at the same time she's looking back on her life, her achievements, her sacrifices and her childhood. She's also thinking ahead, imagining her legacy, what it might be. After martial law and press censorship took hold in the Philippines in 1972, Imelda could increasingly—and invisibly to most Filipinos—spend time with



Imelda dancing with Henry Kissinger

all the “beautiful people”: Christina Ford, George Hamilton, Henry Kissinger and arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi. She had a mirror ball installed in her New York townhouse and converted the roof of the palace in Manila into a dance club as well. Though the music in this song reflects a little of that world, the lyrics look back to her formative years.

As with many of these songs, the words, or at least a number of phrases, come from actual quotes. I sometimes reordered these phrases and changed the syntax a little to make the phrase fit a rhyme scheme, but they are essentially unchanged.

Sung by Imelda with chorus

Vocal by Florence Welch (Florence + the Machine)

When I was a young girl in Leyte

My dresses were all hand-me-downs and scraps

I'd see the people smile, when I would sing for them

How happy they all seemed—when I would dance

Imelda was raised on the island of Leyte, in a small town called Tacloban. She was born into a prominent family—Romualdez—but was the child of an unsuccessful businessman, and so she was scorned by the more socially connected members of her extended family. More on that later.

We lived a stone's throw from the palace

A simple country girl who had a dream

The ladies passing by, a better class than I

How much it meant to me to be like these

Later, the family lived on Solano Avenue, close to Malacañan Palace, in Manila. The young Imelda would serve cookies and tea to the wealthier members of her extended family. She had a good singing voice, even as a child, so she would sometimes entertain as well.

*Is it a sin to love too much?
Is it a sin to care?
I do it all for you
How can it be unfair?*

From her point of view, and to paraphrase her favorite Philippine standard, she “did it all for you.” In the original song it’s meant in the romantic sense, but a case can be made that Imelda also sees her relationship to the Philippine nation and people in these terms.



*I know that when my number's up
When I am called by God above
Don't have my name inscribed into the stone
Just say:
Here lies love...here lies love...here lies love—
Just say:
Here lies love...here lies love...here lies love—*

*The most important things are love and beauty
It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor
To prosper and to fly, a basic human right
The feeling in your heart that you're secure*

The lines above are based on quotes from Ms. Marcos.

*Is it a sin to love too much?
Is it a sin to care?
I do it all for you
How can it be unfair?
I know that when my number's up
When I am called by God above
Don't have my name inscribed into the stone
Just say:
Here lies love...here lies love...here lies love—
Just say:
Here lies love...here lies love...here lies love—*



Imelda with Don King at The Thrilla in Manila, 1975

2. EVERY DROP OF RAIN

From the disco we flash back to Imelda's childhood. Imelda's father has remarried after his first wife passed away, but the children of the first marriage have refused to relinquish the house to those of the second (Imelda and her sister and brother) and their mother. These younger children—along with housekeeper Estrella and her brother—are forced to live in the garage alongside a broken-down car. They sleep on boards, and sometimes the roof leaks.

Estrella has been in the family's employ for a while and is only a few years older than the young Imelda. Though they are fairly close in age, Estrella becomes a mother figure to Imelda, as Imelda's mom is losing her mind due to the crazy family issues. Estrella, who runs the household and does the accounts, becomes a combination friend and confidante—but she is also hired help. In the Philippines during this era such an arrangement is not



unusual; poorer kids are often employed by a family just one or two steps up the social ladder, and they live with that family, often receiving little pay. It is just the way things are done during this time.

Imelda and her brother sometimes visit the others in the big house and serve them tea and cakes. At night Imelda's mother often cries, so the children usually sleep with Estrella.



In this song the two young pals, Imelda and Estrella, jointly recount their childhoods, and they recall that folks in the neighborhood nicknamed them “garage people.” The phrase “when you’re poor every drop of rain you feel” and “when you’re poor it’s like you’re naked” are quotations from Ms. Marcos.

Sung by Estrella e³ Imelda

Vocals by St. Vincent e³ Candie Payne

*Estrella: I was just a young girl
A girl with curly hair
Your mother called me family
I became quite close to her*

*I handled all the money
Washed the clothes and made the meals
In the night she'd wake up screaming
So you children slept with me*

*Estrella e³ Imelda: They called us garage people
Where we lived there, you and me
When you're poor—it's like you're naked
And every drop of rain you feel*

*Estrella: When it rained we slept on boxes
There was water all around*

*Imelda: But the people in the big house
Never bothered to find out*

*No clothes, no bed, no jewelry
Sometimes I had no shoes*

*Estrella: A typhoon came—the house collapsed
And the neighbors passed us food*

At one point the family is even forced out of the garage and has to live in what is called a nipa hut, a shack made of thatched palm leaves, fairly common in the Philippine countryside. A large storm blows the shack over but they soldier on with the help of neighbors.

Typhoons are no joke, and the Philippines has been inundated several times in recent years. Not too many years ago one hit Burma and over ten thousand people were killed and many more left homeless.



*Estrella & Imelda: They called us garage people
Where we lived there, you and me
When you're poor—it's like you're naked
And every drop of rain you feel*

*Every little tiny drop of rain you feel—
Every drop of rain
Every little tiny drop of rain you feel—
Every drop of rain*

*Estrella: I handled our finances
I myself was never paid*

*Imelda: My teachers paid a visit
I felt, felt so ashamed*

*But I had kept my dignity
Some things cannot be killed*

*I smiled and kept my head up
A Romualdez I was still*

Romualdez is still a prominent name on the island of Leyte and in its major town, Tacloban. Despite her situation, Imelda's connections with her extended family will prove to be helpful in the future.

*Estrella & Imelda: Every little tiny drop of rain you feel—
Every drop of rain
Every little tiny drop of rain you feel—
Every drop of rain*

3. YOU'LL BE TAKEN CARE OF

Imelda's mother, Remedios, reportedly promises Estrella that in return for her selfless devotion to their family she will always be taken care of by the children. Remedios, who knows she hasn't got long to live, assures Estrella that one of the children will do well someday and repay her kindness.

Sung by Remedios to Estrella

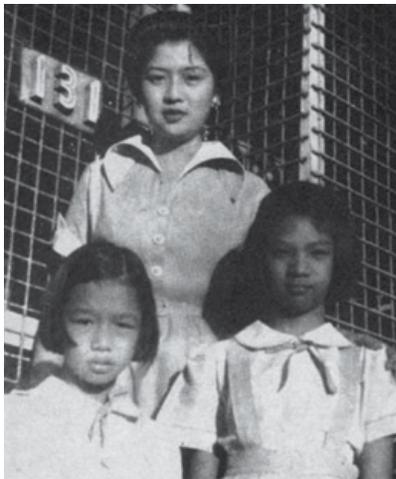
Vocal by Tori Amos

Precious little children — what can I do?

Someday they'll remember — what I told you

Did it together just you and me

Without a man in this family



Imelda's family in Manila, 1952

*I didn't raise them — it's you they love
They will remember the things you've done*

*Sometimes I felt that I've lost my mind
Things didn't work out the way we planned
And when they grow up and they make good
They will repay what I owe to —*

*You'll — be taken care of
And they'll — remember you —
Precious little children
On that you can be sure
You — will never want for more*

*When they grow up they'll be kind and smart
And you will see that they'll all go far*



Imelda's mother, Remedios

*I haven't long but I know it's true
These little ones owe a lot to—*

*You'll—be taken care of
And they'll—remember you—
Precious little children
On that you can be sure
You—will never want for more*

*You'll be taken care of—they'll remember you
Someday they will give you—things I never could
You'll be taken care of—on that you can be sure
If there's any justice in this world you'll never want for more*

*Someday—I promise you
Remember—what I say is true
Someday—I promise you
Remember—what I say is true*

4. THE ROSE OF TACLOBAN

As a young girl in Tacloban, Imelda blossoms into a local beauty, and she acquires the nickname Rose of Tacloban. She sings this quasi-Disney song as a young pretty girl about to make her way in the world.



Sung by Imelda

Vocal by Martha Wainwright

*I wrote inside my yearbook
“To try is to succeed
Fried chicken and the rumba
The colors pink and cream”*

This is what she actually writes in her high school yearbook (and it reminds us that Afro-Cuban music is popular all over the world during this era).

*Ninoy was my first love
But he said I was too tall
A rich girl stole the sweetheart
Of the Rose of Tacloban*

Imelda briefly dates Benigno Aquino, known by the diminutive Ninoy, who later becomes a politician and will challenge Imelda's future husband. He is reportedly her first serious crush, but he breaks off the relationship, claiming she is too tall. (Imelda is indeed extremely tall for a Filipina, and many men would not want a wife who towers over them.) *This slight is not forgotten.*



Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, 1980

22

Ninoy later marries Maria Corazon Sumulong Cojuangco, who is also from a prominent local family. She will become president, succeeding Marcos, after Ninoy is assassinated.



Imelda as a young woman

23

*The heart grows slightly colder
Necessary to survive
And money makes it easy
In many people's lives*

*The sky above protects us
Don't know what I will become
Or what lies beyond tomorrow
For the Rose of Tacloban*

*Elegant women on a magazine page
Elegant women, like a paper parade
I don't go out dancing, I just stay at home
Cutting out their faces, and replacing them with my own
Cutting out their faces, and replacing them with my own*

Imelda does indeed take pictures of women out of magazines and puts cut-outs of her own face in their places.

*The sky above protects us
Don't know what I will become
Or what lies beyond tomorrow
For the Rose of Tacloban
What lies beyond tomorrow for the Rose —
Of Tacloban*

5. HOW ARE YOU?

Making the big move, young Imelda Romualdez relocates to Manila. She capitalizes on a family connection and stays at her uncle's house while working as a salesgirl at a piano store. She sometimes sings to draw in customers. Estrella seeks her out and the old friends reconnect over a cordial lunch. During this period Imelda is relatively poor, so the two women are more or less on an equal footing, at least financially.



I imagine that this lunch—between two women who were once almost inseparable but are now about to go their separate ways—is slightly awkward and tense. Imelda, striving to escape her past, must know that a close relationship with a maid is not advisable for her future prospects. Estrella must sense it too. I envision a polite and somewhat empty conversation. This song, sung by Estrella, weaves her side of a banal conversation with her interior monologue—what she might be thinking, but not saying. Thoughts that aren't as kind and polite as what's said on the surface.

Sung by Estrella

Vocal by Nellie McKay

How are you?—I'm learning English

You're looking good—it's so hot today

We should keep in touch—oh, you'd better be going

It's a long long way—to your uncle's place

I got a job—it's just okay

And how's your dad?—it's hard to say

I miss you all—it's been so long

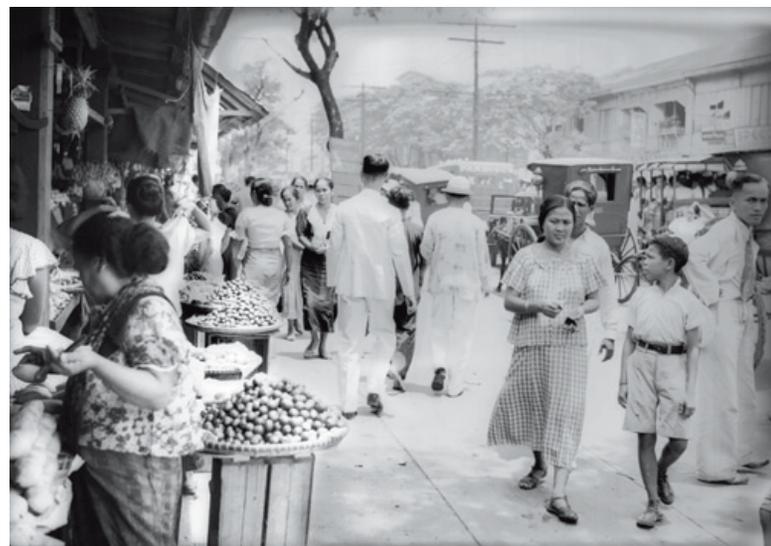
And who can say where love has gone?

And your life—is just beginning

And my life—is almost through

I've given up—never finished school

There was too much—too much work to do



How are you? Shall we get a soda?

You're looking good—it's so hot today

We should keep in touch—oh you'd better be going

It's a long long way—to your uncle's place

I was right there—right with your mother

And her last words—'fore she passed away

Did they tell you—about the promise?

Should I ask you? Tell me what'd they say?

Estrella is of course referring to the promise made by Imelda's mother, Remedios, that Estrella would someday be "taken care of" in return for her loyalty and for having worked through her adolescence rather than finishing school.

*And there's no way that you could help me
And you're barely better off than I
You're a beauty—sing like an angel
We're together for both our lives*

*How are you?—well I'm okay
You're looking good—it's hot today
I miss you all—it's been so long
And who can tell, where love has gone?*

*Now I've really liked, this conversation
It was long ago—you were just a child
It's getting late—I must be going
Life is hard sometimes—but I'll be alright*

*How are you?
Oh, I'm okay
This is a nice place
It's so hot today*

6. A PERFECT HAND

This song is sung by Ferdinand Marcos, the handsome and ambitious young senator from the wild northern province of Ilocos. Marcos had been in jail previously for shooting a political rival of his father's; instead of hiring a lawyer, while awaiting trial he decided to defend himself and to study law in prison, and was famously successful in his own defense. As a senator in Manila, he spots Imelda on a magazine cover where she is featured as Miss Manila, and the gears begin to turn.

This beauty contest has its own story attached: Imelda lost to a rival by a close margin, whereupon she went to visit the mayor—and as a result of her visit the decision was made to have two winners.



*An earlier beauty pageant in 1947 where Imelda
was crowned "Rose of Tacloban"*

*Sung by Ferdinand Marcos
Vocal by Steve Earle*

*They occupied our country
We were almost overrun
I knew if I did not react
They'd kill us, ev'ryone*

The "they" Marcos is referring to are the Japanese, who invaded the Philippines during World War II and brutally controlled the strategic archipelago. General Douglas MacArthur led American troops in an attempt to rout the Japanese, but eventually gave up and fled to Australia. He later returned, as he famously promised.



General Douglas MacArthur returning to the Philippines, 1944

*I promised to my mother
She meant so much to me*

*That for ev'ry single tear she shed
There'd be a victory*

This melodramatic business about promising his mother is a quote from Marcos, who as a young senator painted himself as a war hero. When he became president some years later he awarded himself a slew of medals for wartime bravery and exploits.



Japanese soldiers celebrate the fall of the Philippines in April 1942

*Who's holding aces?
And who's gonna fold and
Who's got a secret?
And who's feeling bold?
It's a winning combination
If a lady understands...that the

King and the Queen of Hearts
Could be a perfect hand*

Knowing that the beautiful Imelda Romualdez is connected to a powerful and influential family on the southern island of Leyte, Marcos imagines that an association with her family through marriage will give him influence and connections where at present he has none. This link with the Romualdezes will prove to be a real political advantage.

*So know what you are holding
But be prepared to bluff
There are many ways to win a game
And skill is not enough*

*In the Senate or in business
But most of all in love
You ladies all know how things work
You know how to get things done*

*And if you open the door for a lady
You open a door for yourself
And a stranger's only someone
Who you have yet to help*

*Who's holding aces?
And who's gonna fold and
Who's got a secret?
And who's feeling bold?
It's a winning combination
If a lady understands...that the

King and the Queen of Hearts
Could be a perfect hand*



Young Senator Marcos

7. ELEVEN DAYS

Imelda and a girlfriend happen to be relaxing in the cafeteria of the Senate having some soft drinks—they have been escaping the heat and passing time by watching some of the debates. A young senator (Marcos) emerges from the chambers, spots the two girls, and arranges to be introduced. He no doubt recognizes Imelda from her beauty-contest picture that was in the papers recently. He asks her to stand, as he knows or senses that she is tall for a Filipina. They stand back-to-back and he pronounces that they are the same height (I think she was actually taller and that he had on elevator shoes)—and therefore, he pronounces flirtatiously, it's okay. Imelda sings here about their whirlwind courtship.

Sung by Imelda

Vocal by Cyndi Lauper

He's so fast, tell me what's his name?

It was only a moment, but I don't feel the same

He gave me—two roses

He gave me—two roses

One is open

One is closed

One is the future

And—one is my love—

After meeting Imelda in the cafeteria, Marcos begins a relentless pursuit. He sends her the two roses with a note (described in the lyrics) attached, and continues to send her letters and gifts

throughout the next eleven days. Amazingly, even though they don't have any meetings or face-to-face contact during this time, he manages to maintain the pressure.

Later, Marcos, prescient in his attentiveness to the political import of image and marketing, produces two films—an early kind of docudrama—that have actors portraying this courtship of Imelda. This is a still from one of those biographical films:



Eleven days—since the moment we met

Eleven days—I will never forget

Eleven diamonds—on the ring that he gave

I haven't seen him—in

Eleven days

Eleven days

Eleven days
Eleven days

What am I doin'?—must be out of my mind
He pulled out the paper and I signed on the line

After eleven days Marcos takes the young Imelda on a car trip to Baguio City, a mountain retreat not too far from Manila. A journalist is invited to come along on the trip as both witness and chaperone—and to provide free publicity. Marcos has legal marriage papers hidden in the glove compartment, and he must have quite a line, because Imelda signs them on this first outing together. (Well, the union must seem advantageous to her, too.)

He gave me—two roses
He gave me—two roses
One is open
One is closed
One is the future
And—one is my love—



Eleven days—since the moment we met
Eleven days—I will never forget
Eleven diamonds—on the ring that he gave
I haven't seen him—in
Eleven days
Eleven days
Eleven days
Eleven days

8. *WHEN SHE PASSED BY*

The wedding of the young beauty to the up-and-coming senator is highly publicized and quite an affair. Estrella attempts to go to the ceremony—but she isn't let in. Estrella can see her old friend Imelda in her car, but in all the hubbub she isn't spotted herself. Nonetheless, Estrella is transported and overjoyed at the good fortune of her former charge.

Sung by Estrella with Imelda present at top of song
Vocal by Allison Moorer

I heard that you were getting married
I always knew that you'd do well
You're a legendary beauty
From our small provincial town

Ilocos joined to Leyte
Two important families
A glorious occasion
A foretold destiny

I followed in the morning papers
How exciting it has been
The courtship and the whirlwind romance
For the sweetest of beauty queens

He's crazy for you
Who wouldn't be, I'm sure
And nothing matters more than that
And you'll never be poor no more—

*How she looked when she passed by
How she looked when she passed by
I feel like I'm watching history
Living before my eyes
Many years from now
We'll recall just how
How she looked when she passed by*

*I know that you are in there somewhere
Letters get misplaced in the mail
Guess that there was some confusion
Amidst those throngs and swells*

*Did you see me outside?
Did you see me wave?
When you passed in your car
Ah well, that's okay—*

*How she looked when she passed by
How she looked when she passed by
Feel like I'm watching history
Living before my eyes
Many years from now
We'll recall just how
How she looked when she passed by*



9. WALK LIKE A WOMAN

After they are married, Ferdinand is determined to remake Imelda into the political and social asset he believes she can be. He dictates how much she can eat (even weighing her food!) and what she should wear. He shows her how she should walk and how she should enter a room.

Sung by Imelda with Ferdinand present

Vocal by Charmaine Clamor

(Imelda and answers)

He taught me — how to do it

He taught me — lightly

He taught me — you'll get through it

He taught me — nightly

And to be married to such a man

I can't believe how lucky I am

I am so lucky — so lucky to be

Never poor no more — I have all that I need

I'm going to learn how to walk like a woman

I'm going to learn how to dress, how to dance

I'm going to learn how to make an impression

Do anything for the love of this man

And if he loved me on the day we met

Then why must I be someone else?

The girl he married — now is that still me?

Who am I now? I ask myself



*See him look at someone else
I copy her hair and the way that she dress
I live to see him look at me
That's all I want, that's all that I need*

*I'm going to learn how to walk like a woman
I'm going to learn how to dress, how to dance
I'm going to learn how to make an impression
Do anything for the love of this man*

*Shouldn't he love me for the way I am?
And if he loves me, then why must I change?
Was that the reason that we fell in love?
Will he still love me if I'm not the same?*

*And if I bang my head on the wall for hours
Then I won't feel the confusion no more
The New York doctor—bright yellow pills he gave me*

It is difficult for the young bride to adjust to the demands of public life, to say nothing of the extensive makeover by her husband—and, as a result, she has a nervous breakdown. She does indeed bang her head against the walls, and at one point her siblings find her in bed, cold and unresponsive. She is quickly flown to New York Presbyterian Hospital and admitted to the psychiatric ward. Her doctor tells her she has a choice: she can renounce this new public political life and go back to what she was, or she can change herself, using auto-suggestion to embrace her husband's world. (Psychology is in some ways simpler during this era—in this case, to “cure” oneself one simply has to exert mind over matter.)

Imelda returns to Manila transformed, ready to begin work. From this point on she is a changed woman.

*Remind yourself what you're doing it for—
It's for love—it's for love—it's for love
It's for love—it's for love—it's for love
It's for love—
(In your head, there's nothing wrong with your heart)*

*I'm going to learn how to walk like a woman
I'm going to learn how to dress, how to dance
I'm going to learn how to go out in public
Do anything for the love of my man*

*It's for love—it's for love—it's for love
It's for love—it's for love—it's for love
It's for love—
(In your head, there's nothing wrong with your heart)*

10. DON'T YOU AGREE?

Returned from New York, the new Imelda is now completely determined to make herself indispensable during her husband's campaigns for president. She travels all over the country, memorizing details about the locals in each town, learning everything about all the delegates and singing songs at political rallies. She throws herself into her new life, and—some say thanks to her—Marcos wins.

Sung by Imelda with Ferdinand present

Vocal by Róisín Murphy

With my heart and with my skin

From town to town and back again



44

*With my skin and with my soul
How each one smiles when he's alone*

*And here we are—convention center
Traveled so far—crossed many rivers
No time to rest—no time to sleep
Keep movin' on—my tired feet*

*Sometimes we need a hero
Can't make it on our own
Sometimes you need a strongman
When things are out of control
Don't you agree? Agree with me
Don't you agree? Don't you agree?*



45

*Don't you agree? Agree with me
Don't you agree? Don't you agree?*

*Who needs a chair? Whose roof has leaks?
Their children's names, what each one needs
Got my people ev'rywhere
The bellboys and the operators*

Imelda bribes the bellboys and the telephone operators at the hotel where the convention delegates are staying so that the opposition candidates often never get their messages.

*Now, who stood up to the Japanese?
Who cares about the Philippines?*

This is, of course, another reference to Marcos's wartime "heroism."

He'll build a house—I'll decorate

I can't take credit for that metaphor—that's a quote.

I'm telling all you delegates

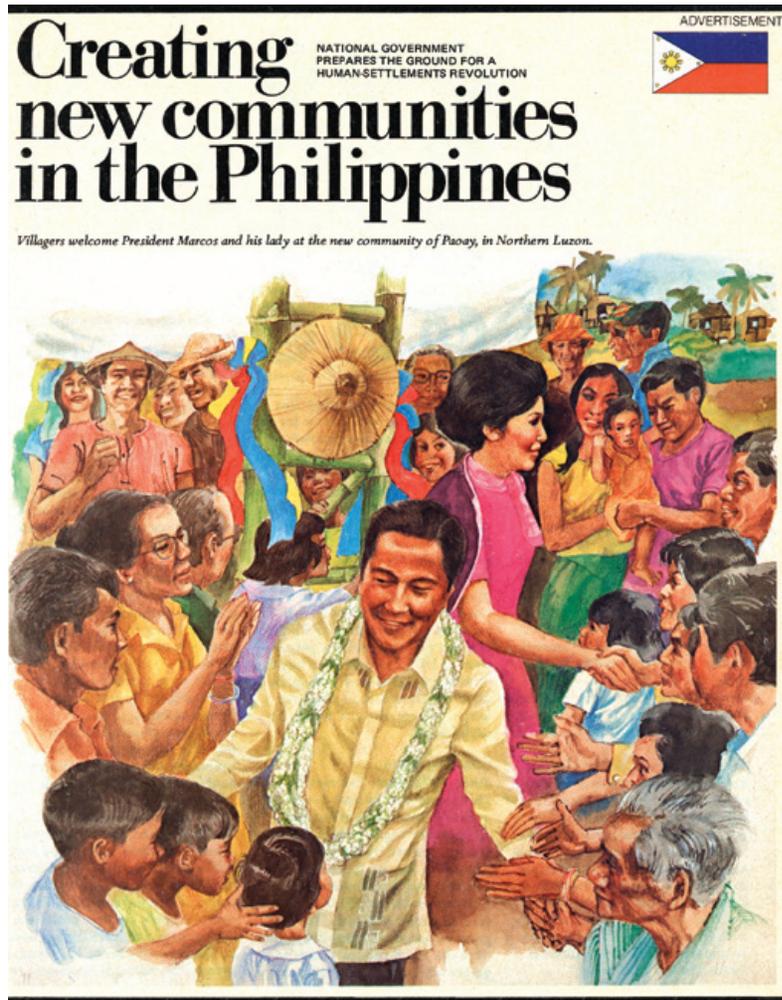
*Don't you agree? Agree with me
Don't you agree? Don't you agree?
Don't you agree? Agree with me
Don't you agree? Don't you agree?*

*Sometimes we need a hero
Can't make it on our own
Sometimes you need a strongman
When things are out of control*

11. PRETTY FACE

Outside of the Philippines we know mainly of the later excesses of the Marcoses, like the shoes and the vast missing sums of money, but inside the country during this initial part of the Marcos era there is great love for the first family. Not only are they a glamorous couple—a down-home version of the Kennedys—but, moreso than most of the elected officials in the Philippines, they actually keep many of their campaign promises, at least for a while. Imelda builds hospitals, roads, and art institutes, and directs a clean-up program—which she calls Operation Snake Pit—for an insane asylum. She establishes orphanages and provides care for the elderly. To this day the Philippine people acknowledge her contributions and good works.





*Sung by Imelda with Ferdinand present
Vocal by Camille*

*Will you reach — into your pockets?
And show us that you care
For the orphans, and the farmers
Ev'ryone give their share*

*I feel so guilty, when I'm resting
Though I rise at early dawn
For ev'ry hour that passes
I could have helped someone*

This is another quote—and it is true that Madame Marcos remarkably and somewhat mysteriously didn't seem to need much sleep. (More on that later.)

*And we'll show the world
What a country girl can change
And we'll show the whole wide world
That we have a pretty face*

*Pretty face, pretty face, pretty face have we
Pretty face, pretty face, pretty face have we*

*A thousand miles of concrete
Schools and dams and parks
Two thousand day care centers
And a center for the arts*

*There will always be poor people
Got to teach them how to care
If a hospital is needed
Ev'ry business give its share*

Imelda, like charity ladies all over the world, knows that she can hit up wealthy and successful businesspeople for her causes; and the businesspeople, in turn, know—as they do elsewhere—that if they contribute to her causes and projects, they will probably get a little special attention when they need something down the line. In later years the calls for “contributions” became somewhat more demanding.

*And we'll show the world
What a country girl can change
And we'll show the whole wide world
That we have a pretty face*

*Pretty face, pretty face, pretty face have we
Pretty face, pretty face, pretty face have we*

*Some would call me Robin Hood
But this work we do I know is good
So dig a little deeper now
We're gonna turn this thing around*

*Pretty face, pretty face, pretty face have we
Pretty face, pretty face, pretty face have we*



12. LADIES IN BLUE

This song is sung by a group of Manila society ladies who are enlisted by Imelda to help on political campaigns, charity events, and general organization — to become Team Imelda.

Sung by the Blue Ladies

Vocal by Theresa Andersson

I have a life

It is good, you might say

My husband is best

When he works, when he plays

The maids clean the house

They take care of the kids

But I know that somehow

There is much more than this —

And we — we ladies in blue

The ripples spread out

From the stones that you threw

We — we ladies in blue

Concentric circles

From the ladies in blue

Some people might say

But I don't need to think twice

I could be like some others

And be content with my life

But she never sleeps

Never seems to need rest

How does she do it?

And still look her best —?

The Blue Ladies pop amphetamines to keep up their energy — and to keep pace with Imelda, who also never seems to need much sleep. In conscripting these gals to help her, Imelda has turned the tables, and now has the upper-class women she once envied as a child working for *her*.



We — we ladies in blue

Ripples spread out

From the stones that you threw

We — we ladies in blue

*Wider and wider
From the ladies in blue*

*Ladies in blue, ladies in blue, ladies in blue —
Concentric circles
From the ladies in blue
Ladies in blue, ladies in blue, ladies in blue —
Wider and wider
From the stones that you threw*

*The world isn't perfect
And it never may be
But ev'ry little bit helps
Some from you, some from me*

*Ladies in blue, ladies in blue, ladies in blue —
Concentric circles
From the ladies in blue
Ladies in blue, ladies in blue, ladies in blue —
Wider and wider
From the stones that you threw*

13. DANCING TOGETHER

Imelda takes her first trip abroad as first lady and has a great time. She hangs out with celebrities, socialites, and old East Coast money. It is a heady experience — one she will repeat again and again.

*Sung by Imelda with chorus
Vocal by Sharon Jones*

*Went to the house of Mary Lasker
Saw Matisse, Picassos, Renoirs and Gauguins
Golf course and flowers, statues and stables
I met a Whitney, Rockefeller and Brown!*



Andy Warhol and Imelda at an art opening, 1976

*And they were dancin', dancing together
Dancin', oh so beautifully
Dancin', dancing together
Dancin', oh as if in a dream*

*Charles Jourdan, Oleg Cassini
There was Andy Warhol and Hanae Mori
Beautiful products all over the table
Fills my heart up with thoughts of my people*



*Fashion designer
Oleg Cassini, 1989*



*Imelda dancing with
George Hamilton, 1985*

And they were dancin', dancing together...

*I love my little people
You don't know what it's like
I'd rather be back in my Leyte
Back in the Quonset hut*

I don't know that Imelda ever lived in a Quonset hut (a nipa hut, yes) but this is what she is quoted as saying. She vacillates, on the one hand denying her humble childhood, aspiring to join the upper crust at home and abroad, while on the other, identifying with "her people," who are discriminated against because their skin is brown (though Imelda herself is, naturally or not, very light-skinned).

*Ali Hassan, Margot Fonteyn
Christina Onassis and the Queen of Spain
Beautiful women in beautiful homes
Just out of reach if your skin's colored brown*

And they'll be dancin', dancing together...

*"Hello Mr. Zeibel? Yes, my name is Jane Ryan —
Mr. Saunders and I would like to make a deposit..."*

Jane Ryan and William Saunders are the names under which the Marcoses keep their (secret) Swiss bank accounts.

*Mm-hmm, now listen:
Breakfast with George, disco with George
It must be us who truly serve!*

Imelda is referring to George Hamilton (an American actor known as “the tanned one,” active mainly in the '60s and '70s), who becomes her frequent companion at social events and disco nights.

Imelda feels a sense of duty to see and be seen, to dress up and to function as a model of beauty and glamour. She sees it as her job to live the dream for the Filipinos who can never hope to experience such things. To Imelda, being a living fairy tale, a vicarious dream-come-true, is a service she provides for the Philippine people, and therefore all the partying and socializing is justified and necessary. It's work—exhausting, hard work—that only she can do.



Imelda dancing with Lyndon Johnson, 1966

14. MEN WILL DO ANYTHING

Ferdinand Marcos has a number of affairs, most of which are kept discreet, but one with American B-movie actress Dovie Beams becomes public knowledge. Marcos brings the star of *Wild Wheels* and *Guns of a Stranger* to the Philippines, ostensibly to appear in a film about his own wartime exploits. She is to play the love interest of the young Ferdinand, and the fact that she does not physically resemble a Filipina doesn't seem to be an issue. Things don't go as smoothly as Ferdinand would have liked and there is a big scandal, and it is the public nature of the affair which makes it a great embarrassment for Imelda.



Sung by Imelda with chorus

Vocal by Alice Russell

You play around with that woman

Didn't you know I cared?

Walking 'round, ev'ryone can see

A sleazy cheap affair

Marcos assures Dovie during the affair that she'll be set financially from now on, but at some point he decides the relationship is over and instructs his boys to send her home. She asks, "Where's the money?" and he or his representatives tell her to shut up and leave quietly—at which point she reveals that she has been collecting evidence as "insurance."

Her place is burgled, but she has the evidence well-hidden: Polaroids of the two lovers, envelopes containing an exchange of pubic hair, and, famously, a bedroom recording of Marcos singing to Dovie. Even with this material as a threat, Marcos's boys don't cave in, so she releases the recordings to the local university radio station and they play them on the air.

What's the matter with me baby?

Am I not good enough for you?

If you prefer that slut — okay

I'll tell you what we'll do

Men will do anything

For a little piece of mind

Men will do anything

That's how you keep them in line



Men will do anything

For some sweet tranquility

Men — will do anything

And there's nothing you can do to me

Imelda goes nuclear and makes threats that, if carried out, will severely damage Ferdinand's political standing. But she also cleverly offers him a deal: they stay together, but now she has her own funds and, significantly, a newly created fiefdom called Metro Manila—the city and all its surroundings are essentially hers to do with as she pleases. Imelda has assumed the upper hand in the relationship. Her marriage from now on is all business.

*Do anything that you want them to
If you leave them on their own
They'll sign here on the dotted line
If you ignore what they have done*

*Like a poor little mangy puppy
With his tail between his legs
If you catch them fooling around
Outside the mosquito net*

...a Filipino expression for an extramarital affair.

*Men will do anything
For a little piece of mind
Men will do anything
That's how you keep them in line
Men will do anything
For some sweet tranquility
Men—they'll do anything
And there's nothing you can do to me*

15. THE WHOLE MAN

Just as her friend Nancy Reagan relies on astrology to make many of the decisions for her and Ronald, Imelda develops her own original cosmic theories regarding the universally true, the good, and the beautiful, and about how love can better the world and humanity. She often expounds on her theories using pie-shaped charts and diagrams to help make the ideas clearer—and sometimes it seems as though the ideas are flowing from the drawings rather than the other way around. Imelda frequently shows these drawings to foreign journalists, and also uses them to accompany a speech she gives to the U.N. General Assembly.

*Sung by Imelda with Ferdinand present
Vocal by Kate Pierson*

*We're talking—about the whole man
In body—in mind and in spirit*

This is the archetypal circle, which in Jungian psychology and other theories is a universal symbol representing the whole man.



*And you, give the body, what is good, good, good, good
You make him—educated*

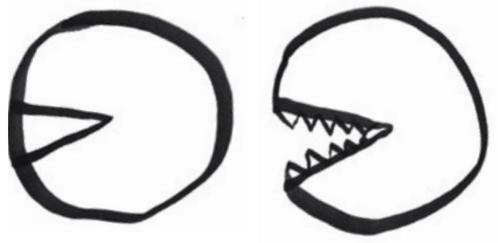
*What makes a home?
The answer is love
What is love when it's real?
The answer is beauty*

*We're talking—about the whole man
When he's whole—we see him smile*

The same circle, now with a curved line in it, has become a smiley face!

*But take—just one part—away from the rest
And now he's a—a crocodile*

If you wrench a pie-shaped piece out of the circle, it becomes a stylized aggressive animal—like a crocodile. Well, that's what she said.



*What makes a home?
The answer is love
What is love when it's real?
The answer is beauty*

*Beauty through time
Culture and spirit
At home where he lives
He's up when he's in it
The heart and the home*

More circles and triangles form a heart shape.



*Wherever he lives
He's up when he's down
He takes when he gives—*

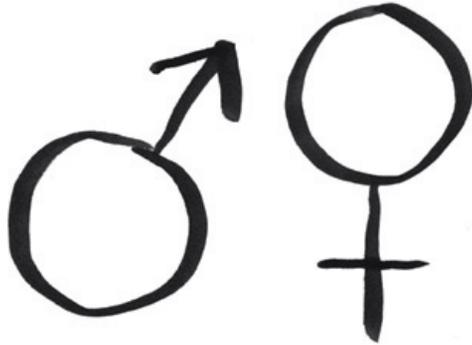
*How do the children draw a tree?
Zero and one—are you following me?*

Typically, a tree in a child's drawing is a variation of a circle supported by a line.



Human order—woman and man

The common symbols for male and female—also based on circles.



So on and on—are you seeing the plan?

*Going in circles—chasing the dollar
Like a Pac-Man—a vicious creature!*

The crocodile has become a Pac-Man.



*Here, over here, the center is mankind
But I'll never—be a teacher!*

What makes a home?

The answer is love

What is love when it's real?

The answer is beauty

Beauty through time

Culture and spirit

At home where he lives

He's up when he's in it

The heart and the home

Wherever he lives

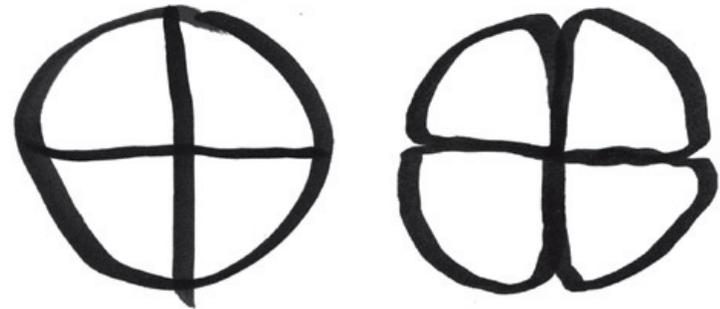
He's up when he's down

He takes when he gives—he's a:

Cos-mos man

A cross to a flower!

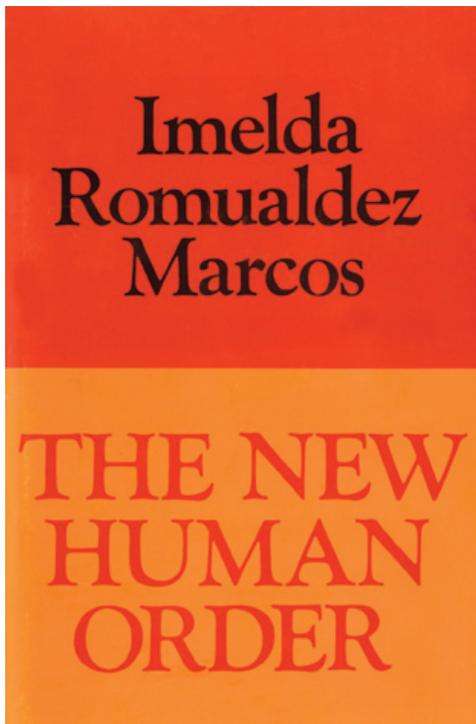
The circle—the mandala, the cosmic whole—is divided into quarters by superimposing a cross over it; and, with a little further embellishment, it now resembles the petals of a flower.



Switch! Recycle
Ecological order

These exhortations are quotes as well.

Cos-mos man
A cross to a flower!
Switch! Recycle
Ecological order



16. NEVER SO BIG

Estrella comes to Tacloban, in Leyte, while Imelda is there on a state visit, but she is told that Imelda is sleeping. Estrella's circumstances have gone downhill, and now she really does need help. Imelda, who is the first lady, has been (some say) informed by her mother about providing for the woman who looked after her as child. After being turned away, however, Estrella has to catch the last jeepney (a former jeep modified to serve as a primitive bus) home, so she returns without any contact.



Sung by Estrella

Vocal by Sia

*People ask me if I knew you
I tell them, "It's true"
You were just a simple schoolgirl
When I took care of you*

*One is never so big
As when one stoops down
To help someone in need
Get their feet on the ground*

*I gave up ev'rything
To give you both a start
And in my time of need
Could you open your heart?*

*Don't make me beg—don't turn away
She always said you'd help someday
Can I get a message through to you?
Are you the girl that I once knew?
What was I thinking of?
What am I doing here?
What was I thinking of?
What am I doing here?
Woo hoo woo hoo woo hoo
Woo hoo woo hoo woo hoo*

*It's your old hometown
There's the park and the tree
And the house where we lived
At the end of the street*

*It's a crazy idea
Could I get through to you?
It won't take very long
Just a minute or two*

*Never so big—never so tall
Never so big—when you are small
Never so big—never so tall
Never so big—when you are small
You never know, where love is found
God only knows, where we are bound
Woo hoo, woo hoo, woo hoo
Woo hoo, woo hoo, woo hoo
Woo hoo, woo hoo, woo hoo
Woo hoo, woo hoo, woo hoo*

17. PLEASE DON'T

Ferdinand Marcos is diagnosed with lupus, and he becomes increasingly frail. It affects his kidneys, and as a result he is put on a dialysis machine—there are several now installed in the palace. He is largely immobilized from this point on. His public appearances become rarer, and the ministers and generals who surround him begin assuming some of the decision-making.

Around this time Imelda takes it upon herself to become the global diplomat, meeting with Qaddafi, Mao, Kissinger, Castro, Ford, Bush Sr. and many others to argue on behalf of Philippine interests.



Imelda with Fidel Castro

Sung by Imelda with chorus

Vocal by Santigold

The world—is full—of in-tolerance

Greed—injustice—and dominance

A woman—a woman knows—knows relationships

And that's why—why I make—make my little trips

So if—there's a problem

It's really better this way

I don't need—the president

I'll get my little bag and say:



Ronald Reagan dances with Imelda while Ferdinand dances with Nancy Reagan, 1969

Imelda describes these “little trips” as “handbag diplomacy,” as she doesn’t make big fancy state visits. If something needs to be sorted out—like halting Muslim aid to the Islamic rebels in Mindanao, a southern island of the Philippines—she quickly gathers some Blue Ladies and her handbag, and off they go. (Indeed, her visit to Qaddafi did help solve that “problem.”)

*Please don't!—don't let them look down on us
Please don't!—like they used to do to me—*

Again, this is an actual quote that tellingly reveals Imelda’s psychological motivation for some of her trips, both diplomatic and otherwise. She seems to see her own psychology and that of the nation as being interchangeable.



Imelda and Qaddafi

*Nixon—Castro—Zhou Enlai
Qaddafi—is easy—and I'll tell you why
A woman knows—just how to do—only rub his leg
He understood—my point of view—so I don't have to beg*

Imelda describes Qaddafi as a “momma’s boy” and is quoted as saying that she only has to rub his leg to get him to agree to her political agenda.

*So if—there's a problem
It's really better this way
I don't need—the president
I'll get my little bag and say:*



Imelda meets Chairman Mao in Peking, 1974

Please don't!—don't let them look down on us
Please don't!—like they used to do to me—

Ronald Reagan—Mao Zedong—they're all the same
Kissinger—Anwar Sadat—let me explain
Talk a bit—a little dance—champagne on ice
An hour or two—relationship—we're friends for life!

Champagne and dancing as a means of diplomacy are based on quotes from an interview. Imelda can't really lose in these "diplomatic" trips because, not being the president herself, she can't make absolute promises and therefore she can't be held responsible. She *can* return home and present the offers and deals, but she doesn't have the ultimate authority to agree to them during a meeting. So she always has an out: if my husband doesn't agree, well, after all, *he's* the president. But, if it works, she comes off as the smart and canny diplomat.

Please don't!—don't let them look down on us
Please don't!—like they used to do to me—

18. AMERICAN TROGLODYTE

Even after the Filipinos won their independence, the U.S. still had a massive presence there, militarily and culturally. A good part of the Vietnam War (in Vietnam it's called the American War) was staged out of Philippine bases. The country was, in a way, still a U.S. colony. The corruption, human rights abuses and financial chicanery were overlooked by the U.S. as long as the country was a "friend" and a perceived bulwark against communism. The U.S. poured money into the Philippines and gave support to the Marcos regime, and didn't want to know or hear about much of what was going on.





The U.S. was powerful. For much of the world it was also the land to emulate—the freedom of the press, career opportunities, civil rights and other institutions were truly inspirational. The huge influence of American pop culture was overwhelming. This inundation was no accident. The U.S. State Department and others made massive efforts to export not just American goods, but also American culture and values. It was all perceived as a total package. Coca-Cola and Hollywood were viewed as forces that would magically pave the way for democracy.

While many Americans saw these business arrangements, propaganda and salesmanship efforts as a way of helping others and of showing them a “better” way, it wasn’t necessarily better for everyone.

Sung by Ensemble

Vocal by DB

I could be a dancer, maybe

I could be a judge

Used to sing that karaoke

But I, I don't do it much

Democracy in action

There is nothin' up my sleeve

A watermelon postcard I am

Plantin' all my seeds

Americans are wearin' those sexy jeans

Americans are usin' technology

Americans are surfin' that Internet

Americans are listenin' to 50 Cent



Americans are buyin' that modern art

Americans are drivin' gigantic cars

Americans are doin' that exercise

Americans are livin' like troglodytes

Ev'rybody knows me

They are drinkin' to my health

I terrorized my fam'ly and I

Terrorized myself

There are guerilla groups and insurgents in the hills of some of the islands; one group calls itself The Monkees and another refers to itself as The Beatles. Needless to say, they are rivals.

Evangelized my bedroom —you can

Ride away with me

All the girls together in a

Mighty symphony

Americans are playin' that basketball

Americans are doin' that rock and roll

Americans are goin' to outer space

Americans are buyin' that real estate



Americans are livin' the simple life
Americans are dancin' on Friday nights
Americans are goin' to Broadway shows
Americans believe in the Holy Ghost

Americans are wearin' that lingerie

Americans are throwin' that shit away

Americans are watchin' reality

Americans are goin' from A to Z

Americans are dancin' in discothèques

Americans are payin' their income tax

Americans are workin' from 9 to 5

Americans are livin' like troglodytes



19. SOLANO AVENUE

This song is sung by Estrella, after the publication of a biography about Imelda in which Estrella describes the destitution of their common childhood. When the book is released Estrella is visited by government personnel, who bring her to Madame Marcos. Her old friend pretends to be happy to see her and offers her the money Estrella has been promised, as well as a place to live—a “safe house” in Manila where she will now be under guarded escort “for her own protection.” Later on she will be relocated to Leyte and barred from communication with any member of the press.

Sung by Estrella

Vocal by Nicole Atkins

What did I do to make you mad?

I swear I only told the truth

And none of this could hurt you now

And it's no insult to be poor

So take back—all your money

Although I need it—more than you

Just acknowledge—that you knew me

On Solano Avenue—oohh

Solano Avenue was the street where both women lived when they were young.

I didn't mean you any harm

I didn't mean to bring you shame

*It's not a sin that we had nothing
You and I were not to blame*

When they teased you on the street

When they hurt you deep inside

To me it was—that you came running

And I held you when you cried

So take back—all your money

Although I need it—more than you

Just acknowledge—that you knew me

On Solano Avenue—oohh



20. ORDER 1081

Order 1081 is a declaration of martial law, signed by Marcos in 1972 ostensibly to enable the government to cope with a rise in chaos, crime, and corruption—all of which has been largely created by him. He has reached his term limit as president, but suddenly there are bombings and assassination attempts (a man with a knife even manages to stab Imelda at a rally), and most feel that “something has to be done” to rein things in. So Marcos signs a proclamation which simultaneously allows him to stay in office and to pick up—without specific charges—“suspicious” characters, which includes all his political rivals. The latter suspension of habeas corpus, a cornerstone of democracy, effectively creates a dictatorship. Marcos silences any critical press.



Marcos soldiers being stoned by protestors, Manila, 1986

(It all sounds draconian, but we came perilously close to this in the U.S. under George W. Bush, where for a period of time any substantive criticism of the invasion of Iraq was silenced, and habeas corpus was suspended as well.) Order 1081 is essentially the end of democracy in the Philippines—and it stays in effect for nine years.

As has happened during other periods in history, these measures, which seem severe in retrospect, are more or less accepted by most folks. The presence of alleged dangerous communist insurgents and the campaign against them, combined with the periodic bombings and street fighting, make everyone desirous for a return to calm and order. Giving up some rights in exchange for security doesn't necessarily seem that bad of a deal.

At this time Estrella, who sings this song, is living in the slums of the bayshore area on the edge of Manila. As part of Imelda's clean-up campaign for an upcoming IMF and World Bank conference in October 1976, Estrella's home is—unknowingly to Imelda—bulldozed, along with thousands of other shacks.

Sung by Estrella with chorus

Vocal by Natalie Merchant

A bomb went off this morning—raining bodies on TV

They are blaming the insurgents, they are blocking off the streets

The largest bombing is the tragic Plaza Miranda bombing, in 1971, at a gathering which includes most of Marcos's opponents. Almost all are killed. Benigno Aquino escapes being blown up because he is late arriving.

*And the smoke is rising slowly, from the barrel of a gun
The solution to disruption — Order 1081*

*Now the sunsets are incredible across Manila Bay
You can hear the bombers landing at the U.S. Air Force base
And somewhere in the distance, out beyond the setting sun
They will sign a proclamation — Order 1081*

*Now we live down by the water in a shack that's made of wood
And the bankers need to huddle — so they need some extra room
We will find us somewhere better, there's enough for everyone
Got a perfect explanation — Order 1081*

In this song Estrella parrots the party line, agreeing that it's best for the nipa huts and the unsightly shacks like her own to be torn down. She's trying to convince herself—as we all do—that the draconian measures are justified.



86

*I thought I ordered coffee but they gave me 7Up
Got to clear away these shanties and these ugly nipa huts
So the seeds of our great future, they can grow here when we're done
And it's clearly all because of Order 1081*

*For thirty days the rain fell, we were nearly washed away
The radio fell silent, nothing left to do but pray
And the senator he told us the guerrillas are on the run
And the reason they are hiding? — Order 1081*

There is a torrential rainstorm just before Order 1081 is signed. And yes, the radio—from the rain or from some other cause—falls silent. No one knows what is going on.

They are planting plastic flowers on the seaside esplanade

There are indeed plastic flowers in Rizal Park.



87

The Pope is speaking Spanish but we can't hear what he says

The Pope's speech during his visit is partly drowned out by the arrival of Imelda's helicopter.

*Got to stop all this confusion, got to wipe away this scum
And the way to make it happen — Order 1081*

*It's amazing that the soldiers somehow all know how to dance
It's amazing how the soldiers keep the creases in their pants
Now it's safe to walk the streets at night — a new world has begun
Ev'rybody's sleeping soundly — thanks to 1081*



Imelda, Ferdinand and Pope John Paul II, 1981

21. SEVEN YEARS

Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, the sole surviving opposition leader, is thrown into jail immediately after Order 1081 is put into effect. He is placed in solitary confinement for seven years, which eliminates all local opposition to Marcos.



Aquino on the plane returning to the Philippines, 1985

Sung by Aquino & Imelda

Vocals by DB & My Brightest Diamond

*Aquino: For seven years I've been in here
Seven years down in the hole — they said
“Your watch, your glasses and your wedding ring
You won't need them anymore”*

It's clear that many don't expect Ninoy ever to come out of the prison alive.

*I felt abandoned — I felt cast aside
So where is God who never sleeps?
I heard a voice say, “Why do you cry?”
Then I found my inner peace*

*Imelda: Ninoy, you were my first love
But you said I was too tall
The heart gets stronger and grows colder
For the Rose of Tacloban*

This is the same Ninoy that Imelda dated when she was a young woman. Talk about holding a grudge! He broke off the budding romance, but Imelda believed that he really left her for someone more socially and financially connected—Maria Corazon Sumulong Cojuangco, who became Corazon Aquino.

*Aquino: I begged to God could he forgive me now?
And take back all those things I said
This moment was a gift from above
Maybe it's some kind of test*

Benigno Aquino has a weak heart, and the years in solitary weaken it further. He feels that he might not have the strength to keep going. His condition worsens and eventually the news leaks out, becoming a worldwide human-rights cause célèbre. Even Jimmy Carter suggests that he be let out, though the U.S. turned a blind eye to the end of democracy in the Philippines seven years previously.

*Imelda: Santo Niño, Santo Niño
Take good care of him
Santo Niño, Santo Niño
Take good care of him*

Imelda decides to be a humanitarian and goes to the jail in person to have him released and moved to a cardiac hospital—one that she has built. Imelda then “graciously” allows him to leave the Philippines for a heart operation in the U.S. He is now effectively in exile and can make no more trouble in the Philippines, and she has spun herself as a savior.

After Aquino arrives in the U.S., she says that if he attempts to return against the Marcoses' wishes, he will not do so alive. This proves to be prophetic. Imelda makes a show of praying for him to “Santo Niño” (Baby Jesus).

*Ninoy, remember a long time ago
You used to walk me to my home?
Who set you free? Who built this hospital?
You think I hate you but you're wrong*

*Aquino: For seven years I wore this crucifix
A necklace that watched over me
Face to face with mortality
I let go of all my fears*

After a few years in exile, however, Aquino does eventually decide to return, as he is the only one who can seriously challenge Marcos. His supporters wear yellow and place yellow ribbons around town, inspired by the popular Tony Orlando and Dawn song “Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree.” The Marcos regime tries to prevent his return, but by taking a circuitous route he flies into Manila via Taiwan...

*Imelda: Now my husband be might hate you
But you know I saved your life
Ninoy, don't be a hero
I beg you, don't get on that flight*

Upon landing, Aquino is rushed off the plane by some uniformed men and led down to the tarmac, where he is instantly assassinated. An anonymous farmer is immediately gunned down, and it is claimed that this lone “maniac” is responsible. The U.S., up until now an unwavering supporter of the Marcoses, begins to have real doubts about the wisdom of standing by the regime.

*Imelda: Santo Niño, Santo Niño
Take good care of him
Santo Niño, Santo Niño
Take good care of him*



Aquino's assassination at Manila airport, 1983

Two million attend Aquino's funeral. The Marcos government convenes a series of trials and hearings to determine who killed Aquino (no one buys the farmer story) but no one is ever sent to jail during the Marcos regime. The assassination and cover-up serve to shock the Philippine people out of their complacency.

*Santo Niño, Santo Niño
Take good care of him
Santo Niño, Santo Niño
Take good care of him*

22. WHY DON'T YOU LOVE ME?

Things move relatively quickly now, as Aquino's assassination triggers the collapse of the whole house of cards. The Philippine public begins to have grave doubts about the Marcos regime, including Imelda and the generals that surround them. Rallies and demonstrations demanding change are frequent and popular.

In an interview on U.S. television it is suggested to Marcos that if he really wants to prove that the Philippines is a democracy and that he's as popular as he claims, he should put it to a vote and confirm it. Marcos, amazingly, takes the bait and agrees to hold an election, thinking he can rig it as easily as he has done in the past.



94

But public opinion is changing, and there is less going along to get along. Aquino's widow, Corazon, becomes the focal point of an opposition movement and agrees to run for president against Marcos. There are yellow shirts and ribbons everywhere. The movement, essentially peaceful, is nicknamed People Power.

The election is a violent and corrupt mess and although Marcos and his boys do their best, Corazon wins by popular consensus. Marcos, however, also claims to be the winner. Suddenly there are two presidents. There are massive, mostly peaceful demonstrations, and at one point some of the generals who have stood by the Marcos regime defect—maybe they can see what's coming. Significantly, the Catholic cardinal (the Philippines is nominally a Catholic country) defects as well. His name is Cardinal Sin. Imelda visits him in the middle of the night to plead her case, and he makes a joke about her visiting the “house of sin.”



95

Imelda, in a last-ditch emotional pitch to the public, sings her theme song, “Dahil sa Iyo” (Because of You), to a crowd of supporters. But the writing is on the wall, and a U.S. senator tells them to “cut and cut cleanly” (i.e., don’t unleash the troops) and that a U.S. Marine Corps helicopter will ferry them to the U.S. base on Guam and then on to Hawaii.

The mobs rush into the palace, and it is then, after the Marcoses have fled and after our story is over, that the famous shoes are discovered.

This song is sung in an imaginary duet between Imelda and Estrella, who have no contact with one another at this point. One woman feels betrayed by her countrymen, and the other feels betrayed by her old friend and former charge. Here lies love.

Sung by Imelda & Estrella

Vocals by Cyndi Lauper & Tori Amos

Imelda: Why don't you love me?

Estrella: Why don't you love me?

Imelda & Estrella: Why don't you love me?

Imelda: I gave you my life

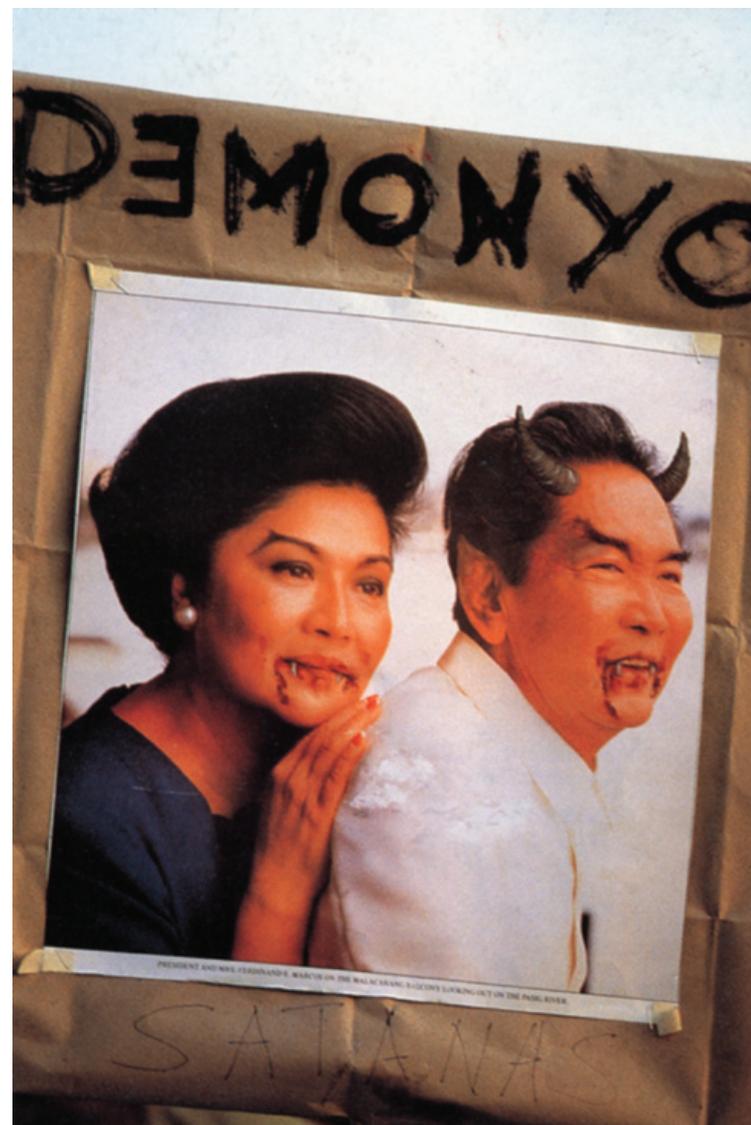
I gave you my time

What more could I do?

I'm broken inside

Estrella: I rose each morning

Worked way past midnight



*Exhausted, expired
Now you kick me out?*

*Imelda & Estrella: Why don't you love me?
What's a woman to do?
Why don't you love me? (do I)
Mean so little to you?*

Estrella: It's been —so long—our lives—

Imelda: What's wrong—what's right?

Imelda & Estrella: I did ev'rything...

Estrella: Ev'rything was for you

Imelda & Estrella: Why don't you love me?

*Estrella: My legs won't hold me
My chest feels so strange
Why don't you love me
Was it something that I said?*

*Imelda: How can you say this?
And when did you change?
You used to love me
Was it just pretend?*

Imelda & Estrella: Why don't you love me?

*Imelda: Just look at Nixon
They tore him apart
How could you be so hard?
I gave you my heart*

*Estrella: Does it add up to nothing
The years that we've been through*

Imelda: And how can you say this to me

Imelda & Estrella: When I did ev'rything—

Imelda: Ev'rything was for you

*Imelda & Estrella: Why don't you love me?
Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?*



Marcos family being airlifted out of Manila by U.S. Marines, 1986

After the Marcos family was airlifted by U.S. Marines to Guam (where Imelda made a whirlwind shopping stop at the PX), they moved on to exile in Hawaii. Gold bullion that the family had hoarded was found in the palace, as well as the shoes, and the Philippine government (and people) is still paying off debts from this era. Billions are missing. After twelve years of haggling with the notoriously secretive Swiss banks, those banks were embarrassed into allowing \$500 million they were holding to be returned to the Philippines in the summer of 1998. Imelda was acquitted of embezzlement by a U.S. court in 1990, but she is still facing charges in the Philippines. Human rights groups claim that over 1,000 people were assassinated (with no trial) under martial law, and that as many as 35,000 were tortured. There are psychic wounds to heal that might be more significant than the money and shoes.

Imelda is still alive. Her husband died in Hawaii in 1989, after which she and her children returned to the Philippines. She was not attacked or vilified, as one might have expected, but lives relatively quietly in a luxury apartment building in the Makati district. We outsiders know mainly of the embezzling, the shoes and the disco nights, but she was also, for Filipinos, a glamorous entrance onto the world stage, and she did indeed build those hospitals, schools and bridges—more than many others who had promised they would. Like most politicians she was driven by psychological angels and demons—sometimes one side would win, and sometimes the other.

—David Byrne, 2009

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This project has been emerging for a long time. Lots of people were involved in it at various points along the way. Their contributions and suggestions are not always apparent in this present manifestation, but without them it wouldn't have gotten to where it is.

Years ago Marc Geiger at William Morris casually suggested that Fatboy Slim might be a good person for me to work with, though he had no idea it would turn out like this.

In thinking through the theatrical possibilities, Marianne Weems was incredibly helpful and supportive. Kim Whitener helped with an early live version and Jim Taylor had suggestions that only a great screenwriter would think of. Jim Findlay and Steve Luber helped us as well.

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At various points, other singers and performers were involved, either in live performances or as the music took shape: my band—Mauro Refosco, Paul Frazier and Graham Hawthorne—plus Ganda Suthivarakom, Melody Butiu, Dana Diaz-Tutaan, Angel Desai, and more. Thanks to Brett Sheehy and Kate Gould @ Adelaide Bank Festival, who allowed us to do a trial concert version in 2006, and Ara Guzelimian and Kathy Schuman @ Carnegie Hall.

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Special thanks to all of my family and friends who offered support, criticism and suggestions: Cindy Sherman, Ford Wheeler and many others.

—DB



CREDITS

All songs mixed by Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC
All songs mastered by Greg Calbi @ Sterling Sound, NYC
Most DB vocals and guitars recorded @ South Hell Studio, NYC
Production Coördination by Frank Hendler
Graphic Design by Danielle Spencer & DB
Image Research & Licensing by Jane Shaw
Artist Management by David Whitehead @ Maine Road (DB)
& Garry Blackburn @ Anglo Plugging (FBS)
Press by Sacks & Co.

MUSIC

1. HERE LIES LOVE

Vocal by Florence Welch (Florence + the Machine)
(D. Byrne, N. Cook)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett
Orchestra arrangements by Tony Finno

Cagedbaby: Keyboards
David Byrne: Guitar
Fatboy Slim: Programming, Synth Bass
Amy Kimball, Galina Zhdanova, Hiroko Taguchi, Pauline Kim: Violins
David Gold: Viola
Garó Yellin: Cello
CJ Camerieri: Trumpet
Greg Smith: French Horn
Michael Seltzer: Trombone
Jay Hassler: Clarinet
Rick Heckman: Flute, Oboe

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton, Mark Rankin @ Miloco Studios, London, and Patrick Dillett @ Avatar Studios, NYC

2. EVERY DROP OF RAIN

Vocals by Candie Payne & St. Vincent

(D. Byrne, N. Cook)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Cagedbaby: Hammond

David Byrne: Guitars

Mark degli Antoni: Marimba, Mellotron

Mauro Refosco: Percussion

Paul Frazier: Bass

Thomas Bartlett: Piano

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton,
and John Reynolds @ New Air Studios, London

3. YOU'LL BE TAKEN CARE OF

Vocal by Tori Amos

(D. Byrne)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

David Byrne: Acoustic and Electric Guitars, Backing Vocals

Fatboy Slim: Keyboard Bass

Graham Hawthorne: Cajón

Mauro Refosco: Shaker, Pandeira, Cajón

Thomas Bartlett: Clavinet, Wurlitzer

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton,
and Mark Hawley @ Martian Engineering Studios, Cornwall

4. THE ROSE OF TACLOBAN

Vocal by Martha Wainwright

(D. Byrne)

Produced by Cagedbaby, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett
Orchestra arrangements by Gil Goldstein and Tony Finno

Cagedbaby: Upright Bass Loop

Mark degli Antoni: Toy Piano

Mauro Refosco: Woodblock, Udu, Shakers, Rods and Bells

Tony Finno: Rhodes Piano

Amy Kimball, Galina Zhdanova, Hiroko Taguchi, Pauline Kim: Violins

David Gold, Cyrus Beroukhim: Violas

Arthur Cook, Garo Yellin: Cellos

Kenneth de Carlo, John Sheppard: Trumpets

Chad Yarbrough, Theodore Primis: French Horns

Jay Hassler: Clarinet

David Young: Flute, Oboe

Kenneth Finn: Euphonium

Recorded by Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC,
and Avatar Studios, NYC

5. HOW ARE YOU?

Vocal by Nellie McKay

(D. Byrne, N. Cook)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Fatboy Slim: Bass, Loops, Synths

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton,
and Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC

6. A PERFECT HAND

Vocal by Steve Earle

(D. Byrne)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Allison Moorer: Backing Vocals

David Byrne: Guitars

Graham Hawthorne: Drums

Paul Frazier: Bass

Thomas Bartlett: Piano

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton,
and Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC

7. ELEVEN DAYS

Vocal by Cyndi Lauper
(D. Byrne, N. Cook)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Cagedbaby: Keyboards
David Byrne: Synth, Guitar, Wah Guitar
Fatboy Slim: Keyboard Bass
Thomas Bartlett: Wurlitzer

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton,
and Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC

8. WHEN SHE PASSED BY

Vocal by Allison Moorer
(D. Byrne, T. Gandey)

Produced by Cagedbaby, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Cagedbaby: Keys, Drum Programming
David Byrne: 12-String and Electric Guitars
Paul Frazier: Bass

Recorded by Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC

9. WALK LIKE A WOMAN

Vocal by Charmaine Clamor
(D. Byrne)

Produced by Cagedbaby, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Cagedbaby: Keys, Synth and Bass Programming
David Byrne: Piano, Clavinet, Guitar, Trumpet Loop
Ganda Suthivarakom: Backing Vocals

Recorded by Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC

10. DON'T YOU AGREE?

Vocal by Róisín Murphy
(D. Byrne, N. Cook)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett
Horn arrangements by Dan Levine

David Byrne: Bottleneck Guitar
Mauro Refosco: Clang, Chorus Percussion
Paul Frazier: Bass
Thomas Bartlett: Wurlitzer
Barry Danielian: Trumpet
Dan Levine: Trombone, Bass Trombone
David Mann: Tenor Saxophone
Paul Shapiro: Baritone Saxophone

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton, John Reynolds
@ New Air Studios, London, and Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC

11. PRETTY FACE

Vocal by Camille
(D. Byrne)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Cagedbaby: Wurlitzer, Pad
Camille: Vocal Beatbox, Vocal Arrangement
David Byrne: Backing Vocals, Organ, Guitars
MaJiKer: Vocal Arrangement

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton, and MaJiKer

12. LADIES IN BLUE

Vocal by Theresa Andersson
(D. Byrne)

Produced by Cagedbaby, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Cagedbaby: Keys, Programming
David Byrne: Guitar
Paul Frazier: Bass

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton,
and Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC

13. DANCING TOGETHER

Vocal by Sharon Jones
(D. Byrne, N. Cook)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

David Byrne: Guitars
Fatboy Slim: Bass and Brass Loops
Mark degli Antoni: Organ

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton,
and Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC

14. MEN WILL DO ANYTHING

Vocal by Alice Russell
(D. Byrne, N. Cook)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Cagedbaby: Keyboards
David Byrne: Guitars
Fatboy Slim: Organ
Mauro Refosco: Tambourine
Paul Frazier: Bass

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton, John Reynolds
@ New Air Studios, London, and Mark Rankin @ Miloco Studios, London

15. THE WHOLE MAN

Vocal by Kate Pierson
(D. Byrne)

Produced by Cagedbaby, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Cagedbaby: Keyboards
David Byrne: Guitar, Electronic Percussion
Paul Frazier: Bass

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton,
and Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC

16. NEVER SO BIG

Vocal by Sia
(D. Byrne, N. Cook)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

David Byrne: Backing Vocals, Cavaquinho, Programming
Paul Sandrone: Bass
Thomas Bartlett: Keyboards

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton,
and Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC

17. PLEASE DON'T

Vocal by Santigold
(D. Byrne)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

David Byrne: Synths, Percussion Programming
Mauro Refosco: Shakers, Congas
Thomas Bartlett: Wurlitzer, Clavichord, Organ Bass

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton,
and Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC

18. AMERICAN TROGLODYTE

Vocal by David Byrne
(D. Byrne, N. Cook, J. Pardo)

Produced by Los Amigos Invisibles, Fatboy Slim, David Byrne,
and Patrick Dillett

Armando Figueredo: Rhodes Piano
Cagedbaby: Synth
David Byrne: Guitars, Trogloodyte
José Luis (Cheo) Pardo: Guitar
José Rafael Torres: Bass
Fatboy Slim: Sequencer, Programming

Recorded by Los Amigos Invisibles @ Gozadera Studios, NYC

19. SOLANO AVENUE

Vocal by Nicole Atkins

(D. Byrne, N. Cook)

Produced by Fatboy Slim, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Orchestra arrangements by Tony Finno

David Byrne: Guitars

Fatboy Slim: Loops, Bass, Keyboards

Amy Kimball, Galina Zhdanova, Hiroko Taguchi, Pauline Kim: Violins

David Gold: Viola

Garó Yellin: Cello

CJ Camerieri: Trumpet

Greg Smith: French Horn

Michael Seltzer: Trombone

Jay Hassler: Clarinet

Rick Heckman: Flute, Oboe

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton, and Patrick Dillett

@ Kampo Studios, NYC, and Avatar Studios, NYC

20. ORDER 1081

Vocal by Natalie Merchant

(D. Byrne)

Produced by Cagedbaby, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Orchestra arrangements by Tony Finno

Cagedbaby: Keyboards

David Byrne: Backing Vocals, Rhythm Guitar

Ganda Suthivarakom: Backing Vocals

Amy Kimball, Galina Zhdanova, Hiroko Taguchi, Pauline Kim: Violins

David Gold: Viola

Garó Yellin: Cello

CJ Camerieri: Trumpet

Greg Smith: French Horn

Michael Seltzer: Trombone

Jay Hassler: Clarinet

Rick Heckman: Flute, Oboe

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton, and Patrick Dillett

@ Kampo Studios, NYC, and Avatar Studios, NYC

21. SEVEN YEARS

Vocals by David Byrne & Shara Worden (My Brightest Diamond)

(D. Byrne)

Produced by Cagedbaby, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Orchestra arrangements by Tony Finno

Cagedbaby: Keyboards

David Byrne: Arpeggio Guitar

Amy Kimball, Galina Zhdanova, Hiroko Taguchi, Pauline Kim: Violins

David Gold, Cyrus Beroukhim: Violas

Arthur Cook, Garó Yellin: Cellos

Kenneth de Carlo, John Sheppard: Trumpets

Chad Yarbrough, Theodore Primis: French Horns

Jay Hassler: Clarinet

David Young: Flute, Oboe

Kenneth Finn: Euphonium

Recorded by Patrick Dillett @ Kampo Studios, NYC,

and Avatar Studios, NYC

22. WHY DON'T YOU LOVE ME?

Vocals by Cyndi Lauper & Tori Amos

(D. Byrne, T. Gandey)

Produced by Cagedbaby, David Byrne, and Patrick Dillett

Orchestra arrangements by Tony Finno

Cagedbaby: Keyboards

David Byrne: Guitars

Paul Sandrone: Bass

Tony Finno: Rhodes Piano

Amy Kimball, Galina Zhdanova, Hiroko Taguchi, Pauline Kim: Violins

David Gold, Cyrus Beroukhim: Violas
Arthur Cook, Garo Yellin: Cellos
Kenneth de Carlo, John Sheppard: Trumpets
Chad Yarbrough, Theodore Primis: French Horns
Jay Hassler: Clarinet
David Young: Flute, Oboe
Kenneth Finn: Euphonium

Recorded by Simon Thornton @ HMS House, Brighton, Mark Hawley
@ Martian Engineering Studios, Cornwall, and Patrick Dillett
@ Kampo Studios, NYC, and Avatar Studios, NYC

VIDEOS

1. Eleven Days
2. When She Passed By
3. Don't You Agree?
4. Dancing Together
5. Please Don't
6. Order 1081

Concept by David Byrne

Films by Peter Norrman

Video and Still Image Research & Licensing by Jane Shaw

Production Coördination by Frank Hendler

SD Onlining and Color Correction by Hello World Communication

Analog Digitizing by Post Office Digital

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