

THE MOON MOTH

The Moon Moth - Music Analysis Libretto

CHARACTERS

Edwer Thissell Soprano or Mezzo Soprano

Welibus 2, Haxo Angmark, First Forest Goblin - Mezzo Soprano

Rolver, Slave 1 and Slave chorus - Soprano or Mezzo Soprano

Welibus 1, Kershaul, and Slave chorus - Soprano or Mezzo Soprano

Message Slave, Sand Tiger - Baritone or Tenor

Hostler, Second Forest Goblin - Baritone or Tenor

Mask Maker - Baritone or Tenor (very small part??)

7 singers 4 female 3 male - if other cast members are available they may be crowd members and slaves and chorus singers ad lib.

The Outworlders and most slaves are female, the Sirenians male - this establishes otherworldliness - no one notices - the male pronoun is used for all

ORCHESTRA Flute, Bassoon (dbl Contra), Horn, Trumpet in C , Trombone Percussion 1 player: (2 Timpani[C,G][B, D#,] Snare Drum, Marimba, Tambourine, Cymbals, Gong, Tam tam) Piano, Harp, Violin, Cello 10 Players in total.

Costumes

Old oriental chu chin chow flavour - scholars with brightly coloured long silk robes and little instruments slung from belts. Slaves in skimpy tops and harem pants Hollywood Kismet style.

Masks

Sea Dragon Conqueror - worn by Thissell - very large with tall plumes - symbolizes a hero

Moon-moth - worn by Thissell - dull, with pathetic droopings - symbolizes insignificance

Tarnbird - worn by Rolver - dull green scales, mica plates, blue-lacquered wood and black quills

Cave Owl - worn by Kershaul - symbolizes erudition and patient exploration of abstract ideas

Sand Tiger - shark like

Forest Goblin

Mask Maker - deceptively simple Universal Expert - two thousand bits of articulated wood

Angmark Dragon Tamer - black metal with knife blade nose, socketed eyes and three crests running back over the scalp

Slaves wear a simple black slave mask

Instruments

slung over shoulder or on belt or at hand on a bench and held up and played as required with fingers and arms (no mouth action). All Sirenese (and outworlders!) carry several instruments
hymarkin for addressing slaves.

kiv for casual polite intercourse.. for conversation between intimates or one a trifle lower than yourself in strakh

strapan for social inferiors. - ? cor anglais - tuck instrument under arm and play with fingers, squeezing air like a bagpipe in rhythm

gomapard for ceremonials (played by Sand Tiger)- gentle strum to the beat

double-kamanthil for ceremonials

ganga (pronounced gang-gah - two hard 'g's)

zachinko for more formal dealings.

Scene 1- Prologue - Office of the Home Worlds Diplomatic Institute

Thissell is on stage (maskless) reading the video text

FROM CASTEL CROMARTIN CHIEF EXECUTIVE IPP EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION RUSH!!

-TO EDWER THISSELL RECENT GRADUATE OF THE HOME WORLDS DIPLOMATIC INSTITUTE -
YOU ARE APPOINTED CONSULAR REPRESENTATIVE TO THE PLANET SIRENE AFTER THE
UNFORTUNATE DEATH BY BEHEADING OF THE PREVIOUS OFFICER.

Journal of Universal Anthropology

The population of the Planet Sirene is highly individualistic, possibly in response to a bountiful environment which puts no premium on group activity. There is everywhere and at all times a plenitude, not to say superfluity of food, and the climate is benign.

With a fund of racial energy and a great deal of leisure time the population occupies itself with intricacy: intricacy in all things - intricate craftsmanship, as in the carved panels that adorn the houseboats, intricate symbolism as in the elaborate masks worn by everyone, the intricate sing-song language, invariably accompanied by a small instrument and above all the fantastic intricacy of human relationships.

Prestige, face, repute, glory: the Sirenese word is 'strakh'.

There is no medium of exchange on Sirene; the single and sole currency is prestige - 'strakh'.

Masks, worn at all times, accord with the philosophy that a man should not be compelled to use a similitude foisted upon him by factors beyond his control; that he should be at liberty to choose that semblance most consonant with his 'strakh'.

THISSELL

How interesting there is no medium of exchange Sirene - only *strakh*
How interesting for a recent graduate - Cromartin must have faith in me.
exits SR

Scene 2- Rolver's Office at the Spaceport on Silene

video of spaceship landing - Thissell enters SR and looks around
Esteban Rolver enters SL

ROLVER

I'm Esteban Rolver, local agent for Spaceways Travel.
sees lack of mask - turns away and talks over his shoulder
Where is your mask?

THISSELL

holds up his mask (a Sea Dragon Conqueror) self-consciously
I wasn't sure...

ROLVER

Put it on!...
Are you masked?

THISSELL

Yes

ROLVER

his instrument expresses shock and surprise
You can't wear that mask!
In fact how - where did you get it?

THISSELL

It's copied from a mask in the Polypolis Museum. I'm sure it's authentic.

ROLVER

It's authentic enough. It's of a type known as the Sea-Dragon Conqueror, and is worn on ceremonial occasions by persons of enormous prestige, enormous *strakh* - heroes, master-craftsmen, great musicians.

THISSELL

What would happen if I wore this mask?

ROLVER

Someone might challenge you and, if you failed to respond, ring his duelling gong and attack you there and then.

goes to closet. pulls out mask

Here, use this Moon-Moth; it won't get you in trouble.

THISSELL

Does this mask signify any degree of strakh?

ROLVER

Not a great deal.

THISSELL

After all, I'm Consular Representative. I represent the Home Planets, a hundred billion people.

ROLVER

If the Home Planets want their representative to wear a Sea Dragon Conqueror mask, they'd better send out a Sea Dragon Conqueror type individual.

THISSELL

I see...I suppose I can find something just a bit more suitable in one of the shops. I'm told a person simply goes in and takes what he needs, correct?

ROLVER

Correct. But the owner loses strakh if a person of low prestige makes free with his best work.

What instruments do you play?

THISSELL

Well - I was given to understand that any small instrument was adequate, or that I could merely sing.

ROLVER

Very inaccurate. Only slaves sing without accompaniment.

I suggest you learn the following instruments as quickly as possible; (*demonstrates each instrument*) the *hymerkin* for your slaves.

The *kiv* for nondescript conversation between intimates or one a trifle lower than oneself

The *gomapard* for ceremonials - many others are very useful, the *zachinko* for more formal dealings,

The *strapan* for your social inferiors - in your case should you wish to insult someone. un idf you hear the call to battle, the *skaranyi*.

but these should provide at least a rudimentary means of communication.

At the moment there are only 4 off-worlders here - we two, Welibus, our Commercial Factor and Kershaul, an anthropologist. I'll take you to Welibus, who can provide the houseboat and the slaves you will need.

they exit SL - video of new scene at docks - enormous trees loaded with fruit, cereal pods, sacs of sugary syrup - and houseboat moored at dock

Scene 3- Welibus Office - Andante

a female slave appears SL, wearing a dozen tight bands of pink cloth and a dainty black mask sparkling with mother of pearl sequins, setting out a tray of instruments and dusting them

Thissell enters SR with Welibus

WELIBUS

That houseboat and these instruments will do well to begin with.

THISSELL

I shall need to pay you...

WELIBUS

My dear fellow - this is Sirene - such trifles cost nothing

THISSELL

But a houseboat!

WELIBUS

courtly flourish on kiv

I'll be frank, Ser Thissell. The boat is old and a trifle shabby. I can't afford to use it. My status would suffer. Status as yet need not concern you. Now as to slaves. Rex and Toby should serve you well.

raise voice - swift clatter on the hymerkin as he talks to the female slave

Avan esk trobu

Fascu etz Rex ae Toby
she exits SL and reenter SL with Toby who wears a loose mask of black cloth and russet cloth
Here is your new master. Serve him well and you will be returned to your home islands
the slaves prostrate themselves

THISSELL

Er.. Go to the houseboat, clean it well, bring aboard food
no movement

WELIBUS

with hymerkin accompaniment
Go to the houseboat, clean it well, bring aboard food
they go SL

THISSELL

I haven't the slightest idea how to go about learning these things

WELIBUS

Kershaul might be persuaded to undertake the job. He's an anthropologist, high in prestige, the third of our little group of expatriates.
they exit SR - lights change to dark

Scene 4- The houseboat - Lento

back to light - video of beautiful but shabby elaborately carved and furnished houseboat interior. Thissell and Kershaul on stage sitting teaching and learning instruments. Rex and Toby carry out cleaning tasks. Instruments practiced are hymerkin, ganga, strapon, kiv, gomapard and zachinko. Kershaul exits SR after a while
Video shows surf defining a strip of white beach; beyond rises jungle, with a silhouette of black hills against the sky.

THISSELL

hymerkin accompaniment
It's time for our weekly trip to the docks in town for food.
lights fade to black

Scene 5 - The message - Andante

video of houseboat docking at the dock, Thissell walks slowly in from SR. Slave arises from squat and touches forehead with knuckles.

SLAVE

The Moon Moth before me expresses the identity of Ser Thissell?

THISSELL

I am Ser Thissell.

SLAVE

I have been honoured by a trust - three days from dawn to dusk I have waited on the dock; three nights from dusk to dawn I have crouched on a raft below this same dock listening to the feet of the Night Men. At last I behold the mask of Ser Thissell.

THISSELL

What is the nature of this trust?

SLAVE

I carry a message Ser Thissell. It is intended for you.

THISSELL

Give me the message.

SLAVE

Instantly Ser Thissell

video of message as Thissell reads it

FROM CASTEL CROMARTIN CHIEF EXECUTIVE IPP EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION - RUSH!!

NOTORIOUS ASSASSIN HAZO ANGMERK ABOARD CARINA CRUZIERO DESTINATION FAN ARRIVING JAN10 UT. MEET LANDING WITH ADEQUATE AUTHORITY, EFFECT DETENTION

AND INCARCERATION OF THIS MAN. HE IS SUPERLATIVELY DANGEROUS - KILL HIM WITHOUT HESITATION AT ANY SHOW OF RESISTANCE

then video of rocket descending

THISSELL

Haxo Angmark must be aboard. Five minutes for him to land and emerge on the soil of Sirene. Possibly 20 minutes for landing formalities. The landing field is a mile and a half by this winding path...

When did this message arrive?

the slave leans forward uncomprehendingly - Thissell now uses hmyerkin accompaniment

This message - have you enjoyed the custody long?

SLAVE

Long days have I waited on the wharf, retreating only to the raft at the onset of dusk. Now my vigil is rewarded. I behold Ser Thissell.

Thissell groans and turns away

THISSELL

Aaah! Ineffective, inefficient Sirenese! Why not deliver the message to my houseboat?

furiously walking up the dock and off SL

Twenty five minutes - twenty two now!

Scene 6 - The Hostler - Allegro

video of dock with line of mounts

a hostler inspects a line of his mounts outside his stall- Thissell appears walking fast from SR

THISSELL

mix up with instruments accidental use of ganga

Ser hostler! Ser hostler!

I have immediate need of a swift mount!

HOSTLER

slow inspection by the hostler and then selection of stimic - brilliant progression of trills

Ser Moon-Moth, I fear that my steeds are unsuitable to a person of your distinction.

THISSELL

By no means, they all seem adequate. I am in great haste and will gladly accept any of the group.

HOSTLER

Ser Moon-Moth the steeds are ill and dirty, I am flattered that you consider them adequate to your use. And...

switch to skaranyi

I somehow fail to recognise the boon-companion and co-craftsman who accosts me so familiarly with his ganga.

clear implication of no steed- Thissell sets off at a run and off SL pursued by the contemptuous skaranyi of the hostler!

Scene 7 - The Forest Goblin - Allegro

video of passing scenery along the path to the spaceport- quick then slower. Then Thissell enters SR at a tired walk.

THISSELL

Too late, too late. Haxo Angmark must have landed and be travelling this way

Two people pass then a Forest Goblin.

Thissell puts himself in the way

zachinko

You travel the road from the spaceport. What have you seen there?

FOREST GOBLIN

strapan

Where I travel and what I see are the concerns solely of myself. Stand back or I walk upon your face.

marches forward to exit SR and Thissell leaps aside. Thissell hesitates, then continues on his way to exit SL

Scene 8 - Rolver's Office at the Spaceport - Allegro

passing scenery along the way to the spaceport - then blackout -then arrival at Rolver's Office, where Rolver is found [wearing a Tarnbird mask] as Thissell enters SR

THISSELL

Ser Rolver - who came down from the Carina Cruziero?

long moment while Rolver studies Thissell

ROLVER

Why do you ask?

THISSELL

Why do I ask? You must have seen the spacegram I received. I rushed out as fast as I could. Where is Angmark?

ROLVER

In town I assume.

THISSELL

Why didn't you hold him up, delay him?

ROLVER

I had neither authority, inclination nor capability to stop him.

THISSELL

studied calm

On the way I passed a man in a rather ghastly mask - saucer eyes, red wattles.

ROLVER

A Forest Goblin. Angmark brought the mask with him.

THISSELL

But he played the hand bugle expertly - how could he...

ROLVER

He's well acquainted with Sirene. He was Commercial Representative before Welibus.

beat

THISSELL

Do you have a weapon I might borrow?

ROLVER

You came out here to take Angmark bare-handed?

THISSELL

I had no choice. When Cromartin gives orders he expects results. In any event you were here with your slaves.

ROLVER

Don't count on me for help.

But I can lend you a power-pistol.

finds and hands over the gun

I won't guarantee its charge. You might be safer not finding him. Angmark is a dangerous man.

lights to black - then video of road back to Welibus office

Scene 9 - Welibus Office - Andante

Welibus is sitting in a chair in his verandah, wearing a Waldemar mask

THISSELL

Good morning Ser Welibus

WELIBUS

kiv

Good morning

THISSELL

May I ask how long you have been sitting here?

WELIBUS

long pause zachinko

I've been here fifteen or twenty minutes. Why do you ask?

The mask maker lays down his carving rod, goes behind a screen and returns wearing a mask of gold and iron, with simulated flames licking up from the scalp, and carrying a scimitar, which he whirls, while playing skaranyi

Even the most brilliant artist can augment his *strakh* by killing sea-monsters, Night Men and importunate idlers. Such an occasion is at hand. The artist delays his attack by exactly ten seconds, because the offender wears a Moon-Moth.

THISSELL

desperately

Did a Forest Goblin enter the shop? Did he depart with a new mask?

MASK MAKER

ominous rhythm

Five seconds have lapsed.

Thissell exits rapidly SR

Scene 11 - The Esplanade - Andante

video of the Esplanade. Lots of characters in masks walk up and down. Thissell stands disconsolate. Kershaul enters, wearing a Cave Owl mask.

KERSHAUL

Ser Moon-moth Thissell, you stand engrossed in thought.

THISSELL

Good morning Ser Kershaul

KERSHAUL

And how are the studies coming? Have you mastered the C-sharp plus scale on the *gomapard*?

THISSELL

I'm chasing Haxo Angmark.....

explains the current situation to Kershaul in mime

KERSHAUL

I recall Angmark. Not a gracious personality, but an excellent musician.

twists the goatee on his mask

What are your plans?

THISSELL

They're non existent. I haven't any idea what masks he'll be wearing - so how can I find him?

He might be twenty feet away and I'd never know it. No one will tell me anything; I doubt if they care that a murderer is walking their docks.

KERSHAUL

Quite correct. Sirenese standards are different from our own. It's true they dislike interference. They emphasise individual responsibility and self sufficiency...

Should you locate Angmark what will you do? He is a dangerous man.

THISSELL

I'll carry out the orders of my superior.

a man in a Forest Goblin mask comes swaggering towards them. Kershaul lays a restraining hand on Thissell's arm but Thissell steps out into the path, his borrowed gun ready.

THISSELL

Haxo Angmark, don't make a move, or I'll kill you. You're under arrest!

KERSHAUL

Are you sure this is Angmark.

THISSELL

Turn around. Hold up your hands

FOREST GOBLIN

zacinko

Why do you molest me Moon-Moth?

KERSHAUL

placatory phrase on the zachinko

I fear that a case of confused identity exists Ser Forest Goblin. Ser Moon-Moth seeks an outworlder in a Forest Goblin Mask.

skaranyi

FOREST GOBLIN

He asserts that I am an outworlder? Let him prove his case or he has my retaliation to face.

KERSHAUL

ingratiating phrase on the zachinko

I am sure that Ser Moon-Moth'..

FOREST GOBLIN

fanfare on the skaranyi

Let him demonstrate his case or prepare for the flow of blood!

THISSELL

Very well. Let's see your face. That'll prove your identity.

the crowd gasp, ominous strumming, FG pulls his duelling gong cord

KERSHAUL

desperate ingratiating phrase on the zachinko and screams

Run for it or you'll be killed! Run! Run!

T runs pursued by FG for a few yards - then derisive blast on the skaranyi.

Blackout.

Scene 12 - The Houseboat - Andante

early next morning - dawn light - video of a boat mooring alongside Thissells' house boat - a Sand Tiger comes aboard

SAND TIGER

gomapard

Dawn over the bay of Fan is customarily a splendid occasion; the sky is white with yellow and green colours; when the sun rises the mists burn and writhe like flames.

He who sings derives a greater enjoyment from the hour when the floating corpse of an out-worlder does not appear to mar the serenity of the view.

video of corpse attached to houseboat

The singer does not care to be plagued by the antics of a dissatisfied ghost. He therefore ordered his slaves to attach a cord to the ankle of the corpse and tie it to your houseboat. You will wish to administer whatever rites are prescribed in the Outworld.

He who sings wishes you a good morning and now departs.

exits- Thissell types up a message

OUTWORLDER FOUND DEAD. POSSIBLY ANGMARK. MEDIUM PHYSIQUE. BROWN HAIR, BLUE EYES. AWAIT INSTRUCTIONS.

reply emerges

ANGMARK HAS BLACK HAIR, BROWN EYES. WHY DID YOU NOT MEET LANDING? SERIOUS INFRACTION. HIGHLY DISSATISFIED.

Scene 13 - The Houseboat - Andante

video of houseboat

a masked man sitting at a desk - Thissell enters SR with gun in hand

THISSELL

Please don't argue or make any..

another man has entered SR (Angmark wearing Dragon Tamer mask) and hits Thissell over the head. He is flung to the floor and his gun taken away.

ANGMARK

I trapped you very easily

THISSELL

So you did.

ANGMARK

hymerkin

Bind the fool's arms!
the slave at the desk does so - taking off his mask to reveal slave mask - then he leaves
Get to your feet! Sit in that chair!

THISSELL

What are we waiting for?

ANGMARK

You'll learn in due course.
How did you fix on me?
silence

I admit to being curious.. Come come. Can't you recognize that I have defeated you?

THISSELL

I operated on a basic principle. A man can mask his face but he can't mask his personality.

ANGMARK

Aha. Interesting, proceed.

THISSELL

I borrowed a slave from you and the other two outworlders. and I questioned them carefully. What masks had their masters worn during the month before your arrival. My next step was to keep watch upon the three of you. Every day I noticed what masks you wore and compared it with my chart. Only Welibus had a different pattern.

ANGMARK

I see my error. I selected from Welibus's masks but to my own taste.

Stand up!

Angmark rips the mask from Thissell and dons the Moon-Moth himself
hymerkin

Carry this man up to the dock.

THISSELL

Angmark - I'm naked!

blackout

Final Scene 14 - The Esplanade - Andante

video of the esplanade -on stage 4 or 5 people people walking about in masks (of course)
Angmark fixes a rope around Thissell's neck

ANGMARK

Welibus is dead. You shall soon be dead. You are now Haxo Angmark. He will soon be dead. I am Edwer Thissell. Everything will be serene.

THISSELL

My mask..my face.

people react with stupefaction to the naked face. Struck rigid - falling on the ground, screaming in fright

CHORUS

Disgusting! Revolting! Hideous! Offensive! Frightful! Ghastly! Shameful!

ANGMARK

Everyone behold the outworld criminal Haxo Angmark. Approach and observe his execution!

THISSELL

I'm not Angmark. I'm Edwer Thissell.

cries of dismay, shock, disgust.

Give me my mask - anything - a slave cloth.

ANGMARK

In shame he lived. In maskless shame he dies.

FOREST GOBLIN

Moon-Moth, we meet once more.

ANGMARK

Stand aside friend Goblin. I must execute this criminal.

the Forest Goblin jerks the rope from Angmark's hand. Men seize Angmark. A cloth is thrown over Thissells' face, his bonds are cut

FOREST GOBLIN

strapan

A week ago you reached to divest me of my mask. You have now achieved your perverse aim.

ANGMARK

But this is a criminal. Notorious, infamous.

FOREST GOBLIN

What are the misdeeds?

ANGMARK

Murder, shipwrecking, torture, blackmail, robbery, selling children into slavery....

FOREST GOBLIN

Your religious differences are of no importance. We can vouch, however, for your present crimes.

HOSTLER

This insolent Moon-Moth nine days ago sought to preempt my choicest mount.

MASK MAKER

I am a master Mask maker. I recognize this Moon-Moth outworlder !He entered my shop and derided my skill! He deserves death!

CROWD

Death to the monstrous outworlder!

steel blades rise and fall - the deed is done

Angmark writhes and dies The assassins stand silent and watch his soul depart

FOREST GOBLIN

For you we have pity but also contempt. A true man would never suffer such indignities.

THISSELL

zachinko

My friend you malign me! Can you not appreciate true courage? Would you prefer to die in combat or walk maskless along the esplanade?

FOREST GOBLIN

There is only one answer. First I would die in combat; I could not bear such shame.

THISSELL

I had such a choice. I could fight with my hands tied, and so die - or I could suffer shame, and through this shame conquer my enemy. You admit that you lack sufficient *prestige* to achieve this deed. Who here has the courage to do what I have done?

HOSTLER

Not a man among us would dare what this man has done.

the crowd mutters approval

MASK MAKER

double kamanthil

Pray Lord Hero, step into my shop. Exchange this vile rag for a mask befitting your quality

SECOND MASK MAKER

Before you choose Lord Hero, examine my magnificent creations.

MASK MAKER

Would the Lord Hero consider a Sea-Dragon Conqueror beneath his dignity?

THISSELL

By no means. I consider it suitable and satisfactory. We shall go now to examine it.

all exit in joyous procession

fade to black and curtain.s