

Dream Performance

by Joshua Siegal

Who could build an amphitheater to hold six to eight billion people? I say six to eight because by the time the planning, construction, tech, and rehearsals were done, the earth might have eight billion people instead of over six, as it has now. It's true that in a dream performance, all this preparation could be accomplished in a day, or an hour, or even instantaneously, by a crew of ants, or martians, or girls in half-torn-apart construction costumes like I once saw on a calendar, but there's no way that instantaneous readiness could be as much fun as watching it all go up girder by girder and come together line by line. Maybe we could have ants and martians and scantily clad construction girls all do the construction: a competitive bid process with competing teams like they did with the Petronus Towers in Malaysia. I think the ants would win, but the martians, they're a definite wild card.

So, let's say two years in the planning and construction, during which time I'm getting paid \$3,000,000.00 - tax free, of course.

All the seats in this amphitheater will have speakers in the headrests so that everyone can hear the action on stage in minute detail. If an actor were to scratch her head, it would resonate in every seat in the house. Each section of the audience shall be comprised of a mix of ethnicities, cultures, and nationalities, according to their actual statistical representation on earth. So, lots of Indians and Chinese. But plenty of North and South Americans, Europeans, East Asians, Africans, Middle Easterners, etc. The audience will be told that because of the immense number of people seeing the show, everyone will have to be seated one section at a time. While they're waiting, the people can amuse themselves with a form of entertainment which is numbingly familiar the world over: dated American sitcoms.

On everyone's ticket would be printed the correct seating section, but a row and seat number which actually do not exist. Thus, in every section, the audience will have to work it out for themselves. This would, of course, be discretely filmed by a crew including Steven Spielberg, Roman Polanski, and a resurrected Alfred Hitchcock. We will let Hitch keep his worms, he'd probably appreciate the ghoulishness.

Similar to current conditions on earth, such a gathering of people would generate an enormous amount of waste. Manning the bathroom cleanup detail will be a crack troop of janitorial engineers commandeered into service: executives from record companies, telecommunications companies, auto manufacturers, energy concerns, pharmaceutical companies, and media conglomerates. It's my guess that they will find themselves at home chin-deep in crap.

All the human waste will be packaged and sold to the martians as fertilizer. As for other biological needs of the audience, food will be given away for free at many stands in the immense lobby, so long as one doesn't request anything familiar. People from Iceland will have to eat curry and people from South America will have to eat cous cous. Because North Americans and Europeans have generally been exposed to many of the culinary cultures in the world, if they can't find anything utterly foreign, they will just be given a bowl of rice with a broiled beetle on top.

Any babies birthed in the audience will be returned to their parents after the show.

As the show begins, all lights in the house go out. Dramatic music plays in everyone's headrest speakers, first just rhythmic drumming, then harmonic progression: first Gregorian fourths and fifths, then Asian pentatonic structures, then classical and modern Western scale systems, and finally Indian music. This all collapses to a single, pulsing tone, which peaks and then capitulates, leaving an expectant silence.

Then I take the stage, scratch behind my ears, and sit. I am a dog. "GREETINGS," I say. Thanks to built-in translators in the headrests, everyone can understand me, but because I am a dog, no one thinks that someone else is hearing this in their native tongue. Then I wow the crowd by standing on my haunches and doing some spiffy dance moves, tossing in a couple of layups with a basketball, and drawing a very accurate picture of Mt. Fuji/Mt. Kilimanjaro/The Pyramids/Aztec Ruins/Machu Pichu on the blackboard. Once I have the crowd in my pocket, a young man (bit part) enters the stage and puts a white robe on me. Then he kneels. "What do you have for me?" he says. "Only this," I reply.

"Do not value money above love. Be kind to others. Leave them to their own ways. Return what

you take. Do not stamp out life where it grows. Compete fairly."

Then the man stands and says, "THAT IS TOO DIFFICULT!" and begins to choke me.

Suddenly, he drops through a trap door. A sound effect plays of him falling a long, long way.

Then the young man enters the stage again. So as not to confuse Christians or anyone else not believing in reincarnation, the man will wear a different shirt each time. The same scene plays and replays itself, seemingly ad infinitum. Finally, after the thousandth time, the man rises and says, "OK."

Then the entire amphitheater goes black again and a gigantic projection screen appears and shows clips of the muddled humans fighting for their seats. It also shows clips of people kindly helping one another to find their place.

After an hour of this, a single blazing spotlight stabs through the darkness illuminating me in my robe. The film playback freezes. A drum roll plays. I say:

"WOOF! WOOF!"

The end.

After the show, on the way out of the auditorium, all religious leaders are packaged and sold to the martians as fertilizer.

Then I take my three mil and retire in anonymity in the South Pacific.