

Story Notes

on

F-1 SNOW WHITE DWARFS ENTERTAINING SNOWWHITE SEQUENCE

Meeting held: FRIDAY DECEMBER 15th 9:00 - 12:00 A.M.

Present were: WALT (in at 10:50) ALBERT HURTER
 TED PINTO
 LARRY WALT PFEIFFER
 PREIFFER HELVENSTON
 FRANK LES
 PAUL SMITH CLARENCE (part of the time)
 PENNER Dick Lundy

OPENING OF SEQUENCE - and OPENING SONG AND BUSINESS

WALT Open the sequence with a lot of fun and things going full speed.
 Opening shot - in the moonlight ... house lit up ... animals that came to
 house with Snow White, are peeking thru the window ... other animals and
 birds coming down from the trees and peeking thru ... get happy effect of
 music coming thru ...

When you cut inside the house, show that they are having a lot of fun
(we left the dwarfs and Snow White eating their soup) ... It should open
as if they had been dancing and playing for a long time.... This shot
might show the orchestra going, and Snow White dancing, either by herself
or with the dwarfs ... it would be a happy, peppy dance (folk or country
square dances suggested - nothing stately like the minuet in this part) ...

Snow White might finish with her dancing, and, tired, sit down, or be led
to a seat ... or she could spin over from her dance to a seat in a chair ...
the dwarfs would go on with the dancing ... and then four would come out
with their jugs ... lift them - pat them, doing a little dance - then play
on the jugs - and from that into a song combining the whole business.

In playing the jugs, the dwarfs could pat them (like Negroes playing jugs)
and juggle them from one dwarf to another ... one of the dwarfs might get
his finger stuck in the mouth of a jug, and finger could be released after
some shaking with a plop sound.

There are seven of the dwarfs ... three or four could keep music going -
running back to dance or play, then picking up with music again ... do away
with stops in the sequence, because every stop takes up footage ...

When Sn.W. is dancing with some of the dwarfs, others could leave whatever
they are playing because they want to dance with her ... show they are having
fun ... no stops ... get comedy song for the quartette.

Quartette might comprise Sleepy, Deafy, Bashful, Happy ... or Doc, instead of
Deafy; or use Sleepy with the fly in quartette - fly would bother him
as he sings in quartette. Where song calls for him to do something, fly could
do it instead; or he has to sing a loud note, and goes into a yawn instead...

If Bashful has to do a break or sing a few words by himself, he should be so
shy, the others would have to pull it out of him ... Grumpy is another possibility
for quartette ... he could go bass as the owl in "Lady of the Moon" later ...
I think Grumpy should take more or less a lead in the operatic handling of the
Quartette ...

OPENING SONG - QUARTETTE PROCLAMATION AND SINGING FROM SCROLL

- PINTO re Quartette idea ... it is intended not to have regular quartette number but have dwarfs treat scroll like a proclamation, reading from it what their program is to be (Snow White is their only audience) ... what they do here is build-up to what they are going to do for her, introducing their entertainment ... (It was later decided not to handle the scroll business this way, but as suggested by Walt, to have the dwarfs sing in mock operatic style some funny fast song, to be worked out later.)
- WALT This (opening song) is not a little song, but an act ... in opening stuff we want to get chance to see them do their stunts ... have dwarfs come out as orchestra ... open with them playing as an orchestra ... you have lots of chance to show them play ... In opening number, Snow White could be dancing with a couple of the dwarfs ... the rest of them playing their instruments (we have good business of one playing the organ) ...
- We should have a tune where we have a chance to get breaks with instruments and sections of the song that the instruments could play It would be better if all that came at the beginning.
- In the middle of the opening business, the four dwarfs could come out and do a little singing chorus with harmony (or just harmony without singing a regular song) ... (suggestion made that there might be dissonance instead of harmony) When the four finish, they could go back to playing instruments again ... their business would be just a little insert ...
- The jug quartette could be part of the program. The dwarfs sing, dance, and play - combine all this in the opening song business ... get a song that will [give] you a chance to combine all the stuff in a logical way.
- Quartette and scroll: When the four dwarfs read their notes from the scroll, have them all move across with the notes, and crowd the last dwarfs off the scroll - then they shift back to the beginning of the scroll for the next line ... when there is a fast part in the tune, they crowd and move along very fast.
- The opening song should be a peppy happy tune.
- Suggestions were offered as to what kind of song to use for the opening: Several rounds suggested: Three blind mice; Scotland's burning; Frere Jacques; Little Brown Jug, Old Oaken Bucket, and others. It was decided that it might be best to make up a simple tune ourselves, and have dwarfs sing it earnestly, working very hard to put it over - and stressing their facial and body expressions as they try to reach high or low for the notes, and try to put the song over.
- Have a silly tune and bring in 4 little jugs - 4 little whistles - (and whistles would say something) ... four little chairs (dwarfs would arrange themselves in some chairlike position) ... then "there was an old table" and dwarfs gather together to form a table ... then they dance as table and chairs might.
- LARRY: Tie the song together, with: "A Man had a house ... and in the house he had 4 jugs (jug business) ... four chairs (chair business)
- WALT: It would be better if scroll were piece of music (instead of proclamation and introduction to what is to follow) ... and the dwarfs were singing ... Scroll business is very cute - typical of the dwarfs ... good to have Dopey at the end ... other dwarfs would shove him off the page as they move along with song.

WALT: Suggested that music on scroll be written so that a line of music is carried over from one side to reverse side - there would be a jumble as the dwarfs must turn page for next note ... music keeps going round, winding like a barber pole.

The song could be sung in mock operatic style - not burlesquing real opera, but heavy dramatic stuff as the dwarfs might do it, using a very simple song - just a few words, or a line - and rendering it with much expression and elaborate gesture. Ted suggested a simple nursery rhyme treated in this way.

PINTO: Suggested, "Once there was an old brown jug" - have one dwarf singing - a second picking it up ... each dwarf trying to outdo the others in expression ... this would give dwarfs a chance to act ... acting and holding on to the scroll keeps them busy.

WALT: As dwarfs sing from the scroll, when one gets thru with his part, he lets go of scroll, and it snaps into the face of the remaining ones.

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One of the dwarfs singing "a jug, a jug" could get mixed up in his lines and start singing, "a plug - no, a mug, etc."

Get good expressions with the scroll stuff and operatic treatment ... shots of dwarfs holding their notes, and others would look at him as he holds it ...

Keep the business typically dwarfish ... anything they think of, propose, or do, must have some relation to their own little word ... jugs, crickets, etc. Dwarfs personify all these things - think there's personality in all these inanimate objects. ... get away from usual quartette stuff, and get atmosphere of the dwarfs thru their songs and dances.

At first it was felt that the quartette must be a snappy song, or the opening song must be a snappy one, and not descriptive, lest it resemble too much the LADY OF THE MOON number... It was later felt that probably all the dwarfs songs and games would have something of the same quality running thru them, and that a descriptive song, therefore, would not be out of place for the quartette to sing. Their stunts could come in, and then they go back to their instruments.

When the quartette finishes with their song from the scroll, Snow White might applaud and ask for more... That would give excuse for another number. Grumpy would say: "Now we'll give her one with a moral in it ..." as introduction to LADY IN THE MOON ... in some way bring in Grumpy's dig about women being troublemakers.

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The business of dwarfs playing and dancing without a reason isn't as strong as if they had a reason for it.. Have dwarfs tell a story about a house... something to justify using the different things... "There was a table, chair, plates, cups, jugs, broom" with pantomime and sound effect for each of the props ... they could imitate the prop in the song by standing or arranging themselves like a chair, so you would know they meant to look like a chair... that gives opportunity for dances of a fanciful order, instead of straight stuff.

Orchestra would be very important in this section, because it would be one of the first things we see.

re Happy directing: I think it would be better if Happy were playing some instrument, and they didn't have anybody directing them... get some peppy tune like Cookie Carnival (?)

Operatic quartette would be comedy stuff, but dwarfs would sing it straight.

Drinking Song was suggested: but it was decided that Drinking Songs appear in all music comedies ... another type of song would be better for us.

"Old Oaken Bucket" suggested for comedy treatment... Dwarfs Sing, "The old oaken (pause) (then quick) bucket..." repeat... that hung in the Well - well - well (said as exclamation, not as last word of the song)

LUNDY Suggested that, for contrast, one of the quartette sing with a dead-pan, trance-like expression, which would bring out the exaggerated elaborate efforts of the other dwarfs.

resume:

WALT: (repeating) We need a song that starts out with a lot of pep, so the orchestra has chance to show off ... show cuts of orchestra and the way they play, and at the same time get over idea they are very happy ... also bring quartette angle into the song ... the jug playing and any different instruments they might use ... We need a number that will combine all these things.

Coming out of quartette: it might start out with fast singing - as they go on, they would retard - then get some long held notes ... some counterpoint ... lead back into the peppy stuff ... and big chord as they finish ... then they all might dance together ... it should be done without having to do new numbers all the time ... the one song serving for all the business.

From singing, dwarfs might break into funny little dance, holding each other's beards ... at the finish of that, come into the Four Jugs ...

must keep in mind that the entertainment is for Snow White...

The song could be about jugs and making of jugs... (suggestion was made to follow thru the making of a jug ... first it was a tree, then the tree was chopped, etc...) tracing it finally to an old oaken jug about which they are singing.

Les suggested the possibility of the dwarfs singing about Snow White's having come to take care of them and fixing the house and how happy they were she was with them.

I don't see why we must have a theme to the fast song... Just a line for them to play around with. (approved Pinto's idea of the jug ... it was empty .. and they drank out of while it was full (plop, plop sound) till it was empty again...)

These dwarfs, if possible, should have their own style... If we do any quartette singing, we should do it for comedy purposes, and not to put over a theme.

Sketches of Snow White dancing with dwarfs look very cute... it should be brought in with their act ... or at the very opening inside shot of the sequence.

It was agreed to have Snow White participate in the fun, and not remain thruout just audience.

PENNER Dance suggestion: Have just the eight dwarf legs showing below scroll do dwarf dance.

TED: It's easier to have her dance in the opening with the dwarfs than to have her get up in the middle of the sequence to dance.

PINTO: In dancing, Snow White would be holding the dwarfs' hands, and they would be doing the trick stuff ... quarrel for right to dance with her. A type of peasant dance, or country dance would be good for this. (Walt liked the hands on hips dance position for the dwarfs)

"LADY IN THE MOON" SONG

Happy to sing the narrative part in the song.

Discussion regarding best way of cutting to dwarfs in their character roles as frog - cricket - etc... It was decided to cut to them just before they were to go into their business, hearing the rest of the narrator's lines o.s. - in cutting to the owl, frog dwarf, etc., just see them finishing the extemporaneous costuming ... fixing eyebrows for the owl, tying duster behind for bird, etc. Don't break up song by assigning parts

It was decided to use as few additional props in costuming for LADY IN THE MOON as possible: Sleepy to use his hands as fins for Fish, perhaps not use feathers for bird's tail, just pantomime with hands...

LARRY Work in sound effects in song on line "they used to fight every night"

When Sleepy is wakened and given his cue for his part in the song, he could get little wiggle with his hands under his chin, as fish fins, as introduction to fish character.

WALT Suggested three choruses of song - first time straight ... second time they fight during the chorus ... build up to the jealousy angle ... the third time they're all friends again.

Patter in between choruses should be faster ... pantomime for frog getting jealous of the owl and cricket jealous of the fish ... they might show their teeth in jealousy.

Walt liked this song for its animation possibilities. Dissonance, if used, would have to be comic (Penner suggested dissonance for fight chorus) I'd like to have them come back to the same tune, but fighting each other.

When the spring is referred to in song, have one dwarf piddle fingers in a little water ... flute could accompany sound effect for musical water effect...

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This song would be introduced in this way: Snow White would be applauding after the musical entertainment... then quartette might step out and tell her what they would do ... one of the dwarfs might say: "Once all the animals in the woods were friends, but they got into trouble;" GRUMPY: "On account of a woman" ... that would lead into the song.

or

After the entertainment, the dwarfs don't know what to do; Grumpy suggests "Let's do the LADY IN THE MOON - it has a moral to it, and the moral is that a woman always gets you in trouble" ... "once the animals were all friends...." don't make it wordy ... plant what you need to give the meaning to the song.

"Once there was a tree" ... when dwarfs question, "a small tree?" they should bend down low to indicate small ... Answer: "No, a tall tree" ... and all the dwarfs, with a sweeping motion from low to high, indicate tall tree, to give action to the line.

"A big hoot owl" ... show two fingers at the side of the head.

Keep the song moving from the animation angle.

In cueing Sleepy (he falls asleep as soon as he has done his part) ... the first time, the other dwarfs should shout, repeating the line which serves as his cue, and stressing, "High" - "Fish" "Sing".

In the quartette, each dwarf would take his singing in a different way ... each would overdo in a different way in trying to reach his note, the others watching his efforts.

"LADY IN THE MOON" number, cont.

Get cricket sound by rubbing bottoms of dwarf's shoes together for squeak - instead of real cricket noise. Ducky's sound is too realistic; or you might leave the cricket out if you can't do much with him.

In this song, night animals like owl, mocking bird, frog, cricket are used - because they serenade the moon.

Second Chorus: (fighting chorus)

Walt suggested playing the song and getting feeling of fight in the music, if possible... more important, however, to show the fighting in the way the dwarfs themselves work it...

PINTO: ~ Have them all fight together in a lot of confusion ... Snow White puts her fingers to her ears - calls "Stop" - then asks, "What was the matter?"

WALT: Have the explanation for the lady in the moon being a man very short.

PINTO: Dwarfs stop at S.W.'s call - She questions, "What was the matter" or "What happened" - they answer: "They found out that she was a he, and that they had been serenading the man in the moon" ... "So then they were happy once again"... then continue with the 3rd chorus, when they're all friends again.

LARRY: Suggested possibility of doing the song in waltz time at the end and back again into the happy stuff at the end of the last chorus.

WALT: Suggested that the last part of the last chorus should be fast; if you slow up anything, perhaps the second time. Also, the fish should be brought in to the song again.

WALT: We cut to him each time he sings, and as soon as he finishes, he is back asleep again.

WALT: At the finish of the LADY IN THE MOON SONG - dwarfs say to Snow White, "Now you do something" She says: "What shall I do" ... Dwarfs: "Tell us a story" Another dwarf, "a true story" - and on into the Snow White "Once there was a Princess," stuff. This way is more direct than a lot of stalling and explaining.

augusta
7 c.
12-13-35