

CATCH THE WAVES

A ONE-ACT PLAY

BY

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Synopsis

A team of space explorers are on a mission to save Earth when they are forced to crash land on the planet Kapzastria. There, the local inhabitants share their resources and unique skills to help the travelers complete their mission. With the help of a Greek chorus of Ancients speaking in verse and the Earthlings, (Terra and Firma), making regular appearances in hologram, every actor in this far out space adventure is a star.

Run-Time

Approximately 50 minutes.

Style

Sci-fi comedy.

Setting

Scenes take place on both the Neo-Ventura space ship and the planet Kapzastria. The play is easily performed in a black box with minimal scenery and simple, black set pieces that can be moved as needed. If your production budget allows for more elaborate sets, then you are only limited by your imagination.

There should be at least two exits, though three is better: upstage right, upstage left and aisle.

The Earthlings appear in hologram. While this can be achieved in any number of ways, the original production used a light strobe effect when those actors entered.

Props

Billowgrab wavecatcher device (shared by the Wave Catchers and Dr. Gizmo)

Quadri-nepti-hepti-liptigon volumizer (a colorful sci-fi-thingamajig – Dr. Gizmo)

Sub-quantum-atom-plishtagraph (another colorful sci-fi-thingamajig – Dr. Gizmo)

Po-ta-tu-ber (looks a lot like a potato – used by Yannyr, Xenophi and Communicator).

Casting

Gender flexible cast of 18 – 26, depending on number of Ancients used in the chorus.

Note about the writing

A slash / in the dialogue indicates the next line should begin then.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE ANCIENTS

Any comfortable number of actors who speak in chorus.

SPACE TRAVELERS

CAPTAIN (Has complete confidence in his/her crew...pretty much)

NAVIGATOR (Has an excellent sense of direction)

CATCHER 1 (A bit bumbling – works closely with Catcher 2)

CATCHER 2 (Also a bit bumbling – works closely with Catcher 1)

FETCHER (Ready for any assignment. Knows a bit about psychology.)

NUMBER 2 (The Captain's first mate.)

GIZMO (A quirky genius with a breathtakingly enigmatic vocabulary.)

COMMUNICATOR (Loves to communicate and appreciates others' skills at it.)

LIEUTENANT (Keeps tabs on what's happening in engineering.)

KAPZASTRIANS

YIREL (Leader of the Kapzastrian Counsel.)

XENOPHI (Reporter skilled in the use of "mindlock" to communicate.)

WERDAN (Eager to battle the leader of the alien spaceship)

DYRED

THAANN

YANNYR

EARTHLINGS

TERRA (Appears in hologram with news from Mother Earth.)

FIRMA (Appears in hologram with news from Mother Earth and wears the latest hairstyles.)

Scene 1

SETTING: Front of stage.

AT RISE: MUSIC plays as The ANCIENTS
ENTER. They form a tableaux until
the music ends.

THE ANCIENTS

Deep in outer space,
a crew of intrepid travelers,
tasked with the responsibility
of saving their own, far away planet,
struggle for survival
among the harsh elements
of fragile planetary systems.
They search the stars
to catch the waves.

(BLACKOUT - END OF SCENE)

Scene 2

SETTING: Bridge of the Neo-Ventura spaceship.

AT RISE: The CREW of the Neo-Ventura are shown in tableaux. They begin speaking at LIGHTS UP. NUMBER 2 walks around the bridge, inspecting.

CAPTAIN

Navigator, are we on course?

NAVIGATOR

Yes, Captain. According to my calculations, we should reach our target waves in less than one Earth day.

(WAVE CATCHERS are struggling with the billowgrab, a curious instrument with lots of colors, knobs, gadgetry, etc. It is pointed at NUMBER 2 as he/she passes them.)

NUMBER 2

Hey, watch where you point that gizmo of Doctor Gizmo's!

CAPTAIN

Crew, is the wave-catcher instrument ready?

(CATCHER 1 takes the billowgrab from CATCHER 2 as they both approach the CAPTAIN.)

CATCHER 1

Yes, Captain.

CATCHER 2

Unclear, Captain.

CAPTAIN

What was that?

(CATCHER 2 takes it back from CATCHER 1.)

CATCHER 1

Unclear, Captain.

CATCHER 2

Yes, Captain.

CAPTAIN

Well, which is it? Is the instrument ready or not?

CATCHER 1

We think so, Captain.

CATCHER 2

But we can't be sure.

CAPTAIN

Fetcher, bring Doctor Gizmo to the bridge.

FETCHER

Aye, Captain.

(FETCHER exits. NUMBER 2 takes the instrument from CATCHER 2 and looks it over, curiously.)

NUMBER 2

We need to know if this contraption is going to work!

CATCHER 1

(Nervously apologizing.)

It's just that Dr. Gizmo had to patch it together with the supplies already on board.

CATCHER 2

We haven't used it yet and, and, and...

(She looks to CATCHER 1 for support.)

CATCHER 1

And there is no precedence for this assignment.

CATCHER 2

And there is no precedence for this assignment!

CAPTAIN

I don't want excuses. This is a matter of life or death for our planet.

(NUMBER 2 thrusts the instrument back into the hands of CATCHER 1.)

NUMBER 2

You heard the captain. Whatever tests you need to run, just get on with it. Our very existence depends on catching these waves.

(GIZMO enters, followed by FETCHER. GIZMO is very disheveled. His hair is sticking out on end and he wears a white lab coat with a tool belt dripping in "futuristic-science-ish-gadgets" stuff. He is holding one of these contraptions and muttering to himself. As he speaks, ALL look at him with awe...or total confusion.)

GIZMO

(Holding up the gadget as he speaks.)

If I take this quadri-nepti-hepti-liptigon volumizer...

*(He plucks another gadget from his tool belt,
holding it up next to the first.)*

and just carefully adjust the alignment of the sub-quantum-atom-plishtagraph with it...

(Fitting the two pieces together somehow.)

then the vario-transma-zaptor should...should...well it should...grrrr...

(He looks in confusion at the gadgets.)

It should...

*(He looks up and speaks out to the audience,
oblivious to the crew on the ship.)*

I don't understand. All of my calculations are perfect. I've run the theoreticals thoroughly through...

(He pauses, struck by an idea.)

Unless? Unless? That's it! The Murphy's-law-receptors are misaligned! Genius!

(GIZMO begins to run offstage.)

CAPTAIN

Doctor Gizmo! I called you to the bridge for answers, not nonsense!

GIZMO

Captain! My work mustn't be interrupted. The sensitivity of our –

CAPTAIN

As your captain, I can interrupt anything I want to on the Neo-Ventura.

*(FETCHER and LIEUTENANT quickly begin to
gossip about the CAPTAIN yelling.)*

CAPTAIN

You two, quit talking!

(To GIZMO.)

See? I just interrupted them.

GIZMO

But Captain, the billowgrab!

CAPTAIN

Exactly my point. Is it working?

GIZMO

No!

NUMBER 2

No?!

GIZMO

But I have it now! It's genius! Brilliant! All I have to do is take the inner-wrench-traptor's outer keymorph and –

CAPTAIN

Enough!

NUMBER 2

Don't bother the Captain with details. Just, just, go do whatever mumbo-jumbo science-y thing you do and make that wave-catcher work!

GIZMO

(Grabbing the billowgrab from CATCHER 1 and speaking with giddy delight.)

My precious device! Genius! Brilliant! So obvious! Hahahahah!!!

(GIZMO exits.)

COMMUNICATOR

Captain, I'm getting a message from Mother Earth. Terra and Firma are arriving in hologram.

CAPTAIN

Bring them in, Communicator.

(SOUND EFFECT as, TERRA and FIRMA enter and stand on the hologram spot – possibly the end of an extension platform. They never look directly at the CREW and they speak in a deadpan and expressionless way.)

TERRA & FIRMA

Greetings, Neo-Ventura. This message comes to you from your Communication Coordinators on Mother Earth:

TERRA

Terra.

FIRMA

And Firma.

TERRA

As per inter-stellar communication recommendation code 8349173-dash-LOL, we will pause throughout this message for your psychological well-being so that you can react to what we say, thereby creating the illusion of having a conversation with your species back on Mother Earth.

FIRMA

Pausing now.

(TERRA and FIRMA freeze with artificial smiles on their faces while the CREW mostly roll their eyes or shake their heads. Only the COMMUNICATOR takes this seriously.)

COMMUNICATOR

(Speaking slowly and clearly – as though really being heard by TERRA and FIRMA.)

Greetings, Terra and Firma. What news do you have from Earth?

(TERRA and FIRMA continue to pause for a few more seconds.)

FIRMA

Thank you for noticing. Yes, I did get a new hairstyle.

(COMMUNICATOR is slightly embarrassed.)

NAVIGATOR

Wait, what?

NUMBER 2

I think she said something about her hair. Did any of you notice that?

FIRMA

(Continuing as though having not been interrupted.)

I knew you would all want to see my new look so you, too, can stay current on the latest styles while traveling light years from civilization.

TERRA

Why don't you turn around for them, Firma, while we pause again?

(TERRA resumes his/her plastic smile as FIRMA slowly turns around, showing off the hairstyle.)

COMMUNICATOR

(At a loss, trying to continue the illusion of dialogue.)

It's, um, very nice, Firma.

LIEUTENANT

(Aside to COMMUNICATOR.)

You do know that they can't hear you, right?

COMMUNICATOR

I'm the *communicator*! It's my *job* to communicate with Mother Earth.

NUMBER 2

(Studying FIRMA'S hairstyle in the "hologram".)

I wonder how she did that in the back?

FIRMA

(Having not heard NUMBER 2.)

Can you see the back?

COMMUNICATOR

(Loudly with self-importance.)

We were just admiring the back of your hairstyle, Firma. Very fashionable.

TERRA

Of course, it will be totally passé by the time you return.

FIRMA

(Aside to FIRMA)

If they return.

TERRA

(Nodding.)

If you return.

(TERRA and FIRMA smile stiffly again.)

CAPTAIN

Well, *when* we return, we'll look forward to catching up on whatever the latest styles are. Isn't that right, crew?

(CREW nod and give various agreement to the CAPTAIN while looking doubtfully at each other.)

TERRA

Now, captain and crew of the Neo-Ventura, we must turn to the matter of your mission.

FIRMA

Have you had any success catching the waves yet, Captain?

(TERRA and FIRMA look hopefully out as they pause for the expected response.)

CAPTAIN

(Stumbling and stalling.)

Aah, not yet, Terra. But our engineers are confident/ that very soon-

TERRA

Excellent work, Captain.

FIRMA

We knew that you and the entire crew of the Neo-Ventura could be counted on.

COMMUNICATOR

Actually, Terra and Firma, what the captain is trying to tell you is -

LIEUTENANT

They can't *hear* you!

COMMUNICATOR

I don't tell you how to do *your* job!

TERRA

Because your success in this mission –

(LIGHT EFFECT and SOUND of something hitting the ship. TERRA and FIRMA continue to move their lips, but they momentarily aren't heard.)

COMMUNICATOR

Captain, I'm losing the hologram!

NAVIGATOR

Turbulence ahead!

NUMBER 2

All crew to stations.

FIRMA

...the very existence of life on Earth...

COMMUNICATOR

I can't hold them.

(TERRA and FIRMA begin to "fade" as the light over the hologram spot fades.)

FETCHER

They're fading!

NAVIGATOR

It's a debris shower!

TERRA

And our scientists predict we only have...

(SOUND EFFECT as all CREW suddenly lurch forward and back. The LIGHT over TERRA and FIRMA goes out and they exit.)

CATCHER 1

What happened?

NUMBER 2

We've been hit, Captain.

COMMUNICATOR

I can't get the hologram back.

NAVIGATOR

More debris is heading right for us, Captain.

CAPTAIN

Status on the hit, Officer?

LIEUTENANT

Engineering reports damage to the –

(HE/SHE is interrupted by another SOUND EFFECT as the CREW again lurch – this time side to side, immediately followed by the blinking of LIGHTS and NEAR BLACKOUT.)

NUMBER 2

Captain, we have a power compromise.

COMMUNICATOR

How will I get the hologram back?

LIEUTENANT

Forget the hologram!

CAPTAIN

Navigator, get us out of this debris storm!

LIEUTENANT

Captain, Engineering reports the radio-zactor propell-i-thon is down!

NAVIGATOR

(Pointing out over the audience.)

The debris is coming from that planet.

CAPTAIN

What planet?

NAVIGATOR

Kapzastria. It's charted, but unexplored.

NUMBER 2

We're locked in orbit with the planet's debris.

CAPTAIN

Can we escape the planet's orbit?

LIEUTENANT

Not without the radio-zactor propell-i-thon!

CAPTAIN

We'll have to make an emergency landing. Communicator!

COMMUNICATOR

Yes, Captain?

CAPTAIN

Communicate to the people of Kapzastria that we come in peace.

COMMUNICATOR

But my communi-zappiter-matrix is down!

CAPTAIN

(To NUMBER 2.)

Alert the crew.

NUMBER 2

Attention all crew. Prepare for emergency landing. Repeat: go to landing stations!

CAPTAIN

And Fetcher.

FETCHER

Yes, Captain?

CAPTAIN

Go to Gizmo's lab. Tell him, no matter what, protect that wave catcher!

(BLACKOUT – END OF SCENE)

END OF SELECTION