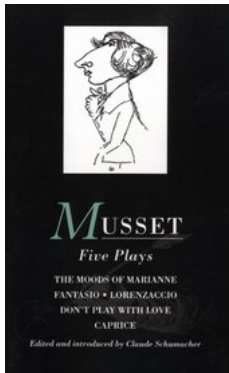


Fantasio by Alfred de Musset



Musset's play is set in an imaginary Munich in an imaginary feudal past. His heroine, Elsbeth, is to marry a ridiculous prince, the ruler of Mantua, and the population of Munich is celebrating. Amongst the revellers though is Fantasio, a mysterious young man, who recognises Elsbeth's misfortune. On the eve of the wedding, the court jester dies and Fantasio dons his costume in order to enter the palace. In his disguise, and now as the paragon of wisdom and truth, Fantasio urges the princess not to marry the prince. In a frenzied moment, he whisks the wig off the prince upon his entry march into Munich and ends up imprisoned. Thanks to Elsbeth, though, Fantasio is set free.

Genre:	Romantic drama	Fee:	£40 plus VAT, per performance
Cast:	m8 f2 (plus chorus)	Scripts:	ISBN 9780413692405 £14.99
Set:	Munich	Length:	2 acts
Contact:	amateur-rights@bloomsbury.com		

EXTRACT

Elsbeth (*alone*) There appears to be someone behind those bushes. Is it the ghost of my poor fool I see sitting in the grass among the bluebells? Answer me. Who are you? What are you doing there? Picking flowers? (She moves to a little rise.)

Fantasio (*dressed as a fool with hump and wig*) I'm an honest flower picker who bids good day to your beautiful eyes.

Elsbeth Why are you dressed like this? Why have you come with this large wig to mimic a man I loved? Are you practising to be a fool?

Fantasio May it please Your Most Serene Highness, I am the king's new fool. The head butler received me favourably. I was presented to the king's valet. The kitchen boys have been looking after me since yesterday evening, and I am humbly picking flowers waiting for my wit to come.

Elsbeth I doubt if you'll ever pick that particular flower.

Fantasio Why? It can come to an old man just as a young girl can lose it. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between a flash of wit and gross stupidity! Talk, talk, talk. That's the most important thing. The worst marksman can hit the bull's-eye if he shoots 780 times a minute, just as well as a clever marksman who takes one or two well-aimed shots. All I ask is to have enough food to fill my belly and I will look at my shadow in the sun to see if my wig is growing.

Elsbeth And so there you are dressed in Saint-John's cast-offs? You are right to speak of your shadow. As long as you wear that costume it will always remind me of him more than you, I think.

Fantasio At the moment I am composing an elegy that will decide my fate.

Elsbeth In what way?

Fantasio It will prove conclusively that I am the best in the world or it will be nothing at all.

If you enjoyed this, you might like:

- *The Game of Love and Chance* by Marivaux (m4 f2)
- *Lorenzaccio* by Musset (m29 f6)
- *Don't Play With Love* by Musset (m4 f3)