

***The Squeeze*, a new musical revue - Description and Lyrics**

"The Squeeze" – Since the early 80's, wage raises haven't match growing inflation and there has been an ever increasing income disparity from the wealthy to lower classes. This has caused frustration and stagnation among the middle class and hopelessness among the poor. Both Republicans and Democrats have acknowledged the problem but have different ideas for a solution. In 1995 Nancy Pelosi termed it the middle class "Squeeze" – and because 'the squeeze' has consequently shaped modern times, I decided to write a satirical yet inspirational musical revue about it. The piece emphasizes how people have persevered despite their struggle and stagnation. The music focuses on folk, modern and early jazz styles, meant to draw on the nostalgic sound of a Shubert Brothers revue in New York City in the 30's (they were often about the depression). There are 13 songs and 1 instrumental work, 1 tap dance number; run time is about an hour. Music and lyrics by Amos Gillespie.

Cast of Characters:

Ella – Wife of Jack

Jack – Multiple roles: Husband of Ella, Banker

Lori – Teacher

Brian – Multiple roles: Blue Collar Worker, Student, Hypnotist

Lyrics:

1. Think Less (Ensemble) - The exposition of the show, the ensemble questions whether or not 'thinking less' is the best way to cope with a mundane and stagnant work life.

Looking around, who am I foolin', tricking myself into thinking there's progress.
Putting in hours, time gets subtracted; toll after toll, groceries, train rides, my account is impacted.
Looking for more, working for less, paying expenses, paying for date night.
Happy to do it, happy to be here.
But it seems I pay more.
And I pick up more work year after year.
I'm grateful.
I'm thankful.

Free time is rare, it is hard to find, when I want to clear, what's on my mind.

Bigger goals and larger roles, just something new to get me through.

Woken up, go back to sleep, toss and turn, too much concerning, I should go, I need to get this done.
Get clothes on, same ones again, check the phone, no it's too early, look outside, it is a rainy day.
Look at mail, I don't remember, this was paid, not by December.
Do it now and move on, it's not that much just pay sign and
going through, this page and that, Groupon has, this for a diner hey that's nice, what was subtracted
just, got, added.

Back and forth now, spend, save, small raises.

Rising wealth, which ones will see it, just a few, not sure I'll be it.

Stay on course and think less you have the weekend it's time to go.

Free time is rare, it is hard to find, when I want to clear, what's on my mind.

Bigger goals and larger roles, just something new to get me through..

Airfare fees, never the same, home purchase, what is the value?

My health plan, eat what is green and walk, walk, walk, run.

Back, and, forth, now, spend, save, small raises.

Late at night, what am I learning, working here, not much I'm earning stay on course and think less you have the weekend it's time to go.

I need to sleep, I need some sun, I want to leave and try to have fun but how do you do that?

I don't remember. There's too much to work on.

How do I un-know this just for a while?

2. Timing (Jack) - Jack searches to pinpoint the most cost-effective time of day, week and year to purchase airfare – he is planning to visit his family back in Omaha for their summer parade and fair.

Must act now, I've got to find a flight, there's a time to buy that is just right.

Perfect timing is everything.

You can get a deal that will make you sing.

On Sunday Tuesday Wednesday's fine but the best is Monday late at night.

Advance purchase is timing too and they say forty seven days before, it's true.

And don't forget about the time of year, I always need to fly when the price is high.

I have my fam'ly out in Omaha, I see them once a year or not at all.

This year's diff'rent, my mind is made, my nephew's joining in the Summer parade.

I'll be flying in on Wednesday night, we'll all start drinking well beyond what's right.

We'll have dinner - and sleep all night, woken up by the children, before the first light..

Which airline should I choose this time, I want to go straight there at a decent fare.

Some are thrifty but not too good, there's a risk in choosing what is the lowest I don't think the cheapest is the..

I can't stand this, I can't take this; I just need to get this done.

3. A Sketch From Cezanne (Lori) - a song about a simple way to restore in a work intensive life.

Water's the sun and all over they run, it's clearly the day that attracts everyone.

All I can see are the browns and greens and shades of blue.

Out in the air there's permission to breath, no places to go, no direction to lead.

I want to see the paintings, reflecting what is all around.

Strollers in sand, kites in one hand, this is easy.

Calling out loud, kind of a crowd,
Morning is gone, morning is gone.

All those here, are all out in the open.
All exposed, with their guards let down.
Fam'lys relatives some they adore, siblings and friends they love more.

Couples on second dates feeling what they can't think about, some are on third dates and don't care.
Singles are walking along and they feel a little sad, some tried to feel nothing be-fore.

Seagulls on land, clouds in a strand, this is easy.
Tourists around, on the shore of the town, light and breezy.
Time spent away and from reality, we try not to know, what the children don't see.
Openly curious making friends un-knowingly.
Staying outside for as long as we can the season is short just a sketch from Cezanne.

I want to see the paintings, reflecting what is all around.

4. Cheap Husband (Ella) – Ella debates with Jack and the audience about their battle on whether or not to indulge in simple pleasures.

I got a man who can't be free, we are married he thinks it's me.
Sometimes I try to tell him why, that he is the cheapest guy.

Jack be free, can't you see, spend a little more it's not hard to be,
cautious with your every dime, take a break and splurge this time.

His clothes and things the furniture, all handed down, nothing is new.
He is so thrifty dry and shrewd, he will not shy from a three week old stew.

Jack be free and let it be, take a chance to see the life you're not living.
Just this once I want to dream, we'll have a little more down stream.

He will say he's practical, that it's out of necessity.
I sympathize with his position, but I want a little something for me.

Jack be free oh can't you see, you can treat yourself, it's like therapy.
Wouldn't you know it could help you, loosen up your belt a bit.

I would like a valentine, him and me all lookin' fine,
on the town, arm and arm, far from home and spending something.
Sometimes you need to act like you're going, up and up a change from the mornin'.
Fresh and new, boldly through, the mud you feel stuck in.

Jack's a guy I don't really get, nervously he won't place a bet.
But he's got to take a chance, if he wants some more romance.

Jack be free and let it be, take a chance to see the life you're not living.
Just this once I want to dream,
we'll have a little more, we'll have a little more, we'll have a little more down stream.

5. Drinking Alone (Jack/instrumental/tap number) – After Ella complains about how cheap Jack is, he stays back and drinks alone, preparing for a yard sale. Throughout the music, he takes items from one box and moves them into another box labeled 'Yard Sale' – the items represent past dreams/endeavors he is now giving up on, except one. The last thing is tap shoes, he taps the last 1/3 of the music and by the end, his confidence is restored.

6. Giving (Lori) – Lori contemplates the importance of giving to charity.

Lending a hand, spreading your reach, showing you care just by listening.
Giving your time, forcing a smile.
Let us try to find a way.
Pleasant is good, neighborly fine, showing respect is no less than sunshine.
Trickling up from bellow all in time, leaders exist in shadow.
Treasuring worth, to no avail, assessing value through records.
Time to move on and do it with grace.
Let us try to find a way.

Within the Bible belt givers abound, just through commandment it's mostly found.
This should not be, when will we see?
Selflessly giving it goes beyond me.
Me, me, me, me, what is all that about?
Talking in circles just fewer words please.

Moving along it's a struggle, take a step back it's no trouble, some seem behind, but is it true?
Their act of sharing's the strongest virtue.
Looking for guidance it's staring us down, the source of our answer's in those all around.

Lending a hand, spreading your reach showing you care just by listening.
Giving your time, forcing a smile.
Let us try to find a way.
Some think it's weak, I need a change.
Treat Power and giving as one and the same.
Trickling up from bellow all in time, leaders exist, in shadow.

7. Can't Make Dance Night (Ella, Jack) – Ella and Jack are too exhausted after the work week to attend their Friday night ballroom dance class.

Jack: Friday night has finally arrived and what a week it has been, every day became a 10K, a long race I couldn't win.
Ella: Don't forget what we planned tonight we talked about it on Monday.

We subscribed to a ballroom dance class one month for each Friday night.

Jack: Wait a minute just tell me when, I agreed to do this again. I thought that we were just talking, I hadn't made up my mind to try it. Can we go at a different time? I was hoping to have some wine. This will never work, it's not for me. I have no energy.

Ella: What the hell we have talked for months! You agreed to it on Monday night.

You are the one who keeps talking, saying we need to get out more often.

You complain that your days are routine learning nothing your life is unseen.

This is happening oh don't you see?

Normally you agree.

Jack: Ya I know but this week was long, I don't feel quite the same. Why can't we go on another day, maybe next Sunday.

Ella: Not an option it wasn't offered this is our only chance. All the time it is up to me to get you out of the house.

Jack: Last week I took you out to see the Farmers Market.

Ella: So groc'ry shopping is the way to spice things up for the two of us?!

Jack: I'm trying to have more fun with you, give me some time, I will come through.

Ella: Come through tonight, your indecision wears me down, what more can I..

Jack: My inspiration ebbs and flows like water in the River Nile!

Ella: Your inspiration rarely flows much further than a single mile!

Jack: Well that is quite harsh, surely abuse, making me feel, I'm of no use.

Ella: That's not the case, I just want you to follow through, stick with the plan.

Jack: I have worked a long week; Friday night is the worst time.

Ella: There will never be a time, don't you see, a time when you are not

(Overlapped) Ella: over worked, burned out, broken down, dog tired.

Jack: over worked, tuckered out, broken down and spent.

Ella: We will always feel this way but maybe we will wait OK alright OK alright OK alright
OK alright you win!

Jack: I can't think, or feel, or stay, awake, I can't, I'm not, not ok. I promise we will go
some time just not tonight alright I win!

Jack: Friday night has finally arrived and what a week it has been, I discovered a new wine, a red blend and now it's all mine.

Ella: Celebrate on giving in to your vice I feel oh so proud I was hoping we'd make it out but all you do is indulge.

Jack: Don't you fret 'cause (together): Later on we will try again to dance the night away!

8. Caged Bird (Lori) – Lori, a public school teacher, is frustrated with her current demands.

I have a job here teaching children what I know.

I show them that I care but circumstances rapidly have been changing.

I feel I've been loaded, weighted down with restrictions.

I have no self-expression, how can I stay motivated..

Deadlines, testing, averages, watching grades so closely, fearing, standards, evaluations.

I'm a caged bird, with cut wings to retain me.

I think it's over, I can't live in this fallacy my heart is full of pain.

Reasons why, I'm not sure, they think we control the households, screen time, parents discipline.
It's not just us, neighborhoods and playgrounds, everywhere, children grow, not just
In my, classroom, I can't make the changes they are asking, it's social, there is a bigger picture here, not
a simple fix.

I feel I've been loaded weighted down with restrictions.
I have no self-expression, how can I stay motivated, here..

9. I Can Handle Debt (Brian) – Brian is a young man weighing college choices, and what level of debt he's
prepared to embrace.

(Recitativo) I have to weigh the pros and cons of a high, higher or highest education.
Public or private. What is it worth? When your debt becomes soaring?
Should I not think?
Should I just jump?
I have done my homework and statistic'ly speaking the benefits always outweigh the costs.
But to what end?
Will I default?
Maybe debt is an illusion and indiff'rence is the key..
I have role models, the government's in debt, a lot!
It is good business to be in debt, I'll think of it that way.

(Strict time) You got to pay, a little every day.
There is no chance of turning back this is the only way.
The price is high, but int'rest low, I think I'm fine, but I don't know.
What is the value of education? I need to find out what I can spend.

We live in debt, It is the surest bet.
It is a lifetime of reminders that you're never set.
Never, never, never, ever, never, never, ever, set.

I will forge ahead and not look back there is no part of me that can barely see what my future is I really
have to know there is no second guessing and no repressing my will to go as high as I can go.
Show my fam'ly that we can do it.
Education is everything, prosperity it is sure to bring.
I just have to prepare myself for loads of debt and so little help.
It's not a synch, of all my relatives; I am the first one taking all of this so seriously.
I would like to find a job that has a little variety.

And my only alternative, is to work for just a few years, anywhere I just have to save up and make plans
for my career.
I will look for college near by, not too far or programs online. I can look for what is affordable and give
this some more time.

I will forge ahead and not look back there is no part of me that can barely see what my future is I really
have to know there is no second guessing and no repressing my will to go as far as I can go.

Show my fam'ly that we can do it.

Education is ev'rything prosperity it is sure to bring. I just have to find a way a scholarship less financial aid less heartache less to defray.

I have no other means, no one who really sees, the chance I'm taking, deviating from down home.

I really can not be so shy with tuition oh so high it's now or never so I must decide the hole I could be in sometimes it feels like sin a touch of selfishness is how we get to win.

I'll live in debt It is the surest bet It is a lifetime of reminders that you're never set.

Never, never, never, ever, never, never, ever, ever, ever set.

10. Love Is What You Own (Ella, Jack) – With questionable financial value on all things tangible, Ella and Jack determine that love is the only thing they 'own'.

Ella: What is the value of all that I have?

What is the value of all that I need?

Finding what's honest in anything sold, a tale through the ages that's always retold.

Looking at you I'm reminded of knowing that all that I love really is all I own.

Jack: Finding what matters is hard I attest, all of our effort for more, it's a mess.

Trying and trying with no end in sight, after the day you are my only light.

Ella: Getting caught up in a motionless time we can remember that our love's entwined.

Ella and Jack: I enjoy seeing you talking and being with you finding the time anywhere any place.

Ella: I see a future with children around, in a new home further out of the town.

Jack: This is a dream I have had so many years, despite our hard times, I will take on our fears.

(Dance Break)

Ella and Jack: What is the value of all that we have?

What is the value of all that we need?

Finding what's honest in anything sold, a tale through the ages that's always retold.

Looking at you I'm reminded of knowing that all that I love really is all I own.

11. Rich Guy on the Train (2 men) – An unhappy CEO investment banker has to ride the train; another passenger makes fun of him.

(Recitativo) Banker: I can't believe this train it always stops.

Brian: What do you mean?

Banker: I need to get to the board of trade in fifteen minutes it doesn't run express?

Brian: Is this your first time, using the public train?

Banker: I used it once to go to school thirty years ago.

Brian: Thirty years!

Banker: Someone damaged the garage door at my building, I couldn't drive out.

All three of my cars were blocked in.

And I couldn't find a cab in the rain.

Brian: I guess you'll have to ride and wait, like the rest of us.

Banker: Like the rest of you..

Brian: What do you do at the board?

Banker: I am a CEO investment banker.

Brian: So you work to make money on money, the prep school version of Las Vegas.

Brian: I wouldn't put it that way, I help grow the economy.

Brian: Is it growth, or do you look to see who to favor?

Banker: Is there really no express train?

Banker: Sorry to say but this is the way the world works, driven by profit.

Brian: How do you feel when the market isn't doing so well?

Banker: Horrible and destitute..

Brian: But you have plenty to live on, is your job addictive?

Banker: Maybe so but people who love their work often embrace it full time.

Brian: Addictive, like Las Vegas.

Banker: You're implying that I'm greedy, but this is how the free market works.

Brian: (Really expressive/emotional) Free market, so free, free market, so free.

Limitless desires, no restrictions.

No restrictions, all that you could possibly want.

And more, and more.

And more, and more, and more, and more!..

Banker: OK what was that?

You are out of control. I'm getting off now.

12. Executive Party – (instrumental)

13. Squeeze My Nectar (Brian) - (Parody on Led Zeppelin's 'Lemon Song') – Brian is risk-averse and 'gets the blues' every time he considers trying something new in his life.

I'm gonna keep you baby for as long as I can. Oh ya ya yuh, as long as I can.

I wouldn't be here children right here in my comfort zone.

I shouldn't listen, baby, to my second voice Oh!

I shouldn't listen, baby, to my second voice.

Every time I feel the risk of leav'in, I get the blues,

I have no choice.

Bur(n) ya yuh. Whoa my my my leavin' my comfort zone gives me the blues, gives me the blues.

I can't get away from it.

Those from my high-school ten year, said I couldn't settle down, they were wrong!

Let me tell you baby, I'm in my place, settled right here, (n)this groove, in these old line jams.

Went to bed last night, worked the longest double, bring home my money, they take my money, for the status quo. I'm gonna keep you baby, for as long as I can. Let's bring it down now..

I'm gonna keep you baby, for as long as I can. I wouldn't be here my possums, in this, every mans, safe zone. Bring it down....

Squeeze me baby, till the juice runs down my leg.
Squeeze me baby, till the juice runs down my leg.
The way you squeeze my nectar.

I'm gonna take it, and stay where I am, just keep it right here.
I'm gonna take it, I wouldn't be here in my comfort zone, doin' my job for the status quo,
no risk involved I can't!
I can't risk anything.
No more blues.
No chance.
Keepin' it safe..

14. Love Letter (Ella) – Ella writes a love letter to her miscarried child, symbolizing a career woman's struggle to balance a work-intensive life with building a family.

Dear little soul, oh my brave little soul. How I think of you, I will love you forever.
You had come to me in a dream, we were playing together.
I could feel all you meant to me, time had slipped away.
You came to me, you were all I could see, my whole life had changed, I will love you forever.

I can not feel, anymore. I have some trouble calming down.
It is my fault, I failed us. I could not nurture me for you.
Every time I got close to tuning in with you, something outside mislead my heart.
Every time I could feel a pulse from you draw near, I did not take the time to hear..

Your..soul, next to mine, your soul right next to mine. I just felt it go, no, I want you forever.
I will pray to you every night, I will think of you always.
Wondering what you found instead, I will stay your angel.
I have to try to sleep tonight, please try to stay close by.
You are the only thing that's true, you know that I love you.

15. Hometown Parade and Fair (Ensemble) - (a throwback from 'Timing') - Jack and Ella gather their friends Lori and Brian for a fun trip out to Jack's hometown parade and fair, their one week vacation for the entire year. An unexpected encounter with a fair employee manipulates Jack's perspective.

Ella: Will we have a vacation this summer?

Jack: My hometown has a parade and fair in August.

Ella: That sounds great I really wanna go. Let's go have some fun with ev'ry one.

Jack: Should we find some friends who wanna go? I will look on-line at airfare.

Jack: We have made it back, to my hometown,

Ella: determined to play and to wind down.

All: I think we are all looking forward to the beauty of this tradition.

Ella and Lori: There is something here, that just feels right,

Jack and Brian: all the townsman here, have some insight.

All: Gathered here, all together this parade is restoration. People here, are resourceful, with desire closed in.

Joy so full of joy, they show us what we are missing. Joy so full of joy, they show us what we have missed. There is so much laughing and oh so much playing and There is so much caring and oh so much loving and

Ella and Lori: Temporary fix, there are problems.

Jack and Brian: Finding time for fun, is infrequent.

All: Even for the fam'lys on ranches

Out in open air they still miss it.

Ella and Lori: Their hometown parade is infrequent.

Jack and Brian: Only once a year, they can have it.

All: Now's the time to see this big event determined to play and reinvent.

We will savor every moment here. This is quite a seen but so sincere..

Ella and Lori:

Pig wrestling fry bread a folk band the hypnotist.

Pig wrestling fry bread a folk band the hypnotist.

Jack: Hypnotist, I'll try that, I don't think it really works, how can he, get me sleeping I can barely sleep at night. (Jack sits in the hypnotist's chair)

Pig wrestling fry bread a folk band the hypnotist.

Pig wrestling fry bread a folk band the hypnotist. (cont. under dialogue)

Hypnotist: Close your eyes, they are heavy clear your mind from everything, you will hear, only my word speaking to you from within.

Hypnotist (speaking): Now when I snap my fingers, you will awake but before I do, remember this; when you return home after your time here, you will be content with what you have. You will not be concerned with climbing a workplace ladder. You will not have expectations for new benefits, vacation time or annual wage raises. You will not expect more of anything! You will work hard. You will be happy with your LIFE. You will be happy with what you have to look forward to. And what you have to look forward to...are the holidays, your loved ones...and your hometown parade and fair! (fingers snap).

(Jack awakes, absolutely thrilled, elated, relieved) Jack (speaking): Yes!...This is all I need, my hometown parade and fair(?), the holidays! I have enough income for one week unpaid vacation time in the entire year, I'm good! That's all I need! I'm so relieved, I'll just live my life! This is my place. I was born to stay where I was born! And it's OK!..it's OK (he thinks about it a little)...

All (with complacent expressions): Over joyed, we have time to be here at the local fair this is far, far as we go for a little getaway.

This is all, all we need to get a little peace of mind, just a while, just one week and we are ready for the year..

Jack and Brian: Is it all we, just a fair?

Ella and Lori: Far enough away, is it really?

All: Is it far enough, for adventure?

Does it satisfy exploration?

Gathered here, all together this parade is restoration; people here, are resourceful with desire closed in.

Gathered here, all together this parade is restoration; People here, are resourceful with desire closed in.

Brian: That was, kind of amazing I loved it.

Lori: Do we, have to go back home and work, fourteen, sixteen, eighteen hour days?..

End of Play