The Firebringers

Chamber Opera in Three Scenes

for four vocalists, clarinet, cello or bassoon, percussion and piano

Libretto by Ben Allen-Kingsland

Music by Chappell Kingsland

Commissioned by *Reimagining Opera for Kids* (Kim Carballo, Artistic Director)

Scene 1: Rainbow Crow (p. 2)
Story from the Lenapé Indians of North America
Duration: 14 minutes

RAINBOW CROW	Soprano
CREATOR	Mezzo-Soprano
COYOTE	Tenor
OWL	Baritone

Scene 2: Prometheus (p. 14)
Story from the Ancient Greeks
Duration: 11 minutes

PROMETHEUS	Baritone
ZEUS	Tenor
EAGLE	Mezzo-Soprano
HUMAN	Soprano

Scene 3: Murilé and the Moon-Chief (p. 25)
Story from the Chagga of Kenya & Tanzania
Duration: 8 minutes

MURILÉ	Tenor
MOON-CHIEF	Mezzo-Soprano
MURILÉ'S MOTHER / MOONWOMAN	Soprano
MURILÉ'S FATHER / MOONMAN	Baritone

Total duration: 33 minutes

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RAINBOW CROW

COYOTE, OWL and RAINBOW CROW, in the forest.

RAINBOW CROW
(beautiful wordless birdsong)

COYOTE and OWL take notice.

OWL
(hoots briefly)

COYOTE
(howls briefly)

COYOTE & OWL
Listen to the Rainbow Crow
Song like a sunrise
Song that glows

COYOTE
Higher than a coyote's[1] howl

OWL
Melodious more than the hoot of an owl

COYOTE & OWL
What a sound that comes from Rainbow Crow

RAINBOW CROW
(flying forward)
Too-whit, too-whit
I can't stop singing

COYOTE & OWL
Don't stop singing, Rainbow Crow

RAINBOW CROW
Too-whit, too-whit
Just look at all the Earth has given us

TRIO
Woods to give us shade

RAINBOW CROW
Seed

[1] KAI-yoat

COYOTE
And meat!

OWL
For food

TRIO
Water when our voices creak
Warmth at night to ease our sleep
And morning warmth to draw forth the dew

RAINBOW CROW
(dancing)
(wordless birdsong)

COYOTE & OWL
Listen to the Rainbow Crow
Song like a sunrise
Song that glows
Don't stop singing, Rainbow—

OWL
(noticing something, shouting)
Hold!

COYOTE and RAINBOW CROW freeze. OWL is pointing up into the sky. Perhaps we see the CREATOR on a platform upstage as she tosses a snowflake to earth.

OWL
Never in my life have I observed the sight
Of this tumbling precipitant, flaked and white

RAINBOW CROW & COYOTE
Huh?

OWL
(impatiently)
In the sky, in the sky
Something's falling from the sky

RAINBOW CROW & COYOTE
(shouting)
AAH!

They cover their heads. OWL traces the snowflake down as it falls.
It lands with a gentle sound. The animals peek their heads up.

RAINBOW CROW
What could it be...?

COYOTE
Something to eat...?

All three creep closer to the snowflake, very slowly. OWL reaches out a wing and touches it. He smiles.

OWL
Why, it's harmless

RAINBOW CROW & COYOTE
Are you sure? Are you sure?

OWL
(recoiling from COYOTE's smell)
Just as certain as I am you simply have to bathe your fur
See, it's harmless

RAINBOW CROW
So I see

COYOTE
Hey, let's eat!

OWL
You might not want to be so bold
This little flake is rather cold

RAINBOW CROW
Cold? Cold?
Oh no, how sad!
This must not stand
I must warm it with my bottom!

COYOTE & OWL
Rainbow Crow!

RAINBOW CROW plops down on top of the snowflake. Beat.

RAINBOW CROW
Now my bottom is cold, but not for long
I've got warmth of soul and a sunshine song
And I'll bring my warmth where it needs to go
Even to a little flake of…

OWL
Snow

They look at him.

RAINBOW CROW
"Snow!"

COYOTE
That's good.

RAINBOW CROW
I like that.

OWL
(pointing to the sky)
SNOW!

A monstrous snowstorm begins. The animals flap and scatter, flustered.

RAINBOW CROW	COYOTE	OWL
(birdsong)	(howling)	(hooting)

TRIO
What to do? What to do? What to do? What to do? What to do?

OWL
(clearing his throat)
Ah-ah-ah-em.

They gather around a great stump.

OWL
I've called you to the stump of decision
To offer this portentous premonition:
If naught be done to halt the snow
Then buried will we be below
This ivory mist that falls so bleak and cold

RAINBOW CROW & COYOTE
Huh?

OWL
(impatient)
I'm cold! Someone fix it!

COYOTE runs around energetically.

COYOTE
Well shoot why didn't you say so?
Look no further I'm your hero
No need to thank me
No need to thank me
Why sit around and shiver?
My chilling howl will make 'em quiver and run run run run run
No need to thank me
No need to thank me
Just watch how it's done

COYOTE strikes a fierce pose and howls at the snow. He catches a snowflake on his tongue and is delighted.

COYOTE
Guys, guys, I caught one!
You've gotta try this.

COYOTE runs around the stage, catching snowflakes on his tongue.

RAINBOW CROW
It's falling like the rain from the heavens high
I don't think we can scare it off

OWL
Neither do I
I conjecture the Creator must be sending it

COYOTE & OWL
But why?

RAINBOW CROW
I will ask her.

COYOTE & OWL look at her.

OWL
Ask the Creator?

COYOTE
But she's so far!
Up through the clouds
Out past the stars!

COYOTE & OWL
The twelfth heaven!
What a journey

RAINBOW CROW
Don't you worry
I'll bring my warmth where it needs to go
Even to the one who made the snow

RAINBOW CROW gets ready to fly.

COYOTE
Be careful, Rainbow Crow!
Oh, if you could pick up some snacks on your way…

OWL shoves him out of the way as he comes forward.

OWL
Farewell, Rainbow Crow!
May your sojourn be auspicious!

RAINBOW CROW
(not paying attention)
Huh?

OWL
Good luck.

RAINBOW CROW flies away. OWL and COYOTE disappear.

The flight is very long, through stormy clouds and buffeting winds. Finally the skies clear, and the air shifts to the dark emptiness of starlit space.

The CREATOR stands on an upper platform, working on crafting something. A loom? A tanning bench? RAINBOW CROW is still flying as CREATOR begins to sing.

CREATOR
A world
to shape
To set
in place
Connect
Protect
Sustain

In life
and death
In song
and breath
I do
What I
think best

Create
then take
my rest

CREATOR reaches a stopping point and sighs contentedly. She closes her eyes and falls asleep standing up.

RAINBOW CROW arrives, exhausted.

RAINBOW CROW
Three days flying! Oh, a cramp!
Shake it off, Rainbow Crow.

She sees the CREATOR.

RAINBOW CROW
The Creator! She's smaller than I expected
Ahem!
Pardon me, Oh Creator...
My name is Rainbow Crow...

No response from CREATOR.

RAINBOW CROW
Hello?
She's napping
Just my luck
What would be a gentle way
to wake her up?

Beat. RAINBOW CROW closes her eyes and begins to sing.

RAINBOW CROW
(beautiful wordless birdsong)

CREATOR stirs, wakes, listens. RAINBOW CROW's song finishes.

CREATOR
Such a gift

RAINBOW CROW whirls around and bows.

CREATOR
Rise, Rainbow Crow
Thank you for your song
When my creations add to the world's beauty
I love them all the more
What brings you here?

RAINBOW CROW
Down on the earth the snow is falling
It grows deep and it grows cold
It's wonderful you're trying new things
But if I may be so bold
I think we've had enough
Of the white and powdered stuff
Could you please make the snowstorm stop
Before our woods are swallowed whole?

CREATOR
The spirit of the snow controls its fall
I created it and that is all
I have no power to bring it to a halt

RAINBOW CROW
But the cold, dear Creator, but the cold
Your animals will freeze
Surely not a fate that pleases you
Give us help, dear Creator, with the cold

CREATOR smiles. She picks up a long staff.

CREATOR
So I shall, little hero, so I shall
Arrange communication
Between two of my creations
Watch me now, little hero, watch me now
As I reach
For the sun

The CREATOR stretches the staff up into the sun. The end of the staff catches fire.

CREATOR
Fire

RAINBOW CROW
(awed)
Fire

CREATOR
May it be a comfort when the snow grows deep
May it keep you healthy in the winter weeks
May it warm your body to a restful sleep
You and all those who
Await you

RAINBOW CROW
The others! I've gotta get back to Earth
Thank you, Creator
(beautiful wordless song)

CREATOR
Don't thank me yet

CREATOR hands over the staff. RAINBOW CROW winces and coughs.

RAINBOW CROW
It's hot!
cough And *cough* my throat...

CREATOR
Hot indeed, and wreathed in smoke
Your journey will be long

RAINBOW CROW
Yet I'll carry the warmth
Where it needs to go
Down to the ones who suffer in the snow

RAINBOW CROW takes off, carrying the long torch. CREATOR fades away.

RAINBOW CROW begins to cough as she flies. She switches to singing her beautiful song.

She crosses from space into the clouds. The torch gets hotter.

RAINBOW CROW
AAH! This heat... This smoke...
My feathers... My voice!

She starts to sing again, and is interrupted by coughing. Her feathers begin turning black.

She descends below the clouds. The heat and smoke are almost unbearable. She is unable to sing. All she can do is cough. Her feathers turn completely black.

RAINBOW CROW finally tumbles down behind a hill, carrying the much-shorter torch.

Downstage, OWL and COYOTE are huddled together, shivering.

OWL & COYOTE
Where is the Rainbow Crow
Voice like a sunrise
Voice that glows

COYOTE
Think she made it?

OWL
No one knows.

A loud noise from behind the hill.

OWL
What could that be?

COYOTE
Something to eat...?

They scamper towards the noise. RAINBOW CROW, all-black now, stumbles up to the top of the hill carrying the lit torch.

COYOTE & OWL
Rainbow Crow?

COYOTE
You look less rainbowy

OWL
Did you get the Creator to stop the snow?
What's that on the staff all red as a rose?

RAINBOW CROW croaks. OWL and COYOTE are startled. Beat.

RAINBOW CROW
The snow won't stop
But the fire will help us...
(coughs)
Spread it from stick to stick

COYOTE
Are you okay?

RAINBOW CROW
Just go, just go

She hands OWL the stick. He investigates the fire. COYOTE comes to warm his paws.

OWL
This is miraculous
Rainbow Crow, you saved us

COYOTE & OWL
Praise to the Rainbow Crow
Who up to Creator's home did go
Raise our voices
Sing for Rainbow—

RAINBOW CROW is pleased, and tries to sing.

RAINBOW CROW
(croaks, echo of her birdsong)

COYOTE
Please stop singing, Rainbow Crow

OWL gives COYOTE a nudge.

OWL
(kindly, to RAINBOW CROW)
Save your strength, hero bird
After all, you've saved the world

OWL and COYOTE scamper away to share the torch with the other animals. RAINBOW CROW is alone.

The CREATOR appears behind her.

CREATOR
Don't stop singing, Rainbow Crow

RAINBOW CROW
But I lost my voice
My brilliant wings
Am I still me without those things?

CREATOR
A new you
No different from the true you
You displayed as you flew

Listen, Crow, bringer of the fire
The smoke that made your voice go low
Will keep you safe from the hunter's bow
Your charcoal meat will not tempt
Even the hungriest of men

Small comfort?
A ray of sunshine

A bit of sun shines on RAINBOW CROW.

CREATOR
Your feathers, dark and blackened
From everything that happened,
Still remember how they shone
Catch the sunlight just right
The rainbow will return

RAINBOW CROW's black feathers glint in the sunlight.

RAINBOW CROW
I'm still me!
(beautiful wordless birdsong)

CREATOR
Don't stop singing, hero Crow
Fly in safety, wings aglow
Sing your song and always know
How you saved your fellows from the snow

END

PROMETHEUS

PROMETHEUS, bound to a rock. The EAGLE flies down to him, vicious and imposing.

EAGLE
By order of Zeus
King of the Gods
I'm here
To eat
Your liver

AUDIENCE
Eew!

EAGLE
For crimes against
The will of Olympus
I'm here
To eat
Your liver

AUDIENCE
Eew!

EAGLE
Prepare yourself
Prometheus
This beak of mine
Is sharp enough
To poke in here and munch
You
Up!

The EAGLE sticks her beak into PROMETHEUS's side. He giggles and squirms as if being tickled.
The EAGLE pulls out his cartoony liver with her beak.

EAGLE
(her mouth full)
Aha!
I've got
Your liver

The EAGLE sits down and begins to feed. PROMETHEUS scratches the gaping hole in his side, unconcerned. EAGLE glances over at him.

EAGLE
Didn't that hurt?

PROMETHEUS
(sighs, shrugs)
I am immortal
It will grow back

EAGLE
And I'll be back to eat it again
That's what makes the punishment so delicious

PROMETHEUS
I have no regrets

EAGLE
You also have no liver!
What's wrong with you?
You silly Titan!
What crime could be worth this torment?

PROMETHEUS sighs.

PROMETHEUS
A crime that was not a crime
Except in Zeus's eyes

Flashback begins as PROMETHEUS sings. He is unbound from the rock and moves downstage. EAGLE stops eating and watches him.

He goes to a pile of earth and begins to shape it with his hands.

PROMETHEUS
Have you ever raised a family?

EAGLE
No

PROMETHEUS
Have you ever built a home?

EAGLE
No

PROMETHEUS
Have you ever seen the statue
Just inside a block of stone?

EAGLE
No…

PROMETHEUS
Have you ever drawn a painter's brush
Across an open canvas
And felt the rush, the mystic touch
Of seeing your creation fill the space
Where nothing was?

EAGLE
(intrigued)
No

PROMETHEUS picks up a human-shaped figure that he has made out of clay, dressed in a Grecian frock.

PROMETHEUS
I have

PROMETHEUS breathes on the human figurine. HUMAN rushes onstage as if life was just breathed into her.

PROMETHEUS
When I created humankind
When I gave to them the breath of life
When I saw the clever minds behind their eyes
All I felt was pride

PROMETHEUS and HUMAN are looking at each other fondly.

ZEUS enters on a higher level. He carries his thunderbolts.

ZEUS
(harshly)
Prometheus!

PROMETHEUS gives ZEUS a dignified bow. HUMAN begins foraging quietly in one spot as they sing.

PROMETHEUS
Lord Zeus

ZEUS
I don't need to tell you I don't trust you Titans
That's why I locked your brothers underground
But I understand you're clever, so instead of fighting
I've given you your freedom, let you stick around
But I want results
See, I need returns
My son made me this lightning

I've got power to burn
So let's see what you've got
Let's see if you're hot
Are you going to be worth
Keeping here on the earth
Or not?

Done anything for me lately?

PROMETHEUS
(gesturing)
My latest creation
I call them humans

HUMAN waves pleasantly.

ZEUS
"Humans."
What do they do?

PROMETHEUS
I taught them to build
I taught them to farm
I taught them to think
To keep each other from harm
I taught them to look—

ZEUS
(interrupting)
I know!
What if they worship
Me?

PROMETHEUS
Um, they could…

ZEUS
Make them worship me
Like a king on high
With my lightning flashing
In my ice-blue eyes
Make them sacrifice…
Let's see…
The best of their food to me!

PROMETHEUS
But Lord Zeus…

ZEUS
Set that up, will you?
(exiting)
Oh I
Love
Me

ZEUS exits.

HUMAN
(to PROMETHEUS, not seeing EAGLE)
So what do we do?

EAGLE
So what did you do?

PROMETHEUS
(to EAGLE)
With his thunderbolts in my face
I had no choice but to obey
But there are different ways to obey

(to HUMAN)
Let's bring out the meat

PROMETHEUS and HUMAN bring two cow carcasses onstage.

HUMAN
The two best cattle from our herd
Their meat would last for months
But you're saying we must give it up to Zeus?

PROMETHEUS
He demands a sacrifice
But he's not sure just what he likes
Let's give him the chance to choose

PROMETHEUS reaches inside the cows and pulls out a huge handful of steaks.

PROMETHEUS
Take all the steaks and the finest cuts

HUMAN
Take all the steaks and the finest cuts

PROMETHEUS
And hide them underneath the cattle guts

HUMAN
And hide them underneath the cattle guts

PROMETHEUS piles the steaks together in front of one carcass and drapes a pile of guts over top of them. The guts are all that's visible.

PROMETHEUS
Take all the steaks and the finest cuts

HUMAN
Take all the steaks and the finest cuts

PROMETHEUS
And hide them underneath the cattle guts

HUMAN
And hide them underneath the cattle guts

PROMETHEUS
Then make a pile of fat and bones

HUMAN
Then make a pile of fat and bones
And top it off so meat is all that shows

PROMETHEUS
And top it off so meat is all that shows

HUMAN
Then make a pile of fat and bones

PROMETHEUS
Then make a pile of fat and bones

HUMAN
And top it off so meat is all that shows

HUMAN & PROMETHEUS
And top it off so meat is all that shows

PROMETHEUS and HUMAN make a pile of bones covered in fat, and artfully place one big steak on top of it.

EAGLE wanders over to the pile of guts. HUMAN doesn't react to the EAGLE.

EAGLE
This looks disgusting

EAGLE wanders to the pile of bones with a steak on top.

EAGLE
Say, this looks pretty good!

PROMETHEUS
Exactly!

PROMETHEUS fetches a lit torch and brings it to HUMAN. He shows her how to light the piles.

PROMETHEUS
Use this fire to light the piles
The cooking smoke will summon—

ZEUS enters in a rush, sniffing excitedly.

ZEUS
Something to eat....?

PROMETHEUS
Lord Zeus
Which sacrifice pleases you?

ZEUS
(pompously)
Your Great Lord Zeus
Will now peruse

ZEUS meanders between the piles of meat. He sniffs the pile of burning guts and makes a face.

ZEUS
Eww!

He sniffs the bones and fat with the steak on top.

ZEUS
(indicating the bones and fat)
Mmm... medium rare!
This sacrifice pleases me more

PROMETHEUS
So let it be proclaimed
And passed down from age to age
This and only this is the sacrifice you must make

HUMAN and PROMETHEUS share a crafty, self-satisfied moment.

ZEUS
(oblivious)
Yes! So commands Lord Zeus
As for this?
Do whatever you want with this pile of slop

ZEUS kicks the other pile. The guts fall away and the steaks are revealed. PROMETHEUS and HUMAN freeze.

ZEUS
Bless my thunderbolts—!
What was all this tasty meat
Doing hidden beneath the guts?
I want this pile!

PROMETHEUS
But Lord Zeus

ZEUS
You tricked me! This is the good pile!

PROMETHEUS
But you gave your commandment
Surely you would not go back on your word

ZEUS stews.

EAGLE
(to PROMETHEUS)
I see, I see
You tricked him so humans could keep the good food!
That was crafty

ZEUS
Fine, Prometheus
Friend of Humankind
Fine, lowly Humans
Followers of mine
Keep the better meat for yourselves
Enjoy it without this!

ZEUS snatches the torch from the HUMAN.

HUMAN
Our fire!

ZEUS
Fire is a gift from the gods
And I'm not feeling very generous
Enjoy your foodstuffs raw
Enjoy the winter cold
Enjoy the night dark through and through
Without a fire to burn for you

HUMAN
Please, Lord Zeus, return the fire to us

ZEUS
Never!
Never!
Thank your friend, Prometheus

ZEUS storms offstage proudly.

HUMAN sinks to the ground. Winter comes. She hugs herself for warmth. PROMETHEUS is heartbroken.

PROMETHEUS hands her a raw steak. She smiles at him and tries to eat it, but has little appetite.

PROMETHEUS
Without fire
My creations couldn't live for long
Watching them suffer
Made me wish I'd never made them
Made me wish I'd never shamed that tyrant Zeus
Made me wish that there was something I could do

Up on a platform, we see Zeus lounging in Olympus. There's a great fire pit next to him, and a burning stalk sticking out of it. PROMETHEUS sees the fire and makes a decision.

He begins a journey up to Olympus, with the EAGLE following him.

PROMETHEUS	EAGLE
The answer was perfectly plain	
	What did you do?
Only one course of action remained	
	What did you do?
An answer as clear as the nose on my face	What? What?
A simple solution to rescue my race	What? What?
I climbed Mount Olympus	
Higher and higher	Oh, don't tell me...
I reached out	
To the sacred fire	He's gonna be so mad!

PROMETHEUS is in Olympus. He reaches out and takes the burning stalk out of the hearth. ZEUS notices and is startled.

ZEUS
What do you think you're doing?

PROMETHEUS
What is right
Even though it will hurt

ZEUS
Prometheus!
Prometheus!
Prometheus!

ZEUS is stunned, then stomps his feet and heads off-stage, pantomiming barking orders. PROMETHEUS begins a long descent from Olympus. He takes the stalk of fire down to the HUMAN.

She is shivering. As soon as she takes it, the shivering begins to subside. She looks up at PROMETHEUS with gratitude, and he smiles. She runs offstage.

PROMETHEUS looks back to Olympus. ZEUS is back, glaring down at him. He is brandishing his thunderbolts. ZEUS snaps his fingers.

The scene returns to the present. PROMETHEUS is chained to his rock. The EAGLE is regarding the uneaten portion of liver.

EAGLE
A crime that was not a crime
Except in Zeus' eyes
You gave your humans fire again
To help them stay alive

PROMETHEUS
I made my choice
Now I'm not a hero
Not a creator
Just a meal

The EAGLE thinks. It pulls out a lunchbox.

EAGLE
I'm supposed to eat your liver every day
But how fresh it has to be
My orders don't say
I'm positively full tonight

I couldn't eat another bite
So what if I just pack this away...
(she packs up the remaining liver in its lunchbox)
And nibble on it tomorrow when I come back
To talk?

PROMETHEUS
I'd like that

EAGLE & ZEUS & HUMAN
Prometheus, Prometheus
Chained to a rock
Gathering dust

EAGLE
(mulling it over)
Condemned to days of endless pain

ZEUS
(vindictive)
Condemned to days of endless pain

HUMAN
(sympathetic)
Condemned to days of endless pain
Because he loved too much

EAGLE
We'll see about that

EAGLE smiles, takes its lunchbox and flies away.

Downstage, HUMAN is cooking at a campfire. PROMETHEUS notices and sighs with pleasure.

END

MURILÉ AND THE MOON-CHIEF

MURILÉ and his family are working. MURILÉ is whittling a stick. His FATHER is standing on a stool, tending an empty beehive in a tree. His MOTHER is mending clothing.

MOTHER
(shaking her head, disappointed)
Murilé, Murilé

MURILÉ
What?

MOTHER
Don't take that tone of voice with me
Murilé, Murilé

MURILÉ
What?

MOTHER
(exasperated)
Husband, listen, do you see!

FATHER
Do what your mother says

MOTHER
Can't get him to do his work

MURILÉ
But Ma!

FATHER
Do what your mother says

MOTHER
Can't get him to tend our herd

MURILÉ
But Ma!
I do my work, I'm doing it now

MOTHER
You think that makes you special?
How'd you get this way? It's not allowed!

MOTHER & FATHER
Get your head out of the clouds

FATHER
Son, you better step up right

MURILÉ
But Papa!

MOTHER
Do what your father says

FATHER
Hard work it's a part of life

MOTHER
Listen what your father says

MURILÉ
But I do my chores, I do my part

FATHER
With your hands but not your heart!
Learn that strength comes from the ground

MOTHER & FATHER
And get your head out of the clouds

FATHER jumps down from the stool.

MOTHER
We'll be with the herd. You finish that stick now.
(calling to the goats)
Hep hep! Hey, goat, hey, goat, hep hep hi-eee!

FATHER and MOTHER exit to tend the herds.

MURILÉ
You'll be with the herd till the day you die
And so will I

He keeps working, sullenly.

MURILÉ
(with nonsense syllables)
Ayah ayah wuya nayah
Do what your mother says...
Ayah ayah wuya nayah
Do what your father says...
You're no different from the crowd
Get your head out of the clouds

He gets to a stopping point with the grain and stands, stretches. He plops down on his father's stool.

MURILÉ closes his eyes.

He feels a little bit of magic. The stool jiggles.

He opens his eyes and looks around. Excited, he closes his eyes.

The other cast members enter silently in neutral costumes and take places around his stool. They will pick it up to create the flying effect.

MURILÉ
(incantation)
Oo

MURILÉ's stool lifts off the ground by magic. He opens his eyes and it drops again.

MURILE
Oo

MURILÉ
(delighted)
Ha-ha!
I never thought the stool could fly!
Look at me now up here in the sky!
You thought my head was in the clouds before
Keep your goats! I'm off to explore!
Farther, faster, higher and higher
More and more and more and more!

Oo
Oo

MURILÉ's stool lifts off the ground. He swoops around the stage, flying through the air. He is able to open his eyes now as he flies.

MURILÉ
Higher! Higher! Past the clouds!
More and more and more and more and more and more!

In a rush, he pushes up past the clouds.

As he leaves the atmosphere, everything becomes still and open. He looks at everything with wonder.

MURILÉ
The moon

MURILÉ glides over to the moon and touches down. The other cast members exit.

MURILÉ
First boy on the moon!

He tries to take a step. The lower gravity makes his steps enormous, and makes him move very slowly.

MURILÉ
It feels so funny to move here

He practices moving. He stops and listens.

MURILÉ
It's quiet
I wonder,
Is there anybody here?

A slow, funky groove begins. MURILÉ looks around to see where it's coming from.

MURILÉ
Someone's coming!

The MOONCHIEF enters, flanked by two MOONPEOPLE. They walk normally, without any gravity affect.

MOONCHIEF
Heyyyyyy
Oom!

They turn sharply to look at MURILÉ.

MOONCHIEF
I knew I heard a sound from up there

MOONPEOPLE
Hey hey
Oom!

MOONCHIEF
I thought I saw a moonman flyin'
In a crazy no-back chair
But this ain't no moonman

MOONPEOPLE
No no no

MOONCHIEF
Look at the way he stands

MOONPEOPLE
No no no

MOONCHIEF
You think he understands me?

MOONPEOPLE
Sho' don't know
Only one way to see

MOONCHIEF
That's right
Well I'm the Moon-Chief
Listen to me

MOONWOMAN
Hey hey

MOONCHIEF
Hey hey

MOONMAN
Hey

MOONCHIEF & MOONPEOPLE
Oom!

MOONCHIEF
What's your name?

MURILÉ
Murilé

MOONCHIEF
Where you from?

MURILÉ
The Earth

MOONCHIEF
Why you here?

MURILÉ
Just exploring

MOONCHIEF
(pleased)
Well ain't that a first

We've never seen

MOONPEOPLE
No no no

MOONCHIEF
A real-live Earthling

MOONPEOPLE
No no no

MOONCHIEF
I'm the Moon-Chief
Listen to me

MOONCHIEF & MOONPEOPLE
Hey hey
Oom!

MOONCHIEF
Here's what we're gonna do now
Gonna serve you up a feast like you wouldn't believe!

MOONCHIEF snaps her fingers. MOONPEOPLE rush off to gather food. MOONCHIEF leads MURILÉ on a walk.

MOONCHIEF
Here on the moon we got everything you could want

MURILÉ
Do you have goats?

MOONCHIEF
Moon-goats!

MURILÉ
Do you have soft pillows?

MOONCHIEF
Moon-pillows!

MURILÉ
(making a face)
Do you do chores?

MOONCHIEF
(laughing)
Not me! I'm the chief!

And not you today either
You my guest, Murilé the Earthling
Now let's eat!
I'm the Moon-Chief
Listen to me

MOONCHIEF & MOONPEOPLE & MURILÉ
Hey hey
Oom!

A great feast has been set out on a blanket. On "Oom," the MOONCHIEF and MOONPEOPLE sit and get ready to dig in. There are huge raw sweet potatoes and legs of bright red meat.

MURILÉ stares at the food.

MOONCHIEF
What's the matter?

MURILÉ
It's not cooked

The MOONCHIEF and MOONPEOPLE look at each other.

MOONCHIEF & MOONPEOPLE
"Cooked?"

MOONCHIEF
What's that? Some kind of fish?

MURILÉ
No, I mean, cooked
Heated up with fire

The MOONCHIEF and MOONPEOPLE look at each other.

MOONCHIEF & MOONPEOPLE
"Fire?"

MOONCHIEF
What's that? Some kind of fish?

MURILÉ
You don't have fire on the moon?
Well, here, I can show you
Do you have any wood?

MOONMAN
(pointing to the platform)
There's some

MURILÉ takes big steps over to the platform. A small pile of sticks and leaves is in place.

MURILÉ
How 'bout a stone?

MOONWOMAN
(pulling a rock out of her pocket)
Here's my pet moon rock

MOONWOMAN gently hands over the rock.

MURILÉ
See, you take the sticks and you make a pile

He does. MOONPEOPLE move closer, fascinated. MOONCHIEF watches from a distance.

MURILÉ
Then you twist a stick on a stone for a while

He does. The end of the stick turns into a smoky red ember. The MOONPEOPLE jump, then move even closer.

MURILÉ
When an ember forms, you give it your breath

He blows on it, gently. It glows a brighter red.

MURILÉ
Touch it to the kindling and it does the rest

He lays the burning stick in with the pile. After a moment, a fire builds and the pile is alight. MOONPEOPLE are amazed and delighted.

MURILÉ
Fire!

MURILÉ jumps from the platform and grabs a leg of raw meat. He holds it over the fire as the MOONPEOPLE sing.

MOONPEOPLE
(focused on the fire as MURILÉ moves)
Look at that
Would you look at that

MURILÉ
It'll keep you warm
It'll give you light
It'll let you take hot baths
And stay up late at night
It can do so much for you
There's no end to the list
But best of all it'll make your food
Taste like this

MOONPEOPLE
Look at that
Would you look at that
Look at that
Would you look look lay your eyes on that
Look at that
Look at that
Look at that
Make your food taste like

MURILÉ offers the now-cooked meat to the MOONCHIEF. MOONCHIEF takes it, her face revealing nothing. A long, tense moment.

MOONCHIEF takes a bite, chews. No visible reaction.

MOONCHIEF
This…
Is…
Huge

MOONCHIEF hands meat out. MOONPEOPLE rush forward to take it, and taste it themselves. They are delighted.

MOONCHIEF
Murilé, Murilé
It's a great day on the moon
All thanks to you

MOONPEOPLE
All thanks to you

MOONCHIEF
All thanks to you

MOONPEOPLE
All thanks to you

MOONCHIEF
I see you, Murilé
As a hero through and through
I ain't playin' with you

MOONPEOPLE
You know it's true

MOONCHIEF
This here is huge

MOONPEOPLE
We’re talkin’ huge

MOONCHIEF
You came to explore
And you gave us so much more
You’ve brightened our lives
With the gift of your fire

Stay and be wealthy! You’re a prince to us now

MURILÉ
(to himself)
To think all this came from having my head in the clouds…
Can I stay as a Prince of the moon, being honored and praised
While my mother and father scrape by for the rest of their days?

He thinks.

MURILÉ
Sure, I’ll stay!

They all cheer.

TUTTI
Fire, Fire
In a flash you feel inspired
Flame, Flame
Watch it glow, you’re not the same
It's a gift to end all gifts
It's a force completely new
Pure potential in orange and red
And flickering yellow and blue
Fire, Fire
We do what we do
We do what we do
All thanks to you!

END